

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

TOLEDO 6, OHIO

Department of History

April 26, 1965

MEMO RE. INTERVIEW WITH MR. E.L. KIMMEL (in charge of MSS. for AFL-CIO in Washington):  
April 19, 1964

1. I was in Washington doing research into the organization of steelworkers during years 1929-1935 and at AFL-CIO headquarters to check on papers of Amalgamated Assoc of Iron and Steel Workers.

2. I found that about the only significant papers which the union has are the copy books of Samuel Gompers and William Green. These have been microfilmed and Cornell has purchased a copy of the microfilm of the Green letters. Some of the Gompers' letters were of a process which could not be copied. Mr. Kimmel told me that the Gompers' papers were going to be deposited somewhere; that Wisconsin seems to have a strong lobby to get them but that he favored the Library of Congress.

3. In addition there are many reels of microfilm of correspondence between national headquarters of the AFL and its affiliated national and international unions. Some of the material is quite good and can be purchased by libraries.

4. Kimmel does not have a very high opinion of historians. He told me that several years ago someone came there to see what material was available and then wrote an

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article telling what rich material was available (including several boxes of materials relating to labor's contributions to European war relief). Kimmel said that the material was worthless and later destroyed.

5. In answer to the question why labor did not keep better records, Kimmel was quite harsh on historians, calling them "eager beavers" and "young Ph.D's" who had only become interested in labor in the past ten years. He said that the leader of a local union was a carpenter or bricklayer who did not care what historians wanted and when room was needed old papers were thrown out.

6. Kimmel is very good about helping you do research in what materials they have. I ordered a roll of microfilm from them and it took only a few days to receive it.

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