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International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
(ILGWU)

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Justice (Vol. 11, Iss. 24)

International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)

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International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, ILGWU, labor unions, clothing workers, textile workers, garment workers, garment industry, New York, United States

Comments

Justice was the official publication of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union ILGWU from 1919 to 1995. Editions of *Justice* were published in English, Italian, Spanish, and Yiddish. When compared side by side, the content of some of these different editions of *Justice* shows significant differences. This is the English-language edition of *Justice*.

"My righteous-
ness I hold fast,
and will not let
it go."
—Job 27.3

JUSTICE

"Workers
of the world
united! You
have nothing to
lose but your
chains."

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL LADIES' GARMENT WORKERS' UNION

Vol. XI. No. 24.

JERSEY CITY, N. J., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1929

PRICE 3 CENTS

The Story of the First Day of the Convention

Governor of Ohio and Mayor of Cleveland Address Convention.—President Schlesinger Eulogizes Acting President Dubinsky and Stresses Need of Restoring the Unemployment Insurance Fund.—Convention Thanks Gov. Roosevelt and Lieut. Gov. Lehman for Their Services in Cloak Strike.

Special dispatch to Justice
By RICHARD ROHMAN

CLEVELAND, Dec. 2.—Resolutions, several of which are expected to be hotly contested, were presented today at the opening of the Convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union at the public auditorium here. Proposals for the election of President, Secretary-Treasurer and Members of the General Executive Board by referendum instead of by Convention, as at present, and for proportional or modified proportional representation are those likely to call forth the most bitter controversy when they come up later on the Convention floor.

Restoration of the unemployment insurance fund in the New York cloak and suit industry, the burden to be carried exclusively by the employers; request for strike authorization in Toledo, Chicago, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Cleveland; old age security; the release of Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings; support of the campaign to organize the Southern textile workers, and a demand for the release of political prisoners in Soviet Russia are among the subjects incorporated in resolutions submitted today.

Another proposal calculated to create a bitter struggle on the convention floor is to reduce the present General Executive Board by elimination.
(Continued on page 2)

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE I. L. G. W. U.



Report of the General Executive Board

Tells About the Victorious Cloak Strike and Other Union Gains.—Rejoices Over the Complete Absence of Internal Strife As a Result of the Elimination of the Communist Union Wreckers, and Outlines Plans for Future Action in the Interest of the Garment Workers.

The report of the General Executive Board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union to the Twentieth Convention of the organiza-

tion which opened on Monday in the Public Auditorium, Cleveland, was made public last Saturday by President Benjamin Schlesinger. The report, beside reviewing the complete rehabilitation of the Union in the cloak and suit industry and in certain miscellaneous trades, stresses recommendations for a general strike of 45,000 New York dressmakers December 31, having for its purpose the elimination of sweat-shops and the present cut-throat competition within the industry.

The General Executive Board, in its report, gives a comprehensive account of its stewardship since the last Convention held in Boston in May, 1928, when the last vestige of Communist influence within the ranks of the union had been eliminated. It details the victory of 30,000 cloakmakers in the general strike of last July, the successful struggles in the pleating, hemstitching and embroidery trades of New York, understandings reached with chain stores, mail order houses and department stores regarding the confinement of cloak production exclusively to union shops, and the preliminary organization work in the New York dress industry prior to the forthcoming general strikes.

Jubilant over the complete absence of internal strife that had marked the union since the Communist adventure, the report states:

"For the first time in many years we meet in an atmosphere freed of rancor and fraternal discord, with ranks united and our horizon cleared of treacherous obstacles which threat-

ened the very existence of our union. For the first time in many years, we are gathered at a convention ready to proclaim to the world of labor that our great organization, after an unhappy period of disruption and humiliation, has emerged strong and militant again, having been saved from destruction by the loyalty, the tireless devotion and the self-sacrifice of its members, to take its place once more in the front ranks of the labor unions of America."

Discussing the strength of the Communists in the cloak and dress trades, the report declares:

"In the cloak trade, both numerically and with regard to influence, they are a zero. Ninety-five per cent of the cloakmakers are back in the union and have divorced themselves completely from the 'left' nightmare. In the dress trade, they have retained a nucleus amounting to a score of shops, but even there they are largely a negative factor."

Pointing out that the Union's efforts in the dress trade prior to the impending strike are meeting with huge success, figures are quoted to show that within the last two months Local 22 has gained 2,600 new members and 150 new shops, and Local 59 has gained 1,000 new members.

Among recommendations to the convention are included one for the increase of dues to meet the organization needs, a \$6 tax a year for two years in order to reduce the huge indebtedness inherited from the Communists and endorsement of old age security.

Greetings To Our Members

By WILLIAM GREEN
President, American Federation of Labor

It is with very great appreciation of the constructive progress the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union has made in the recent months, I write this greeting to the members of the trade unions in the women's garment industry.

The Communist menace which for a time held your organization in its grip has been conquered and your unions are free to perform their constructive, protective functions. It is sustained upbuilding of standards that will mean progress for the members of your unions and your industry. There is special need in your industry for the union to be on guard constantly to prevent the development of practices that might bring back sweat-shop conditions.

The history of your organization indicates how essential union organization is and points to the strategic value of keeping before your organization plans for union maintenance and expansion.

The labor movement hopes you will use your coming convention to plan with wisdom and courage for substantial progress during the coming years.

By FRANK MORRISON
Sec'y, American Federation of Labor

I wish Justice, official magazine of the International Ladies' Garment workers' Union, success in the publication of its especial number in honor of that international's convention.

The I. L. G. W. U. has been prominent and aggressive in American trade unionism. It has triumphed over seemingly unsurmountable obstacles. Its first general attack on sweat shop conditions, 29 years ago, in New York City, was a righteous revolt against debasing conditions, and the garment workers have kept alive this spirit of protest and this yearning for a better life.

These workers have been subjected to attack on their front and on their flanks by those who should be with them, but who persist in believing—that is, those who are intellectually honest—that the experience of wage earners can be ignored, and that gains can be secured by other methods than workers developing their individual capacity through collective action.

Affiliates of the A. F. of L. can point to many notable victories in the cause of social betterment, but every student of the organized wage earners will place the I. L. G. W. U. in the front rank.

20th Anniversary Celebration of the Historic 1909 Dress Strike

On Saturday evening, November 23, hundreds of men and women, young and old, filled the Auditorium and the lobby of the I. L. G. W. U. building to its capacity. They all came to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Waistmakers' Strike. They were filled with joy, happiness and most pleasant and inspiring memories of 1909.

1909 was in their minds and on their lips. Every now and then there was an outburst of emotion when one recognized the fellow worker with whom he fought that memorable battle of 1909. It was a reunion of veterans of many industrial battles. So many participated in the battle of 1909, others in the strike of 1913, and in the numerous other strikes carried on by our International; and there were those who are busily engaged in the preparation of the Dressmakers' Strike of 1930.

Many of the guests traveled from other cities; messages of greetings came from far and near; the air was full of hope and faith in the ability and resourcefulness of our International again to become the great social force that it was.

The hall was gayly decorated which added to the good humor and joyful spirit of the assembled. The program was started with singing of labor songs led by our good Comrade Samuel Friedman, in which the entire audience joined. This added to the cheerfulness and good humor of the guests.

The meeting was opened by Fannia M. Cohn, of our Educational Department. In a short address she pointed out the significance of this intimate gathering, to which were invited those who participated in that heroic battle either as strikers or as sympathizers. She also stated that each local of our Union and many branches of the labor movement were being represented here. In this way, she added, we commemorate the unknown soldiers in the cause of the labor movement, with the hope that on February 15th, 1930, we will join our Dressmakers' Union, Local 22, in a double celebration, and that is of the twentieth anniversary of the settlement of the 1909 strike and the rebirth of a strong Dressmakers' Union. She then introduced as the Chairman of the evening, Bessie Switzky, who was not only a striker in the 1909 strike, but also a member of the Executive Board of the then Local 25, and a member of the strike committee that was in charge of that memorable strike. The chairman vividly painted that period in the history of our Union, which she said, will always be remembered.

The speaking program was started with two veterans of our International—Brother A. Rosenberg, President of our International during the 1909 strike, and Brother Baroff, one of the moving spirits of the 1909 strike, and who was a commander of that army of dressmakers in many of their battles. They were followed by many comrades and friends who participated and assisted the waistmakers in their battle of 1909. Amongst them were Rose Schneiderman, President of the Women's Trade Union League, and Mary Dreier, one of the founders of the Women's Trade Union League and still one of the active spirits there. The League representatives were particularly welcome for their active part in the Strike and the contribution they made toward its victory. Brother Feinstein spoke on behalf of the United Hebrew Trades, whose officers and members took a leading part in that historic strike. Mrs. Jacob Pankin was there, speaking for the Social-

ist Party officially. Our good Comrade Jacob Pankin, who actively participated in the building of the Dressmakers' Union, spoke. Our Brother Grossman, once President of our International, although ill in health, came to this affair. He too, addressed the audience and so did Dr. Hoffman, editor of Justice, and Vice-Presidents Julius Hochman, Manager of the Dress Department, and H. Greenberg, manager of Local 91, also one of the strikers of 1909. Pauline Newman, Brother Antonini, Manager of Local 89, and Sonia Farber, who was a striker in 1909, also spoke.

The speakers emotionally discussed the great battle of the waistmakers, and of the inspiring and idealistic spirit that animated the tens of thousands of waistmakers, who were the first to expose to the world the conditions under which needle trade workers were slaving. Those 20,000 with their idealism, with their determination to establish a union in the waist industry, laid the foundation of the International Union. This strike was not only a great event in the labor movement, but it inspired the women's movement as a whole.

It advanced the cause of women suffrage as its leaders held up the strike as proof of women's ability to fight for their rights and to assume responsibility for a general strike through their efforts to establish a militant trade union of workers amongst whom 90 per cent were women.

Our Sister Sadie Reich read a number of messages, amongst them one from President Schlesinger, in which he conveyed his regret at not being present, since it would have taxed his health to come to the meeting, but as he said, he was with the audience in spirit and joined them in the happy celebration. There was also an inspiring message from Acting President Dubinsky, who was in Philadelphia on official business, and could not attend the affair as he planned. As he stated, distance could not weaken his joy in this celebration. Brother Wander, Secretary of Joint Board Cloak and Dressmakers' Union, assured us in his congratulatory message on behalf of that body, that he regretted illness prevented his joining the dressmakers in their anniversary celebration.

An inspiring and hearty message was read from Brother Reiser, who took an active part in that uprising. Amongst other things, Brother Reiser stated that the revolt of the Twenty Thousand was not merely for the sake of getting a dollar raise. It was a revolt against slavery, against oppression, and for the establishment of a better world and a better life. It was a fight to make a union which would insure happiness, sunshine and welfare for all fellow workers. A warm message with best wishes was read from Brother Breslaw, Manager of Local 35, who due to absence from the city could not attend the celebration. Brother I. Nagler, General Manager of our New York Joint Board, in his message of congratulations, stated that his wedding anniversary, only could keep him away from this memorable meeting. A congratulatory message was received from Mrs. Mary K. Simkhovitch, who regretted that due to illness, she could not join in the celebration. An inspiring message was read from Vice-President A. Kirzner and Brother Bernard Shane of Toronto, Canada.

The Socialist City Convention sent a message of congratulations and also offered its support in the impending Dressmakers' Strike. It was

signed by Rachel Panken, A. I. Ship-lakoff, William M. Feigenbaum and G. August Gerber. Messages of warm greetings were also read from S. Shindler, then Secretary of Local 25, from Rebecca Silver and Sarah Camen, once active members of Local 22. Miss Elizabeth Dutcher in her message, spoke with admiration of the 1909 strike; with enthusiasm of her work as Chairman of the picket allies, and Editor of the special strike editions of the "Call" and "N. Y. Journal." Mrs. Elsie Cole Phillips, who actively participated in the strike as a member of the Women's Trade Union League, as Miss Dutcher did, in her message says:

"My association with that memorable struggle has lived in my memory as one of the three or four most vital and developing experiences I've ever had the luck to know. The fine courage, the idealism, the high intelligence and the sportsmanship with which that mass of young girls met, endured and saw through the personal and organization problems which had to be solved in order to bring the strike to success—and the sacrifices involved for them individually, were often so great!—is one of the springs of my deep belief in the possibilities of some day establishing a true democracy, economic as well as political."

Brother B. Feigenbaum, one of the

most active friends in that historic strike and who has been very ill for some time, sent his heartiest greetings and best wishes through Brother Feinstein. The audience asked that a committee be sent to visit Brother Feigenbaum. At the direction of the audience a message of sympathy and best wishes for a speedy recovery was sent to Brother Morris Sigman, who was operated on the same day, at Rochester, Minnesota.

The artistic phase of the evening was taken care of, as our good friend Ray Porter Miller performed a musical program accompanied by Beatrice Cohen at the piano. Miss Miller, a young gifted coloratura soprano, who is known to many of our members, was most enthusiastically received, and by her singing she added much to the pleasure of the evening.

The delicious eats in charge of a most competent group of members of Local 22 and other locals, had no mean share in adding to the cheerfulness of the audience. The evening ended with dancing. This modest celebration was arranged by a committee of Local 22, in cooperation with the Education Department of our International. The committee of the Dressmakers' Union consisted of Sister Sonia Farber, Brothers J. Rabinowitz and Saul Silver.

The First Day of the Convention

(Continued from page 1)
ing three or four vice-presidential posts.

The referendum resolution was proffered by Locals No. 9 and 10 of New York, supported by several out-of-town locals.

The Convention opened at 10:30 yesterday morning to the strains of music and with banners flying, five hundred Cleveland cloak and dressmakers marched up and down the convention floor, and deposited huge baskets of flowers on the stage, surrounding President Benjamin Schlesinger, distinguished visitors and members of the General Executive Board.

Governor Myers Y. Cooper of Ohio, addressed the convention in the morning, introduced by International Vice-President Kreindler, who presided. Other prominent visitors who spoke included Mayor John D. Marshal of Cleveland, Harry McLaughlin, President of the Ohio State Federation of Labor, and others.

President Schlesinger, who received a moving tribute from the delegates and visitors who jammed the balcony, in responding to the welcome and praise showered upon him for his activities in the successful New York

cloak strike, paused to praise Acting President David Dubinsky, who participated prominently in the conduct of that strike. Schlesinger stressed the need for restoring the unemployment insurance fund in the New York fund," he declared, "must be in a post-employers carry the burden alone. "The tion to give material relief to our workers in time of acute need within the distressing in-between-periods."

He spoke passionately on behalf of a comprehensive scheme of old age security, proposing that each state legislature enact such a law. He touched on the recent New York cloak strike and upon the impartial machinery which has grown out of it within the industry.

A warm telegram was sent to Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt and Lieut-Gov. Lehman for their cooperation in the industry. A wire of sympathy and encouragement was sent to Ex-President Morris Sigman, who is recuperating from a serious operation in Rochester, Minn. "Your many years of service have won you a permanent place in the love and affection of our entire membership," the telegram, which was adopted unanimously, read.

Union Health Center Broadcasts Series of Health Talks

On Wednesday, December 4, the Union Health Center, situated at 331 East 17th street, inaugurated a series of informal lectures on Industrial Hygiene from Station WEVD. The nature of this organization is such that for a good many years the medical and dental men offering their services to the group have come in steady contact not only with the "normal" diseases but with the afflictions that find their origin in the particular industries. As a consequence, these practitioners are prepared to add to the theories of industrial hygiene their wealth of clinical experiences. Diseases arising from the printing trades, the garment trades, etc., will be discussed and methods of prevention and cure will be given.

These talks will be delivered every week at 3:20 P.M. on Wednesday and the health experts at the Center will be behind the microphone.

More Shops Which Have Paid Full Day's Pay Tax

Mirsky Coats	\$210.00
Ben Rothblum	249.00
Kerr & Steinberg	190.40
S. & K. Cloak	34.20

Shopworkers Present Gift to M. Telesnik

In consideration of the good and noble work performed by the Chairman of the Rokler Cloak Co.'s shop, Brother Morris Telesnik, we the workers, consisting of 45 people, present our Chairman with a gold Howard watch and chain and hope he will use same in the best of health.

The committee:

I. FINKOVITZ,
I. KALISHMAN,
H. BARBER,
M. SANDLER,

Cloak & Skirt Makers,
Union Local No. 21

Our International Today and 19 Months Ago

By **BENJAMIN SCHLESINGER**

President, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union

On Monday, December 2, the twentieth regular Convention of our International opened in Cleveland. Our last Convention, the nineteenth, was held in Boston during the month of May, 1928.

From the Boston Convention to the present there is thus an interval of only nineteen months; but if we take the condition of the International today and compare it with its condition at the tie of the Boston Convention, one can scarcely believe that only nineteen months have elapsed since then. One is rather inclined to believe that nineteen years have passed.

When our Convention met in Boston, the International was still bleeding from the wounds inflicted upon it by the Communist rowdies. The Cloakmakers' Union of New York was gravely ill; the many thousands of loyal and devoted union men who had been ruined by the 26-week strike into which the r-r-revolutionary charlatans had dragged the cloak industry a year and a half before, were so discouraged, so terribly depressed, that it seemed it would take years before one could talk to them again about a union. "And if the situation in the Union was dismal, the situation in the shops was still more dismal. Of all the hard-won union conditions, there remained only a shadow; piece work, long hours, and low wages prevailed again. In most shops the workers were treated as in the worst days of the sweating system.

To-day, after the lapse of nineteen months, the Cloakmakers' Union is once more sound, strong, militant, as it was in the heyday of its existence. It affords me pleasure to tell all our members, as well as all our friends who stood by us in those trying, desperate days, that the Cloakmakers' Union now controls as many shops as ever before and in many respects is stronger than ever before.

The influence of the Communists in the Cloakmakers' Union is now wholly vanished. The stronger the Union became, the better grew the conditions in the shops, and the more secure the worker began to feel in the shop, the weaker grew the Communist influence. A healthy, vigorous body is immune to a weak and insignificant poison.

To restore union standards and union control in the industry, it was necessary to measure strength with the employers; it was necessary to call out New York's thirty thousand cloakmakers on a general strike. We did that, and the response of the cloakmakers to our general strike call was so unanimous and so enthusiastic that it surprised not only the employers, but the whole community.

By means of the strike we succeeded in bringing out before the public view the whole sad truth about the plight of the cloakmakers, and in bringing it out in such a way that even the conservative elements

had to acknowledge the justice of our cause and to support us in our struggle.

The entire press of the city aided us. Many prominent personages intervened to bring about a settlement, among them Governor Roosevelt, Lieutenant-Governor Lehman, and Mayor Walker. During the two weeks that it lasted, the cloak strike was the most burning issue before the community. A three-year agreement was entered into, and provided the seasons are not poor, I am confident that, working under this agreement, we shall be able to do much during these three years to improve the lot of the cloakmakers, both as regards earnings and other conditions of employment.

The Cloakmakers' Union is now in a splendid condition, strong and united, and without the slightest taint of Communism.



BENJAMIN SCHLESINGER

Our Convention in Cleveland will have a great many questions to deal with. Here I will point out only two which, in my opinion, are of particular importance.

The first concerns the strengthening and enlarging of the International. The Convention will have to approve the plans which the General Executive Board has worked out in regard to the unionization of the great dress industry of New York, and it will also have to endorse the plans as to the unionization of the other centers of the ladies' garment industry.

The production of dresses in the city of New York amounts to more than \$350,000,000 a year. A considerable part of these dresses are made under sweatshop conditions. There are hundreds of dress shops in New York where the workers put in fifty and more hours a week, and where the wages are from ten to fifteen dollars a week.

The organization of the dress trade in New York is of the utmost importance, to all the members of the International in all trades and in all cities. It is a question, first, of eliminating the sweatshop from this great industry, which means

improving the lot of the 45,000 workers employed in it; second, of gaining a vast stronghold for our organization, of rendering our International strategically stronger in all its future campaigns and moves against the employers wherever they may be.

I am convinced that a general strike of the dress trade following the expiration of the existing agreements will put a stop to sweatshop conditions and inaugurate the same control in the dress trade that we have established in the cloak trade. Much has already been done toward the attainment of this end, and judging by the results of our efforts in this direction so far, I am positive we can score a complete success.

The great army of workers in the women's wear trades must be made to realize by the Convention that the general strike now in preparation in the dress trade of New York is of no less importance to them than the general strikes of the cloakmakers, and that the strike will have to be supported by them with the same united forces with which they have always supported the cloak strikes.

The plans of our General Executive Board in regard to the unionization of the other centers of the ladies' garment industry are also of the highest importance. When I speak of other centers, I have in mind the new centers which have sprung up in the last four or five years. Many are under the impression that our trades have dwindled, that there are not as many workers employed in our trades as formerly. This is wrong. This view is based upon observations in the old centers of the industry. The fact is, however, that in the last few years there have arisen quite a number of new centers where our work is being done. Today, for example, there are big cloak shops in Kansas City, Missouri. The number of cloakmakers in Baltimore has trebled and quadrupled in the last few years. The same is true of the cities on the Pacific coast, etc., etc.

All these centers, the old as well as the new, must be organized. We must not neglect them. The longer we neglect them the more detrimental the new centers become for us and the harder it will be to enroll the workers of those centers in our unions. We must at once enter upon the work of organization.

The second important question I wish to point out has to do with the finances of our Union. This is an unpleasant and very prosaic question, but a most important one and we must solve it immediately.

The Communists not only squandered the funds which our unions had accumulated in their treasuries, but also bequeathed us debts amount-

ing to about a million and a half dollars. No matter how hard this may be for us, we must pay the money. A union that is involved in debt is hampered in its course. Debts are like stones in its path, like chains on its feet. The Convention must devise ways and means to remove these stones and chains.

We have a great deal to do in the matter of organization, of upbuilding, and we must not permit the question of debts to hinder our work for one moment.

We come to the Convention with glad hearts because of what we have managed to accomplish in the last year and a half. We come to the Convention with the same high spirits that we used to come to Conventions in the years before the Communist plague. Again we have a powerful Union. Again we enjoy the respect of the entire labor world. Again we exercise control over our trades. Again we possess the prestige that comes with victory and a responsible leadership. The present Convention will not have to worry about "saving the Union from extinction," as was the case with the last two Conventions. Its task will be to plan fresh undertakings, fresh campaigns and triumphs, in order still more to improve the lot of our workers and still further to strengthen the ranks of our organization.

We come to the Convention with a banner proudly waving over a mighty army of workers that ever marches onward.

POVERTY NO CRIME: RELIEF IS NEEDED

New York.—Poverty is not a crime, but is an economic condition which the State is bound to recognize in some way or other, State Senator Seabury C. Mastick, chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee for Old Age Relief, declared before the Ethical Culture Society.

Senator Mastick estimated that 41,000 persons in this State more than 70 years old would be entitled to old age relief, and that the cost of such a law would be \$12,000 annually, at the rate of \$30 a month to each applicant. He said an old-age pension law would not depopulate institutions for the aged, as many old people would need hospital and institution care and some would have no other place to go.

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JUSTICE

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EDITORIALS

The Convention

The delegates have come to the present Convention in Cleveland with happier hearts than to the last two conventions. The International has again begun to grow and to gain strength; the cloakmakers have rehabilitated their union; the dressmakers are following in the footsteps of the cloakmakers and their union is growing bigger and stronger; considerable activity is going on in other trades that are affiliated with the International; in some of them successful strikes have been waged, while others hold themselves in readiness for a strike and have the best prospects of winning it. All in all, the position of the International is incomparably better than it was two or four years ago. Then it stood under the sign of destruction and annihilation, and now it stands under the sign of progress and growth.

At the Cleveland Convention the delegates can tell in joy what their unions went through in the days of the Communists' destructive rule.

That was a very sad time indeed for our Union. It seemed as though everything would be destroyed and wiped out. And the worst of all was that people began to lose faith in the possibility of ever raising the Union again from its ruins.

The communist Saturnalia of destruction took place not only in New York, but all over the country. Wherever the International had been active and by hard fighting had won for the workers a better and brighter life, the destroyers came and worked havoc. Instead of sentiments of brotherhood, the seeds of mutual hatred were sown in the hearts of the workers; instead of a united front of workers against employers, there ensued a fratricidal war of workers against workers.

In the course of its existence the International has gone through a number of other internal conflicts, some of them quite heated and exciting ones; but those were union conflicts. The members fought over certain policies and principles in the management of the union. From these conflicts the union emerged not weaker but stronger. The integrity of the union was sacred to all, however they might clash over its policies and principles. The unity of the workers in their war with the employers was held by all to be of greater importance than the internal strife over the administration of the union. It was quite otherwise in the last internal conflict the International has gone through. This was not a fight over union policies and union principles, but a struggle against mischievous elements bent upon disrupting and destroying the union.

The Communists began their destructive activity in our Union with a campaign of slander and abuse against its officers and with a provocative agitation against higher dues in the Union. These are old and well-tried demagogic methods. It is always easy to incite the masses against the leaders and to persuade them that all their troubles are due to the latter. And it is still more easy to incite the rank and file against higher dues in the Union. And the bigger and baser the demagogue, the greater the success he is able to score in this direction.

One must not be surprised at the naivete of the masses who allowed themselves to be misled by the Communists, but one cannot but be surprised that those who pretended to be the leaders of the masses were so simple-minded as to believe that the Communists were going to introduce a greater measure of democracy in the Union and that they were fighting for the rank and file. The masses permitted themselves to be imposed upon because the Communists knew how to incite and inflame the masses against the Union. But how could persons who aspired to be leaders and spokesmen believe even for one moment that the Communists were fighting for democracy? Communists and democracy! Is not this a contradiction in terms? Why, Communists are always scoffing at democracy. Is not democracy a term of ridicule among them? No, the Communists were not fighting for democracy in the Union, but for a dictatorship; and when they could not get it, they tried to smash the Union.

The delegates to the Cleveland Convention can now say with joy that those days of havoc and destruction in the Union are over and that the days of building and rehabilitation have come. The International is recovering its strength throughout the country. The delegates are bringing glad tidings to the Convention. Everywhere new life, new activity, has set in, and there is confidence and hope in the success of the work.

And the Cleveland Convention will demonstrate that true democracy does exist in the International and in its leadership. The Convention has before it a long, comprehensive program of proposed democratic reforms, and we are confident that the

delegates will act in harmony with the wishes and sentiments of the members of the Union who elected them. This is the only, the true democracy: to act in accordance with the decisions and the wishes of the electors.

We do not believe that any one save a malicious demagogue can say that the elections to the Conventions were not conducted in a truly democratic and honest manner. Neither can any one say that the leadership of our Union did not carry out all the promises it made in the manifesto it issued on the eve of the cloakmakers' strike. This is true democracy, democracy that carries out the will of the members.

The Convention has before it quite a number of important problems in addition to the question of democratic reforms. The Convention must find ways and means to improve the financial condition of the International, so that it may be able to rid itself of the heavy debts that are weighing it down. In this the Convention must do double work: it must find ways to reduce the expenses of the International and to increase its income. There are certain expenses which only the convention can do away with, and as for increasing the income, that surely is a matter which the Convention alone can decide. And besides financial questions, the Convention is confronted with a series of organization problems. In short, the Convention has no lack of work.

The present Convention marks the beginning of a new page in the history of the International. The Deluge which sought to wash away and to blot out everything, and the Generation of Confusion who sought only to disrupt and to wreck, are happily gone. The International, thanks to its great vitality, has survived all these destructive forces and triumphed over them. The International is now internally whole and sound and continues to march on the road to progress and success.

We wish the delegates of the Convention the utmost success in their deliberations in the interests of our Union and of the entire labor movement.

Convention Issues

The three most important issues relating to democracy within our Union are the referendum, proportional representation, and the recall. These three issues are sure to take up a considerable part of the Convention's time and attention. We know quite well that there are those among the delegates who are anything but enthusiastic about the aforementioned reforms in the International. Some are of the opinion that these three democratic measures do not work well in a union, while others think that too much democracy is in general a bad thing for a union. But whatever one's view may be of the proposed democratic measures, one must admit that the demand for them did not arise suddenly, but that, on the contrary, these measures have long been discussed and also demanded by the members of the International. As a matter of fact, the question of more democracy within the Union has always been a live issue.

But while the members of our Union have devoted considerable time to the theoretic side of the question, that is, whether or not it is necessary to introduce these democratic measures, they have given very little attention to the technical aspect of the question, namely, how these reforms are to be realized.

Take, for example, the demand for the referendum. Who is to be entitled to have his name on the referendum ballot? Surely not every one that any delegate to the Convention may nominate for President or Secretary can be placed on the referendum ballot, else it may happen some day that the names of all the delegates to the Convention will be on the ballot, each delegate nominating the other. That may perhaps be democratic, but it is certainly absurd. There must therefore be restrictions so that not every one anybody happens to nominate shall get on the referendum ballot. But what shall these restrictions be?

Again, what if there is only one candidate? Let us say that only one has accepted the nomination, must his election also be submitted to a referendum vote? If yes, it is obvious that the referendum will take the form of votes for and against the candidate. Well, what will happen if the "noes" outnumber the "yeas"? Who will then be President or Secretary?

One may also raise many questions in regard to a proportional representation and the recall. But our aim here is not to raise questions, but to point out that the matter is not so simple as it may seem on the face of it. The proposed democratic reforms involve not only a whole series of technical difficulties, but also questions of principle, as is the case with proportional representation, whose object is to protect the rights of the minority. For, true democracy does not mean merely that the majority rules, but also that under the rule of the majority the rights and interests of the minority are safeguarded.

And so we say that the Convention will not find it such an easy matter to negotiate the proposed reforms. We are confident, however, that it will solve these questions in the most satisfactory manner.

Welcome Friends and Allies

It is a most gratifying phenomenon that the student youth of America has begun to take such a keen interest in the struggle of the wage workers to improve their lot. We are thinking here of the students of both sexes who came to assist Local 38 of the International in its campaign to mitigate the plight of the women workers who are employed in the rich and fashionable dress shops on Fifth Avenue, where they are being exploited in the most shameful manner.

The students who came to help the union were willing to serve as pickets, distribute leaflets in the street, and get arrested. And we are informed by the manager of Local 38 that he daily receives fresh offers from students who are ready

From Time To Time

By DR. B. HOFFMAN (ZIVYON)

I have attended only one convention of the International. That was the famous convention of 1914, which took place shortly after the period of storm and stress in the Cloakmakers' Union of New York, and at which Brother Schlesinger was elected President.

That convention, too, I believe, was held in Cleveland. There are times when it seems to me that all the conventions of the International take place in Cleveland. If I am not mistaken, the convention at which Brother Schlesinger was for the first time elected President of the International also met in Cleveland. And if that is the case, Cleveland ought to be celebrating its silver jubilee of international conventions. I suppose, though, that international conventions must also have been held in other cities, only I was not there.

I have no intentions here to write reminiscences of the International and its conventions. I leave that to Brother Abe Rosenberg. All I want to say is that we are progressing, regardless of the fact that I am often told by cloakmakers, dressmakers, reefer makers, and other garment makers, that things are getting worse and worse. No, they are not getting worse, they are getting better. The battles which the garment workers have waged have not been lost.

I remember quite well the condition of the cloakmakers at the time the International held its convention in Cleveland in 1914. The "Protocol" was still in force. It still furnished the theme of long essays in fat magazines as well as of lectures at colleges, and all over the country the Cloakmakers' Union was still regarded as a paragon for all unions to emulate. But could any one think of comparing the cloakmakers' lot then with their lot today?

Why, the cloakmakers of today are in clover compared with the cloakmakers of fifteen or sixteen years ago. In 1914 the cloakmakers did not even dream of a 40-hour week. If any had spoken then of a 40-hour week, he would have been considered a visionary, a dreamer.

Some operators and finishers began to dream then of week-work instead of piece-work, but no one dared to make an issue of it.

The cloakmakers may be paupers even today, yet they are now far more respectable paupers than in 1914. The standard of living is now a great deal higher, incomparably higher. Their outlook has become broader.

And because their outlook has become broader and their needs greater and more numerous, they must fight for further improvement, for further gains. Always to fight and always to advance is the mission of organized labor. And this mission the International has always sought to fulfill.

It seems to me, though, that between the Cleveland convention of 1914 and that of 1929 our immigrant garment workers have become somewhat too Americanized. It is certainly a matter of gratification that they have become Americanized, but too much of even the best thing is unhealthy.

By "too Americanized" I mean that they have become too practical. And to be too practical means to think only of today, of immediate returns.

True, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. But that is so only if, while holding the bird in the hand, we keep on pursuing the two in the bush. It is a bad thing, however, if on account of the bird in the hand we forget the two in the bush altogether and give up the pursuit after them.

The labor movement becomes petrified and loses its momentum and significance if it has no higher aim than immediate results in the form of a larger and better piece of meat in the pot. If the immediate success of today becomes the be-all and end-all of labor's struggle, the worker may easily drop out of the ranks of the fighter if no fresh immediate success can be achieved for some time. The labor movement must consequently have a higher aim to fight for.

I am not sure whether I ought to express an opinion on the democratic reforms within in the International which are recommended. But I hope I shall not influence any one by voicing my opinion. Experience has taught me that people pay attention to your opinion only if it agrees with theirs; but when your opinion conflicts with theirs, they pay very little attention to you.

I am a staunch adherent of democracy, and that not because I believe democracy is a cure for every ill, but because I believe that democracy can certainly do no harm. And if it can do no harm, why dish it out in teaspoonfuls when bucketfuls are available?

I am not sure that electing the highest officers of the Union by a referendum instead of electing them at conventions, is better, but I believe that it is surely not worse. And if the rank and file believe that the referendum is more democratic, let us have the referendum.

I hardly think that the recall will ever be made use of in the International, but if there is a demand for the introduction of the recall, there is no ground for opposing it. The demand is a democratic one, it cannot hurt, so why should not the right to recall be incorporated in the Constitution of the International?

I can very well see why there may and should be opposition to democratic demands whose democracy is very questionable, but in that case the question is not of opposing democracy but of determining what is and what is not democracy.

Democracy means the rule of the people. But the people are very rarely of one opinion; there always exist differences of opinion among the people; hence democracy means the rule of the majority of the people. But that is not all. Democracy means also that the rights and interests of the minority are respected. The minority cannot rule in a democracy, but neither should it be oppressed.

The minority should always have a chance to make itself heard and a guarantee that it will not be wronged. There are those who think that too

much democracy in unions is an expensive proposition. That may be quite true. But if it were only a matter of cost, it might perhaps be much cheaper to turn the Cloakmakers' Union over to a contractor. I do not believe, though, that the cloakmakers would agree to this. And they would also be right. For in the end it would turn out that this arrangement was costing them more dearly, far more dearly. It is therefore better to have the Cloakmakers' Union run by a Joint Board than by a contractor.

However, the most important question is this: How can we get the people, who are fighting so hard for democracy, to make use of democracy once they have won it?

For example, we have just had elections for delegates to the Convention, and according to all reports from the locals, a large number of members took part in the elections. But is the number really so large?

Democracy in the United States complains that scarcely half of the citizens take part in Presidential elections and fewer in the Congressional elections. On other elections the number of participants is still smaller. In European countries the participation is far greater. In Germany, for example, nearly ninety percent of the citizens take part in the elections. In England over eighty percent of the citizens turn out to vote on election day. But did even fifty per cent of the members of the International vote in the elections for delegates to the Convention?

Even in locals where a very heated election campaign took place less than twenty-five per cent of the members took part in the elections.

And bear in mind that a convention of the International is not an everyday affair. Moreover, the present Convention is such an important one. Indeed, it was on account of its importance that it was convoked half a year sooner than it would ordinarily have been held. Besides, this Convention has to pass on the very democratic reforms for which the rank and file is fighting; so why did the great majority of the members stay away from the elections?

But let there be no misunderstanding. I do not mean to use the indifference of the people as an argument against democracy. It would be simply ridiculous to maintain that because more than half of the American citizens of voting age do not participate in the Congressional elections, the elections as well as the Congress should therefore be abolished altogether. It is no news in the United States that the largest party in the country consists of those who do not vote at all. The non-voters also constitute the largest party in our Union. But there can be no question of taking away the franchise from those who are interested and do come to vote because of the indifference of those who do not. The question is not whether democracy should be abolished or restricted because most people do not make use of it, but what to do in order to get them interested so that they will make use of it.

The question of how to get the people to make use of democracy they have secured is not a union question. It is a problem which is engaging the attention of many a democratic government. In some democratic coun-

tries they have even passed a law compelling every citizen of voting age to vote in the elections, and those who do not are punished. According to this, democracy is not only a privilege, but a duty.

I am not going to say whether I regard such a measure as wise or unwise. The measure is a most debatable one and there are strong arguments pro and con. All I want here is to point out that the problem is an important one and that we should give it our attention. We must find ways and means to get the people interested in the democratic rights and democratic reforms which they have acquired. Here is a great and important educational task for the country in general and for labor unions in particular.

GREEN ASKS UNIONISTS TO AID TETILE LABOR

Washington.—In a call signed by President Green and Secretary Frank Morrison, trade unionists are asked to make financial contributions to assist the United Textile Workers' Union in its Southern organizing campaign.

The call was issued under instructions of the conference of national and international representatives, held at Washington, under authority of the A. F. of L. convention at Toronto.

"The Southern textile workers are victims of low wages, long hours and indefensible conditions of employment," the call states. "They are exploited and oppressed. Let us again show that labor can be relied upon to respond to the call of helpless men and unprotected women and children in their hour of greatest distress.

"A small contribution from the millions of working men and women who compose the A. F. of L. and from their friends will constitute a sum of money which, wisely employed and economically expended, will serve to organize Southern textile workers and secure for them decent living conditions and guarantee protection they so greatly need."

The call suggests that each union determine the amount of money it can contribute. Secretary Frank Morrison, A. F. of L. Building, Washington, will receive contributions and make full and complete accounting for same.

UNIONISED INDUSTRY SHOWS MARKED GAINS

New York.—Marked gains are recorded in the cloak and suit industry as the result of an agreement to abolish low standards between the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union and three employers' associations.

Raymond V. Ingersoll, impartial chairman of the industry, reports that the number of firms having contractual relations increased from 1,417 to 1,532. The books of practically all of these firms have been investigated to check the sending out of work to shops which have not subscribed to labor standards. The four organizations co-operate with the commission.

Between meetings of the full commission the joint committee of managers, made up of the managers of the four organizations, meet at frequent intervals with Chairman Ingersoll.

to help the union in its efforts to organize the dressmakers employed in the rich and aristocratic shops. And it must be noted in this connection that the students here in New York who have displayed such a keen interest in the struggle between capital and labor belong for the most part to wealthy and in some cases to very aristocratic families. Nor do most of them come to the union by accident, or because they are out for a thrill. They have been won over to the cause of labor through the propaganda of Socialist and radical organizations. A par-

ticularly important part in this campaign of education has been played by the League for Industrial Democracy, of which Norman Thomas is the leader. The League has followers and branches in most American colleges.

The labor movement needs friends and sympathizers, especially among the student youth, the future intelligentsia of the Nation. And so we hail with joy the students who come to the aid of the wage workers in their struggle for a brighter and easier life.

How Our Garment Unions Were Built:

By A. ROSENBERG

Ex-President, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union

This highly interesting account of the stirring events which led to the birth of our Union was written for the December issue of the American Federationist which is wholly devoted to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. The article is reprinted here by courtesy of that magazine.

-Ed.

Before Unions

Marble as the conditions of the workers in the cloak trade were, it was only by chance that the sweatshop Javes discovered that there was a way by which they could improve their hard lot.

This was in 1884. The Irish longshoremen, who were employed at loading and unloading the big ocean liners, went on strike. The agents of the steamship companies thereupon descended upon Hester and Essex Sts., in the lower East Side of New York, in search of strike breakers, offering forty cents an hour and steady work. Our fellows knew nothing about the strike, as there were no Yiddish newspapers in those days, and none of us could read English, and so they eagerly accepted the offer.

Men's tailors and cloakmakers now left their shops and went to work as longshoremen. The first few days none of us suspected what was really going on. Every morning all the Jewish strike breakers were assembled, placed aboard a ship, and distributed among the various docks along the waterfront.

Presently the strikers managed to catch some of the Jewish scabs and gave them such a drubbing that they had to be taken to the hospital. From that time on we began to understand the meaning of a strike. The great majority of the strike breakers quit at once.

This incident caused many of us to realize that if workers stick together they can demand more money for their labor and get it, too. And so our cloakmakers began to dream of a strike and waited for a miracle that would make it possible for them, too, to strike. And such a miracle happened in the spring of 1885.

As stated above, most of us worked for outside contractors who had nearly all of them been tailors in the old country. Accordingly, they followed the Old World tradition that permitted a master to hit his employees. One day a cloakmaker fell out with his employer, whereupon the latter slapped him in the face. This was something that even the enslaved cloakmakers could not brook, and as a protest against the outrageous behavior of the contractor, all the workers of the shop went on strike.

After striking for a couple of hours, the workers assembled at 165 East Broadway, where there were meeting halls then, in order to consider what to do next. After many hours of heated discussion, some one proposed that the workers of all contracting shops be called out on strike. The proposal met with everybody's approval. The workers present were divided into committees which got all the contracting shop workers to quit.

From three to five thousand workers joined in the strike. Having no leaders, the workers chose from their own ranks an operator, one Kornberg, and two passers Gutman and Fleigler, to direct the strike. These three work-

ers were able to write a little English or German.

At that time there existed in New York a group of Russian students exiles from Russia. As soon as they heard of our strike, they came to the strikers and began to urge them to demand that the contracting system be abolished and that the manufacturers employ all the workers in the inside shops. This suggestion made a great hit with the strikers and they took it with great zeal and enthusiasm.

One of the students, Abraham Cahan (now editor-in-chief of the Yiddish daily "Forward"), proposed that we form a union of cloakmakers, and at once the strikers began to enroll as members of the union.

Now that we had a union, the strike began in real earnest. There were no scabs in those days, and so, after a strike of three weeks, the manufacturers acceded to the demand that all of our workers be taken into the inside shops.

There was great rejoicing in our camp, and it was decided to hold a parade in which each of the marchers was to carry a broom, signifying that the sweating system had been swept away. The New York papers devoted a great deal of space to this strange parade.

The day following the parade, when our workers arrived at the inside shops, a fresh strike broke out. The sample makers who were American girls, refused to work side by side with immigrant Jews. The manufacturers were highly elated over this and told the "victorious" workers to go back to their meeting halls. There was a great uproar, and the workers who were in dire need on account of their long strike, did not know what to do. To make matters worse, the eight-day fast of Passover was at hand. Accordingly, they decided to swallow their pride and go back to work for the contractors.

To keep up the union was now out of the question. Nobody attended the meetings any more, and a couple of weeks later the union was disbanded. The little money in the union's treasury was divided up among a handful of members. Thus ended the first cloak strike in New York, and no sooner had the first cloakmakers' union been born than it died.

The Knights of Labor

It was not long before the cloakmakers were again in a warlike mood. At that time there existed a powerful labor organization called the Knights of Labor, which occupied the same position as that now filled by the American Federation of Labor. The A. F. of L. was then still small and insignificant.

The Knights of Labor carried on vigorous and extensive propaganda among the American workers. Big strikes took place in various trades, outstanding among them being the strike of street car men in New York.

The cloakmakers witnessed these conflicts, and the stirring events of those days infused a militant spirit into the Jewish workers, too, and that year, at the height of the fall season, there broke out another cloak strike. No one knew who had called the strike. It was rumored then that the contractors themselves had instigated the strike in order to exact higher prices from the warehouses.

Be that as it may, the workers quit. When the cloakmakers were already on strike, steps were taken to organize them into a union.

The Knights of Labor assisted very energetically in the organization of

our union and we became a local of the Knights of Labor. The mystical rites and ceremonies which attended upon our installation as members of the K. of L. made a tremendous impression upon us, and we felt like real union men who had some one to look after their interests.

But there was a fly in the ointment. In the Knights of Labor the individual locals had no power to run their own affairs during a strike, everything being managed by a district committee representing all the unions in the city—the shoe workers, the iron workers, the bricklayers, the copper-smiths, the teamsters, etc. Accordingly, in the negotiations for a settlement of our strike, we were represented by such a committee, whose members were wholly unacquainted with the conditions of our trade, did not understand our problems, and were unfamiliar with the character of the contractors we were working for.

A few days later the District Master Workman and a couple of deputies came to us and declared that we must go back to the shops as the employers had granted us an increase of a few cents.

But no sooner had our men returned to the shops than they forgot the solemn oath they had taken to remain loyal to the Knights of Labor. They ceased to attend meetings, and the union died. After that no attempt was made to organize a union in the cloak trade until the beginning of 1888. Before that year, to be sure, there were occasional strikes against individual contractors, but they were of no importance because they did not possess a general character.

In the beginning of 1888 the ranks of the cloakmakers included a number of young men who were intellectually far above the average tailor, such as Abraham Cahan, Morris Hillquit, etc. These men together with a couple of others now set to work to organize a cloakmakers' union. The plan was first to form a union and then, if necessary, to call a strike. At first it seemed that this union was going to live. The union already numbered several hundred dues-paying members. But the stronger the union grew in numbers, the harder it was to restrain the members, who kept on clamoring for an immediate strike. They had no patience to wait for an opportune moment, and little by little they began to leave the union. The small number of intelligent members were unable by themselves to keep it up and after six months of hard work, the union had to disband.

The First Real Cloakmakers' Union

It was in December, 1889. The inside manufacturers began at this time to produce a better line of garment. As a result they were no longer able to employ girls to make their samples in the better line of dresses and mantles. So they began to employ regular tailors for this work and the girls gradually disappeared from the shops. The men who were employed in the inside shops were organized in what was known as the "Mantle Makers' Society." The latter was a benevolent society rather than a union, its object being mutual aid in time of distress. But as the fall season that year was a very trying one, it occurred to the members of the society that it might not be a bad idea to turn their organization into a union, one that would be able to bring about better conditions of work in the shops.

A committee of inside tailors employed by the cloak firm A. Friedlander and Co. came to the United He-

brew Trades with the request that that body help to organize a cloakmakers' union. The United Hebrew Trades granted the request and forthwith appointed a committee of three, consisting of M. Schach, B. Weinstein, Secretary of the United Hebrew Trades, and Joseph Baroness, who at that time was a knee-pants operator.

Baroness began to explain to the workers the significance of a union, and what they might expect to achieve once they were organized. This kind of propaganda made a tremendous stir among the cloakmakers and they began to idolize Baroness as a new Moses, come to deliver the cloakmakers from their bondage and lead them into Canaan. And so they rushed to join the union by the hundreds and the thousands.

There ensued a series of individual shop walkouts. The bosses, thinking that this union would share the fate of its predecessors, did not offer much resistance and granted all the demands of the workers.

The strike fever also seized the workers of Meyer Jonasson, then the largest cloak manufacturer in America. After the strike had been in progress for a couple of days, a carriage drew up in front of the strikers' headquarters, which were located in a cellar at 92 Hester Street, and out stepped old Meyer Jonasson. In a long speech in which he did not fail to pay compliments to the strikers, he granted all their demands, and to show how delighted he was with the workers, he ordered a treat for them: three barrels of beer and generous portions of herring and pumpernickel bread. Naturally the workers shouted themselves hoarse cheering Mr. Jonasson.

The news of this occurrence spread with lightning-like rapidity to all the cloak shops of New York. Baroness was at once engaged as our leader; and enjoying the full confidence of the masses, he succeeded in a short time, by means of several mass meetings, to organize nearly eight thousand cloakmakers.

While the cloakmakers were busy building a union, the cutters were not asleep, either. Their union, though it had been in existence for some years, was small and weak. But at this time it began to gain in strength, and certain relations were established between the cloakmakers' union and that of the cutters, the two agreeing to help each other in time of strike.

The Lockout of 1890

On May 10 of that year ten of the largest cloak manufacturers locked out about four thousand workers. One of the ten manufacturers had had a disagreement with some of his tailors and had discharged a number of workers. The union naturally demanded that these workers be reinstated. When the firm had refused to do so, the union called out on strike about 350 men employed by that firm.

The cloakmakers were then in alliance with the cutters. Accordingly the latter gave the firm an ultimatum: If you don't take back the discharged cloakmakers, we too will strike. By way of answer to the ultimatum the ten manufacturers who belonged to the association locked out their cutters. Thereupon the union called out four thousand of its members on strike. This strike was the biggest and longest which the garment workers had yet waged. The strike lasted about fifteen weeks. And notwithstanding the fact that there was little money in the union's treasury, the

An Epic of the American Labor Movement

enthusiasm of the strikers was more effective than millions of dollars.

The outside contractors organized and closed their shops. They realized that if the strike was lost, their interests would suffer greatly thereby. Hence they joined the workers in the strike.

A strike committee was formed of the three organizations involved, to wit: the Cloakmakers' Union, the Cloak and Suit Cutters' Association, and the Consolidated Board, as the contractors' organization was called. An agreement was entered into providing that no union man might work for a non-association contractor. The contractors on their part bound themselves not to cut any material that non-union cloakmakers were to work upon and in like manner the cloakmakers obligated themselves not to work on any goods cut by non-union cutters. Each of these three organizations gave security that it would observe the agreement. This triple alliance infused new life and hope into the ranks of the strikers.

Among those who helped us wage the strike there was a certain T. H. Garside, who claimed to be an anarchist, but whom nobody knew. Since, however, he was an American and a good talker, whereas our official leader, Barondess, was a recent immigrant, Garside became the assistant strike leader whenever it was necessary to employ English.

After the strike had been going on for fourteen weeks, the manufacturers realized that the game was getting too dangerous, that they would never be able to break the strike. They began negotiations for a settlement. Finally Garside signed an agreement with the manufacturers in the absence of Barondess.

As soon as the contents of the agreement became known, there were protests on all sides against it. The day after the signing of the pact there was a mass meeting in one of the biggest halls in New York. The meeting rejected the agreement and decided to continue the strike.

When the manufacturers learned of what happened at the meeting, they realized that the jig was up. A few days later the strike was settled on terms that spelt a complete victory for the union, and at the end of August, 1896, the strikers returned to work, marching to the shops like conquering heroes.

The Famous Jamaica Affair

In 1891 there existed two large cloak manufacturing firms, Blumenthal Brothers and Benjamin & Caspari. These two firms employed about eight hundred workers, whom the union called out on strike. The contractors for these firms tried to run their shops with scabs. One of the contractors opened a factory in the woods near Jamaica, L. I. When our committee arrived at the shop to remove the workers, a fight ensued and in the melee some goods were damaged. That evening the contractor and a squad of detectives raided the hall where the strike committee was in session and arrested the entire committee as well as Barondess. The prisoners were taken to Jamaica and put in jail there. At the same time Chief Police Inspector Byrnes, a notorious union-hater, issued orders to all hall proprietors in New York not to rent any halls to the cloakmakers for meeting purposes. We were not even given a chance to meet for the purpose of devising ways and means to secure the release of our imprisoned brothers on bail. We tried to meet in private homes, but wherever we came,

the police were already on hand waiting for us.

Barondess alone was released on \$10,000 bail. The remaining fifteen prisoners remained in jail until their trial some four months later, when fourteen were acquitted and only one was found guilty.

Through the intercession of the Central Labor Union of New York, and also of Samuel Gompers, the President of the American Federation of Labor, who then had his office at 14 St. Marks Place, we were finally permitted to hold meetings.

As soon as we met to discuss what to do next, we started a movement to have the governor pardon the cloakmaker who had been sentenced at Jamaica to serve five years in the penitentiary.

In this too, the Central Labor Union of New York came to our aid and together with Barondess succeeded in securing the tens of thousands of signature for a petition to the governor to pardon our imprisoned brother. Shortly afterwards the latter was pardoned.

While our union was having trouble aplenty on account of the Jamaica prisoners, a couple of manufacturers raised their heads and had Barondess arrested on a charge of having extorted money from them. And al-

though the union proved that the money had been exacted from them as back pay for their workers for time lost through a strike, Barondess was found guilty and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment. The case was appealed and he was released on bail.

The First Opposition Union in the Cloak Trade

During the time the union was busy trying to secure the release of its leader, there naturally could be no talk of safeguarding the interests of the workers in the shops. Wages began to decline frightfully, and because of this thousands of cloakmakers fell away from the union. But when all these troubles were over, we began to think seriously of strengthening the union. The union called strikes against several shops in order to revive the fighting spirit of the cloakmakers and cause them to return to the fold. But while these strikes were in progress, part of our members seceded and joined the Knights of Labor. The K. of L. local sought to obtain recognition from the manufacturers against whom we were striking. As a result, the strikes were only partly won. In the end we forced the K. of L. local out of business, yet were unable to bring back the great mass of cloakmakers into

our union. Barondess's courage and energy were wholly gone; his popularity, too, had greatly declined. There now commenced a fight to the finish to oust him from the leadership of the union.

The opposition brought over from Chicago a certain Abraham Bisno to take the place of Barondess. But as soon as Bisno found out what was going on, he withdrew.

The Anti-Barondessists now organized and met secretly in order to come to our meetings well organized and to cause disturbances in case they should be unable to control the meetings.

The union got wind of it and decided to prefer charges against eighteen persons who were the ringleaders of these secret meetings. A couple of days later these eighteen persons called a mass meeting, and having been encouraged by the Jewish members of the S. L. P., they formed an opposition union called "The International Cloakmakers' Union." Anything constructive was naturally beyond the power of these secessionists, but they did succeed in bringing about the destruction of our union.

This state of affairs lasted almost two years, during which all the gains made by the workers in the preceding ten years were lost. Meanwhile Barondess left the union.

After Barondess left New York, the internal dissensions diminished and there was serious talk of harmony and amalgamation. We reinstated all the oppositionists as members of our union.

The Birth of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union

At the end of the last century there were cloak unions in Baltimore, Chicago and Philadelphia and we in New York thought it would be a good thing to take common counsel with them on how to organize the trade. In December, 1899, we invited all existing cloak unions to a conference in New York. Representatives of New York, Brooklyn, Newark, N. J., Philadelphia, and Baltimore participated, and the conference decided to form an international organization which was to be known as the "International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union," and which was to be affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. We applied to the Federation for a charter, and in May, 1900, held our first convention in Philadelphia, where Herman Robinson, then an A. F. of L. organizer, installed us and delivered to us our charter.

The first two years of our existence we made progress, slow progress but sure. During this period the unions of Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, and San Francisco joined our International. Thus we continued to advance until 1904.

That year there broke out the open shop plague. As a result we began to decline, losing both prestige and members. In addition, there appeared on the scene the Industrial Workers of the World, with their cry of "one big union." We, too, were hit. Opposition unions were launched against us in all cities where we had locals. Naturally, this prevented us from doing any constructive work, all our energies being taken up with defending ourselves against the onslaughts of our assailants.

We thus continued until the I. W. W. craze passed out of the mind of our workers, and only then were we able to undertake the constructive organization work, work that led to the great strikes of the waistmakers and the cloakmakers of New York.

THE STRENGTH OF TRADE UNION GROUP INSURANCE

By MATTHEW WOLL,

President, The Union Labor Life Insurance Company

With the passing of each month the labor movement becomes more deeply interested in the protection of its membership against the vicissitudes of life.

More and more our movement as a whole registers its opposition to forms of so-called protection offered by employers as a means of seeking for themselves a good will and loyalty which they do not earn.

As trade unionists we are bound to give to employers only that good will and loyalty which are honestly and fairly earned.

Employers turned to the group insurance idea as a means of securing for themselves not only a volume of good will earned by their solicitude, but a loyalty not earned by them in any sense of the word. Their thought was and is to see to it that the employee was given a seeming benefit that would cease upon stoppage or change of employment.

Labor realizes more and more the shallowness of that proposition and more and more rejects it as unsound, unfair and deceptive. The worker who is "protected" by a group policy contracted for by the employer is NOT getting something for nothing. He is earning for the employer the money that pays for the insurance. If we are going to get something from our employers let it be in every case in the form of wages. We can do what we like with wages. We earn what we get and when it passes to our hands the money is definitely and finally ours. When the employer puts money into group insurance he does it in the hope of earning a loyalty that he feels he cannot get otherwise. He hopes men will be slower to quit their jobs, slower to stand up for their rights, more docile in every way. And usually he is right.

To a certain extent that was the thought back of organization by labor

of the Union Labor Life Insurance Company—labor's own insurance company. In addition, labor saw that the time had come to put an end to benefit systems. There is not a benefit system in existence among trade unions that is not unsound; there is not one that can be assured that its assessments will not have to be changed; but one, in reality, that can possibly be sure of going on to the end of the lives of those who now pay to its maintenance. All experience proves that. Experience has shown the weakness of benefit systems and the foolishness of employer group insurance.

But experience has shown the soundness of life insurance. Life insurance rests upon a scientific foundation. There is a fixed and scientifically developed relation between money paid in and benefits paid out. The resources of the whole company stand back of every individual policy and the state stands constantly on guard with rigid rules and restrictions. In this particular the state protects the people adequately and expertly.

Ten years ago trade unions were not thinking about group insurance. They were worrying along—and worrying a great deal—with their benefit systems, wondering, many of them, whether the assessments would have to be increased next year or whether they could wait two years, but knowing, as many know today, that increases must come.

Many unions still have benefit systems, but every one of them knows that the day of the benefit system has gone, just as the day of horses and buggies has gone. Trade union group insurance has come to take its place and labor has organized a magnificent institution of its own—the Union Labor Life Insurance Company—to furnish this modern and scientific protection.

With the New York Cloak and Dress Joint Board

by HARRY WANDER
Secretary-Treasurer

A regular meeting of the Joint Board, Cloak, Skirt, Dress & Reefers Makers Union, Locals 2, 3, 9, 10, 17, 22, 23, 25, 48, 64, 82 and 89, I. L. G. W. U. was held Wednesday, November 20, 1929, 8 P. M., at the International Auditorium, 3 West 16th Street. Chairman, Joe Rabinow.

The Joint Board minutes of November 17 are read and approved.

The Board of Directors submits the following report:

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held Monday, November 18th, 1929, 8 P. M., at the office of the I. L. G. W. U., 3 West 16th Street. Chairman, Louis Reiff.

Secretary's Report

Brother Wander reports that he made arrangements with the International Auditor to make an audit of the receipts and disbursements of the Joint Board for the period of the General Strike up to the present date. The Auditor is busy at present with the International Convention report, but he will start work on the books within a few days. As soon as the report is ready, it will be submitted to the Board.

He reports further that demands have been made upon him to meet some urgent obligations amounting to \$25,000, which are as follows:

Ten thousand dollars for interest and taxes on the building.

Eight thousand dollars to redeem the shares of the International Union Bank, belonging to different out of town locals, which were put up as collateral by the Joint Board.

Ten thousand dollars as payment on the loan from the International Union Bank. An agreement was reached some time ago to pay \$2,000 every month toward this loan but no payment was made for the last five months.

Brother Wander explains that he considers the first two items as obligations of the Joint Board. As far as the payments of \$2,000 monthly to the International Union Bank are concerned, he claims that he knows nothing about it, and if the Joint Board were taxed with this amount monthly from its regular income, it would be impossible to meet these payments. He therefore suggests that the Board authorize payment of the first two items and that some definite arrangement be made regarding the payments of \$2,000 monthly.

Brother Dubinsky states that when the re-organization took place in December, 1926, the Joint Board assumed obligations of \$400,000 to the International Union Bank and \$200,000 to the Amalgamated Bank, which amounts were borrowed from these two banks by the Communist administration, during the 1926 General Strike. Subsequent to that the Joint Board sold its International Union Bank stock and used the proceeds towards liquidation a substantial part of these two loans. The balance of these loans had to be paid according to the following arrangement: \$1,000 per month to the Amalgamated Bank and \$2,000 per month to the International Union Bank. Since the Joint Board had no money the Locals agreed to pay the Amalgamated loan on a pro rata basis, and the Joint Board was to take care of the International Union Bank loan. For about six months all locals except Local No. 35 paid the Amalgamated loan, then they stopped paying altogether. The Inter-

national Union Bank loan was not paid at all.

When Schlesinger came into the Union the banks began pressing for their money. He then arranged with them that the International would pay regularly every month the amounts agreed upon with both banks. Up to the strike the International made these payments, but no payment has been made since the strike, and the banks, naturally, insist upon collecting the amounts due to them. There is also another obligation of \$100,000 which the Communists borrowed from the Garland Fund during the 1926 General Strike. This loan is also due for payment and must be met. It is therefore up to the Joint Board to make arrangements about meeting all these obligations.

A lengthy discussion follows the explanation made by Brothers Wander and Dubinsky, and after due deliberation it is decided that a meeting of the Local Managers, together with President Schlesinger, Acting-President Dubinsky and General Secretary-Treasurer Baroff, be called to take up this matter and reach an understanding about meeting all of the above obligations. As to the question of the \$10,000 item which is due for interest and taxes on the building, the Secretary is authorized to pay same.

Managers' Reports

Brother Hochman, of the Dress Department, reports that the Organization campaign which was conducted by the Dress Department throughout the season has been concluded, due to the fact that the work has completely slowed down, and there is no activity in the industry. Accordingly the Organization committee has been dismissed and Brother Gusman will confine himself to preparing the work in connection with the contemplated General Strike.

As a result of the Organization campaign 165 shops were organized.

Total number of workers organized during this campaign, 2,150. Out of this number 1,796 are employed in the Association shops and 1,354 in the Independent Shops.

The total number of Union shops controlled at present is 421.

The total number of workers employed therein is 9,573.

Brother Hochman states further that the credit for the successful accomplishments during the Organization campaign is due primarily to the able management of Brother Gusman, under whose direction the organization work has been conducted, together with the valuable assistance given to him by Brother Louis Reiff and Sisters Sadie Reiff and Margaret Di Maggio.

At present the dress department is busy with the preparatory work for the coming general strike. All necessary arrangements are being made to handle our propaganda work and every means taken to perfect the strike machinery, so that we may be fully prepared for the great task.

Brother Hochman reports further that last Wednesday, the first conference was held with the Affiliated Dress Manufacturers' Association, at which our side was represented by Brothers Schlesinger, Dubinsky, St. Iler, Nagel, Wander, Spielman, Breslaw, Fruhling, Antouini and himself. All matters with regard to the renewal of the agreement have been gone over thoroughly, after which it was decided to leave the further negotiations to sub-committees, consist-

ing of an equal number of representatives of each side. As soon as the sub-committees will make any headway the official conferences will be resumed.

Last Thursday afternoon a conference was held with the Dress Jobbers and Thursday evening a similar conference was held with the Dress contractors. At both of these conferences the procedure and result were the same as at the one with the Affiliated Dress Manufacturers.

In all probability, there will be at least one more official conference held with each Association, before we will leave for the Convention.

Upon motion Brother Hochman's report is approved.

Brother Moser, of the American & Independent Department, reports that up till now his department was busy with the collection of the one-day's pay tax, and so far succeeded in collecting the sum of \$95,000. Now the work slowed down considerable and there are very little prospects for further collections. Due to the general dullness in the industry all other activities have likewise been reduced. The office is busy, however, with payroll cases, most of which are of a very aggravating character. The office also instituted a general shop control, in order to secure all necessary data for the coming season and arrange our activities accordingly.

He reports further that the strike against Freed Bros. has been declared, in accordance with the decision of the Board of Directors, and was placed in charge of Brother Aronsky. The strikers have made a splendid showing so far, and according to all indications this strike will be of short duration.

Upon motion Brother Moser's report is approved.

Brother Carotenuto, Manager of the Brooklyn Office, reports that the work in his district has slowed down, and he is conducting a general shop control, in an effort to bring all the members of his district into proper Union standing. He is experiencing, however, some difficulty in connection with renewals of Union books. In accordance with instruction given by the Finance Department no yellow book is to be issued to any member unless the \$10 strike tax is paid up in full. Accordingly he refused to issue such books to members who did not pay up the full amount of the tax. He learned, however, that some local offices renewed books, which he refused to renew. He therefore wants the Board to advise him how to proceed with this matter.

After due deliberation Brother Carotenuto's report is approved and it was decided that the Local offices be notified not to issue any yellow books without the full payment of the \$10 tax.

Brother Chancer, Manager of the Brownsville Office, reports that he has just returned to his office, having recovered sufficiently from his illness, and he is now preparing a report covering the activities of both, his office as well as the Picket Committee up to the time when same was merged with the Organization Department. He will submit said report at the next meeting.

Brother Nagler reports that the Organization committee of both, the Cloak and the Dress Divisions have been temporarily discontinued, due to the fact that there is hardly any activity in the industry. In the Cloak Division only Brothers Metz and Rosenberg have been retained to assist in the general shop control and investigation of non-union shops which is now being conducted, while Brother Mucclgrossio has been assigned to Brother Moser's department.

In the Dress division Brother Gus-

man has been retained to assist in the preparatory work in connection with the coming general strike.

Speaking of the work accomplished during the dress organization campaign, Brother Nagler feels satisfied with the results, and he believes that it laid a good foundation for the coming general strike. He has already communicated with the Dress locals about organizing the general strike machinery, so as to be in readiness when the proper time comes.

He reports also that Brother Philip Oretzky, of Local No. 10, has been appointed by the local as special organizer to organize the non-union Dress Catters, which is a part of our strike preparatory work.

In conclusion Brother Nagler reports that there are prospects of renting suitable quarters for the Joint Board offices in the Garment Center district, and he believes that in about a few weeks we will be in a position to make arrangements about moving to new quarters.

He stated also that in view of the fact that he and Brother Wander will soon have to leave for the International Convention, he recommends that Brother Sorkin be designated to take charge of the Executive offices of the Joint Board during their absence.

After due deliberation Brother Nagler's report is approved.

The meeting is then adjourned.

Upon motion the Board of Directors' report is approved.

General Manager's Report

Brother Nagler reports about the conferences held with the three Dress Associations, last week, and he states that these conferences were of a preliminary nature. The needs and requirements of the industry have been gone over most thoroughly, and an understanding as to the procedure of the conferences has been reached. All future negotiations will be conducted by sub-committees, representing each contractual party. Our Conference Committee will be represented on these sub-committees by President Schlesinger, Acting-President Dubinsky and Brothers Nagler, Hochman, Breslaw & Spielman.

Our Conference Committee met this afternoon and went over all details concerning our demands. Next Tuesday all Executive Boards of the Dress Locals will have a meeting at which all matters pertaining to the renewal of our agreements, including our demands, will be discussed.

In the Cloak industry there is practically no activity at the present time, due to the fact that there is hardly any work in any of the shops. For this reason the Organization Committee has been temporarily discontinued. The Dress Organization Committee has likewise been discontinued in order to give the Dress Department a chance to proceed with its General Strike preparatory work.

Brother Nagler reports further that the case of the Gotham Girls Coat Co., has been adjusted and all workers, including the Shop Chairman returned to work. Brother Perlmutter did excellent work in connection with this case.

The strike against Freed Bros. is still in progress, and Brother Aronsky who is in charge of this strike, is doing splendid work in connection with it. The Merchants' Association, to whom Freed Brothers applied for membership, to which we objected, has brought the case before the impartial Chairman, who ordered a hearing which will take place within the next day or two.

In conclusion Brother Nagler recommends that no meeting be held by the Joint Board next Wednesday, due to the fact the Local No. 17 is having to banquet that night.

The meeting is then adjourned.