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Organized Labor's Attitude Toward Machinery

BY PAUL KLAPPER, PH.D.

PART VIII

CHAPTER V

Organized Labor's Policies Toward the Machines (Continued)

2. THE STRUGGLE TO INCORPORATE ALL MACHINE OPERATION IN THE UNIONS

After new machinery had been installed in a trade, the troublesome question arose—"What shall be done with the unskilled worker who comes with it, and with the machinists, electricians, and engineers who had no place in the industry before the change?" To keep them out means to maintain an army without the union's jurisdiction, too powerful to be neglected with safety. To take them all in at once may infuse too large an unsympathetic element, and besides, requires the counteraction of the hatred and prejudice which such changes bring. In 1902 at the convention of the Iron Moulders' Union, the president said in his opening address: "Laughed at some years ago, the machines have demonstrated their usefulness. . . . It is no longer the simplest kind of work that is made upon the moulding machines. . . . Becoming alarmed at our attention to the machine question, and misinterpreting our purpose to mean a limitation of output . . . the employers have determinedly opposed our proposition to employ moulders. The so-called 'unskilled' laborers have become highly specialized. . . . Our original attitude toward the machine was a shortsighted and mistaken one, and the resulting injury cannot be removed by a perpetuation of the early prejudice. After careful consideration with my colleagues, I am prepared to recommend to this convention that it make provision whereby competent machine operators will be accepted into membership of the Iron Moulders' Union."

The committee appointed, reported while the convention was still sitting: "As the result of the trend of events and of the policy, the organization has been pursuing, a class of specialist moulders has developed, to whom the mechanics of the trade have been inclined to deny the privilege of membership. Most of them are to-day outside of the pale of the organization. We feel

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that so long as they remain in their unorganized state, they will constitute an element of danger to the Iron Moulders' Union, and be a constant menace to the wages and conditions of the more skilled followers of the craft. Taking that view of it we are constrained to advise that the union broaden its conception of eligibility to membership, and extend its sphere of influence until it will as nearly as possible, embrace all competent moulders in every branch and subdivision of the trade."

The resolution then takes up the question of classes of specialists; thus, "Shall special cards be issued to 'Bench Workers,' 'Moulders,' 'Machine Operators,' etc.? It points out the injustice of such a scheme as well as the fact that it is fraught with danger. It holds it to be a radical error to organize special groups with interests and concerns other than those of the general union. Such an action would make heterogeneous, a body that must find its strength and power in the homogeneity of organization and interests. Hence the resolution continues: "We strongly advise that all caste feeling be eliminated from our policy; that we recognize the truth of the suggestion that in a few years, the Iron Moulders' Union of North America will not be enabled to yield adequate protection to its members, unless it includes among its members all who work at moulding, be it upon the simplest or the most complicated work."

To carry out this policy, the core makers, artisans closely allied to the iron moulders, were at once taken into the union, after being kept out for seven years. Then the constitution was amended so that this recommendation became a permanent guide in the union's policy. The new addition adopted in July, 1902, reads: "Resolved, that it be accepted as the future policy of the Iron Moulders' Union of North America, that we shall seek to establish our jurisdiction over the *moulding machine operators*, and all those who work at moulding in the numerous subdivisions into which the specialization of our trade has divided it." And, further, "that it be an instruction to the incoming officers to organize all competent machine operators, radiator moulders, etc. . . . granting them a special charter or affiliating them with locals already in existence." Thus the iron moulders did what they could to increase their jurisdiction and maintain the control of the labor market of their craft.

The glass workers tried hard to keep out foreign-skilled labor

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before the machines came. Thus the Glass Bottle Blowers' Association provided that no foreigner can be admitted during the blast of a year, i. e., during months of September to following June or July, except by special consent from the president. Any member who aided a foreign blower in coming, was to pay a fine of one hundred dollars under penalty of expulsion. The initiation fee for the foreigners was to be one hundred dollars. But as this led to scabbing and to filling non-union shops, it was reduced to the fee for natives, i. e., three or five dollars. The Flint Glass Workers' Union made the same conditions, but found that it had to reduce its initiation fee to fifty dollars. *The National Glass Budget* (June 6, 1906) complains that before the plate glass blowing machines were introduced, "foreign blowers came to this country, and planked down five hundred dollars in initiation fees." But when machinery came to stay, when the high degree of skill and special dexterity were undermined, the Glass Workers' Union found that they could not risk the presence of so large an army of workers outside the fold. They therefore reduced the initiation fee, and inaugurated a "welcome to our midst" policy which they hope will give them the jurisdiction of the largest number of workers in the trade.

That the printers should covet the most far-reaching jurisdiction and control is only natural in the light of their policies that we have studied. They met the problem first when the number of women who took to typesetting grew to such numbers, that they became a serious menace to the men in the same locality. With the machines casting their shadow before them, the union began to fear the women more. In 1887 (35th Convention, p. 107) the "Committee on Female Labor" brought in a report that was incorporated into the Constitution. It declared, among other things that, since competition of a serious nature was threatened by the women who were unorganized and underpriced, all subordinate unions should organize special female locals and guarantee to them an equal wage, even at the risk of strikes with employers. "The Typographical Union of New England has spent perhaps five thousand dollars in endeavoring to secure union wages for organized women, but employers immediately threatened to discharge all women who organize." (United States, Ind. Com., Vol. VII, p. 176.) To demand a specially low rate for women would have led to their employment

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in preference to the men. But with wages equal, an employer would rather have a man, since he could usually stand the strain better and needed nobody to help him lift heavy cases of type and composition. Expediency rather than gallantry led to the adoption of the principles of "equal pay" among the printers.

The second problem of this nature presented itself to the printers for final solution in 1900. For a long time it was a great question as to the proper disposition of those machinists who are employed in the printing shops to look after the linotypes, keep them in repair, and clean the finer machines so that the operator will always have a machine in the best working order. They had to be union members; hence, the printers' union decided that the best thing it could do at the beginning was to demand that all machine tenders be members of a union. Some of these joined locals of the International Typographical Union, and others the Machinists' Union. In the cross relations difficulties without end arose. If the Machinists' Union declared a strike, should those working in printing offices leave the machines? If they did, other machinists who were members of the Typographical Union, and who were not affected by the order, applied for the vacated positions and could not be refused. Thus came the anomalous condition of a union man "scabbing" on another union man.

At the 46th Convention in 1900 (p. 65, Sec. 136) it was therefore decided after a long and bitter debate to transfer all machinists employed on linotypes to the Typographical Union. The printers, needless to say, rejoiced at this opportunity of obtaining a more inclusive control of those employed in the printing trade, but the Machinists' Union was up in arms until the American Federation of Labor decided that the principle of organization by trades had to give way before that of organization by industries. (See *Brewers' Union vs. Engineers' Union*.) The printers were, therefore, upheld in passing the following addenda to their constitution: "All machine tenders shall be members of the International Typographical Union, and local unions shall provide and maintain a scale covering such positions."

By the methods and the means that we have seen, organized labor tried to limit the output directly or indirectly and keep ever increasing its jurisdiction, so that those for whose welfare it was existing were being saved, to a slight extent, the hardships that

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NUMBER OF STRIKES DUE TO SPECIFIC GROUPS OF CAUSES—BY TRADES, 1887-1894

Causes	Building Trades		Stone Quarry and Cutting		Glass Trades		Printing Trades		Tobacco and Cigars		Coal Mining and Manufacturing		Clothing Trades		Cotton-Wool Weaving		Boots and Shoes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Increased wages or union scale.....	9,272	37	714	31	67	27	395	46	1,458	57	3,234	52	1,598	44	183	39	211	32
Against decrease of wages.....	980	4	66	2	11	4	35	5	280	11	1,517	24	445	12	111	23	162	24
In re hours of labor.....	6,786	27	705	31	52	21	133	20	3	.1	145	2	458	12	19	4	1	.15
In re time and method of payment.....	586	2	217	9	20	8	26	3	9	.4	496	8	177	5	41	8	27	4
Recognition of the union.....	2,163	8	3	.1	2	.8	8	1	6	.2	40	.7	180	5	1	.2	30	4
Sympathy strikes.....	1,778	7	119	5	1	.4	9	1	606	23	441	7	68	1	...	...	28	4
Against non-union men.....	1,909	7	325	14	19	8	57	8	60	2	87	1	176	5	20	4	71	10
Reinstatement of men—foremen.....	86	.3	8	.4	9	3	28	4	17	.7	100	1	82	2	31	6	40	6
In re apprenticeship.....	265	1	37	1	30	12	13	2	20	.8	...	...	2	.1	...	...	3	.5
Against introduction of machinery.....	11	.1	...	...	...	...	1	.02	20	.8	2	.03	26	.2	2	.2	25	4
Miscellaneous.....	778	3	64	2	32	13	44	6	67	2	48	.8	389	10	59	12	59	9
Total.....	24,614	100	2,258	100	243	100	659	100	2,543	100	6,110	100	3,581	100	468	100	657	100

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accompany the introduction of labor-saving machinery on a large scale, and its own corporate life was made less precarious. How few were the struggles against these machines, and how numerous were the strikes against the problem of apprenticeship, shorter hours, time scale, and the others that we studied in this chapter, can best be seen from the affixed table. It is compiled from the figures gathered by the labor bureaus of the United States and the separate states affected, and also by the United States Industrial Commission in 1900-1901, for the years 1887-1894, the crucial period of change from hand to machine in the industries that we made focal in this study.

The table points clearly and definitely to the answer to the questions which many students of labor problems ask, "To what extent has organized labors' opposition to machinery been a factor in industrial struggles?"

CHAPTER VI

General Conclusion. Estimate of Labor's Position

We have thus far noted that a further introduction of machinery generally strikes at the root of organized labor, weakening its much-coveted monopoly. Our examination of the policies adopted by representative labor bodies leads us to conclusions which group themselves under two heads.

At the beginning we invariably find a hatred, more or less intense, a hostility, more or less bitter, manifested by the artisans throughout the transition period, when new labor and skill-saving machinery is being installed in a craft. The worker finds that not only is he about to suffer the temporary loss of his position, but also that his means of livelihood, his skill and dexterity, acquired by years of tedious and patient toil, are permanently threatened.

In this early introductory stage the labor unions have not as yet had time to survey the new conditions, to determine the enormity or the gravity of the change, nor to feel the pulse of the discontented journeyman. The policy and sentiment of the leaders have not yet been crystallized into a definite program. All the stories of rack and ruin, of conflagration and revolt that history tells us in connection with the Industrial Revolution are true, but these violences were committed by individuals unor-

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ganized and without a representative leader. If these early craftsmen had been bound in some kind of union, we can safely say that the action which would have been decided upon in convention, after argument and deliberation, wrong economically and socially as it might have been, would not have been characterized by the violence which was visited upon so many industrial towns. But the law in England saw fit to forbid labor from organizing; hence it must be held responsible for a great part of the fury and riot of the day.

Whatever animosity is shown in this early period of mechanical innovations is individual, and not the result of a general policy formulated by the union. The average union man is constantly complaining that he cannot understand our present adjustment. He quotes figures which show that the machinery in England is doing the work of 500,000,000 men; in Massachusetts where 500,000 are employed, the work of 50,000,000 men; that one man and two helpers can spin as much as 100 spinners of a century ago; that one weaver can produce what 54 did then; that 150 workers in a textile factory do the work of 97,000 workers of a century ago, and that one iron and steel laborer turns out 1,300 times as much as any one of his predecessors. His question is, "Why, despite these figures, do we find poverty and progress developing simultaneously?" This paradox he constantly quotes. He urges that work should be done by machinery, that the machine should supplant men until the worker becomes the director and the machine the directed. To him the machine should come close to life, and "insensibly teach truth, precision and adjustment to the universal laws of human needs, respect for the wise American idea that labor saved is labor released for higher and nobler toil." But instead of this, he complains the average machine tender is brutalized and stultified by the machine, he is enslaved for a longer period than heretofore, his mind becomes stupefied, his nervous system wrecked at an earlier age because of the high speed at which the new work must be carried on. "Why this difference between what is and what ought to be?" is his query. Since he receives no answer which satisfies and convinces him, he allows his bitter feelings to work themselves out in action.

But within a short time after the labor organization has scanned the situation, has realized the direction and the trend

of the change a general plan is adopted which is conciliatory in its attitude toward the introduction of new mechanical appliances, and encourages their adoption. Webb (*Industrial Democracy*, V. II, p. 393) publishes the results of a royal commission's long and tedious investigation among labor unions on machinery and kindred topics. The report finds not a single case where an English labor union fought the introduction of machinery. We know of a few cases where they did, but the fact that the commission either saw fit to neglect these, or that it did not find any, reflects the infrequency of the practise among organizations of labor. "The Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners, instead of adopting a policy which obstructs the introduction of new machinery actually penalizes the employers who fail to introduce it." (Webb—*Ind. Dem.*, V. I, p. 143.) While this case is exceptional and extreme, though not the only one of its kind, it nevertheless serves to illustrate the conciliatory attitude which labor unions have acquired. The president of the Linotype Company of England, in an address to the stockholders (1893; also in Webb—*Ind. Dem.*, V. II, p. 407), said: "Nearly all the offices which have taken the linotype are union offices—in some cases working by day, in others by piece. Surely that is sufficient proof that the labor difficulty is not a serious one. The union men have, in my opinion, acted very fairly toward us." Considering the year 1893, when the introductory period was not yet over, this citation, coming from one whose position would lead him to be rather unfriendly to labor and to blame it for the shortcomings of his new device, becomes very significant.

We have seen enough of union policies and actions to safeguard us against imagining that organized labor made loud and continued open demands for the introduction of new machinery. Despite these citations of the friendly attitude, industrial quarrels are constantly going on during the periods when new and improved machinery is being installed in a trade. All these strifes, however, are directed not against the machines themselves but against the methods of their introduction. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, in their study, "New Processes and Old," speak of this as the "Conditions of Introduction." Labor maintains that production to-day is a social process; machinery, one of its greatest agents, is a God-given gift, not to the chosen few, but to all mankind. Labor argues that it has as much right as

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the capitalist to the machine for the leverage of the crane, Nature's power in the waterfall, in steam or in electricity, the laws of planes and pulleys—all these operate equally for all. The introduction of machinery, though a decided blessing to the entire community, often brings untold misery to the workers of a craft. It means longer hours, less pay, greater intensity of application, nerve-racking strain, and mechanical processes whose monotony and absolute regularity deaden the sensibilities and result in stunted physical and mental growth. Mr. Black, editor of the *Moulders' Journal* (May, 1897), voices the sentiments of the laborer when he writes, "In a properly constituted society, these innovations would be hailed with pleasure, for decreasing the arduous toil in supplying the necessities. But under present conditions the worker has learned only too well that progress in this direction means further degradation and poverty for him. . . . Thus it is that we often find mechanics viewing with disfavor every change that enables them to increase the effectiveness of their labor, and often throwing obstacles in the way of its success." Mr. Martin Fox, his colleague, adds, "Shall the genius of man conjure up monsters and constitute himself their slave? Or, shall the power of reason and invention be adapted to their true purposes and mark in their progress brighter days, happier lives and a more beautiful and perfect humanity?"

The union men therefore feel that they have a right to some of the blessings of invention. They demand a voice in shaping the policy and determining the condition under which new machinery is to be introduced, so that the inevitable hardships which result to themselves and their families will be minimized. They protest against the employers' stand which denies them a consideration in the industrial life and progress, against the position which declares, "The workmen must not be expected to welcome the machines which are to dispense with their work and wages any more than the victims of the guillotine were expected to admire the monstrosity which was erected to cut their heads off. The naive assumption that the machine is the workmen's friend is a bit of bourgeois hypocrisy which fools no one to-day. The machines are not invented or introduced for the benefit of the workman." (*National Glass Budget*, V. 19, 1903—*Employers' Official Organ*.) The union artisan, with his narrow economic

ken refuses to accept this second "God in his infinite wisdom" policy, and believes that he has a right to be consulted. He seconds John Graham Brooks' Attitude, "If it (machinery) is introduced under conditions in which the laboring men have no voice in determining, the laborers cannot secure their share of advantages and their organizations are weakened and destroyed." ("How to Secure Machinery's Advantages?")

From the social point of view, organized labor is justified in its demand for a voice in matters affecting the method of introducing machinery. The machine is a gift to society, intrusted temporarily to the guardianship of a few fortunate members of the community. In utilizing their trust, they must be given the greatest personal freedom consistent with the welfare of the rest of mankind. At no time shall they be permitted to construe industrial liberty to mean industrial license. There can be no just reason to explain why the workers of a craft should be martyred for the progress of industries.

It is often urged that machinery really causes no such upheaval as we have seen, since its success necessitates either establishing new industries or augmenting old ones. Thus, if the linotype is successful, additional mechanics are wanted in the machine shops, more iron and steel must be manufactured, more coal and iron must be mined, a greater number of cars and engines must be constructed for transportation, more men are needed on the railroads, *ad libitum*. All this is true, provided we add "in the long run," "on condition that no improvements are occurring in the other industries," and "if no material increase in population takes place."

Labor is more mobile to-day than it ever was, but it is not so developed that a printer can go into railroading or machine-making or mining at a moment's notice. A man who has spent years or a generation in one industry is loath to leave it and learn a new one which necessitates new habits of actions, new muscular and nervous adjustment, and acquisition of a new kind of skill and deftness. All these dependent industries that are augmented are not in his vicinity; they may be two thousand miles away. It takes considerable time, trouble and money to move one's family to the other end of the continent. But we must remember that our population is dynamic, ever increasing, hence there are no vacancies awaiting our displaced friends'

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arrival. Then, also, each of these industries is not in a static state, each is being improved, and in all probability each has its quota of idlers. There is, no doubt, that according to the impersonal view of theoretical economists, an adjustment will occur in the long run, but mankind's needs are pressing and immediate and the theorizer's prophecy of future comfort affords little relief in the present.

In addition to the insecurity of employment and the economic and social hardships which the machinery brings, the worker bases his claim to the right to be consulted in its introduction, on the increased danger to life and health. We are too familiar with the accidents in the modern factory, with the prevalence of lung trouble, nervous diseases of one kind or another, and the lead colic of the printer. In the five years, 1897-1903, there were 2,994 deaths among the members of the Typographical Union. 1,323, or 45%, of these were due to respiratory trouble; 38% of these were young men whose ages ranged between twenty-one and thirty-two. In 1903, 27% of all the deaths in the union were due to tuberculosis, not counting those who suffered from lung trouble but whose immediate cause of death was pneumonia. The death rate among the printers is higher than among the miners, despite the large lists of mortalities due to cave-ins, explosions and similar accidental causes.

Mr. Miles Humphrey, ex-president of the Amalgamated Iron and Steel Association, said: "Before the machinery period began the work required more muscle and less nervous energy. It demanded more strength and less vitality. There was more tugging and straining but less danger. When a man was killed fifty years ago the mill was shut down until he was buried." But how different are the steel foundries of Pittsburg to-day with their "slaughter houses," the rod-mills, where red hot rods leap and twist about like snakes, often whirling themselves around the body of a workman and crushing the life out of him instantly or spearing him, if he is to be dispatched with greater pain.

It is amazing to see how calmly the workers take these fatal accidents. The frequency of occurrence has made them insensible to the human emotions and sympathies which death provokes. When a man is hurt in the Pittsburg mills he is at once carted to the private hospital maintained by the steel cor-

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porations. Only his most intimate friends and relatives stop to inquire about him; the others go about their business, for it is a daily occurrence. They envy him for "the easy money he is making in settling with the company." Mr. Casson (Munsey, 5/07), speaking of accidents among the Slavs and Huns in the steel foundries of the Lake Regions, says: " 'Throw him on a heap; dead man no good,' these workers will say when one of their number is killed. . . . In the steel mills heavy masses fall upon the workers, crush life and limb, splashes of molten steel fly from caldrons, strike or miss, cables break, unforeseen defects in cranes and derricks cause them to fall; if a worker succeeds in these hairbreadth escapes he generally pulls his hat over his eyes, swears, and jumps back to his place. Such incidents are all in the day's work." Mr. Carnegie himself often quotes the words of Hudibras:

"Oh me! what perils do environ
The man who meddles with cold iron."

We often explain and justify profit on the ground of risks; some economists even go so far as to erroneously explain the entrepreneurs' returns on the ground of risks, but few, if any, have ever justified organized labor's demand for an increased wage after the introduction of machinery on the ground of increased risks.

Mr. Edward M. Bemis (*Ethical Side of Trade Unionism—Boot and Shoe Journal*, 10/1900) argues that a trust seeks to end competition among minor dealers and to maintain a uniform profitable selling price by obtaining a monopoly of the commodity. In the same sense, a labor union is a trust; it seeks to prevent competition among the workers and to establish as high a price (wages) for its commodity (labor) as possible. If to this conception we add that the second ethical principle of trade union is a "compulsory maintenance of a standard of life," then we can readily understand why labor feels that it is socially just in demanding a voice in the conditions which govern the introduction of labor saving innovations.

It has also been charged that in demanding changes and various modifications in the methods of introducing new machinery, the labor unions have engaged in dilatory tactics which have

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been bad for the industry. While we cannot justify this interference, which delayed the highest development of all the possibilities of the machines, these practises were not entirely devoid of economic benefits. Their methods of procrastination and their attempts to force their policy of partial control of the machines and representation in determining the method of introduction, often acted as wholesome deterrents to overstimulation and overproduction in a specific industry. The invention of a machine, which cheapens the process, increases the output and tends to free the employer from the workers and their organization, always stimulates the manufacture of the commodity in question. An increased demand is often estimated far beyond rational limits and large sums of capital are tied up in this new phase of the industry. When the product is put on the market it is found that the supply is far in excess of the actual demand; the errors of calculation and judgment become apparent, but it is too late. The amounts realized at the sale are far from the sum necessary to meet the obligations that were incurred, and innocent as well as guilty manufacturers go down in the crash which follows the resulting maladjustment. The slow, hesitating policy of organized labor has often acted as a beneficial interference in a period of industrial overstimulation when capital was high strung. True, machinery should make a change in an industry, but if the change is slow and the result of due reflection, it will be evolutionary and not revolutionary. For a number of years after the introduction of machinery in the boot and shoe industry the number of business failures among the manufacturers was far greater than it had ever been before or since. The Massachusetts Labor and Industry Report for 1870-1872, in tracing these business troubles among shoe manufacturers, ascribes most of them to the cause we suggested, viz.: unwarranted stimulation because of the introduction of machinery. The National Labor Tribune (6/27/1877), speaking of the same industry, says: "It is a strange result to see approximating perfection in machinery, lessening profits and pushing capitalists and labor to the wall, but that is the tendency of our time. If the owners of machinery could sell all they made, at the high prices expected, they would prosper indeed; but they cannot sell more than people can buy, and the latter cannot buy more than they earn by labor. Profits are thus on the down grade. . . .

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This is being done through machinery itself, the very agency relied upon by capital to enrich itself."

A second beneficial result which could follow the recognition of labor's demand in the machine question would be to make competition among producers less severe and more equitable. Any industry where organized labor has been practically annihilated by the introduction of machinery will serve as an example. We find in all of these a most ruinous competition which leaves the ranks of the manufacturers strewn with the victims of the last season, each factory owner uncertain when his time will come. In the boot and shoe industry we see: (a) raw material, leather, fixed by the leather trust; (b) machinery bought and sold at a price and royalty determined by the shoe-machine trust. Monopoly prices therefore fix a uniform cost of these articles for all. Physical maintenance, building rent, light and fuel are also fixed items on the manufacturers' books. But there is one variable factor in the manufacturer's cost if no labor union controls the craft, and that is labor. In the course of competition among manufacturers each finds it necessary to underbid his rival by reducing the labor cost. In such an industry, then, wages are cut first and last. This accounts for the increasingly low wage scales which are found in the boot and shoe and kindred industries. But if labor were organized and recognized, it, too, would be bought by all manufacturers at a uniform monopoly price. Competitive prices would then be set solely by the quality of the commodity. Labor would not pay the cost of the struggle among the factory owners, as the most skillful manufacturer who turned out the best shoe at a given price would succeed.

The president of the United Brotherhood of Leather Workers (*Leather Workers' Journal*, 7/1902) complains of the low wages in the craft. He then adds: "The only answer given to the workman's request for a higher salary is, 'wages cannot be increased as we are already selling goods below a legitimate price.' The constant cheapening of men has resulted from the ruinous competitive policy." Mr. McDermott (editor of the *Boot and Shoe Record*, employers' paper) said to the United States Industrial Commission (Vol. XIV, page 208) that there is a very active competition among manufacturers in his trade. There is no agreement among employers as to output, prices or

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wages. The competition is so sharp that it keeps them on the constant watch to see where retractions can be made. His direct examination by the commission shows the results of this trade condition:

Question.—"Does competition have anything to do with fixing the price in the shoe industry?"

Answer.—"Very decidedly."

Question.—"Has it been so sharp that it has become ruinous?"

Answer.—"It has, figuring very close; there have been a great many factories that have failed from time to time."

The union's position which demands a share of the advantages inherent in new labor-saving machinery by being accorded the right to help decide the condition and methods under which it shall be introduced, is therefore not without economic and social justification.

Our economic class struggle would be less intense and would not be characterized by its usual bitterness if we learned not only to consult labor in every significant industrial change, but also to look to labor unions for the best expression of the wishes and spirit of the labor population of the country. Except in a few of the very highest skilled crafts labor is no longer individual but social. Skill is always individual, but since the modern tendency is to replace it by automatic machinery, labor loses this personal characteristic. Judgment and thought are also reduced to a minimum by the use of the machines. These, too, are the personal elements in labor, which are being displaced. The more the processes of production are mechanized, the less is the personal factor of the labor recognized. Our whole modern industrial progress is moving in this direction. As labor loses its individual characteristic, its members begin to approximate a common level; collective bargaining takes the place of individual competition, for the law of evolution is the law of organization and interdependence. Capital to-day is social, but not to the same extent that labor has become so. The recent demands upon labor have been so great, its changes from an individual to a social organization so rapid, that Trade Unionism, as a social institution, shows phenomenal growth. So deeply entrenched is it in our industrial and social national life, so broad and inclusive, so far-reaching that "American Trade Unionism is the

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American problem." Prof. Hollanders adds ("Studies in American Trade Unionism"): "During the past few years the labor problem has risen steadily in importance in the United States, until at present it may not unfairly be described as the dominant economic concern of the American people. In part, this is a result of a temporary lull in other storm centers. The currency has been narrowly rescued from acute malignancy only to be cheerfully consigned to a chronic indisposition. The tariff has passed from an economic issue to a fiscal device. The control of industrial combinations and the regulation of railroad rates are still in the outer vestibule of loose thinking and careless talking."

Not only is the problem of Labor Unionism, the labor question, the "dominant economic concern of the American people," but it is fast becoming central in economic and social philosophy, for the present movement is not from, but towards the spirit of democracy. The political campaign of 1908 clearly showed this tendency. The Eight Hour Law, Injunctions, Strikes, Boycotts, Blacklists—these are questions highly important and exceedingly vexing to the legislative and the judiciary bodies to-day. Unless the labor question is met in a broad and liberal spirit and provided for with economic foresight, we may come to a stage in our development where our question of tariff, transportation, finance, concentration of industry and its control will become tangent to it, for it affects the greatest number of our people in a manner most vital and direct.

[THE END]