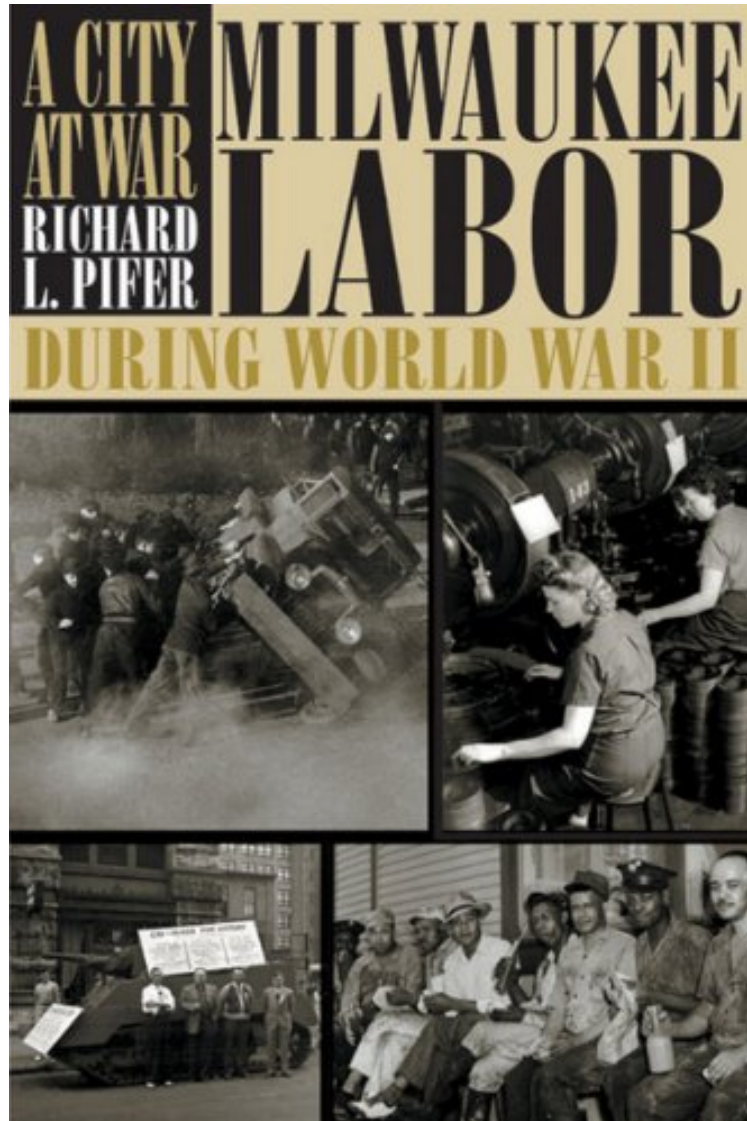


(Free pdf) A City At War: Milwaukee Labor During World War II

## A City At War: Milwaukee Labor During World War II

*Richard L. Pifer*

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**Richard L. Pifer : A City At War: Milwaukee Labor During World War II** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A City At War: Milwaukee Labor During World War II:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great social history book!By Li GangBased on original records and archives,the writer described an deep and lively social historical imagine in War Two. Especially, he told a brilliant story of women and grass root class,and these inspired us the victory coming from ordinary America people whether they were in battle field or they were in factories in home front.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Home Front History From Labor's PerspectiveBy James GallenWorld War II was not fought only on battlefields and the seas by soldiers and sailors, but also in factories by workers and managers. Idquo;A City at WarIdquo; is the story

of this home front told from the perspective of organized labor. Author Richard L. Pifer lays the background of Milwaukee's historic industrialization and the state of its economy and workforce as well as the economic and political milieu in which it grew. Readers learn of Milwaukee's transformation from a processor of food to a producer of steel and machinery. Pifer also explains the ongoing rivalry between the craft unions, concentrated in the A F of L and the industrial unions of the CIO. Resulting jurisdictional disputes would continue to contribute to labor unrest during the war. With its German and industrial heritage Milwaukee was unique among American cities in repeatedly election Socialist mayors. "A City At War" chronicles the role of organized labor in negotiating the agreements for overtime and work rules and organizing patriotic initiatives, such as war Bond Drives that enabled industry and labor to contribute to the war effort. I have read histories of industry's role in providing tools need by the military, but this is the first book I have seen viewing the history from labor's perspective. One topic the labor historian must address is labor's record of striking while Americans' sons were fighting and dying, a practice some regard as disloyal. Pifer confronts the issue head on. He demonstrates that both management and labor maintained a perspective extending into an era of peace when struggles over profits, wages and work rules would determine the success of companies and the security of workers. Pifer makes the case that strikes were fewer and of shorter duration during the war than they were before and would be after. World War II is shown as a time during which inflation was rampant, even though partially suppressed by wage and price controls. Workers endured economic hardships while struggling to make ends meet and preserve their post-war prosperity. Although focusing on Milwaukee, its experience overlapped that of many other communities. I finished this tome with a deeper understanding of the role domestic labor relations played in contributing to victory. It is essential to an understanding of the home front in World War II. I did receive a free copy of this work for reading and review. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good topic, but not objective coverage By A Customer Selecting a city that offered unique dynamics for labor/management relations during World War II, Mr. Pifer makes his pro-union, pro-labor bias very clear through the entire book. Well researched and documented, very little is seen from management's viewpoint and the costs incurred by business during the war. Each chapter seems to use the same phrases from beginning to end, as if there was a shortage of terminology. While the topic is well chosen, this is not an unbiased historical account. The potential for a solid piece of historical writing was there, but the mark is missed in an effort to promote a specific viewpoint.

Milwaukeeans greeted the advent of World War II with the same determination as other Americans. Everyone felt the effect of the war, whether through concern for loved ones in danger, longer work hours, consumer shortages, or participation in war service organizations and drives. Men and women workers produced the essential goods necessary for victory—the vehicles, weapons, munitions, and components for all the machinery of war. But even in wartime there were labor conflicts, fueled by the sacrifices and tensions of wartime life. *A City at War* focuses on the experience of working men and women in a community that was not a wartime boom town. It looks at the stands of the CIO and the AFL against low wartime wages, and at women in unionized factories facing the perceptions and goals of male workers, union leaders, and society itself. Here is a social history of wartime Milwaukee and its workers as they laid the groundwork for a secure postwar future.

About the Author Richard L. Pifer is director of the Reference and Public Services Bureau of the Library-Archives Division of the Wisconsin Historical Society. He has a Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.