

The LADIES' GARMENT WORKER



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Our Free Forum.

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OUR INTERNATIONAL TODAY AND FOUR YEARS AGO

Editorials By BENJ. SCHLESINGER

Conventions serve a double purpose: they afford the organization an opportunity to pause and take a glance backward, in order to note the distance covered, and they provide for the leaders of the organization an occasion to consult with the elected representatives of every branch, large or small, of the organization, to discuss matters relating to the future and collectively map out plans for new departures, struggles and achievements.

The present administration of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union feels happy and proud of the work accomplished in the last four years under its management. Baneful was the condition of the organization in 1914. Our International then practically consisted of two local unions—the Cloakmakers and Waistmakers—both in New York, and even in these two unions the situation was uncertain. The Cloakmakers' Union had only just emerged from the "celebrated Hourwich affair," which had nearly compassed its destruction. The Waist and Dressmakers' Union equally found itself in an insecure position. The old-time estimate of the pessimists that immigrants do not make good union men, that they know how to strike vigorously, but lack the ability of maintaining a stable organization, befogged all minds. Everyone asked himself: Perhaps the estimate is correct after all? Perhaps our people are constituted by nature to be shifty and unsteadfast and all attempts to organize them are bound to fail?

In the cities out of New York we had some locals of cloakmakers and other workers, but they were of small significance. The employers hardly reckoned with them and the workers attached no importance to them.

It was a weak and broken International organization that the present administration took over four years ago and was fully conscious of the fact. The present administration knew the gigantic task confronting it, and therefore plunged into the work with all the energy of which it was capable. The one thing that sustained it was the faith and confidence in the possibility of surmounting the difficulties; the conviction that our trades can be organized and that the International can and will become one of the most powerful labor organizations in America.

Hard, bitter times followed—storms without and troubles within. First the protocol was abrogated and the strike danger faced us for months.

We left nothing untried to avoid a struggle. The most prominent men of the city of New York, even the entire capitalist press, were ranged on our side. The conferences at City Hall stirred the land and the award by the Council of Conciliation was the sensation of the day. But all this proved of little avail. The manufacturers felt convinced in their own minds that we were weak, and sought an opportunity to destroy us. Finally they forced the great general strike upon us.

And this general strike they forced upon us at a time when our energies were strained to the utmost to establish the innocence of our eight arrested brothers, whom the scab-herder Sulkess involved in a false murder charge.

Looking back at those occurrences and contemplating them with cool, dispassionate minds we are disposed to say that the strike was our good fortune. It has once for all established the fact, both for us and the employers that the union is here to stay; that it is no longer a passing thing but a permanent institution, resting on firm ground. That bitter struggle dispelled the doubt from the minds of our friends and the hopes in the bosom of our enemies.

In a certain sense the Local No. 1 episode may be regarded as a sequel to the general strike. Just as a fight was necessary to clear away all outside obstacles to the growth and development of our organization, so it was necessary to wage war on the obstacles within. Situations sometimes arise in the relations between men, that do not lend themselves to amicable adjustment, but must be settled by force. The Local No. 1 situation was of that character. It was incumbent on our International Union to demonstrate to the outside world and its own members that it is a responsible, progressive and disciplined army, and this was shown in its action toward the clique which had usurped the authority of the local and sought by its means to cause a split in the ranks of the International.

The trouble afforded the administration an opportunity to demonstrate its energy, ability and methods. If our large membership desires to gauge the competence and worth of the administration it need only take into account the manner in which this affair was handled.

* * *

At the same time the administration carried on organizing work throughout the country, in all branches of our industry. As already alluded to above the International Union four years ago consisted of a few locals in New York. In outside centers we had only charters. In the four years we have succeeded in establishing powerful organizations all over the land. Our control over the cloak trade is complete. There is only one exception—Cleveland. But even there much work has been done. The trenches are prepared, the army is ready and the morale of the workers is excellent. What is required is a strong offensive, and victory is certain. Had not the Local No. 1 clique obstructed our way we should now have counted Cleveland in the same category as Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, Cincin-

nati, St. Louis, Toronto, Montreal, Toledo and a number of other cities.

It should not be overlooked that the fates were against us. The first three years of our administration were fraught with difficulty and danger for our trades. Bitter slackness prevailed. There have been times when in the city of New York 25,000 to 30,000 of our members have gone idle for months. In slack time it is hard to maintain the existing organizations, let alone to organize new local unions.

Yet we have ventured and won. Among the delegates at this year's convention all branches of our industry in all parts of the country will have representatives, and we hope that they will share our sentiment of satisfaction and gladness at the work done during the years in which we have enjoyed their confidence.

THE REFERENDUM ON WEEK WORK IN THE CLOAK TRADE

At the coming convention the question of week work will be taken up. We hoped that the delegates would have an easy task. But the result is not as expected.

As previously announced, the New York Joint Board had submitted the question to a referendum vote of its members engaged on piece work. The result, already known, shows a majority of less than a thousand votes for week work. Were the majority a very large one the delegates would have no difficulty in coming to a decision. In view of the knowledge that large masses of workers are enthusiastically in favor of the change they could decide there and then to open negotiations with the manufacturers concerning the proposition and to draw up a scale of wages, etc.

Since, however, the majority for week work is comparatively small we must proceed with caution. We must weigh the matter well before taking action.

We thoroughly realize how hard it is to get along with the old system of settling prices. The evils of discrimination and sub-manufacturing grow out of the piece work system. We fully understand the gain that would result to the members individually and to the union collectively from the establishment of week work in the entire trade. We have extensively spoken and written on the subject.

Yet we hold that we must be cautious, for the change would be radical and fundamental. It is one of those reforms which calls for enthusiasm and the exercise of a strong will by the mass of the workers. If a large minority is lukewarm and not quite convinced that the change must be made, it is necessary to be very careful before taking action.

It is for the convention to decide. Perhaps we can find a way of safely carrying out this necessary reform, even under the present circumstances. But the delegates to the convention will be well advised to preserve an earnest attitude in regard to every proposed step, and consider it with due deliberation, notwithstanding the fact that a majority voted in favor of the proposition.

OUR INTERNATIONAL UNION BUYS LIBERTY BONDS FOR \$100,000

The General Executive Board feels that its decision to buy Liberty Bonds for the sum of \$100,000 expresses the wish and desire of the entire membership of the International Union.

The United States of America, of which we all are good and loyal citizens, is waging a life-and-death struggle with a militarist power that tramples upon and outrages every free country upon which it can manage to lay its blood-and-iron clasp.

From the first day that America entered the war President Wilson has made it clear that we have nothing against the German people and that we are ready to sheath the sword and negotiate for peace, as soon as the German people can manage to form a democratic government—a government which will reckon with the will of the people. Our war is against a clique of Prussian Junkers and militarists who hold the German people in political bondage and who are seeking to fasten a yoke around the necks of all the free countries surrounding Germany.

A large majority of our membership has felt the prongs of a Junker power. They have suffered untold agonies under such a power in old Russia. We know what the world can expect from a Wilhelm, who, in reality, is not a whit better than Nicholas, but rather more cunning and wily. We see the peril and therefore must do all in our power to foil it.

The General Executive Board feels that it has done a small part of its duty to help freedom's struggle everywhere and its duty to our country by the purchase of Liberty Bonds for \$100,000.

MAY DAY IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE WAR

By A. R.

May Day as an international labor day has been always celebrated by Socialistic workers in Europe and America in parades and demonstrations in the streets. But owing to the war the First of May has more or less lost its outward pomp. Today, in the fourth year of the war, when the world mourns its slaughtered children, its desolated cities and loss of billions of treasure, there would be no sense in celebrating the day in the old, noisy style.

But, the liberating thought for labor that the First of May stands for has not been weakened, but rather strengthened very much. Labor in the biggest, freest countries has received considerable recognition. Thus the first of May and its message for the workers has assumed a more practical aspect. Formerly the day was devoted to agitation mostly for an eight-hour day. Today the eight-hour day, where labor is organized, has become a reality almost everywhere. Formerly we were wont to demon-

trate our solidarity with the workers of the whole world. Today the solidarity of the freest and most civilized peoples is knit together in a titanic struggle for liberty, popular rights and the rights of nations. Today we all feel that the only stumbling block to our real national, political and economic emancipation is the dark power of Junkerism.

Nationally the workers of England and America are more strongly organized than years ago and their influence is more extensively and profoundly felt. We are in the midst of a period of real transition. The realization of the ideals which International Labor Day has always expressed has become much nearer to us than we hoped for only four years ago. It now depends merely on the issue of the war. If the free democratic countries will secure the final victory, we shall before long stand on the threshold of a new and juster social order. It is in this sense that we contemplate the First of May, 1918, and that our cloakmakers, waist-makers, whitegoods workers and other members, will celebrate the day.

THE KARL MARX CENTENARY

Socialists and Socialistic workers rightly view the celebration of the Karl Marx 100th anniversary as if he lived with us in the flesh. Marx's body died more than thirty years ago, but his spirit lives and acts within us today far more effectively than it did in the masses of the workers during his lifetime. What has rendered this great man immortal for the workers of the world?

In another column Herman Schlueter writes more fully on the life and creative work of the father and founder of scientific Socialism. The theories and ideas of this great teacher of the workers have since become common property. They float about in the minds of the toiling masses consciously and unconsciously. Perhaps we do not express them in such words as Marx has expressed them. But their meaning is felt in the souls of all oppressed wage slaves, who toil and moil and others enjoy the fruits of their labor.

As yet in 1848, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the "Communist Manifesto" framed this call to the labor masses: "Workers of all countries unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains and a world to gain." Ever since that year this call has been a magic word for the workers. Expressed at every gathering and displayed upon labor publications the slogan has stirred and inspired the people.

"Workers of all countries unite!" The slogan has lost nothing of its force and freshness. It still powerfully re-echoes in the hearts and minds. Those workers who have united and organized have much reason to celebrate on May 5 the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx. The fact that they now have better labor conditions, lighter burdens in the shops and factories and brighter prospects for the future they have much to be thankful for to the world-renowned teacher and thinker, Karl Marx.

Workers of all countries unite and break the chains of industrial bondage!

The 100th Anniversary of the Birth of Karl Marx

By HBRMAN SCHLUETER

A hundred years ago, on the fifth of May, 1818, at Trier, in the Rhineland, *Karl Marx* was born, a man to whom the working class of the world owes more than to any other human being. Despite the raging war and despite the thunder of battle, he will, therefore be remembered during these days in all countries and in all tongues, on this and on yonder side as a man who has devoted all his rich knowledge, all his great abilities towards the one aim: **THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKING CLASS!**

His rich knowledge! As Darwin has discovered the law of evolution of organic nature, so has Karl Marx discovered the law of evolution of human history. It was Marx who established the simple historical fact that all the various forms of human society depend upon how people eat, drink, live and clothe themselves and how they obtain the means of subsistence. Each step of economic evolution of a people or of a period, therefore, forms the basis "from which the political structure of the State, the conception of law, art and even the religious idea of the people in question have developed and out of which they must also be explained—not, as has heretofore been the case, but the contrary"—Engels.

Besides this great scientific discovery, by which human history was put upon its real basis and by which particularly the class-character of all previous society was put into the proper light, Marx has established the special law of evolution of the present capitalistic production and the bourgeois society created by it. He discovered that all social wealth is accumulated surplus value; surplus value, which the worker has created above his pay; value, which the capitalist pockets without giving the worker any compensation for it; value, accumulated for that purpose to exploit the worker with it and to let it still more.

The materialistic conception of history and the theory of surplus value—these are the two most important scientific discoveries of Karl Marx. Both of them still form the basis of the entire Socialistic theory of today and without it the labor movement of the world would not even now, have an insight into their real task and no perception of their actual aim.

And therein Karl Marx saw his life's task: he wanted to enlighten the workers about their historical mission; wanted to

show them the road to their final emancipation! He pursued his scientific researches not for the sake of science—and there he differed from the ordinary representative of science—but he wanted to put his knowledge at the service of the working class. "Science was for Marx a motive, a revolutionary force" and to have placed this revolutionary force at the disposal of the labor movement of the world—that is the great merit of this great thinker and fighter.

And from his early youth the great knowledge of this extraordinary man has been at the service of the labor movement of the world.

There hardly existed outside of England—a movement of the working class, when the eagle eye of Marx already perceived its historic importance. At that time already he gave to the workers the famous motto: "Proletarians of all Nations, unite!" which has since become the battle cry of the workers of the entire world. At that time he already began to devote his entire knowledge and his whole power to the realization of this sentence and to prepare the working masses for this revolutionary task. "Because Marx was above all a revolutionist. To co-operate, in this or any other manner, in the overthrow of capitalistic society and the political institutions created by it, to aid in the emancipation of the modern proletariat, to which he had first given the consciousness of its own condition and necessities, consciousness of the conditions for its emancipation—that was his true life vocation."—Engels.

And this vocation he followed when he created the International Workingmen's Association and gave it aim and substance. And he has filled this vocation with his numerous writings, with his work, with all his actions to the end of his life.

And, therefore, today, on his hundredth anniversary, he will be remembered in every hut, factory and workshop, from the icy fields of Siberia to the sunny coast of the Pacific. And, therefore, today all clear-sighted workers of all countries reach hands across the battle fields and gain consolation and hope for the future from the great words of Marx, which will become reality for all that and all that:

"WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!"

The British Labor Party

Its Methods and Practical way of Arriving at the New Social Order

By A. ROSEBURY .

Within recent months the British Labor Party has emerged to the surface as the most forceful section of the labor movement of the world. Ever since the outbreak of the war in 1914 there have been many Socialist and Labor declarations by celebrated leaders in Europe about the prospects of labor after the war. None of these declarations, however, has carried with it the power of inspiring the world of labor so strongly as the report and recommendations of the Sub-Committee of the British Labor Party submitted to its conference in London three months ago.

AIMING AT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER

The British Labor Party works by more or less positive, constructive methods. All sections of the labor movement in England are now knit together politically. In the prosecution of the war all parties, including the "Laborites" and Socialists, work with the government, but of their own free will, without any compulsion whatever, and they work together like practical business people who have a clear understanding. The British workers are patriots, but they admit aiming at the conquest of political and economic power which rightly belongs to them because they are the mainstay of the nation. This explains why they have made certain concessions asked by the government. But they have thereby improved their position and extended their influence.

It is interesting to know what it is that has recently made the British Labor Party so prominent before the world. Until lately the Labor Party was composed of 120 trade unions with a membership of 2,400,000.

240 trades councils and local labor parties.

Independent Labor Party, membership 35,000.

British Socialist Party, membership 10,000.

Fabian Society, membership 2,140.

Women's Labor League, membership 5,500.

Before the Labor Party was organized all these organizations were disunited and sometimes at loggerheads. In the Labor Party they are politically united. Formerly the larger organizations had put forward their own candidates in opposition to each other and most of them were defeated, but since the Labor Party has been in existence, all organized workers and radical elements have an opportunity to nominate the best candidates. Each organization is entitled to run a certain number of candidates, and at the elections they are all able to combine, beat the capitalist candidates and elect their

own men, especially in working class constituencies and industrial centers.

ITS DEFINITE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

The British Labor Party naturally shares the character of the British people. It is slow-going, cold-blooded, deliberate and determined. The trade unions, comprising the majority of the Party, have never relied too much on theories, however high-sounding they might be. "An ounce of practice is more than a pound of theory," has ever been the guiding idea of all practical men at the head of the British labor movement. Thus the Party in its first years did not show any signs of a revolutionary character, and this made the radicals at home impatient with its tactics, while the radicals abroad treated it with silent contempt. This was before the war.

But the war has revealed the light and shade of the labor movement in the principal countries of Europe. Revolutionists showed themselves to be conservatives beneath the surface, while they who had been thought conservatives emerged to the surface as real revolutionists.

The much criticized British Labor Party has quite recently demonstrated its revolutionary spirit. Its statement of aims is a quickening word and a source of inspiration to all progressive workers everywhere. Did this attitude come suddenly? No. The Labor Party had this revolutionary trait, but it did not care to put the cart before the horse. In consonance with the British character it waited for a favorable opportunity, and the fourth year of the war has provided this opportunity. Incidentally the fact is disclosed—a fact not generally known in American labor circles—that the British labor movement has a definite philosophy and a definite aim for the immediate future. This is something which as yet the American labor movement has not.

Here are a few characteristic passages from its social program:

We need to beware of patchwork. . . . What has to be reconstructed after the war is not this or that government department . . . but so far as Britain is concerned, society itself. . . . We of the Labor Party recognize, in the present world catastrophe if not the death, in Europe, of civilization itself, at any rate the culmination and collapse of a distinctive industrial civilization, which the workers will not seek to reconstruct. At such times of crisis it is easier to slip into ruin than to progress into higher forms of organization. . . .

If we in Britain are to escape from the decay of civilization itself . . . we must insure that what is presently to be built up is a new social order, based not on fighting

but on fraternity—on the competitive struggle for the means of bare life, but on a deliberately planned co-operation in production and distribution for the benefit of all who participate by hand or brain—not on the utmost possible inequality of riches, but on a systematic approach towards a healthy equality of material circumstances for every person born into the world; not on an enforced domination over subject nations, subject races, subject classes, or a subject sex, but, in industry as well as in government, on that equal freedom, that general consciousness of consent, and that widest possible participation in power, both economic and political, which is characteristic of democracy. We do not pretend that it is possible, even after the drastic clearing away that is now going on, to build society anew in a year or two of feverish "reconstruction." What the Labor Party intends to satisfy itself about is that each brick that it helps to lay shall go to erect the structure that it intends, and no other.

A PRACTICAL PROGRAM

Then follow a number of practical propositions applicable to local circumstances in England. The party demands:

1.—"The universal enforcement of a minimum." This is explained to mean the legislative regulation of labor and employment; securing employment for all; social insurance against unemployment.

2. Democratic Control of Industry. This is interpreted to mean that all, men and women shall be completely free in the exercise of political rights; that the land and industries shall speedily become nationalized, and such industries as remain in capitalist hands shall be subject to control.

3. National finance shall be revolutionized. This means that the war debt shall be covered by a system of "direct taxation of incomes above the necessary cost of family maintenance." It means that all who have larger incomes shall pay a graduated tax.

4. That the surplus of wealth shall be appropriated and applied to the common good, for the good and welfare of all. It shall go toward easing the burden of toil, giving more light, affording more spiritual enjoyment, education, enlightenment and general happiness.

PREPARING FOR THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

The British Labor Party has also undergone internal reorganization. Heretofore individual members could not belong to it, and it consisted of the leaders of affiliated organizations. Now it has assumed the character of an organization formed of branches or locals whose membership may include also brain workers who agree with its aims. Women workers will form separate branches, which will be represented on the executive committee. Some 6,000,000 women have recently been enfranchised. In

England there is no doubt that the new element of politically enfranchised women will help to make the Labor Party a power in the land.

Reports from London refer to a widespread belief, based on a statement by Arthur Henderson, secretary of the party, that at the next general election the Labor Party will contest 400 seats. It is well to remember that in 1906 the party ran fifty candidates of whom twenty-nine were elected. In 1910 there were two elections. At the first election the party ran seventy-eight candidates and 40 were elected. At the second election forty-two out of fifty-six candidates were successful. At the present time the party has thirty-eight members in the British Parliament.

So far 155 labor candidates have been already chosen for nomination by the various organizations. In this connection it is interesting to note how some of the unions intend to act in this regard. Thus it is reported that the Miners' Federation of Great Britain has decided to contest fifty-two seats; the Amalgamated Society of Engineers twelve seats; the National Union of Teachers, the Sailors' and Firemen's Union and the Boilermakers' Society six each, the Textile Workers five; the National Union of Railwaymen four and the Boot and Shoe Operatives three. As to local labor parties, most of them will contest a number of seats, while many smaller unions and party branches will support the labor candidates of their district.

The Independent Labor Party is preparing to run thirty-five candidates; the British Socialist Party thirteen and in the London district which sends sixty-two members of Parliament it is intended to run candidates in every Parliamentary constituency.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that in regard to International relations the Labor Party seeks to co-operate with the organized workers of all countries and work for a league of nations to maintain peace and liberty and settle international disputes by conciliation and arbitration.

PARIS DRESS WORKERS GET NEW WAGE SCALE

Paris.—The Dressmaking employers have accepted a new minimum wage scale for their employees:

For first hand ladies' tailors, 7.50 francs. second hands, 6.50 francs, with additional increases necessitated by the higher cost of living.

Furriers likewise demanded a minimum wage; equal wages for equal work for all workers; privilege of shop chairmen: the Saturday half-holiday applying to all workers; and minor improvements.

Apprentices and helpers are to get a substantial increase.

The movement has extended to umbrella and parasol workers.

Regarding Higher Per Capita

By AB. BAROFF

I am inclined to believe that some of our members, on reading the above heading, will feel dissatisfied and mutter to themselves:

"Again we are asked for a higher per capita. Why come to us so very often for higher payments? First organize strong unions and give us increased earnings and then demand of us a higher per capita."

And these members will think themselves smart and original. They do not seem to realize that their way of thinking of the union and its benefits and possibilities for the workers is wrong and illogical. They evidently fail to see that the per capita paid to the International determines the activity of our union and its success.

No Successful Organizing Without Ample Funds

Let us analyze the cry of "give us increased earnings and then demand of us higher per capita." Does it seem to these members that the work of organizing strong and powerful locals and winning for the workers higher wage standards is something that can be attained by the International officers saying their prayers?

How are unions organized? First of all we need intelligent, devoted and true leaders to undertake the task of spreading the idea of labor solidarity among the workers. They must arouse them to a sense of self-respect and keep urging them to strive for improved conditions of life. By constant agitation they must imbue the hearts of the workers with hope and faith in the power of unity. This cannot be done by mere contemplation. Energetic effort must be applied; frequent personal contact with the workers is necessary; educational literature has to be distributed. For all this money is required to crown the work with success.

And when this educational work has been attended with success and the workers have begun to perceive that they are entitled to a better livelihood,

and that to attain it they must be organized in a union, the question arises how to bring this about and with it—relief and improvements. The employers remain indifferent to the movement. Having for years exploited the workers they do not easily give up their profiteering tactics, and refuse to give up their unlimited domination over the workers without a struggle. This leads to the next step in the organizing campaign—forcing the employers to make concessions by asserting the power of the union. A general strike has to be called in the industry.

No Effective Strikes by Enthusiasm Alone

The success of the strike does not depend on the enthusiasm of the strikers alone. Very often the manufacturers are stubborn and refuse to give in to the union. They derive strength from the workers' helpless condition, knowing that their "hands" could not save money from the miserable wages they received to carry them through the strike, and they rely upon the starvation of the strikers to deaden their enthusiasm and bring their victims back to the factories. Therefore, in order that the employers should not triumph over the workers and that their diabolic idea of reducing them to submission by starvation should not be realized, the union must stand by them and provide the strikers with the means of life. Our brave fighters must not be allowed to reach the starvation point, and an ample supply of money is required to keep up the good fight and encourage the men and women to stand firm for easier conditions and better wages.

This money supply must come from the funds of the International. It is to carry on this noble work that the International Union was organized; and such funds are derived from the per capita paid by the general membership. The larger the receipts from this source and the richer the general treasury the surer the success with which

the International can accomplish its task.

In my article "Our Organizing Campaigns," in the March issue of the *Ladies' Garment Worker* I pointed out the importance and necessity of this organizing work of the International Union. That, together with what I am saying here, should show the opponents of a higher per capita the connection between successful organizing campaigns and the per capita dues paid to the International.

Need of Organizing More Urgent Than Ever

We shall probably be asked the question: Did not the thirteenth convention in Philadelphia raise the per capita to 4 cents, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents more than formerly? It was then computed by some delegates that the $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents increase would bring in tens of thousands of dollars and enable the International Union to proceed with its organizing campaigns more freely than ever. Why then this demand again for a higher per capita?

In answer to this I want to point out to our members that the centers which now call for organizing campaigns differ from the centers of past endeavors. We are now confronted by a different element which is harder to reach by the ordinary means of agitation. This element has no idea of the trade union movement. I am referring to the native American women workers in our industry, who have been brought up with antipathy to trade unionism, who believe that it is a movement for immigrants and that they are altogether superior to it. To organize this element much more energy, patience and financial resources are required. In spite of energetic campaigns in several such centers of industry we have not succeeded in rallying these workers to the banner of unionism.

Thus the delegates will have no difficulty to understand that if we want to organize completely our industry throughout the land we must tackle these new centers. If my opinion has any value I want to stress the point that the necessity of organizing the workers everywhere is more urgent

than ever because our industry is extending everywhere. Ladies' garment factories are now being found in almost all cities, and the workers in these factories are of the character referred to above. Everyone who has been active in the work of building our unions must come to the conclusion that our International Union must in the near future transfer its activity to the new centres, where employers find obedient slaves. There we must disseminate the ideas of unity and co-operation in order to insure the existence of our unions and the earnings of our members.

Those who are opposed to a higher per capita will see from the foregoing that although we conducted successful organizing campaigns, organized unions and improved conditions with 2½ cents per capita, our new field of organizing endeavor is harder to tackle even with our present 4 cents per capita. For with all our active campaigning we have not succeeded in building up unions and gaining additional members in those new fields.

Revenue of 1916 Larger Than That of 1917

Our members should also bear in mind that our International Union in the past availed itself of Article 7, Section 1 of our constitution, which reads as follows:

The General Executive Board shall have the power to declare a levy of ten cents per member per week on all affiliated unions for a continuous period not exceeding fifteen (15) weeks in any one year, to assist in the support of an affiliated organization engaged in a protracted strike or lockout. The locals shall collect the assessment from the members through assessment stamps issued by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Formerly the General Executive Board exercised its constitutional right of levying these assessments almost every year. Together with the assessments the revenues of the International amounted to more than 2½ cents per member. The following figures will show that for the year 1916 the revenue of the International Union, from a 2½ cents per capita including assess-

ments, exceeded the revenue of 1917 by \$9,018.64, notwithstanding the fact that in 1917 the per capita was 4 cents:

Income from Per Capita:

Dues for 1916.....\$114,270.
Assessments for 1916..... 36,046.80

Total Income for 1916...\$150,316.80

Income from Per Capita:

Dues for 1917.....\$141,298.16
Excess Income in 1916
over that of 1917..... 9,018.64

It is true that the Philadelphia convention did not deprive the General

Executive Board of the right to levy assessments. Knowing, however, the difficulties experienced by our locals in collecting the assessments from their members the G. E. B. has refrained from exercising this right. The result, as the figures show, speaks for itself.

The question deserves the attention of the delegates to the convention, and I rely on their intelligence and loyalty to act in regard to this problem as true trade unionists who feel the importance of making the organization strong and powerful and thus assure to its members easier conditions of labor.

Health Benefits and Health Insurance

Two Important Matters for Convention of the International Garment Workers

By GEORGE M. PRICE

There are two vital matters which it seems to me should come before the next convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in Boston. I refer to health benefits and health insurance.

In his article in the April Number of the *Ladies' Garment Worker*, President Benjamin Schlesinger has in a remarkably vivid way indicated the necessity of a new departure on the part of the I. L. G. W. U. in the endeavor to establish certain health benefits in the industry. He referred to death, tuberculosis and sickness benefits but indicated that perhaps the union is not as yet ready to introduce all these benefits but should begin with death benefit first.

I wish to emphasize the fact that the I. L. G. W. U. is perfectly prepared for the introduction of at least one of the health benefits, namely, that for tuberculosis. Three very large locals—35, 23, and 9—with a membership of over twenty thousand, have already introduced a tuberculosis benefit; two or three other locals are on the verge of joining this movement; the matter has been agitated in the press and among the members, and it seems to me that the membership is fully ripe to introduce a tuberculosis benefit, to be made general in all the locals by the action of the convention of the I. L. G. W. U.

It has been definitely established that

there are at present at least two per cent. of the workers, working in the shops, suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis. This would mean that of the one hundred thousand membership of the I. L. G. W. U. there are at least two thousand men and women who are suffering from this dread disease and who are allowed to work in the shops, surely infecting their fellow workers and spreading disease among them. There is no reason why this menace should not be removed, and it may easily be done by the introduction of a tuberculosis benefit in the entire union.

During the last few years it has been demonstrated that the contribution of \$1.00 per annum per member is sufficient to bear the cost of the tuberculosis benefit. This would mean only about two cents per week per member—surely a very small sum to be imposed upon themselves by the members for such a great cause. A contribution of one dollar would mean a sum of one hundred thousand dollars per year, for which great work could be done toward the elimination of tuberculosis from the industry, by establishing and supporting a tuberculosis sanatorium of our own and also keeping up our members in other sanatoria.

I believe the members of the I. L. G. W. U. are ready for such action and will hail with enthusiasm the establishment

of a tuberculosis benefit in the entire union.

* *

The second matter which I should like to bring to the attention of the next convention is the subject of the stand to be taken by the I. L. G. W. U. in regard to "social, or health insurance."

As is well known, the question of compulsory health or sickness insurance has been brought up in many states and already has been introduced by ten of the largest international labor unions. The New York State Federation of Labor has during 1917 and 1918 joined this great movement and introduced a bill in the legislature for this insurance. In ten other states such legislation has already been introduced and there is no doubt that health insurance is soon to become a law.

The I. L. G. W. U., one of the most progressive of all labor organizations in the country, should stand squarely for the laudable proposition of health insurance accepted by most of the enlightened labor organizations in the country and should join this great movement in distributing the cost of sickness, invalidity and unemployment on the whole industry and the whole population, instead of making them a burden on the workers themselves.

With the organization of medical benefits in the various localities of the I. L. G. W. U. and with the adoption of tuberculosis benefit for the whole International, and with the assistance of the Joint Board of Sanitary Control, which is practically the Health Department of the whole industry, in New York, it will be feasible to control the health benefits, after the health insurance becomes a law, by the unions themselves, thus making health insurance a matter of union and local control.

I trust these two important matters will receive due attention at the convention.

I expect to pass through this world but once; if, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.—Anon.

FAMILY EXPENSES DOUBLED SINCE 1900

The United States bureau of labor statistics reports that a wage of \$1,500 a year will only provide "the minimum standard of comfort."

In other words, this governmental agency declares that if a worker does not receive \$5 a day for 300 working days in the year he cannot support a family in the most restricted kind of comfort.

In 24 principal American cities the lowest annual wage should be \$1,650.

Washington, April 20.—The cost of maintaining a family in this country has doubled since 1900, according to the United States bureau of labor statistics. Figures, just made public, show that the average cost in 1900 was \$679. During 1917 the cost of the same commodities was \$1401. Food alone in 1917 cost only \$53 less than all items combined in 1900. \$327 represented the expenditure for food of the average working man's family in 1900. By 1911 this had risen to \$430 and in 1917 it cost \$716. Rent had advanced 59 per cent. Clothing doubled, rising from \$106 to \$210. Fuel and lighting show a similar advance rising from \$40 to \$82. Most of the advance in all these items occurred between 1914 and 1917. The 1917 figures, the bureau says, are already outdated because of subsequent advances. The minimum standard of comfort today requires a wage of approximately \$1500 per year. The average of 24 American cities is that the minimum amount necessary for a reasonable standard of health and comfort in those 24 principal American cities is \$1650, of which \$660 is spent for food. Investigation by the department of health in New York city fixed the figure for that city at \$1682.

The above figures do not include increases in the cost of such things as amusements, charity, insurance, taxes, books, newspapers, or expenses incident to sickness and death.

WOULD STABILIZE WAGES.

Washington, April 20.—The department of labor and the United States shipping board are attempting to work out a system whereby wages will be regulated to compensate for the increased cost of living.

This plan is accepted by some British manufacturers, especially in the textile industries. In Lancaster and other cities in England an agreement has been effected by employers and the workers whereby wages are made to fluctuate in accordance with figures on the cost of living prepared by the British Board of Trade. About 60,000 workers are included in these agreements which cover all classes of textile workers except mechanics and those engaged in the maintenance of the plants.

American Labor Movement in Present Crisis

By A. R.

PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF STRIKES

Early last month representative officers of five international unions appointed on the War Labor Conference Board published their recommendations for maintaining industrial peace during war time. In these recommendations the United States Government is asked to adopt a policy officially recognizing organized labor.

The creation of a national war labor board is proposed with functions and powers of bringing about settlement of labor disputes by mediation and conciliation through appropriate machinery of committees or boards sitting in various parts of the country and having a well-defined authority.

It is provided that the board in its work of mediation and conciliation shall be governed by the following principles:

Right to Organize

The right of workers to organize in trade unions and to bargain collectively, through chosen representatives, is recognized and affirmed. This right shall not be denied, abridged or interfered with by the employers in any manner whatsoever.

The right of employers to organize in associations of groups and to bargain collectively through chosen representatives, is recognized and affirmed. This right shall not be denied, abridged or interfered with by the workers in any manner whatsoever.

Employers should not discharge workers for membership in trade unions, nor for legitimate trade union activities.

The workers, in the exercise of their right to organize, shall not use coercive measures of any kind to induce persons to join their organizations.

In establishments where the union shop exists the same shall continue and the union standards as to wages, hours of labor and other conditions of employment shall be maintained.

In establishments where union and non-union men and women now work together, and the employer meets only with employees or representatives engaged in said establishments, the continuance of such condition shall not be deemed a grievance. This declaration, however, is not intended in any manner to deny the right or discourage the practice of the formation of labor unions, or the joining of the same by the workers in said establishments, as guaranteed in the last paragraph, nor to prevent the War Labor Board from urging or any umpire from granting, under the machinery herein provided, improvement of their situation in the

matter of wages, hours of labor, or other conditions, as shall be found desirable from time to time.

Established safeguards and regulations for the protection of the health and safety of workers shall not be relaxed.

Women in Industry

If it shall become necessary to employ women on work ordinarily performed by men, they must be allowed equal pay for equal work and must not be allotted tasks disproportionate to their strength.

Hours of Labor

The basic eight hour day is recognized as applying in all cases in which existing law requires it. In all other cases the question of hours of labor shall be settled with due regard to governmental necessities and the welfare, health and proper comfort of the workers.

Mobilization of Labor

For the purpose of mobilizing the labor supply with a view to its rapid and effective distribution, a permanent list of the number of skilled and other workers available in different parts of the nation shall be kept on file by the Department of Labor, the information to be constantly furnished:

1. By the trade unions.
2. By state employment bureaus and federal agencies of like character.
3. By the managers and operators of industrial establishments throughout the country.

These agencies should be given opportunity to aid in the distribution of labor, as necessity demands.

Custom of Localities

In fixing wages, hours and conditions of labor regard should always be had to the labor standards, wage scales, and other conditions, prevailing in the localities affected.

The Living Wage

The right of all workers, including common laborers, to a living wage is hereby declared.

In fixing wages, minimum rates of pay shall be established which will insure the subsistence of the worker and his family in health and reasonable comfort.

President Wilson subsequently approved the plan in a proclamation, calling upon all employers and employees to enlist the aid of the board in settling labor difficulties, and urges that there be no discontinuance of work which would interfere with production while negotiations are in progress.

WORKERS MAY STRIKE FOR BETTER CONDITIONS

Washington, D. C. Organized labor scored a victory in the house of representatives by securing enactment of orderly or bona fide strikes for increased pay and better conditions from drastic penalties directed at war-time interruption of belligerent utilities.

The bill, which passes, provides a \$10,000 fine, 30 years' imprisonment or both for the willful injury or destruction of war material, for willfully making or causing to be made in a defective manner any war material, or for conspiring to prevent the erection or production of such war premises or war utilities.

The last provision is limited in its operation by the clause that nothing in the act shall apply to the right of men to agree together to cease work or not to work if for the purpose of getting increased wages or for bettering their conditions.

UNIONISM AND ARBITRATION PUT PACKING INDUSTRY ON 8 HOURS

Chicago, Ill.—As the culmination of an organizing campaign among stock yards workers started last July by the Chicago Federation of Labor, America's packing industry has been swept into the eight-hour column.

To avoid a strike the packers agreed to arbitration and Federal Judge Alschuler has just ruled that beginning May 5 next eight hours shall be the basic work day, to be completed as far as possible within a period of not more than nine consecutive hours. Double time shall be paid for Sunday and holiday work and time and one-quarter for overtime up to 10 hours, and time and one-half thereafter. Where plants operate on the three-shift system employees shall be allowed 20 minutes for lunch with pay.

Wages are increased as follows: For employees receiving 30 cents an hour and under, 4½ cents increase; between 30 and 40 cents an hour, 4 cents increase; and 3½ cents increase for those receiving over 40 cents an hour. Where women do the same work as men they shall be paid men's rates. These increases are to date back to January 14 last.

On May 5 next, when the eight-hour day becomes effective, the wage increases must be readjusted so that workers will receive the same wage as they did under the long workday system.

In answer to the employers' claim that the packing industry is now on a 10-hour basis, Judge Alschuler said that 11, 12 and 13 hours are exceedingly common and "14 and 15 and even more hours daily for a number of days is not unusual, and Sunday work is very frequent."

The decision will affect over 100,000 workers employed in packing plants of Armour, Cudahy, Morris, Swift and Wilson in this city and plants operated by some

of them in Chicago, Kansas City, Sioux City, St. Joseph, St. Louis, East St. Louis, Denver, Oklahoma City, St. Paul, Omaha and Fort Worth.

Arbitration hearings started last February. Prior to this the workers presented demands and the antagonistic attitude of the packers developed such a strike spirit among the workers that the government asked both sides to come to Washington to adjust differences.

Packers agreed to arbitrate, and almost immediately attempted to withdraw their signatures. They abandoned this position however, when the workers answered, "Arbitrate or face a strike." It is hinted that Secretary of Labor Wilson expressed views on the packers' proposal that recalled the old days when he was an officer of the United Mine Workers.

STANDARD OIL ADOPTS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey is flirting with organized labor's theory of collective bargaining. Its plan provides for meetings between company officials and representatives of the employees. If a laborer, hardly able to speak the English language, feels that he has been wronged he may, it is stated, appeal personally even to the company's highest officials. Life insurance, pensions and sickness insurance is provided. An applicant for employment must submit to a physical examination that "he is not assigned to a job to which he may be unequal."

"One difficulty with which the company has been confronted," said Mr. Bedford, "was that because of its tremendous growth, it had lost the immediate personal touch between the management and the workers."

Another indication that Standard oil officials are making social progress was the statement that "welfare work is not regarded in any sense as a substitute for fair wages."

The essential difference between Standard oil's plan and organized labor's is that the first "gives" and the latter "takes."

MRS. MOONEY AND ISRAEL WEINBERG RELEASED

San Francisco—Mrs. Rena Mooney was released from jail March 30 on bail of \$7,500 on each of two charges of murder against her in connection with the preparedness day parade bomb explosion here in 1916.

Mrs. Mooney had been in jail since July 27, 1916. She was brought to trial and acquitted of one of the eight charges against her.

Israel Weinberg, defendant in the preparedness day bomb cases, has been released from jail on \$15,000 bail after an imprisonment of one year and nine months.

Despite his recent prompt acquittal the prosecution has held him in jail on other charges in connection with the bomb throwing. Weinberg's attorneys secured an order from the state supreme court that Judge Dunne must pass upon the validity of the bail bonds. This court has been charged with using dilatory methods in this case, and to meet every objection, the attorneys deposited \$15,000 in cash.

On leaving the jail, Weinberg said: "The supreme court has admitted that the crime with which we are charged was a single transaction, and if one of the defendants is admissible to bail, they all are; and if one is innocent, they all are. I am confident that in a very short time Tom Mooney and Billings will be free also."

MOONEY ASKS FOR PARDON

San Francisco—Thomas J. Mooney has asked Governor Stephens for a pardon from the sentence of death imposed in connection with the preparedness day bomb outrage in 1916.

This is the only remaining course for Mooney, as the state supreme court has refused to grant him a new trial, although the court was shown that perjury methods were employed by the prosecution. The state supreme court took the position that the trial was ended and the record of the case—which it alone acts on—was closed before the perjury charges were proven. In effect, the state supreme court holds that it will not go outside the record of a case, even though human life is endangered.

Prior to this it had been reported that President Wilson had telegraphed Governor William D. Stephens of California asking executive clemency for the convicted man.

DETROIT LABOR PARADE ON MAY 1ST

The Detroit Workers' Defense League has arranged for a May Day demonstration, which project has been enthusiastically endorsed by the Detroit Federation of Labor, at its last meeting.

All affiliated organizations are expected to take part in the demonstration of solidarity.

SEATTLE CENTRAL LABOR UNION TO PUBLISH DAILY PAPER

Seattle—To put their new daily newspaper on a financial basis the Central Labor Union has incorporated a \$100,000 stock company. To check any attempt of outside influences to gain control of a majority of the stock, 51 per cent will be held by the Central Labor Union. The spirit behind this movement is shown in the report of Editor Ault who stated that in one week \$9,900 in cash or Liberty Bonds had been contributed. When Delegate Wilson of the Truckers' Union heard this state-

ment he said the amount should be \$10,000, and posted his bonds for \$100.

CO-OPERATIVE BUYING A SUCCESS

The wholesale purchasing department of the Central States Co-operative Society is a success, reports John H. Walker, president of the society and president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor.

"Reports from our wholesale purchasing representative," said Walker, "indicate that the wholesale department has saved a little over \$600 after paying the salary and all expenses of the representative for the first month of the department's existence."

"This is an inspiration to every real co-operator. It proves that our movement is everything that has been claimed for it. Every co-operative store in Illinois and nearby states should buy at least their staple articles and as many of the other articles as they possibly can through the wholesale department."

AMALGAMATED CLOTHING WORKERS TO HOLD CONVENTION

The third biennial convention of this union will be held beginning next May 13, in Baltimore, Md. The union has been in existence four years. The convention call issued some time ago by Secretary Joseph Schlossberg says:

"The third convention, next May, in Baltimore, will be greeted by the greatest hosts of labor ever organized in the clothing industry, with a new and inspiring record of progress and attainments, including the establishment of the 48 hour week."

"We are coming to the Third Biennial Convention with a stronger organization, with a greater record of achievements, with a more powerful press, and with a sense of self-reliance that will be an inexhaustible source of courage in the great task of working out our own salvation."

THE 3,000,000 MARK

There never was such rapid growth of membership before;

In consequence, exploiters have a grouch—they're awful sore.

But nothing seems to stem the tide, the workers plainly see

The so-called open shop is but the road to poverty.

So everyone get on the rope and pull away like—well,

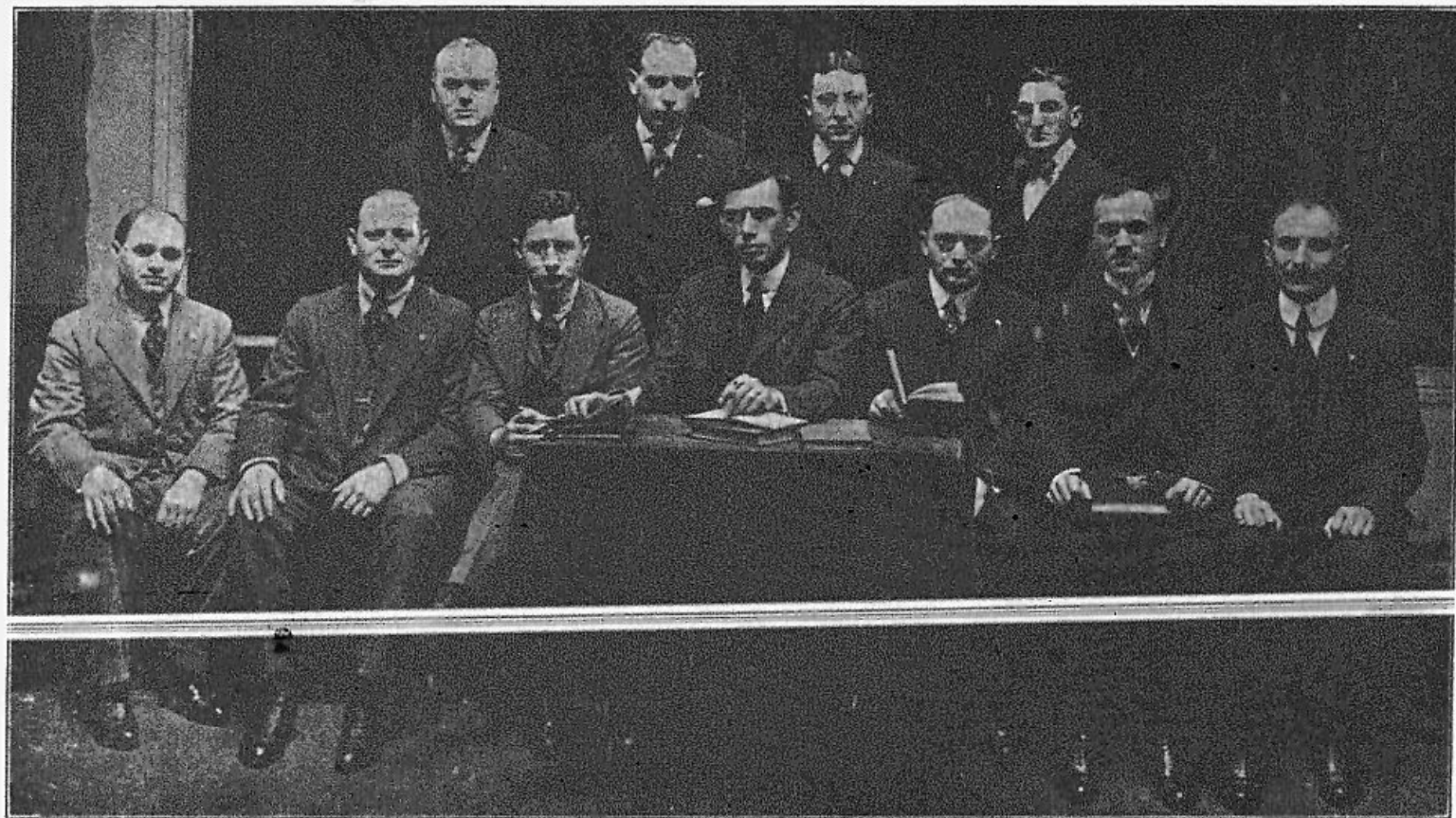
Just pull as hard as possible for the A. F. of L.

If each and every one will do their part, it won't be long

Till we can say with pride, we've reached the mark—three million strong.

—Thomas H. West.

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE REORGANIZED CLOAK OPERATORS UNION LOCAL No. 1



Left to right, seated: M. J. Ashpis, H. Wagner; Ph. Kaplowitz; Benj. Schlesinger (International President), M. Wolberg; W. Bloom; B. Feinberg.
Left to right standing: M. Sapin; A. Student; N. Haynes; F. J. Ringer.

Two Women Workers' Locals in Our International

By FANNIA M. COHN

THE UPBUILDING OF THE CHILDREN'S DRESSMAKER'S UNION LOCAL NO. 50.

The history of the Children's Dressmakers' Union, Local No. 50, is very interesting. It tells us of the trials and tribulations that the workers of this trade have undergone before they succeeded in building up this union. Now that this Local occupies an indisputable position within the International and in the progressive labor movement, it is interesting to note the conditions that had existed in this trade before it was organized and the progress it has made since then.

It was in 1909, when a handful of pressers of a few shops of that trade assembled somewhere in a small room in Brownsville and discussed the then existing labor conditions. The workers complained of long working hours; because while the small earnings were regulated there was no limit to the hours. As long as the engine was in motion, the workers were at their machines, and so it was not very seldom that they worked 70 hours and more a week, but never less than 60 hours.

At that meeting the workers also complained that it was absolutely impossible for them to live on their meager earnings that seldom exceeded \$3 to \$5 a week. One of the causes of the low earnings, was, in their opinion, the fact that the employers exploited learners. Learners worked between two and four weeks without compensation at all, and afterwards the employers were at liberty to fix the price, and the price seldom was above two dollars for a period of three or four weeks.

So that the employers had plenty of almost free labor, supplied by the constant influx of learners.

A curious grievance ventilated at that historical meeting was that of the workers of a certain shop that their employer sent one of the working girls to his home to take care of his baby while his wife went shopping. The workers of other shops complained of being subjected to bad treatment and humiliation on the part of their employers, many of whom cursed them and used insulting language, which no person with any dignity can tolerate for a moment.

After these indictments against the employers it became evident to all that the only way to improve conditions was by organized protest, by forming a union of all the workers in the trade.

The idea was so novel that many doubted whether it would be possible to induce

a considerable number of the children's dressmakers to join such an organization. Fear was expressed that the employers would notice such a movement among their workers and discharge them, and that the 90 per cent women workers, the majority of whom were young girls who never heard anything about a labor union, would hold aloof from the movement.

Finally the view of the few enthusiastic idealists prevailed, and it was decided to form a union. A committee was appointed to go to the United Hebrew Trades and ask for a charter.

Thus the foundation of the union was laid, and the few members got busy. Every evening they waited outside of some building, where a children's dressmakers' shop was located and called their fellow workers to join them in their effort to organize a union in the trade and so better their unbearable conditions.

Soon this group of pioneers succeeded in obtaining a charter from the International and afterward opened a small office.

In 1910, during the cloakmakers' strike, the union was already strong enough to call out the workers on general strike. The strike was called in Brownsville, where the contractors were located.

The inhuman conditions of the workers in the children's dress trade called forth little attention on the part of the public. Strange to relate, the only men who were interested in ending this strike was the expressman who delivered the merchandise from the manufacturers to the contractor and carried it back. As the expressman also suffered from the strike he constituted himself as mediator and succeeded in bringing together both sides. Afterwards he acted in the capacity of arbitrator.

The result of the strike was the shortening of the hours of labor from 60 and 70 to 53, and there was an understanding between the employers and the workers that in case of trouble a representative of the workers should be admitted to the shop, but the employers refused to sign a written agreement with the local union.

Encouraged by their first victory, the active members of the local succeeded in securing assistance from the International Union, and with the help of an organizer they carried on an energetic organizing campaign, not only among the workers of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, but also in Manhattan, New York. The result of this campaign was the general strike of March, 1913, which lasted three weeks, and brought the manufacturers to terms. The Children's Dress Manufacturers' Association, recog-

nizing the union, signed a collective agreement. The workers secured shorter working hours, from fifty-three to fifty, and one dollar increase for the week workers, to be paid in two terms. Agreements were also signed with the contractors and independent manufacturers.

Unusual dullness in the trade affected the upbuilding of the Local, and in 1914 the general officers of the International started a work of reorganization.

After an energetic campaign, a general strike of the entire trade was called in January, 1916, which lasted about six weeks. The workers fought with determination in spite of great difficulties and eventually the strike was satisfactorily settled, due to the efforts of President Schlesinger, and the local officers.

The collective agreement signed by the Manufacturers' Association is still in force, provides for 49 hours work a week; an increase in wages of one dollar for week workers; a 10 per cent increase for piece workers, and a dollar increase every year, during the three-year life of the agreement (1916-1919).

Notable is the fact that they got a minimum wage of six dollars for learners, and so the two dollars compensation which existed previous to the strike was forever banished. In addition to this, the agreement provided double pay for overtime for week workers.

By the terms of the agreement the manufacturers were made responsible for their contractors carrying out its provisions, as well as for the workers' earnings in case the contractor disappeared with the workers' pay, as not seldom had happened previously.

By another provision a committee on immediate action was created, composed of three representatives of each side and an umpire, whose function is to act on any case in dispute arising between the employers and the union, which the officers of both sides fail to adjust. The decision is subject to an appeal to a Board of Arbitration.

By negotiation in conference President Schlesinger and the local officers succeeded in winning for the workers an additional one dollar increase beginning with March 1 of this year. By the agreement they had received an increase of a dollar on January 1, 1918.

Now, at the fifth anniversary of the first general strike of the Children's Dressmakers' Union, we find that Local No. 50 is a great factor in the industry it controls.

Local No. 50 likewise has a recognized place in the progressive labor movement which it supports liberally, financially, as well as morally. The members of Local No. 50 point with pride to the financial assistance their union was able to give, to their brothers and sisters of the cloak trade during the lockout of 1916. Their members liberally contributed to the Jewish war suf-

ferers' fund, although Washington's Birthday was not recognized as a legal holiday in their trade.

As a means of being in touch with its membership, the union issues a monthly publication, "Our Aim" which is distributed among the members; and now that the existence of the Children's Dressmakers' Union, Local No. 50, is assured the active members and officers are planning to initiate activities of an educational and social character—this is surely praiseworthy.

Financially as well as morally the local is prepared for any emergency, and we, on our side, take pride in the fact that one more local union whose membership consists of 90 per cent women workers can size itself up with the best organized locals within our International.

STANDING OF WAISTMAKERS, LOCAL 49

Only those acquainted with conditions under which the Boston Waistmakers worked prior to the strike of 1913, will appreciate the accomplishments of Local No. 49.

Not only were the workers insulted by their masters and foremen for the slightest mistake, but they were fined in addition. The earnings were as low as \$3.00 to \$7.00 for a 60 hours week work. There were no limitations to overtime—for which they never were paid extra.

After the two weeks' strike of 1913, the waistmakers succeeded in getting their employers to recognize the union, but the terms on which peace was made did not in the least satisfy the strikers; and the result was that within a short time the local was almost out of existence.

Many of us still remember the doubt of some leaders, as to whether there would ever be a Waistmakers' Union in Boston again. They supported their opinion with the argument that the girls in Boston were incapable of practical and constructive work, and also that they were a lot of hot-headed revolutionists.

But despite these arguments the International Office in 1916 succeeded in reorganizing the local, and after a two days' strike in February of the same year, the union succeeded in getting the manufacturers' association to sign a collective agreement; so that the prophets were utterly confounded. The accomplishments of Local 49 speak for themselves.

Since the strike of 1916, the union has succeeded in increasing the earnings of its

members as high as 100 per cent. In some cases even more; and the workers are getting the best protection in the shops. Sanitary conditions have been introduced in the shops, and not only is there a limitation to working hours, but they are getting time and a half for overtime for week workers, and fifteen cents additional per hour for piece workers. But one of their greatest gains is the forty-eight hour week that the members of Local 49 are enjoying since the first of May.

The Boston Waistmakers' Union ranks among the best locals of our International Union and is generally respected. It is a factor in the progressive labor movement of Boston, to which it renders liberal support, material and moral. The union also enjoys a standing within the community.

The excellent conditions of the Waistmakers' organization induced the cutters of the trade to join the Local to have a chance to work with them hand in hand for further improvement.

That the waistmakers appreciate the accomplishments of their union is proven by the fact that in celebrating the second anniversary of their organization in February, 1918, every member participated by contributing something to the exhibition arranged for the purpose. To bring the members closer together it was decided that its proceeds should go for a country home—a Unity Center—which should be run on a co-operative basis, where every member should have an opportunity to spend a few weeks in the hot summer months in pleasant surroundings.

Now, that the existence of the Local is assured, the active members and officers are considering the necessity of introducing educational and social activities. A course of lectures has been arranged.

But before activities of such a character can be a success, it will be necessary for the union to secure decent headquarters. The active members and officers contemplate starting a campaign among the members for a building fund.

No doubt, such a movement, if energetically carried on, will bring the desired result, because proper and convenient headquarters is essential to success for any enterprise.

We expect that before long the Boston Waistmakers will have their own li-

brary, comfortable reading room, as the Philadelphia waistmakers enjoy.

Well, sisters and brothers, the result of your two years untiring efforts should encourage you to further deeds.

IN BALTIMORE AND OTHER CENTERS

Being in touch with numerous locals of our International Union in many cities I have learned of their conditions, aspirations, and past history. I found them interesting and instructive and have related in the "Ladies Garment Worker," certain facts of their history and struggles because I consider it important to acquaint our big membership with the trials and tribulations of the thousands of workers employed in different trades, and the hardships they had to overcome before they succeeded in organizing a local union in their trade.

It is specially interesting to learn something of those locals that have grown up within the last few years in the waist, dress, white goods, house-dress and kimono, children's dresses, petticoats, corsets and rain-coats.

Our International has succeeded in penetrating into these trades, but has not yet completely organized them.

The main center for these trades is in New York. The bulk of the ladies' garment industry is situated in this big city. But these trades are not confined to New York City. The manufacturing of this merchandise is scattered all over the country. Of late several outside cities have become manufacturing centers of ladies' garments. This is especially true in the cities west of New York, southwest and middle west. For instance, Baltimore is becoming a manufacturing center for "light goods."

Considering the conditions under which the thousands of girls are there employed, we may realize the danger these cities are to our locals. In Baltimore girls are earning as much as three and four dollars weekly, and the competition is even felt by the cloakmakers of that city, because the skirts which were previously made in cloak shops controlled by Local No. 4 are now made in waist and white goods shops where girls work practically for a starvation wage.

The danger from such competition is shown by the following instance: The authorities advertised throughout the coun-

try, inviting men with capital to settle in this city, and the inducement they offered them was "cheap rent" and "cheap labor."

The International is trying to organize the girls there, but it will take some time before substantial results will be accomplished. This is natural, because it is a city where the workers of this trade were never before approached, and we know that it takes time before a new city is organized.

Like every city, Baltimore, too, has a group of young women who are idealists, and with a unique devotion they stand by their organization. Every morning and evening they are outside of the shops, telling their fellow workers that this is a disgrace, humiliating to human dignity to work under such conditions. Late in the evening, one could see these idealists visiting their fellow workers at their homes, trying to enlighten them on their conditions. They are assisted in their work by Miss Anna Neary, organizer for the American Federation of Labor, who is devoting her entire time to the work.

They deserve a word of encouragement. Go on with your work, my fellow workers. It will finally be crowned with success, and this will be your compensation.

The dullness in the waist and white goods trades has affected Local 43 of Worcester, but now with the assistance of the International Union that local is not only re-establishing conditions, but it has also won many improvements.

A start to organize the button makers has been made in Boston, where a number of these workers became a branch of Local No. 49.

Now that the cloakmakers are almost 100 per cent. organized throughout the country, it will be the work of the International Union in the near future to complete the organizing work of the other trades. This will be necessary to retain the conditions in the organized cities. The International will also be able to devote much time to strengthening the existing organization. A good example of this work is the Joint Board of the Cloak, Ladies' Tailors, and Waist & White Goods Workers' Union recently organized by President Schlesinger. It was a very useful accomplishment, and we expect that all the four locals composing it will try to make good.

The work done by the International Union in Boston has brought good results. All the destructive elements are eliminated, and the Joint Board is now in a good condition.

It is interesting and very encouraging to note a desire on the part of the active members to broaden the activities of their unions and initiate such activities to satisfy the intellectual needs of the members as well as the economic needs. One could notice a tendency towards co-operation.

All these activities should be encouraged by the International Union. It is needless to argue their importance. Every intelligent worker appreciates it because it tends to utilize the energy and intelligence of our members for the benefit of their locals.

This co-operative movement is spreading among the country locals as well as the New York locals. It is too early to forecast its course and development at this moment, but if properly directed it will bring good results.

"I'M SORRY; I WAS WRONG"

There may be virtue in the man
Who's always sure he's right,
Who'll never hear another's plan
And seek for further light;
But I like more the chap who sings
A somewhat different song;
Who says, when he has messed up things,
"I'm sorry; I was wrong."

It's hard for anyone to say
That failure's due to him—
That he has lost the fight or way
Because his lights burned dim.
It takes a man aside to throw
The vanity that's strong,
Confessing, "'Twas my fault, I know,
I'm sorry; I was wrong."

And so, I figure, those who use
This honest, manly phrase,
Hate it too much their way to lose
On many future days.
They'll keep the path and make the fight.
Because they do not long
To have to say—when they're set right—
"I'm sorry; I was wrong."
—"Chicago Evening Post."

Cloak Finishers' Union, Local 9

A Brief Review of Its Annual Report for 1917

By A. R.

This local union has issued an interesting annual report, compiled by N. M. Minkoff, the local secretary-treasurer. The report bristles with facts and figures concerning the more important events in the life of the local in 1917. A few of these facts and figures are given here in a condensed form.

The officers concede the fact that "only a small number of the 8,000 members attend meetings and take an active part in the affairs of the organization," adding that the inactive members are nevertheless union men and women. This lack of interest is pretty general. All our locals suffer in the same way. Were the local officers not so busy with the management of local affairs it would not be a bad idea to initiate certain movements appealing to legitimate self-interest and requiring personal initiative. The members do not attend the meetings because, perhaps, they have nothing to interest them directly. Maybe they do not want to hear a repetition of set speeches. The solution for this trouble seems to be—less speech-making and more practical endeavor; entertainments and edifying socials.

Local No. 9 has six branches, one of them a women's branch. Every branch is represented in the local executive board by five members, and the executive board works by six sub-committees which carry out the routine work. There is a membership committee, a consumption and relief committee, a finance committee, an organization committee, a grievance committee and a committee of delegates to the Joint Board.

The organization committee deals with complaints of members against employers, and against workers who turn from the union path. Figures given for five months in 1917 show 2,133 complaints dealt with; the amount of back pay collected was \$1,224, and 175 shop meetings were held.

The grievance committee took up 162 cases and imposed fines on forty-seven members.

The finance committee examines not only the expenditure, but also the income, and

is the advisory committee of the secretary-treasurer.

The committee composed of delegates to the Joint Board represents and defends the local's interests at the Joint Board meetings.

An interesting department is the consumption and relief fund. The work of the committee is of a special kind. During the year the committee met twenty-four times and dealt with fifty-four cases. This fund is entirely independent of the general fund, as the money at its disposal cannot be applied toward any other purpose than for the benefit of consumptive and needy members. The work is regarded as being very important and only the most experienced and practical members are elected on the committee.

The fund derives its income from (1) an assessment of \$1 a year upon every member; (2) 10 cents of the charge for constitution books; (3) all fines revert to the fund.

An instructive financial report is given for the two years and three months of its existence. Now that the benefit question is to come before the convention the figures are interesting. Thus the fund had an income of \$13,783.47, of which nearly \$12,000 came from the dollar assessment. Expenditures were \$5,492.28, and on December 31, 1917, there was a balance of \$8,291.19. Thus the fund rests on a firm foundation and has undoubtedly been a means of consolidating the local.

Thirty-two members received consumption benefit or were maintained at sanitariums at the cost of the fund. The highest sum cited as having been received by one member is \$250. Twenty-three members completely recovered and returned to work. Monetary relief rendered to 223 members totaled \$791.

The membership committee deals with all questions pertaining to admission or re-admission of members. All kinds of cases come before the committee—members dropped, wishing to re-enter; sick members who cannot pay their dues and delinquent

members accumulating arrears of dues out of sheer negligence.

In 1917 the committee met forty-seven times and dealt with 811 cases. Of these over 400 applicants were admitted to membership.

The report shows a loss of 1,861 members, not owing to backsliding on the part of the cloak finishers but for reasons beyond the local's control. It is explained that this is due, first, to the dwindling of the number of finishers in the trade because of the increasing tendency for their hand work being done by machine. Secondly, thirty per cent. of the membership consists of women workers, and a number of them drop out of the trade to get married. There are other elements who similarly drop out of the trade year by year. This sifting process is nothing new. But when there was a constant stream of immigrants the depleted ranks were soon filled by newcomers and no loss was felt. In recent years, however, the flow of immigration has almost entirely stopped.

The matter is not so alarming as the report would have us believe. The one needful thing is that all cloak finishers working in the trade shall be affiliated with the local union. In that case the union

should be strong even if the membership is less numerous.

Another question which is almost an evil in our unions is the backward state of many members in regard to the payment of their dues. At the end of 1917 Local No. 9 had only 1,412 members in good standing, that is, in arrears of dues less than thirteen weeks. All the rest were in arrears from fourteen to fifty-two weeks. The total sum of their indebtedness exceeded the amount of \$23,000—quite a fortune for such a local union.

A good many of these backward members might be excused. Slackness and the high cost of living made it hard for them to pay their dues more regularly. But a large number of members are simply negligent, or they think, perhaps, that they will apply to the membership committee requesting that their debt be wiped off.

The best remedy for this evil would be to have the members pay twice a year, after working two full weeks in the new season. Each member would have to pay about \$5 to \$6 in one lump sum which cannot run anybody. The union serves the worker and his family much better than does the landlord or the storekeeper; and when the members will get the habit of thinking that the union is not a charity institution this evil will disappear.

Cloakmakers Local No. 11, Report to the Convention

Owing to rumors that at the next convention in Boston a demand by some delegates will be made for revoking the charter of Local No. 11, Cloakmakers of Brownsville, and merging its membership with some of the New York locals, the Executive Board of Local No. 11 considered it advisable to issue a report to the convention showing the futility of such a step. The report dwells on certain historical facts of the local's existence, its struggles and achievements, and at the request of its officers a brief survey of the report is placed herewith.

The report is interesting in its description of the rise of Brownsville, N. Y., to be practically a populous industrial city. Its former bogs and marshes and general aspect of ugliness and discomfort have given rise to decent buildings, busy streets and a teeming

population. This now well inhabited section of Brooklyn has similarly become a center for the less pretentious manufacturers of women's garments and hence almost all the New York locals of the International Union have well-organized branches there. Local No. 11 is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, labor union in the ladies' garment industry in that part of Greater New York.

The report tells that years ago, when Brownsville was very sparsely populated, the people who had acquired real estate there for a song and were anxious to see their houses occupied offered them free of rent for six months and even longer. This attracted small contractors from New York and naturally their employees came with them. Needless to relate, the contractors in those times mercilessly exploited their "hands." This was the cause and origin of

the union twenty years ago. According to the report the union then bore the name of "Local No. 4." But as the International was not organized until 1900 this Brownsville Cloakmakers' Union must have been a branch of the then "Brotherhood of Cloakmakers."

The first Brownsville Cloakmakers' Union shared the fate of all similar organizations of that period. It struggled for several years and finally disappeared from the scene. In 1904, when the Williamsburg bridge was opened for traffic and cars began to run across, and the number of contractors and their employees multiplied exceedingly, the need of organization to check the practice of sweating became very pressing. It was then that the present Local No. 11 was organized with the help of the newly organized International Union.

In spite of many ups and downs the local stood its ground. We read in the report that, while most of the New York locals existed only on paper, Local No. 11 was "alive and kicking." And when preparations were made for the historic general strike of 1910 Local No. 11 was completely organized and ready to join the fight. During the strike Local No. 11 so thoroughly controlled the situation that not a trace of scab work was made there. According to the report the local is proud of the fact that between the years of 1904 and 1910 it was a union in the real sense. This was due to the fact that the membership regarded the organization as peculiarly their own, created and built up by their own efforts. The fact that Brownsville is not a nest of non-unionism and scab labor for our trades, like parts of New Jersey, is due to the existence of Local No. 11 and its struggles for uplifting and ennobling the workers' lives.

The report describes the antagonism between the inside and outside workers and how the question came to be an absorbing topic in the Cloakmakers' Union. Soon after the general strike Local No. 11 became affiliated with the Joint Board of New York, and coming in contact with new men, whose main function was to stop the work for one reason or another, the workers of Brownsville at first regarded the Joint Board office as the protector of the New York workers, and a hostile sentiment was generated between them and the then officers of the Joint Board. But the more intelligent and de-

voted element of Local No. 11 stepped into the threatened breach and sought to clarify the situation and conciliate the membership and they succeeded in bringing about a change for the better.

Almost all the cloakmakers of Brownsville work for contractors and sub-manufacturers. Thus Local No. 11 inevitably became the champion of these workers in all their dealings with the employers. The Cloakmakers' Union has been almost entirely engrossed with the interests of the inside workers, and so it devolved upon Local No. 11 to care for the outside workers of Brownsville, and the local succeeded in bringing the shops of the district under no smaller measure of control than that exercised by the union over the shops in New York.

Local No. 11 consists of two classes of members—a young element, intelligent and alert, scattered in the New York shops, and an older, weaker and toil-worn element working exclusively in Brownsville. The latter, according to the report, could not even be expelled from that section by force. They are firmly settled and habituated in Brownsville. The shops they work in are near to their homes, thus saving them the time and trouble of dressing up and taking car trips and lunches in restaurants. Going to and from New York daily to work would be quite an ordeal for them. They take this trip only on festive occasions or to meet a convivial family party. Referring to the demand for merging Local No. 11 with the New York locals the report says:

They who think that this element of Brownsville members can be easily assimilated with some local in New York are mistaken. Seventy-five per cent of our membership are so firmly rooted in Brownsville that they will never fit into another local without showing the bulging patch-work. It would be inconvenient for both sides.

The opponents of the idea of smaller locals, who cite Local No. 11 and the erstwhile Pressers' Local No. 68 of Brownsville as an argument in their favor should note this passage in the report of Local No. 11:

We want to point to a fact that teaches us a lesson. There was in Brownsville a pressers' local of several hundred members. Then a convention decided that the local should be dissolved and merged with Local No. 35, Pressers' Union of New York. Did not this seem a victory for the latter local? * * * But ask Local No. 35 and

they will tell you from their experience that to control that small number of Brownsville pressers could double the amount of the income received and not less trouble and unpleasantness. The Brownsville pressers, on the other hand, will tell you that their affiliation with Local No. 35 has made no material or moral change in their condition; and it is not slanderous to say that both sides are dissatisfied. But when one talks of the advisability of dissolving such a local as ours we feel that it is necessary to give our experience and knowledge of the situation to be able to judge rightly, so as to avoid acting rashly.

As to the practical activities of Local No. 11 the report describes the internal life and idealism of its members which should make their unsympathetic critics pause to think. Here are a few facts:

Local No. 11 was foremost in the enterprise of erecting the handsome Brownsville Labor Lyceum. The local gave the first donation of \$1,000 for this purpose and is now represented in the various committees that manage and maintain this labor temple.

Local No. 11 takes an active part morally and financially in all progressive movements. The Socialist victories in Brownsville in the recent election are, in large measure, due to the activity of the Brownsville cloakmakers.

Even before Local No. 11 was connected with the New York locals, it had distinguished itself in a strike against the firm of John Bonwit in 1907. President Schlesinger of the International Union had led that strike.

Local No. 11 does not pretend to be the best local, but it claims to have contributed to the organizing work in Brownsville at all times.

At the time when the scab order Sulkess attempted an invasion of the Brownsville shops, the cloakmakers of Brownsville gave the disrupters such a hot reception that in a few days they were bundled out of that locality bag and baggage and took good care not to show their faces again.

In the recent trouble with a group of leaders of the cloak operators of Local No. 1 the Brownsvillians likewise showed the stuff they are made of. Boldly they informed the group of over 100 members of

that local working in their shops: "Either you will belong together with us to the Joint Board, or you must go. * * * We will not stand for two unions in one shop," and in Brownsville the trouble was over in three or four weeks.

* * *

We have so far referred to the historical facts contained in the report, and now a word as to the report itself:

The report (published in Yiddish) marshals the facts and arguments in a manner much to the point, dispassionately and without bombast. Its cold, iron logic is irresistible. Those who will read it with sympathetic attention will get a different picture of Local No. 11 than has been current in some circles.

And while we are more interested in its historical side we should not forget that the object of the report is to show in its own concluding words:

"That Local No. 11, exercising a healthy influence over its membership, must by no means be dissolved, because it is a great force in helping to bring about week work in the Brownsville shops. * * * If dissolution is resolved on it will cause demoralization among the membership of Local No. 11. This will react injuriously on the Brownsville shops and may prevent the realization of the week work system. Like an ill wind it will blow no one any good.

"We who know the true state of affairs in Brownsville safely assert that dissolving Local No. 11 means dissolving the union in Brownsville. However easy and deliberate the operation, it will leave a raw wound on the body of our union.

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The Bonnaz Embroiderers in the Cloak and Dress Shops

In the last few years we have had pretty good seasons. Embroidery on garments was in fashion in the waist, dress and cloak trades. We have succeeded in organizing a strong union of Bonnaz machine embroiderers. By a general strike Local No. 66 won week work and a minimum scale of wages. Today our second class operators receive a minimum of \$30 a week, and first-class operators \$35. Of course, we have prevented the employers from turning the minimum into a maximum scale, for the more nimble and skilled operators earn from \$37 to \$40 a week. We have complete control over the workers in the shops and our people are paid for ten legal holidays. Thus, upon the surface, we have little to complain of. But only 45 per cent of our trade is organized. We still have a considerable number of non-union shops, which by their cut-throat competition constitute a standing menace to our union and our trade, and for this reason:

Bonnaz machine embroidering is a highly skilled trade. One cannot become an operator in a day. In spite of the so-called schools, which have lately started turning out operators, the number of workers in the trade is still limited. And when embroidery is in style there is enough work for the union shops as well as for the non-union shops.

It happens very often that two employers are after one worker, and to give our union shops the preference, we decided that our members shall not work in any non-union shop. Not one employer was thereby compelled to settle with the union. They had no alternative, as they could not get any non-union workers.

But when the slack time sets in, it stimulates the evil of competition. The non-union contractors start getting busy, hustling around the waist and dress shops, underbidding the union contractors, and snatching the few bundles out of their hands. They are able to do so because they work fifty and fifty-four hours a week instead of forty-eight hours enforced in the union shops, and they cut down the wages of their semi-slaves, while in the union shops a reduction

in wages during the slack time is prohibited. It is very annoying that at a time when our people start dividing the scanty work among themselves, the non-union shops advertise for help. Now when our members go about idle it is impossible for them to resist the offer of a temporary job in a non-union shop at a ridiculously low wage. Aside from these non-union advertisements being a constant temptation to our members, the non-union contractors have until now kept their workers from joining the union by promising them steady work.

In view of the fact that in all the non-union shops mostly American women are employed, the situation can be easily imagined. Nevertheless we are continually storming the non-union fortresses and are making good progress. But we can only secure our position with the assistance of the International Union and the Waist and Dressmakers Local No. 25. They will surely do their duty by a fellow local union.

Local No. 66 is proud of being a branch of the overspreading tree of our International Union, and the struggles of the Cloakmakers and Waist and Dressmakers have always been our struggles. So our request to them is as follows:

It should be remembered that the Bonnaz machine embroidery trade is entirely in the hands of contractors who work the embroidery into the garments outside of the garment factories. They are practically the outside contractors of the waist, dress and cloak manufacturers.

Therefore our members feel that just as Local No. 25 and the Joint Board of the Cloakmakers' Union are interested in having the outside contractors of their trade registered and run as union shops, and complying with union standards, so they must co-operate with us in controlling the non-union embroidery contractors, who take the work out of their union shops.

In this not only Bonnaz machine embroidery is concerned but also hand embroidery. Our International Union is proud of having abolished home work in the cloak and dress trades. But not less than 1,500 women workers are employed by non-union con-

tractors on hand embroidery in private rooms and kitchens.

At the last convention we called for a decision requiring the cloak, suit, skirt and dress manufacturers to assume responsibility for the labor standards of their embroidery contractors, and also that the work shall be given out to union contractors.

The convention referred our request to the General Executive Board for action. We hope that the next convention in Boston will positively decide that the manufacturers' association in the cloak, suit and dress trades shall be officially called upon to give out the embroidery work to union contractors only.

In the meantime the business agents of Local No. 25 can help us bring this improvement into life regardless of the attitude of the associations. Where the Cloakmakers' and Waistmakers' Unions exercise control over the shops they can help us very much.

The workers in the shops of Local No. 25 on their part can help us by refusing to do the work embroidered in scab shops. As principled, loyal union workers they cannot really act otherwise. If the work comes to our shops direct from the cutting rooms. We shall gladly furnish them with the names of the embroidery shops involved in strikes and also the names of the dress shops for whom this work is made.

When this will be accomplished, our Local No. 66 will be enabled to continue the good work for the good and welfare of the workers in the trade and the International Union in general.

On May 1, Local No. 66 celebrates its fifth anniversary together with International Labor Day. The strong position of the local, numerically and financially, has been more than once referred to in this Journal. A concert for members and friends has been arranged in Mansion Hall, St. Mark's Place.

OSIP. W. LINSKY,
Manager Local No. 66.

DO NOT.

Do not be a quitter
With fear within your heart;
And do not be a starter
Of things that should not start.
—Judge.

LOCAL 43, WAIST AND WHITE GOODS WORKERS OF WORCESTER.

Brother Sigmund Haiman writes:

Things are pretty lively in Worcester at present. Since I arrived in Worcester shop meetings have been held daily with the different shops, and workers are joining the union and pledging their help to organize all the shops of dresses, waists and white goods.

Three shops have signed agreements with the union, and have reduced the working hours from 54 and 56 to 49 hours per week. The cutters (men) were working two hours each week more than the women. Now all work 49 hours.

The increases for week workers range from \$1.00 to \$4.00 per week. Piece workers have received increases from 15 per cent to 50 per cent; the average increase is about 25 per cent. A schedule has been installed in all waist shops for settlements of piece prices, which gives the workers an opportunity to know what they have to demand for certain work, while until now the employers alone fixed the prices.

Price committees and chairladies have been elected in these shops, and they will do their utmost to protect the increases.

The Executive Board and the active members of Worcester are very busy trying to organize the other few shops that have not signed agreements with the union yet. These shops, too, have reduced the working hours from 56 and 58 to 49 hours, and have given increases to their workers, so that they should not go to the meetings of the union, but it is very doubtful whether this will keep the workers from the union.

All the members are determined to go after the unorganized workers in these shops and persuade them not to be fooled by such promises, but join the union and make proper demands.

One of these manufacturers called in the Jewish girls and offered them increases, asking them not to tell it to the Gentile girls, but the idea was scouted.

The last members' meeting was well attended and 20 girls pledged their services to the Organization Committee. They promised to spend every evening in going to the houses of the unorganized, and inducing them to come to the meetings and join the union.

Local 43 is in good spirit over its success.



Bottom row, left to right: H. Wiener; W. Schmeterer; B. Chazanowitz; S. Lefkovits (Local Manager); H. Hilfman; G. Demarines. Middle line: W. Zeligman; F. Becker. Top line: N. Abramovitz; F. Magnavita; M. Goodman; A. Inguli; S. Drezinsky; J. Kavachini; S. Cohen.

Ladies' Alteration and Special Order Tailors' Union, Local No. 80

Secretary H. Hilfman writes:

"The decision of the thirteenth convention to amalgamate Local No. 30, Alteration Tailors; Local No. 3, Ladies' Tailors and Dressmakers, and Local No. 65, Ladies' Tailors and Dressmakers, Brooklyn, was carried out soon after the convention.

"The General Executive Board at the joint conference proposed that the Private Dressmakers, a branch of the Waist and Dressmakers, Local No. 25, should be a separate local and have the jurisdiction over the private dressmakers and take care of the organization work in their own trade. The proposition was agreed to, and the International Union issued them a charter as Local No. 90. The amalgamated union of the three aforesaid locals was chartered as Local No. 80.

"By a ruling of Vice Presidents Lefkovits, Wander and Ninfo, Bro. Morris was elected secretary, while the writer of this was retained as clerk to the secretary.

"At the amalgamation Local No. 30 brought into the treasury \$90 and Local No. 38, \$424. Local No. 65 was in debt, which we paid. Thus the new union started with a capital of \$614.

"It took some time to harmonize and weld together the various elements. In this Vice President Lefkovits, who was appointed by the International to organize the trade, helped a great deal. Not until certain misunderstandings were removed did the organization work begin in earnest, and then everyone assisted Bro. Lefkovits in the best possible way.

"Plans were formed to call a general strike in the fall season of 1917, and we worked untiringly toward that end. We should not forget the demoralization prevailing among the workers. They had lost their faith in all efforts to improve conditions in spite of their unbearable sufferings at the hands of the employers.

"Gradually Bro. Lefkovits succeeded in imbuing them with the conviction that all doubt and mistrust must give way to renewed life and work for a clean and true union. Three mass meetings, then held, encouraged our work of raising the workers out of a sort of bondage, and little by little they joined the ranks of the union.

"The agitation for a general strike was welcomed with enthusiasm. There was no other solution. Our leaders tried to avoid a strike. But while some manufacturers intimated their willingness to meet the demands of the union the majority of the employers ignored the agitation.

"The general strike was called on September 22, 1917, and the workers warmly responded to the call and left the shops. Many firms settled immediately. Only a small number of employers remained stubborn. At the end of two weeks all the firms settled with the union. It was remarkable that not a single arrest was made, so well and orderly was the strike conducted.

"The concessions won included a forty-eight hour week; a minimum wage of \$30 for first-class workers and a minimum of \$26 for second-class workers; an increase of 20 per cent for those receiving a wage above this scale; time and a half for overtime; two legal holidays; a week's trial, and minor improvements.

"The strike was successful, even though it did not extend to the entire trade. The alteration tailors were unmoved, except the workers of the Franklin Simon Company, J. M. Gidding and several East Side stores.

"The prestige of the union grew and there was general satisfaction at what had been accomplished. The union amassed a treasury of several thousand dollars in a few weeks and all went smoothly under the supervision of Vice President S. Lefkovits, for whom we all have a high regard.

"But our employers cannot acquire the habit of living in peace with the union. It seems that a certain firm, Milgrim Bros., employing some 200 ladies' tailors, intrigued against the union, in having four disloyal workers come to work on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. The violation was quickly discovered and the union decided that two of the guilty workers should leave the shop and two should be fined \$50 each. The firm denied knowledge of the fact and insisted on these people returning to work, but the union could not concede the point.

"As it was the end of the season the firm seemed to have planned an attack on the organization. Two shop chairmen were discharged, followed by a lockout of all the

workers. Thus the union was forced to declare a strike.

"The shop was at one time considered a hard one to tackle; but this time all the workers proved loyal to the cause.

"The strike lasted eight weeks. The firm resorted to every expedient in trying to lure the workers back. One of these was the provision of kitchen and sleeping arrangements; another was the employment of eighteen hired guards. It may be safely asserted that the strike cost the firm \$40,000.

"Although the strike had to be abandoned because of inadequate finances, and after all donations from our own members, from the International Union, from the New York Joint Board of the Cloakmakers' Union and from other locals had been exhausted, our local union retained its strength and prestige. When the spring season started the union was in full vigor again. A number of shop strikes were settled in a few days and others in a few hours. So far, we have not lost control over a single shop. We have under union control all the shops unionized in the last strike, with exception of Milgrim Bros. The receipts and expenditures for 1917 show our satisfactory financial standing. They were: Receipts, \$12,192.89; expenditures, \$11,522.43.

"We are grateful, indeed, to our International Union; the Joint Board of the Cloakmakers; Locals 3, 9, 10, 17, 23, 25, 35, 41, 64 and Local No. 1, Capmakers' Union for their financial support in the Milgrim strike. Special thanks are due to the Furriers' Joint Board of New York, Locals 1, 5, 10, 15 of the International Fur Workers' Union, for calling out on sympathy strike their members employed in shops doing work for Milgrim Bros. and paying them strike benefit for six weeks."

* * *

"Several years ago a movement had been started to amalgamate the former Local No. 38, Ladies' Tailors, and Local No. 3, Sample Makers and Piece Tailors. In the general cloak strike of 1916 the necessity for this was clearly demonstrated. We all remember how the Cloakmakers' Joint Board tried to induce the Ladies' Tailors, who were making samples for the cloak houses in strike, to join the strikers.

"It is equally well known that as soon as the sample season comes to an end in the cloak trade the sample makers of Local No. 3 come to work in the Ladies' Tailors' shops,

while the Ladies' Tailors at the end of their season go to work in the cloak shops. Transfer cards are demanded by the respective unions in control of the shops and this causes friction among the locals.

"Again, a sample maker or a ladies' tailor, after the season in his own trade is over often permits himself to accept a lower wage in the other trade, because he considers that a side line, and the interest of the worker in the other trade does not concern him. The active spirits at the head of both locals perceived this and were willing to join forces. To facilitate the process President Schlesinger advised the formation of a trades council to meet and discuss matters of common interest, so as to make the fusion of forces a success upon the convention stamping the project with approval.

"This Trades Council has been meeting weekly. At a mass meeting of the membership of both locals the establishment of the Trades Council and the ultimate amalgamation of the two locals was ratified.

"It is to be hoped that the general officers and delegates to the fourteenth convention in Boston will realize the necessity of reorganizing both locals under one charter."

"THE HEIRS OF ALL THE EARTH."

By Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

From street and square, from hill and glen,
Of this vast world beyond my door,
I hear the tread of marching men,
The patient armies of the poor.

The halo of the city's lamps
Hangs a vast torch-light in the air.
I watch it through the evening damps;
The masters of the world are there.

Not ermine clad, nor clothed in state,
Their title deeds not yet made plain;
But waking early, toiling late,
The heirs of all the earth remain.

Some day, by laws as fixed and fair
As guide the planets in their sweep,
The children of each outcast heir
The harvest fruits of time shall reap.

The peasant's brain shall yet be wise,
The untamed pulse beat calm and still;
The blind shall see, the lowly rise,
And work in peace time's wondrous will.

Some day without a trumpet's call,
This news shall o'er the earth be blown;
The heritage comes back to all;
The myriad monarchs take their own.

Our Free Forum

This column is for letters and short articles of members and readers on current trade and labor topics. The editor reserves the right to publish or withhold communications at his discretion and is not responsible for opinions expressed. He advises correspondents to avoid all personal attacks which may be mistaken for criticism, and will be glad to answer queries.

SHOULD WE HAVE SMALLER LOCALS

Editor Ladies' Garment Worker:

The idea of the writer in this subject in the last issue of the *Ladies' Garment Worker* is that a local consisting of more than 500 members cannot cultivate friendship and brotherliness. Union activity cannot be shared in by all, and an organization is merely mechanical, kept up by artificial means.

If it were the case that smaller locals or branches have the aforementioned qualities, Locals Nos. 11, 3 and 64 would be model organizations and their existence assured. But those locals have no more fraternity, solidarity and activity than Locals 1, 9, 23 and 35. The cloak pressers of New York once had two locals—Nos. 35 and 68. Did the members of Local 68 fare better than at present? By no means. There was friction, and, to some extent, competition.

Not once have the sample makers of Local No. 3 regretted their separation from Local No. 9. The condition of the sample makers has not improved as a result of their having a separate union. The members do not feel such nearness to one another as the finishers, even though the finishers' local consists of almost 8,000 members, and their expenses have increased too.

I am surprised at the writer of the article in question. He surely knows the cry of the operators, in the recent dispute with Local No. 1, namely, "Abolish the several locals in one and the same trade and city." It was this jurisdiction question that brought about the reorganization of Local No. 1. Now this writer comes and says that the only remedy is—smaller locals. Instead of centralization he advocates the idea of splitting up and breaking the strength of our organization. Imagine, for instance, that the 8,000 operators would be split up into sixteen locals. Similarly with the finishers and other locals. Now, naturally, when we talk in the name of democracy we must be so far democratic as to give every local autonomy, so that each local would have an executive board according to its desire. The International Union cannot establish uniformity of thought. Can you imagine a worse situation? For instance, there will be in one shop twenty operators of ten different lo-

icals, four pressers of four locals, five finishers of five locals, and everyone will recognize his executive board only. One executive board will decide one way and another board the other way. This, instead of uniting the workers in the shop, will divide them and create new barriers between one worker and another.

Let us now consider the financial side, which plays a large part in our organization. Does the writer know that all small locals, having even more than 500 members, barely exist? Not once are they anxious about their next month's office rent. Even if their weekly dues should be 25 cents it would not pay, because according to the plan of small locals every local would have an executive board, financial secretary and other officers, and considerable expenses.

If the motive for the new plan has arisen because of the recent dispute with Local No. 1, is it because a big local is sometimes tempted to overstep the bounds of organization, and to discipline a local of this kind great courage, responsibility and effort are needed, therefore it is proposed to divide our strength into small locals to make it easier to control, and, if necessary, to discipline them?—if this is the motive, then it is in the first place cowardly. Secondly, what would happen if ten locals of finishers join and raise the cry, for example, that no finishing should be made by machine, or some similar unrealizable demand, and threaten to withdraw from the Joint Board if their demand be not conceded? Then, instead of disciplining one local, the International would have to reorganize ten locals. Does not this show that the scheme of small locals is illogical?

If the idea is to establish a good control over the members, then instead of splitting them up into small groups it would be more advisable to do away with the present separate locals, separate offices, separate staffs and separate expenses, the total amount of which must be enormous. Instead of this, the membership department, and finance department of all the workers in their particular branch of industry should be concentrated in one central body under the supervision of the Joint Board. This system would effect economy and efficiency. It would pay to engage a financial expert to install a modern system of finance and save much money. It would give us a possi-

bility to introduce uniform dues, one membership committee, one grievance committee and one appeal committee on which all branches of trade would be represented; and instead of locals there would be trade branches. Every branch would have its executive board and elected representatives in the Joint Board. The branches would take up only trade questions. As for the financial and membership questions—these would be dealt with by the Joint Board.

This would give the Joint Board and the International full control over every local and would make it impossible for any local, for the sake of personal caprices, to dream of dictating terms to the central body or misuse the members' money in a desire to break up the union, as was the case recently with a group of irresponsible persons. The motto of our union is unity, integrity and not the splitting up of forces

M. COOK,
Local No. 9.

EDITOR'S REPLY

The first thing to be noticed in the above correspondence is that Brother Cook has not read the articles on this subject in the February and March issues of the *Ladies' Garment Worker*; so that he has not a clear view of the proposition and of the indisputable causes making smaller locals an urgent necessity.

It is strange that Brother Cook, an active member of his local, should have overlooked this matter. We find that many local officers and active members are in the same boat, being either too busy or negligent to follow their own trade press and keep well posted on important general matters within the organization.

There are certain evils due directly to the unnatural size of some of our locals, namely, indifference and aloofness of the large mass of members from the life and activity of their locals, the necessity of organizing and reorganizing every season and want of earnestness generally. Large locals are not a normal and regular thing in an organization. Where the local consists of thousands of members, there is no earthly chance for them to get the floor and express their opinions at members' meetings. Many of our members do not always want to hear what other people have to say; they sometimes would like other people to hear what they have to say. At large meetings this is impossible, and for that reason they stay away.

Brother Cook argues that the present smaller locals do not show the qualities of friendship and solidarity and activity which they are supposed to have because they are smaller. He cites for example Locals Nos. 11, 3 and 64.

In regard to Local No. 11, Brownsville Cloakmakers, the local has issued a report and review of its history to the convention, claiming to have developed certain quali-

ties and to have established a sound control over the Brownsville shops because of its smaller size, while if it had been swallowed up in the ocean of a big local there would have disappeared all the peculiar individuality and character of the local's useful career.

As to the Locals Nos. 3 and 64, it must be borne in mind that these locals were established on the same principle as the big locals, namely, "separate kingdoms," as Brother Cook calls them. They are not founded on that principle, which would give every member an equal opportunity to find expression, but rather on a kind of oligarchy or bureaucracy ruled from above by diplomats and officials. The success of such an organization depends on the ability and talent of the diplomats and officials and not on the will and enthusiasm and co-operation of the members. That is the chief trouble in all our locals, large or small.

My idea of smaller locals is based on the rule of the people, where the officers carry out the expressed will of the people and not, as they do at present, leaving everything to the officers. I mean locals which should gradually rise to a condition where at least fifty or sixty per cent. of the members should be capable of serving in official capacities. Now, we have not the human material from which to select officers. I agree that small locals founded on the principle of separate management and expenses must lead a poor existence.

Brother Cook paints a black picture of 8,000 operators split up into sixteen locals, each having complete autonomy and its own by-laws and their executive boards and members in the shops being continually at loggerheads. But this shows that he has not even read my article but only the heading: "A Local Union Should Consist of Not More Than 500 Members." Discussing the question whether the smaller locals will maintain harmony among themselves and not seek to foster separate interests and separate policies, my article reads:

"The duties and functions of the locals, the executive boards and Joint Boards would remain the same: namely, to improve conditions and strengthen the union. There is no need to change the present form of local autonomy. Every local should be free in strictly local matters, yet closely allied with the rest of the locals in the same branch of trade through a Joint Board, in all matters affecting the general interest. So far as the policy of the union, minimum scale of wages, maximum number of working hours, general strikes and other questions pertaining to the entire industry are concerned—these matters should remain, as at present, in the hands of the Joint Boards and the International Union."

Well informed union people know that by-laws must be in accord with the International constitution; that in an organization there can not be license to override the will of the majority, which is sometimes

mistaken for autonomy and freedom. A local going over the limit runs counter to democracy.

It does not follow that twenty operators of ten smaller locals will work in one shop. That is purely imaginary, and even if they should it does not follow that they will not rather go hand in hand with their interest with their local executives and work in harmony rather than develop friction and conflict.

I have a different picture in my mind; namely, that all trade questions, strikes, complaints and settlements will be taken care of by the Joint Board and the International; that the smaller locals need no separate officers and separate financial systems. Our Philadelphia Joint Board locals have one office and one financial system. There is no reason why the smaller locals should have one membership committee, one grievance committee and one appeal committee. But the main aim of the smaller locals will be to attract the members to their meetings, by encouraging them to take the floor and express their views and by interesting them in responsible work for their interest. At present they are indifferent because they have nothing more to do than pay their dues and listen to a dry report. Such matters as the present high cost of living, cooperative buying for the members and their families, benefit features, educational clubs, local libraries and amuse-

ment of such great interest as to wake up the membership from its indifference.

The work of a union is to educate its members not through outside educational influences but through union activity within, which would make them into better fighters in the economic struggle. At present this work is being done by a very few people; hence it is necessary to **control the members from above**, and we have not yet discovered the most efficient system of control. Many members continually slip away from all control. In smaller locals, properly organized, this control can be automatic—in every member's heart.

The plan of smaller locals aims at uniting the locals in a strong bond of solidarity rather than to separate them. Experience shows that locals are apt to imitate one another in positive undertakings for the common good, and some locals even unite for a common purpose to economize in expenditure, as, for instance, Locals Nos. 35, 9 and 23 are united in caring for the health of their membership through the Joint Board of Sanitary Control.

Above all, let no one compare small locals where the trade is organized to small locals where the trade is **not organized**, where the locals are engaged in a struggle for existence and cannot devote themselves to any kind of educational activity. Smaller locals would bring more solidarity between them, while at present every big local is a sort of "independent kingdom."

LABOR.

I've sailed your ships and your railroads,
I've worked in your factories and mines,
I've sailed the roads you drive on,
I've crushed the ripe grapes for your wines.

I've worked late at night on your garments,
I gathered the grain for your bread,
I built the fine house that you live in,
I printed the books you have read.

I've linked two great oceans together,
I've spanned your rivers with steel,
I built your towering skyscrapers,
And also your automobile.

I've gone out to wrecked ships in the life boats,
When the storm loudly cried for its prey;
I've guarded your house from marauders,
I have turned the night into day.

Wherever there's progress you'll find me,
Without me the world could not live;
And yet you would seek to destroy me
With the meager pittance you give.

Today you may grind me in slavery,
You may dictate to me from the throne;
But tomorrow I throw off my fetters,
And am ready to claim what I own.

You masters of field and of factory,
I am mighty and you are but few;
No longer I'll bow in submission,
I am Labor and ask for my due.

—Budd McKillips.

Directory of Local Unions

(Continued)

LOCAL UNION	OFFICE ADDRESS
40. New Haven Corset Workers	393 Columbus Ave., New Haven, Conn.
41. New York Wrapper and Kimono Makers	22 W. 17th St., New York City
42. Cleveland Cloak and Suit Cutters' Union	314 Superior Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
43. Worcester White Goods and Waist Workers	126 Green St., Worcester, Mass.
44. Chicago, Ill., Cloakmakers	1815 W. Division St., Chicago, Ill.
45. Syracuse, N. Y., Dressmakers	913 Almond St., Syracuse, N. Y.
46. Petticoat Workers' Union	22 W. 17th St., New York City
47. Denver, Colo., Ladies' Tailors	244 Champe St., Denver, Colo.
48. Italian Cloak, Suit and Skirt Makers' Union	231 E. 14th St., New York City
49. Boston Waistmakers	724 Washington St., Boston, Mass.
50. New York Children's Dressmakers	22 W. 17th St., New York City
51. Montreal, Canada, Custom Ladies' Tailors	387 City Hall Ave., Montreal, Can.
52. Los Angeles Ladies' Garment Workers	218 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, Cal.
53. Philadelphia, Pa., Cloak Cutters	244 S. 8th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
54. Chicago Raincoat Makers	409 S. Halstead St., Chicago, Ill.
56. Boston Cloakmakers	751 Washington St., Boston, Mass.
57. Cleveland Waist and Dressmakers	314 Superior Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
58. New York Waist Buttonhole Makers	80 E. 19th St., New York City
59. New Rochelle Ladies' Tailors	106 Union Ave., New Rochelle, N. Y.
60. Phila. Embroidery Workers	2126 N. 7th St., Phila., Pa.
61. Montreal, Canada, Cloak and Skirt Pressers	37 Prince Arthur E., Montreal, Can.
62. New York White Goods Workers	35 Second St., New York City
63. Cincinnati Cloakmakers	411 Elm St., Cincinnati, Ohio
64. New York Buttonhole Makers	112 W. 21st St., New York City
65. St. Louis Skirt, Waist & Dressmakers' Union	Fraternal Building, St. Louis, Mo.
66. New York Bonnaz Embroiderers	103 E. 11th St., New York City
67. Toledo Cloakmakers	813 George St., Toledo, Ohio
68. Hartford Ladies' Garment Workers' Union	16 Loomis St., Hartford, Conn.
69. Philadelphia Cloak Finishers	244 S. 8th St., Philadelphia, Pa.
70. Toronto Skirt and Dressmakers	194 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Canada
71. Chicago Ladies' Tailors	951 N. Hoyne Ave., Chicago, Ill.
72. Baltimore Dress and White Goods Workers	1023 E. Baltimore St., Baltimore, Md.
73. Boston Amalgamated Cutters	751 Washington St., Boston, Mass.
74. Vineland Cloakmakers' Union	H. Miller, 601 Landis Avenue
75. Worcester, Mass., Cloakmakers	26 Columbia St., Worcester, Mass.
76. Philadelphia Ladies' Tailors	505 Reed St., Philadelphia, Pa.
77. Waterbury Ladies' Garment Workers	54 Burton St., Waterbury, Conn.
78. St. Louis Cloak Operators	Fraternal Bldg., 11th and Franklin Aves.
80. Ladies' Tailors, Alteration and Special Order Workers	725 Lexington av., N. Y. C.
81. Chicago Cloak and Suit Cutters	909 N. Homan Ave., Chicago, Ill.
82. N. Y. Cloak Examiners, Squares & Bushelers' Union	228 Second av., N. Y. C.
83. Toronto, Canada, Cutters	110 Augusta Ave., Toronto, Canada
84. Toledo Ladies' Garment Cutters' Union	425 Parker Ave., Toledo, Ohio
85. Cincinnati Skirtmakers	411 Elm St., Cincinnati, Ohio
86. St. John Ladies' Gar. Workers' Union	92 St. James St., St. John, N. B., Can.
90. Custom Dressmakers' Union	Forward Bldg., 175 E. B'way, N. Y. City
92. Toronto, Canada, Cloak Pressers	110 Augusta Ave., Toronto, Canada
98. Cincinnati Skirt Pressers' Union	411 Elm St., Cincinnati, Ohio
100. Chicago Waist, Dress and White Goods Workers	1815 W. Division St., Chi., Ill.
101. Baltimore Ladies' Tailors	1023 E. Baltimore St., Baltimore, Md.
102. Montreal, Canada, Raincoat Makers	1138 Clarke St., Montreal, Canada
105. St. Louis Ladies' Tailors	Fraternal Bldg., 11th and Franklin Aves.
110. Baltimore Ladies' Garment Cutters' Union	1023 E. Baltimore St., Baltimore, Md.
111. Cleveland Raincoat Makers	314 Superior Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
112. Montreal, Canada, Ladies' Waist Makers	1271 Clarke St., Montreal, Canada

The International Ladies'
Garment Workers' Union

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(\$100,000.00)

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