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**BOLSHEVISM IN AMERICAN LABOR
UNIONS**

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BOLSHEVISM IN AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS

A Plea for Constructive Unionism

BY

JOHN A. DYCHE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JULIUS HENRY COHEN

There is no alleviation of the suffering of mankind except veracity of thought and action and the resolute facing the world as it is when the garment of make-believe with which pious hands have hidden its uglier features had been stripped off.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY.



NEW YORK
BONI & LIVERIGHT

1926

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES



X:960g W691N03.73
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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Why a Publisher's Preface? Simply because the announcement of our issuance of this book, **BOLSHEVISM IN AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS**, brought forth protests, even angry denunciations from two or three of our very close radical friends. We were told that the author of this book is, himself, an employer of labor, something, of course, which we ourselves knew. We were also informed that Mr. Dyche, although a Jew himself, which he sets forth in his book, makes a startling differentiation between the Eastern European Jew and the American Jew, accusing the former of being mainly responsible for the constant disturbances in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

The most impassioned attack that has been made by our friends concerns itself with Mr. Dyche's references to the extra-labor activities of the various unions about which he writes—their colleges, building enterprises, and general amelioration programs.

Briefly, our position is, and has always been, that we, as publishers, must maintain an open forum. During the World War more of our books were interdicted by the government than those of any other publisher. But at the time we were publishing Latzko's "Men in War," John Reed's "Ten Days That Shook the World," Albert Rhys Williams' "Through the Russian Revolution," Trotzky's "The Bolsheviki and World Peace," we issued the government's own defense of its position on conscientious objectors written by Major Walter Guest Kellogg. Side by side on our list may be found books by Bertrand Russell and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.; David Karsner's Life of Eugene V. Debs and Otto H. Kahn's "Of Many Things."

We believe that only such books as are obviously dishonest in intent or content are the only ones which should not be found on a useful publisher's list.

HORACE B. LIVERIGHT.

NOTE

THE word Yiddish, instead of Jewish, is used throughout, because the traits of the needle trade worker which I am trying to depict are peculiar, as far as I know, to the Jewish immigrant workers from Eastern Europe.

In the industry in which I am now engaged, there are quite a number of American-born Jewish workers, some of whom I employ and whom I have had an opportunity to observe quite closely. The native-born worker has quite a different conception of things generally than the European and, he has in fact, little in common with the disappointed, disgruntled immigrant one finds in the dress and cloak industry.

The native Jewish worker, like the average American, is an ardent sportsman. The radical catchwords have little fascination for him. Life, as he sees it, is a game in which, of course, the best man wins. Rockefeller, Morgan, Ford are to him the financial and industrial Babe Ruth. He knows that not every one can be the winner.

The immigrant worker from the despotic countries of Eastern Europe generally is disappointed and discontented. He hates and envies the "belorouchka" (white-collared person). He hates the landlord, who, he believes, took the land away from him. He hates the government official who took his last penny away in taxes and who made him do military service. He hates the "capitalist" who, he believes, robs him of the fruit of his toil.

A closer study of the Yiddish worker the reader will find in Chapters VIII and IX.

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INTRODUCTION

IN 1910 when I became counsel for the Cloak, Suit and Skirt Manufacturers' Protective Association, organized to meet the issue of the famous strike of that year, the then Secretary-Treasurer of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, John Dyche, was a figure of a man whom I admired but who withal seemed to me to be something of an intelligent but misguided giant. As we passed out of the stage of strike belligerency, I came to see him at closer range. Three outstanding qualities, as others did, I came to see were characteristic of the man. They were: personal integrity of the highest order, personal courage of the red-blooded variety, and a self-sacrificing purpose to serve his people constructively. This trinity of virtues has always made him seem to me one of the greatest labor leaders this country has produced. He went down to defeat with high honor. Why? Let him tell his story himself.

In 1913, when I helped to shape the Protocol of Peace in the dress and waist industry, John Dyche was then the outstanding figure in the Union. It is not too much to say that at that time it was confidence in his leadership which led my clients to go into these epoch-making agreements. It was faith in John Dyche which made for faith in John Dyche's Union. That the plans should result ultimately in the disintegration of the constructive forces then working from both sides—result furthermore in the disappearance

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of the very leaders among the manufacturers who signed the Protocol, as well as the disappearance from power of himself, minimizes not in the least my confidence in the principles he stood for nor in Dyche himself.

✓ I have seen the principles under other leadership take root elsewhere and rise to great height. Naturally, one looks for explanation. Is the type of man of John Dyche destined to fail as a labor leader? Is courageous, outspoken criticism in such a leader an asset or a liability? Dyche hates politicians. You can see that in his talk, in his writing. He hates truculence. He knows only the tact of outspoken candor. But it is fair to say that if he had continued in power, some of the worst of the present evils of the industry would not now exist.

Governor Smith, in approving the State Housing Law this year (1926), compared the measure presented to him by the Republican Legislature with the one drawn by the State Housing Commission. "But Mr. Politics put his nose in the door," said the Governor, "and we cannot get the ideal we strove for." "Mr. Politics put his nose in the door," says Mr. Dyche. Does he mean politics as we know it in political life? He means "*union politics*"—the kind of politics, however, which, in the union as often in government, puts organization above ideals, aggrandizement of power over principles, helps to keep men in power because of their influence with voters, wins victories which in essence are defeats, and, finally, develops cancers that eat away the very life of the organization itself. But Dyche tells us more. It is a terrible indictment which he draws against the propagandists of the *klassenkampf*. The poor cloakmaker—John Dyche's Moïshe—exploited for the sake of a social program, elicits our sympathy. Worse still, he

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paints the picture of an industry all but ruined through the transfer of power from the employer to the union. Economic processes dammed at one point find their outlets underground. Bootlegging and law-enforcing officers—all the result of ill-conceived restraint. What a tragic picture he draws! Trenchant, biting, with the literary skill that comes from clear thinking, he etches his message in copper. Literally, it burns.

I should not want to be regarded as saying "Amen" to everything Dyche says in this manuscript. He would not, I am sure, expect me to do so. For example, his strictures on "outsiders" and his strictures on the legal profession and the part lawyers played in the industry. While, of course, I do not take as personal these references, they do not win my concurrence. Hilquit and London were on "the other side," but their sincerity of purpose I never questioned, though I differed with them a thousand times. I was always persuaded and still believe that they willed to be constructive. Like other lawyers, however—like myself—they suffered from the limitations of their retainer; they could travel no faster than their clients permitted them to go. Nor do I agree with Dyche (as most every one knows) in his strictures on the processes of arbitration as a substitute for the strike. The industry would have died but for these institutions. As for inside history of the Union, I can vouch only for Dyche as a competent and truth-telling, if hard-biting, witness. The facts he tells are the facts as he saw them. He ought to know. Others may contradict his testimony. But his testimony is his testimony. It is worth the telling and is much the most instructive of any testimony I have yet heard in the industry. Obviously, when I wrote "Law and Order in Indus-

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try" (1916) I could but guess and surmise where Dyche would speak authoritatively. Ten years have elapsed. Time to allow the molten metal to cool and to look at it dispassionately. Dyche had to get out of the industry. So did most of the constructive leaders on the employers' side whom I knew and with whom I worked. Many of the things they prophesied have come true. Still the mass of the workers are uninformed of these economic causes and results. If Dyche's "diagnosis" could be placed in the hands of every garment worker and employer, would they not know more than they do now? "Truth is mighty and will prevail." Sixteen years have elapsed since the Protocol in the cloak and suit industry was signed. It brought into existence, as Dyche points out, a powerful trades union, one of the most powerful to-day. It dominates the industry. In the sanitary field conditions have been revolutionized. But on the economic side has the International Union done what was expected of it?

John Dyche, now himself an employer of men, is still a leader of workers. In these chapters he has justified the faith in his courage, his intellect and his sense of service to the cause in which he enlisted. To paraphrase, "Though they slay me, yet will I trust in them." This message is his message to the workers. But it is more than that. It is experience for the inexperienced. It is judgment and knowledge. It is a primer of facts—a case book—for all who would try to organize industry for social progress. That elusive factor—the human element—is here revealed, revealed by an expert, a real expert. Let us hope revealed for good in the future.

JULIUS H. COHEN.

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THE preacher is disliked the world over while the agitator is not. Why? Because the preacher criticizes, calls the attention of his hearers to their own personal faults and shortcomings, whereas the agitator criticizes, calls the attention of his hearers to the faults of—others. Simple, isn't it?

When trouble comes we are all inclined to fasten its cause on others, rather than our ourselves. And the more foolish we are the stronger is our conviction that somebody else is the cause of that trouble. Yes, the more difficult it is to convince us that our own shortcomings are the cause of our misery.

It is human nature to look for some scapegoat. Since the Germans lost the war, anti-semitism became stronger than ever in that country. In Soviet Russia, the people are sure that the cause of their trouble, the extreme poverty of the masses, is the Allied Powers, the "capitalistic" governments.

The garment workers, too, like all others, have their scapegoat. The guilty ones are the manufacturers, the employers. They simply will not allow the workers to make a decent living. Were they less selfish and less dishonest, everything would be all right. Lately the union officials have been included in the list of the accused. They are now receiving a portion of the blame that in former years had been reserved exclusively for the employers.

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When you see people become enthused over the oratory of a Bryan or a Debs, you may be sure that their speeches contain very little truth, otherwise the masses would not run after them.

You know the story of the Prince, who, addressing a crowd incognito, was so surprised when the mob applauded his remarks that he asked his friend whether he had said anything wrong. What is agreeable is not always true and what is true is not always agreeable. Truisms, but they stand.

A genuine friend is apt to call attention to your shortcomings rather than to your accomplishments. Wise parents when they speak to their children generally avoid talking to them of their merits and accomplishments.

The organized Yiddish worker considers himself the most enlightened in the world. He attends endless meetings, lectures, demonstrations. There he is agitated, propagandized, educated, patted on the back. Here he finds his enemies, real or imaginary criticized, and denounced. He goes away convinced that he is the cleverest, the most progressive creature in the world, never suspecting that his so-called "progressive movement" is only the froth of his own restless, disgruntled mind; the mind of a person who for ages has been a wanderer. The person who is always looking for something. What this something is he himself does not know. Above all he is looking for something to find fault with.

✓ High sounding phrases are to the Yiddish workers what

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beer is to the German, whisky to the Irishman, and opium to the Chinaman. They feel relieved when they find an opportunity either to indulge in or listen to them. And the radicals in the Yiddish labor movement, as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore, are the extremest of the extreme—when it affects some one else's interest. Scratch this radical, touch him in the spot that affects his personal interest, and you will often find him an ultra-conservative. The day the members of the American Security League know the Yiddish workers a little better than they do, will be the night they will sleep sounder, to indulge in an Irish bull.

The leaders bluff, and the mass is restless. When the mass finds out that it has been bluffed, turmoil and restlessness result. To quiet them, the leaders promise something. That is, they bluff them. When the mass finds out that it has been bluffed, it becomes again restless. In this way the bluff causes the turmoil, and the turmoil calls forth the bluff. Each reacts upon the other. Hence the growing demoralization and the distrust of the leaders by the masses. The so-called "Right Wingers" consist mostly of bluffers and the "Left Wingers" of the element of restlessness, although there are bluffers and disturbers enough and to spare in both camps.

The "Left Wing" movement represents the organized protest of the disappointed masses whom the communist politicians use for their own purposes. Of communism itself, the mass knows little and cares less. Instead of being known as "Left Wingers" they should be called the Opposition.

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Without scientific theories the Germans make no move. From the science of the races they have evolved anti-semitism, and race hatred. From the science of socialism they have evolved the theory of "class struggle" and class hatred. Both these "sciences" lead to civil war. Why is it that the Yiddish worker who so strenuously objects to race hatred, of which they are often victims, the propaganda of class hatred should have become so widespread? This singular phenomenon I will discuss in detail later on (Chap. IX).

Movements progress only in proportion as their leaders stand above and try to lift the masses to their own level. When the leaders lower themselves and become the followers of the masses, the movement becomes morally bankrupt. The latest turmoil of the "Left Wingers" is the result of the moral bankruptcy of the Yiddish labor movement.

That radicalism should so often result in demoralization and turmoil is quite natural. The radical is constantly telling his audience of the "enormous power of the organized working class," and must naturally make large promises. He raises the expectation of the masses. When their hopes are not realized, they become disappointed, they begin to accuse their leaders and become restless.

"Labor right or wrong, I am for labor." When labor is in the wrong, nobody profits by it except those who have instigated labor to do the wrong thing. The cause of labor suffers as much from its coddlers and blind defenders as it does from its uncompromising opponents.

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BOLSHEVISM IN AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS

CHAPTER I

WHO AM I AND WHAT DO I WANT?

I AM after you, Mr. Cloakmaker and Mr. Dressmaker, because I feel I am intimately acquainted with many of the details which make up your problem. I know, too, that I am partly responsible for many of them. Also because I have a dream I have cherished for a long while of leading you out of your present chaotic condition. To lead you away from what you have been propagandized to believe is the right path. I know it is difficult, perhaps impossible. But I believe with that French thinker who said, "The impossible is sure to happen."

I do not expect that you will derive a great deal of pleasure from what I am putting down here in black and white. I do not know who will most resent my words, the Right or the Left Wingers. To me, they are six of one and a half-dozen of the other, with the leaders of both showing their greatest earnestness in their denouncements of each other.

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Nor will the members of the Union who have come to me bitter with complaints against their officials, enjoy my opinion: "The officers and the members are all cut of the same piece of cloth; they don't deserve any better leadership."

In treating disease, the all important task is to determine the nature and the character of the illness, diagnosis, as it is called, while the method of medications is almost standardized. I am going to try to make a detailed analysis of conditions in your trade, then follow up their developments, and later describe in detail significant incidents of your organizations, analyze the work of your officers, representatives, lawyers, etc., and finally bring to life some facts which many of you, I am afraid, would like to forget. I am not anxious to "rub it into" somebody. I do not want to "get even" with some old colleagues. But I do want to indicate to you what form of organization, of unionism, the cloak and dress industry needs so that it should be of benefit, not only to a limited number of paid officials and their hangers on, but to all its members. To approximate this, I must call your attention to the causes which brought about the present situation. I must enter into many details which I otherwise would have left alone. I must show the inner side which hitherto has not appeared in the press.

Not considering myself a strong Yiddish patriot,

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I am not afraid to confess that many disagreeable things now existing in your trade are largely a result of Yiddish shortcomings. This applies to both Yiddish employers and workers. At the same time, nobody knows better than I do the excellent qualities Yiddish workers possess, namely the absence of blind obstinacy, a mental agility, a capacity to change, to adapt themselves to new environment. These traits they possess in larger measure than the other workers of this country. Directed in the right channels, they should have brought about a most desirable change in the methods of your organization, and even, eventually, have contributed something new in the way of solving the industrial problems of the whole country. Personally, I have no special cause to love the Yiddish workers, nor any selfish aim to attain. This much I do want to be credited with. I am not selfishly interested in them any more than their paid officials, whose number increases daily. I am not looking for a position in your organization, nor am I a lawyer looking for a fat fee, or a politician looking for their votes, I can luxuriate myself in the privilege of telling openly many things that their leaders themselves talk to one another behind closed doors. I make no apology for my absence of figures, or quotations from government authorities on the subject. Neither will I drag in hearsay allegations of facts which some one has heard some one else relate. I

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have restricted myself to such facts and such incidents as I myself have witnessed, facts I have lived through. Many of you have participated in what I am about to relate. When an investigator knows his human material, the human element, and the psychology of the people engaged in an industry he is studying, then only do facts and figures of industrial life possess vitality and power.

I do not pretend to possess the scientific equipment of the writer of the official history of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union which appeared recently. Neither do I pretend to be a simple workman, as my former colleague, Mr. Rosenberg, the former President of the I. L. G. W. Union did, who recently published a book dealing with the "Reminiscences of a Cloakmaker."

Some facts about myself are due, I think, the general reader. I entered the tailoring trade in 1886 in Yorkshire, England, as a machine operator. A few months later I joined the labor union in my trade, which I then helped to organize. In 1901, shortly after my arrival in this country, I became a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. From 1904 until 1914 I served the organization in the capacity of general secretary. When I first took office in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union its membership was less than one thousand. When I left it in 1914 it was in the neighborhood of a hundred thousand,

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and the union was enjoying contractual relations with the bulk of the manufacturers in the various branches of the woman's garment industry. During the past ten years I myself have been an employer of (union) labor. In this way I have had the unusual opportunities to study the labor problem from these different and distinct points of view. I have also studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science for several years while still working at the trade. My work there on Alien Immigration was noticed even on this side of the Atlantic. Unlike so many of your "class conscious" lawyers eager to fight the cause of organized labor for a high fee, I did not learn a profession.

Unless you are in possession of these simple facts about myself, you will be utterly unable to understand the paradox of a person who has devoted the best part of his life to the labor movement, now being forced to pick a fight with his own union colleagues. But the fact remains that almost from the first day after the signing of the Protocol of Peace of 1910 (when the International became a power in the cloak industry), I have been "against the union," to quote some of my old colleagues. Seeing that my constructive efforts for the welfare of its members were thwarted by officials who loved their jobs better than they did the truth; I was forced eventually to enter the business world, a stranger in a strange land.

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In the English academic circle in which my mind received its training I have lost some of the narrow prejudices of my fellow worker. I did not, for instance, consider my employer as my natural enemy, nor look with distrust or suspicion at anyone who is not a member of my own "class." I am quoting words popular with the Yiddish workers who use it to designate all those non-wage earners who do not belong to their socialistic sect.

It is this acquaintance with social and economic problems which made it then possible for me to realize the senselessness of the fight of the union against the Cloak Manufacturers' Protective Association. I could not help foreseeing that the fight of our "true union men" against the Protocol of Peace must lead to the destruction of the larger shops in the cloak trade and the driving out of the industry the most responsible element in the ranks of the employers. Not that I think that one had to be a student of economics to realize that in this respect the union acted like a bull in a china shop. While yet in England, that is to say, in my early days in the union movement, it became clear to me that a labor organization, especially in the garment industry, had greater strength when dealing with an organized body of employers.

In this monograph I intend to give the result of some forty years of experience and close observation of the garment industries, and to indicate

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the causes which brought about the present widespread dissatisfaction of the workers, a dissatisfaction which is shared by all classes of people who derive their living from it. I will also discuss possible remedies.

CHAPTER II

THE RUIN OF THE CLOAK INDUSTRY

PRECISELY at ten o'clock in the morning of July 10, 1910, something unusual and unheard of happened. Fifty thousand workers in the cloak and suit industry in the city of New York, the majority of whom were Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, responded to the call of a handful of trade union agitators, left their machines and enrolled one after another in the ranks of organized labor.

Workers from the sweat-shops of the East Side joined hands with the highest skilled and best paid artisans of the exclusive Fifth Avenue cloak and suit houses. More than this, they kept out on strike for weeks and months without funds, without proper organization, without trained leadership.

During this walk-out, the leading cloak manufacturers in the city formed an association under the name of the Cloak and Suit Manufacturers' Protective Association, resolving that their workers must return to work as individuals based on a determination that under no circumstances would they recognize the union, or deal with its leaders. But

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such was the determination of the workers that after three months had elapsed the employers became convinced that there was no possibility of securing the return of their work people except as an organized body. Thus the Union.

It was September before the strikers agreed to return to work. By that time a revolution in the labor conditions in the cloak industry in the city of New York had been brought about. What legislators, social reformers, philanthropists and all kinds of "friends of labor" had failed to accomplish during years of agitation, the strikers themselves obtained in these intervening weeks. And they succeeded effectively, thoroughly. The change in their status was so radical, so sweeping, that everybody was amazed. Socialist wiseacres who hitherto pinned their faith in "political action," and who had assured the workers that "the economic struggle was dead" were taken off their feet. The "know it alls," who had persistently assured that the Yiddish workers would never become organized, that by nature they were too individualistic to achieve concerted action, were bewildered. This strike put an end to the chaotic labor conditions that hitherto prevailed in the cloak industry where everything had been left to the tender mercies of competing employers and unorganized workers.

Home work was abolished. So was the practice of carrying home work after working hours. The

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workers, too, became free from petty annoyances, such as the payment of fines, charges for electric power, needles, machine straps, cotton and silks. No longer did they have to pay deposit for machine parts. Hitherto the work had been mostly done by foot power, and furthermore, the operators in some branches of the trade had to drag their own sewing machines from shop to shop as they changed employment. But the greatest benefit which the workers' revolt brought about was the regulation of the hours of labor. With the exception of some of the exclusive Fifth Avenue houses a normal working day was unknown and "overtime" was unheard of. At the height of the season the employees worked "all the hours that God sent." There was no day of rest.

The equalization and standardization of labor conditions in the industry commanded the respect and devotion of the workers to the union and its leaders. The very employers who but recently were determined to go down to ruin rather than deal with the union also began to feel the benefit of this radical change.

The Union, its method of dealing and negotiating with employers, its peace pact, known as the "Protocol of Peace" became widely known. Other industries modeled their agreements after it. For a time it appeared as if the International had initiated a novel and revolutionary method of solving the

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problem of Capital and Labor. News of its great victory reached workers' unions as far as Australia. Inquiries came from all parts of the civilized world to ascertain how it had been accomplished, and what could be learned from it by labor.

Unfortunately for the members, the union soon became the tool of unscrupulous demagogues and silver-tongued orators. Under their influence the workers began to overestimate their power, the power of labor unionism. A swarm of faddists of every description, fancy lawyers and economic Messiahs began to make their appearance among them. The organization became an experiment station for all sorts of "friends of labor" with their fantastic theories and "scientific ideas."

To the members, the union became a kind of Pandora box. All that was necessary for them was to join the organization and, presto, a union shop appeared with an all-powerful shop chairman and a walking delegate who would be able to let them have all kinds of shop privileges and force the employer to pay them high wages, and grant them short hours of labor. As for work—"You know what you have to do;" "take it easy." I'm quoting, not inventing.

Drunk with victory, refusing all counsel of moderation, the members of the union never suspected that their real enemies were within its own ranks, men who were using the organizations and the prin-

ciples it represented, to shield and cover their own selfishness.

Newly arrived "liberators" who knew how to gain the workers' confidence for personal aggrandizement were welcomed. Men who knew how to exploit their inexperience with unionism, their narrow prejudices, their childish enmity of the employers, were all lionized.

To-day the cloak industry in the city of New York lies in ruin and with it lies the union organization. Some of the biggest operators in the trade have closed their factories and quit the business of manufacturing cloaks entirely. The rest began to reduce their plants and to send their work to the smaller outside shops and to out-of-town factories. Two new classes appeared in the cloak industry, the jobber and the sub-manufacturer. The former is composed of the erstwhile cloak manufacturer who, worn out by frequent strikes and irreparable losses, found the cost of production inside his factory mounting higher and higher. The latter is composed of former "kaempfer," of "true union men," who in many instances were trouble instigators in the shop and who were now rushing to the rescue of their employers, releasing them from the necessity of manufacturing inside at a loss, by fixing up a small shop and there making the garments for them. With so many workers idle because of the inactivity of the inside factories, this new class of

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employers, who became known as sub-manufacturers, were able to secure easily all the help they needed, at considerably lower wages than the inside manufacturer had to pay under the Protocol.

To-day the number of manufacturers in the city of New York who produce all the garments inside their own factories can be counted on one's finger tips. The remaining so-called manufacturers are really no more than jobbers who employ a few workers inside their own premises for show purposes only. The bulk of their merchandise is made in the outside shops of the former "kaempfer," the "true union men," the outside contractors and sub-manufacturers.

And the Union? The organization which was once the pride of the American labor movement. What is its status to-day? Torn into two warring factions, engaged in a fratricidal war, exceeding in bitterness anything known in the American labor movement.

Each of the warring factions believes that when it will have succeeded in crushing the other, and will have removed from office the leaders of the opposing faction, peace and harmony will prevail and the organization will go forward in strength. None seem to appreciate the fact that the present appalling situation is due not to the incompetence of any particular leader of either faction, but is related to deeper causes. No change in the personnel

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in the administration could possibly alter matters, for the cause of the present strife is due to the sad fact that the cloak industry has been destroyed.

The state of helplessness to which the union has been brought is indicated by the fact that the sub-manufacturers recently threatened a strike against the jobbers. The object of this strike was to prevent the jobbers from sending their work out to be made in non-union shops.

Here I am trying to indicate the cause which brought about this ruin and to show how the leaders of both the present warring factions have contributed equally to the present appalling condition in which the industry finds itself. The source of all the trouble is, I believe, due to the union policy, or to be more correct, to the nonunion-like policy of the International, which has been pursued and fostered by the leaders of both factions. I hope to show a possible way out, for I sincerely believe the industry can be rebuilt and the union reorganized on a solid, healthful foundation.

I, too, share in the deep-rooted belief existing among all the classes engaged in the woman's garment industry, employers as well as employees, that only a thorough organization of the workers in the industry can lift it out of the present chaotic condition into which it has fallen.

CHAPTER III

INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY

A LITTLE over a year ago I received a telephone call from a Dr. Levine, who said he wanted to see me. I remembered having met him at the Liberal Club some ten or twelve years ago, when I was a member there. He had something important to tell me, he repeated on the phone. We agreed to meet the following Saturday at the Civic Club. There he informed me that the International Union officials had commissioned him to write the history of the organization. To accomplish this, he was interviewing, soliciting opinion, and discussing certain phases in the history of the International Union with the various persons who had taken an active part in its creation. Also, he wanted me to lend him certain materials in my possession relative to that organization.

Knowing only too well how anxious the officials of the International Union are to tell the public the truth and nothing but the truth about their work and their activities, I distrusted the whole idea. Why all this sudden rush to publish a history of

the organization, when its positive results were of a highly speculative nature? I knew that the Union was not growing stronger, and that there was much discontent in the ranks of the members. There was as yet not enough perspective, in my humble opinion, to write an "impartial" record of its activities and achievements. The actors in this economic drama were, for the most part, still alive. How could their contributions be impartially appraised when there had been so much discord and so little agreement among them? By way of answering this, the historian of the International explained the necessity, as he saw it, for collecting all materials as soon as possible in view of the fact that the actors were disappearing from the scene, one by one.

To overcome my mistrust, which he right away sensed, as to his impartiality in the proposed history, he assured me, on his word of honor, that no facts relating to my person would ever be printed without proof sheets being submitted to me in advance of publication.

On this reassurance I forwarded to him a mass of material which was in my possession. I also answered several questions he put to me relative to the well-known Hourwich affair, explaining to him the many knotty points that led up to the abrogation of the Protocol of 1910. "Now," he commented, "I understand many things relating to this

important period in the history of the International Union that were obscure to me."

During the course of our conversation, Dr. Levine informed me that when Mr. Schlesinger took office as President of the International Union, he had destroyed many records which related to the history of the "old administration," which were in the files of the general office. He was told the same by Mr. Rosebury, then in charge of the archives of the International Union. In this way there was not left a single copy of *The Cloakmaker* which was issued by Local No. 1 (New York Cloakmakers), during the years 1907-1908. Neither were there left any issues of the *Wecker* which took the place of the *Cloakmaker*. This *Wecker* had been the official organ of the International Union.

To be sure, this journal has been impolite enough to criticise the members of the Socialist Party for their indifference to unionism. At one time, the United Hebrew Trades had entered into a fight with the "Workers' Circle," a socialistic and radical benevolent society, because of the latter's hostility to the union movement. The cause which compelled us at that time, when the International Union was so poor financially, to issue a journal of our own, was the fact that the *Jewish Daily Forward*, a widely-read socialist newspaper refused to print anything relating to the cloakmakers and their efforts to organize themselves. Mr. Cahan, its editor,

said to me, "It is of no use to take up our space with the cloakmakers and their so-called organization. Nobody except a handful of trade-union fanatics are interested in it. In this country you are still a greenhorn. Our manager knows the situation much better than you, and he assures me that it is useless for *The Forward* to be bothered with it."

I am relating all this to inform the general reader what then was the attitude both of the socialists and their press toward the Labor Union movement. Their battle cry was: "The economic struggle is dead, and the leaders are corrupt." Their argument was that in former years, when Capital was still weak, not as well fortified, unionism might have been of some use to the workers. Now, with Capital so strongly entrenched, both unions and strikes were futile means of improving workers' conditions. A member of the executive board of the Socialist Party told me at that time that it was his firm belief that the union movement was nothing but fake and bluff. All this indicates the exact value of the opinions of those socialist theorists. As editor of *The Wecker*, I was, naturally, persona non grata to *The Forward*. It hated independence of thought worse than it hated being crossed in its editorial dictatorship. The very idea of criticising the socialists because of their attitude to Unionism! The audacity of agitating a general strike in the cloak trade without consulting or obtaining the sanction

of the chief rabbi of the Yiddish labor movement, Mr. Abraham Cahan.

To return to the "official" history of the International Union and its historian. Weeks and months passed by, and I heard not a word from Dr. Levine. Nor was the material I lent him returned. The man is writing a history that may take him a year or two to finish, I thought. Imagine what a great undertaking it must be to write a history of the development of the Woman's Garment Industry and the progress of its organization throughout the United States. Imagine my surprise, when a few months ago, I happened to read in the *New York Times* Book Review section a review of the book, wherein it was referred to as a wonderful history. Nothing like it had been accomplished in the labor world. One superlative after the other was dragged in by the reviewer, whose enthusiasm for the book was so great that he called it "The Iliad of the Woman's Garment Workers."

The wonders accomplished by the organization, the heroism of its members and leaders the reviewer showed by quoting incidents from it that I know never took place. A few weeks after this I read an advertisement on the last page of *The New Republic* citing its praise by several university professors. Similar expressions of opinions have appeared from time to time in various publications. Everybody seemed enthusiastic about this work.

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I no longer wonder that the scientific world questions whether there is such a thing as a social science after this poppycock. Why of late, they have been asking how is it so much progress has been made in every branch of science, whereas sociology appears not to move at all? When sociologists like Dr. Levine draw their conclusion and base their theories on such facts and such data as he has gathered for his "official" history.

It is quite possible for a thinker to be objective when he is dealing with dead figures, such as those of heavenly bodies, atoms, molecules, etc. Soon, as scientists begin to investigate the behavior of human beings they at once lose their objectivity. The historian becomes a writer of fiction.

I was not really surprised at all this. Since the new administration came into office in 1914, the International Union undertook an advertising and publicity campaign both in the Yiddish and English press, the like of which was unknown to the American labor movement. *The Watchman* of the anarchist weekly publication, "Die Freie Arbeiter Stimme," was made the watchdog of the General Office of the International Union. He became editor of the official journal and there took care that not one word of criticism of the doings of the officers should appear in the official press, but kept on telling the workers of the struggles and victories of the International. Facts and instances

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were related illustrating the trade union statesmanship, the foresight, the business ability of its leaders and officers. In the English press their "business ability" was stressed, in the Yiddish their "radicalism."

Why did Dr. Levine forget to send me as he promised, the proofs of that part of his history relating to my person? After reading all the puffs it received from a friendly press I became curious to see what kind of a history it was. I read the book and found it to be nothing but an advertisement of the general office of the International Union sent out in the form of a scientific publication. No doubt it will serve as material for social science. And, who knows but new social theories may be built, based in the facts and data gathered in this book. This "history" may even become a textbook in American universities. Stranger things than that have happened.

This history is really a book full of tittle-tattle, of anecdotes and happenings that the "historian" picked up in offices of the union and East Side cafés. At the same time he left out such important events as actually did take place in the organization, and which had a great influence on the development of the women's garment industries in this country. Events that if stated give quite a different conception of the real character and the nature of the methods and tactics adopted by the union, and the

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exact results achieved. And these events if brought to the surface would throw quite a different light on the whole situation in the woman's garment industry and the real results achieved by the International Union.

CHAPTER IV

UNITED CLOAK AND SUIT MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION

IN this "official" history Dr. Levine left out many things that actually should have been chronicled, while recording many events that never happened. For instance, he made absolutely no reference to the existence of the United Cloak and Suit Manufacturers' Association of New York City, of which a Mr. Orently was manager, who at the time of which I am writing dealt with Mr. Abraham Bisno, who was representing the union.

For "reasons of state" the existence of this association had to be left out of the "official" history of the union. How otherwise could the author conceal the fact that the union's victory against the Protective was barren and bitter, for it had no other result, as far as the workers were concerned, than throwing them back into labor conditions that were worse.

The existence of this Employers' Association employing over one-third of the entire membership of the cloakmakers' Local Unions and its recognition

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on the part of the union was the cause of friction and misunderstanding between the officers of the Cloak and Suit Manufacturers' Protective Association of New York City and the representatives of the union. The representatives of the Protective Association often accused the union. They claimed that the fight against the Protocol and their Association was the result of a conspiracy on the part of Mr. A. Bisno and the United Cloak Manufacturers Association to injure and destroy their organization for the benefit of the United Association. (Similar events has happened in the labor union movement.) In proof of their complaint, they called our attention to the undeniable fact that the union was directing its energy against the members of their Association representing the best and the largest cloak factories in the trade where labor conditions were admittedly superior to that of the United Association. Of this damaging accusation on the part of the representatives of the Protective Association, the union officials were unable to clear themselves. No doubt this idea in their mind contributed to and hastened the abrogation of the Protocol on the part of that Association in 1915.

That Mr. Bisno's agitation against the Protective Association and the Protocol had any sinister motive could only be believed by those who did not know Mr. Bisno's extraordinary honesty and

straightforwardness. Nevertheless, some of the officials of the United Association had influenced Mr. Bisno, through his naiveté and simplemindedness, to take a stand against the Protective. Why he ever picked out the body of employers in whose shops labor conditions were the best, for the object of his attacks, will ever be a mystery to me.

If I did not know that the greatest number of my readers would be cloakmakers engaged in the cloak trade, I, too, might be tempted, like the "official" historian, to leave out all mention of this unhappy event. In the building trades there were corrupt leaders, like Brindell and Sam Parks, whose tactics were overlooked by some of its members because their wages were increased. Regret this moral standard as much as you please. It did not destroy the building trades if it did blast a few reputations. This crazy fight which brought victory to the union, brought also defeat to its members. For its one tangible practical result was to drive the work from the shop of the Protective Association where wages were highest and working conditions the best, to the shops of competitors where wages and earnings were considerably lower.

In an organization whose sole object is the improvement of the conditions of its members, such a blunder should have been impossible. But before the reader finishes reading this monograph, he will have become acquainted with elements and forces of

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the so-called "progressive" Yiddish labor movement, which make anything and everything seem possible. Then it will become clear how it was possible for an organization as large as the Cloakmakers' Union to undertake a fight as quixotic as Don Quixote's. There is this difference. The Spaniard was trying to destroy windmills, while the union officials were trying to destroy—did destroy—the improvements that had been made in the working conditions and wages of their members.

Nor could this criminal fight against the best shops in the trade ever have been conducted without the coöperation, active or passive, of the present officials of the International Union. It is senseless to say that Mr. Bisno, and later Professor Hourwich, were able to carry on this tragic fight alone. The others fought behind a smoke screen, taking good care to do nothing that would compromise themselves, one way or the other. Sitting on the fence, with an eye on their own jobs! Had the interest of the cloakmakers been so dear to the officials of the union, as their interest in their own positions, the cloak industry would to-day be quite different. Alas! What will people not do for the sake of earning a living for their families.

Do you understand why such an important economic phenomenon as the existence for five or six years of the United Association is entirely left out in the "official" history of the International, which

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is so full otherwise of fiction, and incidents that never occurred?

On the other hand the historian, when the opportunity presents itself, tries to get the best of the "cursed traitor" who had the audacity to fight openly against the "slaves of the Protocol." When, for instance, Dr. Levine in his "history" speaks of the ultimatum which the Protective Association sent to the Union, in which they demanded the resignation of Prof. Hourwich, the historian made the following statement:

"It is said that this ultimatum was suggested by Dyche to Julius Henry Cohen, the lawyer of the Protective Association." If it were not for the words, "it is said," I would have compelled the historian and the publisher of this "history" to prove this in a court of law. In making this statement the historian makes the accusation that while being an officer of the International Union, I had conspired with the attorney of the Association against the Union.

CHAPTER V

THE UNION ABOVE ALL

WHY is it, readers will ask, that writers and investigators of labor problems and labor organizations have not yet cared to find out what really is taking place in the garment industries? Why do they skip over the evils there existent, although they seem to see through magnifying glass the better side of it? Why, for instance, should a group of university professors come out with an incorrect declaration in the daily press favoring the union? Can it be possible, one naturally asks, that the whole faculty of a university could be guilty of making a false public statement. Let us see. You may remember that in 1916 there was a lockout of the cloakmakers. I will indicate some of the events that led up to it.

At the end of 1915 the Cloak and Suit Manufacturers Protective Association (the first employers' organization to sign a collective agreement with the union, and which has been instrumental in the signing of several other collective agreements in the woman's garment industries) abrogated the Pro-

tol of Peace with the International. It is true that all the reforms and changes in the Protocol originally demanded by Mr. Bisno and later by Prof. Hourwich were won by the union. Mr. Bisno's cure-all, or hobby, the Impartial Chairman, was instituted. The employers conceded an increase in the number of arbitrators from three to six. This was a main defect of the Protocol according to the contention of the learned council of the union. Despite these concessions, the Protocol was abrogated! And with the breaking of the Protocol the workers in the biggest shops in the trade remained without a Union agreement.

The employers' association abrogated the Protocol because of the increasing number of unauthorized strikes, and "stoppages," against which the union officials, contrary to the spirit of the Protocol, took no stand. It could not have been otherwise, for these numerous stoppages were the inevitable result of the reforms demanded by the radical element of the union, first headed by Mr. Bisno and later by Professor Hourwich. The realization of these demands acted as a sort of boomerang to the Union in many cases, the workers losing many privileges they had hitherto enjoyed. Neither for that matter did Mr. Schlesinger, then the president of the International, dare to take firm measures against the strikes.

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The radical followers of Dr. Hourwich, who had succeeded in getting rid of the old administration, the members of which they had accused of being "agents of the Manufacturers' Association" succeeded eventually in making Mr. Schlesinger the president. He rode into office on a radical platform. Therefore he could not take energetic measures against the very people who had put him in office. To have done this would be to resume the policy of the old administration whose members were called "strike-breakers" and "traitors," because they would not tolerate illegal shop strikes, being true to the Protocol they had signed.

The Protective Association was the greatest factor in the industry at that time, and the union had not as yet conquered it completely. To leave such shops in the air, so to say, without a union agreement was too dangerous, because those shops employed the majority of the workers in the trade. Therefore, something had to be done. A general strike was the only way out of such a desperate situation. But to call a general strike at that time would have been very dangerous. Public opinion was against strikes. The World War was at the height of its fury and anything like non-coöperation would be frowned at. People began to talk of an armistice in the cloak trade for a year. The position of the administration became very shaky. The

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very idea of remaining a whole year without an agreement in the shops of the Protective Association!

The leaders of the Protective Association took the union leaders out of their predicament by a lockout. As they say in boxing, they "beat them to the punch." While the Union was wondering whether to call a strike in the month of July (when the fall season would be in full swing), the employers declared a lockout in the month of April, at the end of the spring season. They figured that by the time the fall season began the workers would be so hungry that they would be able to dictate their own terms to them.

Public opinion, which hitherto had been against the Union, suddenly turned against the manufacturers, because the employers had begun an industrial war at a time when everyone wanted peace. In defense, the manufacturers declared that a lockout was only an act of defense because of the Union preparation for a general strike. In reply to these defenses, there appeared a statement in the New York daily papers signed by the members of the political faculty of Columbia University, stating that "the undersigned have investigated the contention of the manufacturers, viz., that the Union made preparation for a general strike, and found it groundless."

Why make investigations? It was enough that the employers made an accusation against the Union to cause the professors of the political science de-

partment of Columbia University to issue a declaration which thousands knew to be absolutely false. Those professors could not have made the slightest attempt to "investigate" because the *Forward* had been printing daily reports of the preparations of the Union, and the columns of the official journal of the union were filled with plans for a general strike. To serve a humane cause people will do many things that they never would dream of doing for the sake of money.

What caused the Trade Union Commission of Great Britain which was sent to Russia to investigate conditions of labor in that country to send back a favorable report when the whole world knows that conditions of the working masses are so intolerable in that country that even the Communists themselves at the first opportunity, run away from Bolshevik Russia?

What happened here happens in many other movements! When an idea becomes popular and begins to gather adherents, people form an organization in order to realize their ideal. It does not take long, however, before the organization takes the place of the ideal and the real object which called forth the organization becomes forgotten entirely.

That being the case, anyone daring to criticise the officers of a labor union is immediately stigmatized as an "enemy of labor" or a "tool of the employers"

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or a "lackey of the capitalist class." I know it because I have been called all these names!

Under the protection of an ideal, a principle, people allow themselves to do things which they would never dream of doing if it could not be covered up by "raison d'etat." Whether it is a military clique in France, as during the Dreyfus affair, or as now the case with the representative of the so called "progressive labor movement" it is always "raison d'etat" and it is this "raison d'etat" why we so often progress—backwards. Especially is it the case in the Yiddish labor movement, where the air is contaminated with mistrust and suspicion. Anything that can be interpreted in favor of the union is magnified and published broadcast. On the other hand, anything that casts the slightest shadow on the actions of its officers is passed over, and all "for the benefit of labor."

Real progress must always result from experimentation with "trial and error." But when these leaders make a false step and when its results are bad, instead of acknowledging defeat, instead of trying to look for other methods and ways, they undertake advertising and publicity campaigns. What good can result from such methods?

They use the money paid by the members on printers' ink, putting all their own blunders on the "enemies of the working class." The game works for quite a while. But sooner or later, a restlessness

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and turmoil ensues and the membership goes "left." Left-wingism among the members of the International Union can easily be traced to the fact that its members feel that they have been bluffed and fooled.

During the hearing which took place in the summer of 1924 in the City Hall before Governor Smith's Commission of Mediation, I encountered an old cloakmaker who said to me: "Mr. Dyche, our union undertook a series of fights with our employers. We had strikes, lockouts, litigation, arbitration and devil-knows-what. In all these fights we were victorious. Every one of these victories ruined us. Perhaps our salvation will come when we will suffer defeat."

These blunt words sum up the case in a nutshell.

The opposition movement against the International officials is a protest of the masses against their own widely advertised "brilliant victories." They have begun to fear victories more than defeats. I understand their feeling. I am going to try to explain in detail why the victories of the union invariably ended in defeat for the workers, and why some of them believe a defeat will bring them relief from their present situation.

I recently overheard a discussion between a member of the International Union and a friend of mine. The union man was an ardent "left-

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winger." I took the opportunity to ask the union man: "What are the left-wingers after?"

"Nothing," was the reply.

"What is your program?"

"We have no program!"

"Are you not communists?" I asked.

"To hell with communism."

"You are then protesting for the sake of protesting?"

"Yes, that is it."

The International Officials have been reorganizing the biggest local unions in New York City for the last few years. Locals that count membership by the thousands. They charge that their members belong to the Workers' Party, etc. They are correct to the extent that the communist's politicians take advantage of the discontented among them and use the union members as tools. And since the International Union became so strong and so rich the number of people solicitous of its welfare is growing daily. It should have little trouble ridding itself of its left-wingers. Let the administration of the International Union be turned over to the left-wingers and they will soon disappear. They certainly could not pursue the present policy of advertising and publicity campaigns with its arbitration proceedings and its hysterically announced victories. And when called upon to deliver the goods, they, too, would find themselves in a hopeless, helpless position, and

their whole troublesome movement would collapse like a pack of cards.

The primary cause of all the mischief from which the organization is suffering, is its paid officers which are growing daily in number. Wherever you turn, whenever you look into the policies and methods employed by the union, you can always trace it to some paid officer or official who is "doing his stuff." The French have a saying: "Cherchez la femme." I say, "Find the official."

Why was it that the mass of the workers all of a sudden became enthusiastic over Prof Hourwich? That cry "slaves of the Protocol" spread like wild-fire? Because for four years the officials of the Union had carried on a cowardly agitation against both the Protocol and the Protective Association. By doing so they found they were winning favor with the members and shielding themselves against all tests of their real incompetence. "Fight when you can't reason" is another old dodge used by all leaders, whether it is in the needle trades industry or the government.

According to the provisions of the Protocol, in case of an unauthorized strike (or "stoppage" as this is called) arising out of any dispute with any employer, workers' claims were not to be adjusted prior to their returning to their jobs. Naturally, the workers felt sore in these cases. They felt that they had made fools of themselves. What makes

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matters worse is the fact that the Yiddish worker will always bargain where monetary considerations are involved but also that he is ready to strike for weeks or months when a point of satisfaction or a "principle" as he calls it, is involved. Then you will realize what it meant to him to have to go back to work and let the boss get the "best of him."

What did the walking delegates do in these cases? Did they inform the workers, as was their duty, that as union members they had no right to stop working without the authority of the union? That in so doing they had committed a fundamental offense against the principles of unionism? That in accordance with their own constitution, stoppage from work in a union shop without an express order from the union constitutes an act of treason against the organization? No, they did none of these things. This unfortunate official, in order not to jeopardize his job, in order not to get the worker of a particular shop "against him," would address the workers in the following manner: "It is a shame and a disgrace that I have to tell you to go back to work. Until you do so, the union can do nothing for you. The International officers have a Protocol. They need associations. The Protective Association with their Protocol ties our hands. Only when we will get rid of this damned Protocol with the Protective Association will we be free men. Then we will be able to act in Union shops in the same man-

ner as we do in the shops of the United Association and the independent shops. In such shops, how do we act? We tell the employer to behave himself, otherwise he cannot get a single worker back to work. First of all, the matter in dispute has to be adjusted, before we even talk of going back to work. But in a Protocol shop, if you are stubborn, you are sure to lose your job. The International officers will do with your shop the same as they did with the firm of Garfinkel and Rosenblatt and others. They simply filled up these shops with other men. Therefore the sooner you go back to work the better for you." Such propaganda against the Protocol was carried on by the union officials for four years in succession. You see, they were afraid of losing the members' votes when they came up for re-election.

How is that the masses were aroused by the cry of "black treason" and that committees of workers rushed to the general office of the International Union to throw the "arch traitor" through the window of the tenth floor? This attempted assault did not come from the blue sky. This outrage can be traced back to the unfortunate delegate. I know, for I was the "villain" they wanted to reach.

Under the Protocol, all complaints were adjusted by a Board of Grievances consisting of an equal number of Union and Association representatives, both sides of a controversy to be heard by this

Board. When the Union had established its case, the chairman of the Employers' Association was to call upon a member of the Board on the side of the employers to make a motion in favor of the union. This was always possible because the mover was never a paid official and could act independently in accordance with the dictates of his conscience and the facts. If his constituents became displeased with his action, he would only lose an office when his term expired. Nothing else, for he was not a paid official like a walking delegate. You, my readers, can imagine such an instance, can't you? Well, it is no part of union logic to ever acknowledge the possibility of a boss being in the "right." I am talking of the International. One case I remember as clear as if it happened but yesterday.

An entire committee of workers came into the Council rooms of the Board of Grievances one day at the Fifth Avenue Building.

"What's up? A stoppage?"

"No, no, a lockout."

It is always a lockout. Workers were thrown out of the shop. Of course, the walking delegates had told the members of the committee to say so, otherwise according to the rules of the Protocol they would have to return to work. On one side of the room was the shop chairman. A powerful, broad-shouldered giant of about thirty. He stood in front of me and I had a good opportunity to observe

him. One would feel a blow from such a fellow for some time. On the other side of the table behind me was the foreman, a man of about fifty years of age, a midget with a half gray beard. I was surprised that such an insignificant looking fellow should be a shop foreman. One union man argued the case. His speech made no impression. He failed to establish anything. As a last resort, he shouted that the foreman had given the shop chairman a terrible beating. General laughter greeted this charge. Everybody turned to look at the little foreman.

I afterwards asked why such a case was brought up before the Board of Arbitration. The clerks should have adjusted it. I was told that the shop chairman insisted on bringing it before the Board of Grievances because he wanted to visit the Board. After everybody had finished laughing, the president asked who would make a motion in favor of the association. No one of the members on our side made any sign of movement. Each one pushed the elbow of the fellow next to him as if to say: "You make the motion." Each time that happened I felt sick. A Union official to make a motion in favor of the Association! You could not possibly get any walking delegate to do any such thing. Who would reelect such a "traitor"?

Some union official somehow had to make a motion in favor of the Association, otherwise the en-

tire proceedings of the Board of Grievances would have been turned into a farce. We were supposed to render judgment. And we were in the employ of one of the litigants. Such a motion was eventually made by an official of the International, who had been elected at the bi-annual convention by delegates representing locals from all over the United States and Canada. Even the International officials were not any too anxious that day to vote in favor of the Association. The man who did so was myself.

And what happened? The unfortunate walking delegates later went to the workers in the shops and told them: "I did my best for you, but your general secretary does what he wants—he consults no one." In this way I was made a scapegoat by those unfortunate paid officials. To secure their livelihoods they threw their own failures upon me; also the blame for all their weaknesses and cowardice. In this way a widespread opinion arose among the members that if it were not for this "traitor" of a general secretary, everything would have been all right. You will now understand why when the editor of the *Anarchist Weekly* cried "black treason," the simple-minded masses rushed to the general offices to throw the "traitor" out of the window.

I recently met an ex-official of the International who like myself had been a member of the General Executive Board during the Hourwich period. He had just left a group of cloakmakers who were com-

plaining, so he told me, of the good old times when we were both general officers of the Union. The organization was clean and honest then, they contended. Now, all is graft and corruption. And one of those fellows was the leader of that mob that invaded the general office with the cry "lynch the traitors." This was a bit gratifying to me, and in a moment the scene came back to memory vividly as a picture, and the manner in which I escaped, reads like a bad novel.

The foyer of the general office then consisted of one large room. On the right was a door leading into the council room centered by a directors' table. Another door from the back of the council room to the library and archives of the general office. Three small rooms led off the left of the foyer, one of which was occupied by myself, another by Mr. A. Rosenberg, President of the International, and the third by the New York organizer. Suddenly, I heard a noise and a shout, "Where is the traitor, Dyche? Throw him out the window!"

I can hear the mob now rushing into the big council room, demanding me. I left my office, and addressed the would-be lynchers. "Boys, here I am. I am one to twenty of you. The windows are open and in another moment I will be on the pavement. Before you throw me out, allow me a word, please."

"All right," shouted one of them, "let us hear what he has to say." "I, a murderer?" another

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asked. "God be with you. I am a father of children!" A husky fellow near me turned and said to me: "I am no Christian. I am no lyncher. We are all Jews. I have never shed human blood, but," turning to the others, "anyone who dares to lay a hand on Mr. John Dyche will be killed on the spot." "Nor will I," said another, "allow anyone to touch the general secretary." And in a moment the twenty or thirty would-be lynchers had turned into my personal bodyguard. This was the second attempt on the part of a mob to lynch me. The earlier one was much more exciting. The first settlement of the big strike of 1910 was rejected by the strikers, as many of my readers probably know. To appease the mass we had to change some points in the Protocol. What these particular points were to which the mass took exception I do not now remember. I am sure they were not important, otherwise they would not have been so wrought up about it. All the forenoon and Saturday there were mass demonstrations. Bands of unorganized workers representing the cloak industry shouted: "Down with the Protocol!" In the afternoon, after the demonstrators were tired, they cluttered Rutgers Square. The strike leaders and the International Officers were at the *Forward* offices. A rumor started that the General Secretary had made certain concessions to the manufacturers. Persons ran up to the office of the *Forward*, where I with the rest of the union

officials was crying that a mob was looking for me, that they were going to lynch me. I was being accused of selling them out to the manufacturers. As soon as I heard that it was I whom the mob wanted, I made my way from the *Forward* office and over to the mob where I heard myself referred to as "a scoundrel" and "a thief." I made my way up to the orator. "What kind of a union have you?" he kept shouting at the top of his raw voice, banging with one hand a newspaper on the palm of the other. "You elected a corrupt official to represent you and he sold you to the bosses." By then, he was addressing himself to me.

"Landsman," I said, "you do not know what you are talking about. You tell this crowd of the corruption of Dyche, when as a matter of fact you don't know him, and you never in your life have put your eyes on him." "Oh! You must be one of his relatives then." "No," I said, "I am not one of his relatives. I am not defending him. I do not say a good word for him. I only contend that you have never in your life seen Dyche." "Ha, Ha," laughed the big fellow with the newspaper in his hand. "Don't I know him? I worked with him at William Fishman's and at the Empire Cloak Company. In both these places he sold the workers out. You do not know what a scoundrel he is."

"But Dyche never worked in any of the shops you mention," I pressed. "How do you know"

that?" shouted one of the mob. "I know," I answered, "and I will soon convince you that this man who has you on tiptoes by his stories about Dyche has never even seen him. He does not know whether he is tall or small, thin or fat." The fellow with the newspaper began to get shaky. "Prove it," cried some one. "I will prove it to you right away," said I. I put my hand in my pocket and pulled out my union card and said, "You see the name on this union card. You see the inscription. The name is John A. Dyche. That's me."

As soon as he heard this, the by-now nervous orator turned on his heel and pushed through the mob as fast as he could. Silence reigned. They opened the way for me and I went back to the *Forward* office. During the Hourwich affair I again had the pleasure of seeing this leader talking to a group of cloakmakers. I have no idea what he was driving at. But as soon as he observed me coming in his direction, he sneaked off.

It was because of the tactics and the methods of those short-sighted officials that such a big organization as the Cloakmakers' Union opened a fight which ended in a tremendous victory against the Protective Association. The natural result was that the "bundles" began to roll out from their shops into the worst paid shops of their competitors.

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A closer investigation into the causes of strife and strikes between capital and labor will disclose that it is not always due to the selfishness and narrow mindedness of the employers. The self-seeking union politician and demagogue has at times also something to do with it. My acquaintance with the garment industry convinced me that the cause of the trouble, turmoil and strife in that industry is due chiefly to the job-hunting union politicians who became so numerous since the organization became so big and so rich.

CHAPTER VI

HAS UNIONISM IMPROVED THE GARMENT WORKER'S LOT?

To correctly estimate the value of unionism in the woman's garment industries, also to understand to what degree it has contributed to labor improvement, let us examine conditions in the city of New York, the most important center, and where the cloak trade is its most important branch. What has taken place in that particular trade since 1910, since unionism became a power there?

In taking a survey of the trade we should not overlook a very important fact, viz., that until 1914 there was little restriction of immigration in this country. Before then, new arrivals from Europe entered the garment trade every year by thousands. From 1914 to 1919, during the World War, there was practically no immigration into the United States. And, since the war, new immigration legislation has made it a negligible quantity. Immigration has ceased to be a problem for the organized workers in the United States. For that matter the World War had the effect of strengthening the

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forces of organized labor throughout the world. Even in a country like France, where labor unionism never amounted to much, where industrialism has not made much progress (France is largely an agricultural country, where small handicraft still flourishes), the workers have obtained an eight hours work day. And the cost of living and the standard of living there as elsewhere since the war, has risen considerably.

How much then has unionism in the woman's garment industries really contributed toward this general improvement of labor conditions in this country?

As a result of a very costly advertising and publicity campaign inaugurated by the president of the International Union, almost the very first day he entered his office, there exists a widespread belief that labor conditions in the dress and cloak industry before the general strike of 1910, were absolutely intolerable; that the Union had actually taken the workers out from sweating slavery into economic freedom. It is true that the strike of 1910 brought benefits (a résumé of which I made in the second chapter), traces of which are still felt by the workers and the employers alike.

A few months after that strike, and before the introduction of the system of investigating shop disputes by clerks of the Association and Union officials, the members of the Board of Grievances

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themselves had to do this work. This brought me into close personal contact with the leaders of the Employers' Association. I want to say right here, that it is my firm belief now as it was then, that if we had on our side men with even a small part of their broadmindedness, business ability and real belief in Unionism, the cloak and dress industry would be quite different from what it is to-day. Also, the present destructive fight between the various factions inside the organization could never have taken place.

While adjusting disputes with an employer, a member of the Board of Grievances, he said to me in words somewhat to this effect: "I devote a good deal of my leisure to charitable and communal work and nothing gives me so much satisfaction as this work I am now engaged in. We understand your difficulties. You are up against a huge, untrained, undisciplined mass which enlisted in the cause over night. Naturally, they have no conception either of Unionism or the nature of the problems which confront the industry, or the new problems which their strike created. We must find the solution. Not only your members, but the employers also find it very hard to adjust themselves to the new economic order of things. However, I believe that before very long we will succeed in bringing order out of this present chaos. I am sure that in the near fu-

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ture, people will begin to look up to the cloak industry, instead of looking down upon it."

Neither he nor I could foresee the disturbing forces soon to manifest themselves, which were to have such a destructive effect on the whole industry. A few months after the general strike of 1910, I had a luncheon invitation with one of the leading clothing manufacturers in this city. I was accompanied by Mr. R. S., one of the executive members of the Protective Association. His factory was then one of the largest in the city. "I heard a good deal of your strike and your Union," began our host. "Would you please tell me what the Union has accomplished and whom did it benefit?"

"Allow me to inform you," intervened Mr. R. S., "what benefit we manufacturers, what benefit I personally gained as a result of the recent big strike in the cloak trade. Until then, in the busy season, I had to be in my factory from early in the morning until late at night. I knew no rest. I had to be there Saturdays and Sundays. Now conditions are changed completely. At one o'clock on Saturday afternoon, I close my plant and I do not see it until eight o'clock on Monday morning. This I can afford to do because my competitors, all other employers in my line, are also compelled to have their plants closed."

Soon after the first big strike of the waist makers of 1909, an organization of Waist and Dress Man-

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ufacturers was formed, comprising the big waist and dress houses on Fifth Avenue. They made their workers some concessions, but decided to maintain an "open shop" under all circumstances. On the 12th of December, 1912, the same association signed an agreement or Protocol with the International Union and instituted what was known as a "demonstration." That is, they closed their factories for three days in succession, to enable the officials of the Union to organize their shops.

This change of heart on the part of the employers in the waist and dress industry did not, however, come from the blue sky. It was a result of the strenuous efforts by the leaders of the Cloak Manufacturers' Protective Association who had succeeded in convincing them that their fear of Unionism was groundless: that if they helped the Union to organize their own shops, thereby strengthening the workers' organization, they would be helping it unionize the downtown dress and waist shops where the hours of labor were longer and the earnings of the workers much lower. If this were done, the competition of these downtown shops would not be so keenly felt. Without the help of the Protective Association, the International would never have succeeded in gaining such an easy, friendly victory.

The remarkable thing about all this is that since then, the opinion of these very same employers, re-

garding the Union and its leaders, has undergone a radical change. Few, if any manufacturers in the waist or dress industry now have any contractual relations with the Union. Also the opinion of the workers regarding the Union, especially its officers, has undergone the same change. In fact, one might say, that in this one matter, the character of the Union officials, both the employers and the employees, are of the same opinion. Even the majority of the membership supporting the "Right Wing" administration has little good to say of their officers. They support the administration because they distrust the leaders of the "Left Wing," and because of their hatred of the communists who are behind these leaders.

In the *New Post* (January 21, 1916), the one-time official organ of the cloakmakers' Union, there appeared an editorial, "The Most Important Problem in Our Industry," from which the following is quoted:

"Seven or eight years ago, when we began the agitation for a general strike in the cloak trade, we had in mind the downtown shops—the outside shops where the conditions of labor were always the worst. We never thought that the big shops, the Fifth Avenue houses would join our ranks. The fact is that we did not expect that these so-called "high window" houses—the privileged houses—

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would join the movement for a general strike. At that time there existed quite a number of aristocratic shops where the earnings of the piece workers were considerably higher than they are to-day."

In 1910, when this article was written, conditions were still fresh in the memory of the people in the industry. The writer could not take the liberty of describing the conditions as they existed at that time in the same manner say, for instance, as Mr. Hilquit does when addressing a meeting of the Board of Arbitration.

I was the writer of that editorial. I was then manager of local No. 23. In the editorial, I tried to explain to the members of the union the necessity of "certification of contractors." I still believed then that it was possible for a Union official to do construction work in the organization.

Now let us take the conditions in the industry as they exist to-day, as described by Mr. Hilquit in a speech which he delivered at the City Hall before Governor Smith's Commission. My blood ran cold when I read a stenographic report of it. I knew that conditions of labor in the cloak industry were bad, especially in the smaller shops. But I was not aware that they were so bad, or that they embraced such a large number of workers.

Is this all the Union can show after so much organizing, so much energy used, so much money spent by the workers in trying to improve conditions? Is

this the result of fourteen years of organizing work? After all these widely advertised "glorious victories" of the Union over its enemy, the Manufacturers' Protective Association? And the Union now expects the Board of Mediation to alter all that by some miracle. This Board is going to do something which the organized workers with all their fights and struggles were unable to accomplish. A worse indictment against the Union in the cloak and dress industries could not have been drawn up.

Are not your banks, your properties, your tenement houses, your "workers' universities" sheer camouflage, an imposing façade to cover the evils behind them? Before 1910, it was considered that about 90 per cent were working in inside factories. Only from eight to ten thousand workers are now employed in inside shops, the rest being forced to work in the small shops described by Mr. Hilquit in his speech before Governor Smith's Commission on Mediation.

A similar change has taken place in the waist and dress industry. In 1913, the trade was completely organized (with the friendly coöperation of the organized manufacturers); it would have remained so, but for the class-conscious flappers who began to fight their employers in the union shops, whose activities transformed the whole industry into a jobbing business. It is true that there are still a number of large inside factories where labor con-

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ditions are fairly satisfactory, but these are non-union shops, and they employ no Yiddish workers.

The whole garment manufacturing district has been rebuilt. Big lofts have been divided into what are known as "Coney Island shops," subdivided into small compartments like the bathing houses at Coney Island.

The reason for this transformation from manufacturing into jobbing in the dress and waist trade is not far to seek, as the following will illustrate. A few months after the signing of the Protocol in the Waist and Dress industry in 1912, I met Bro. P., who was then manager of the Protocol division of local No. 25 (waist and dressmakers). He seemed overjoyed. "I just left the firm of G. C. C.," he told me. The factory was one of the largest in the trade and the conditions there had always been known to be the best. "If you had seen the scene I witnessed, your heart would have filled with joy."

"What happened there?"

He went on to recite how the chairlady, a little flapper of 17 or 18 years of age, acted. "If you could have seen how this little girl called out Mr. G. from his office and pointed at the printed copy of the Protocol which she held in her hand and told Mr. G. how several paragraphs of that document were not carried out in his factory!"

"This chairlady," continued Bro. P., "assured me that now she does not bother any more with the fore-

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lady in the shop. Whenever she notices anything wrong in the shop, she at once calls for Mr. G. to have it corrected." I could imagine how he must have felt to have a young lady (whose grandfather he could easily have been) threaten him with the Union power in a factory employing several hundred workpeople.

About a year ago, I met this Mr. G. He had long since given up his factory. "I get my work done in forty different shops," he told me. "It is true that these contractors work exclusively for me, but I find it very inconvenient to have my work distributed over such a large area. It's a wasteful and uneconomical way of manufacturing. One of my shops is located as far as Poughkeepsie. But what could I do? Since my shop became unionized, its management has practically gone into the hands of shop chairladies. When they did not have their own way, they immediately stopped the shop. It was these stoppages which compelled me to give up my factory of which I was always so proud. Even in the slowest time of the season you could find cut up silks in my factory to the value of not less than \$100,000. Dresses are a season article. If you do not deliver your orders on time they are cancelled and you are lucky if you get fifty cents on the dollar for your merchandise. Realizing that I could not exist under shop chairladies' management, I had

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to give up manufacturing on my own premises, to my regret."

The union officials requested Governor Smith's Commission on Mediation to decide that cloaks should not be manufactured in New York City shops employing less than fourteen machines. Prior to 1910 the shop of fourteen machines was an exception. Now the request is for fourteen machines, not thirteen. This commission also was to decide how cloaks were to be manufactured, and in what size of shops. Why go to a commission with such a "request" if the Union is powerless to enforce it? Such things can be accomplished by no other mandate than the force of the organized workers. This is a fact that even arbitrators should understand. Now that two years passed since the commission has actually decided in favor of the Union, there are more Union shops working with less than fourteen machines than ever.

Unfortunately for those garment workers, there is no class easier to fool, to bluff or to hoodwink. All that needs to be done is to start a newspaper campaign, to shout "kampf," "victory," "Capitalist class," and these members, the "vanguard of the American labor movement," are Johnnies on the spot.

According to the conclusions reached by Governor Smith's Commission on Mediation, it appears that the earnings of the workers in the inside cloak fac-

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tories are about two and a half dollars per week more than those employed in the shops of the outside submanufacturers. The inside worker is employed about eight weeks longer during the year. This means that the inside worker earns on an average of \$500 a year more.

This investigation also found that every year about one-third of the submanufacturers close their shops and quit business. This means that about ten thousand workers lose their jobs every year, not infrequently with the loss of a week's wages.

How many thousands of dollars were spent on the International's widely-advertised victory of the "Property right in the job," which, according to the Constitution of the United States, no American citizen can be deprived of "without due process of law." So all of a sudden you became the property owner of your employers' shops. A special article, at the time, in the *Forward*, proclaimed this as the most remarkable victory ever won by organized labor in this country. In a comparatively short time, the Yiddish workers had succeeded in gaining a triumph unknown in any other industry. This remarkable victory was attributed solely to radicalism, to the class consciousness of the workers, and to the remarkable statesmanship of its leaders. Now the employers are no longer able to discharge a worker for no rhyme or reason. Now, you can sit and work in the shop until the landlord, not the employer,

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throws you out of your shop, together with your employer, because the latter cannot afford to pay a month's rent in advance. What has become of this "right to the job" you won in 1915? which tens of thousands of you have lost since, because the very shops in which you were owners, the employers had to give up and become jobbers. You were compelled to seek employment from the small submanufacturer.

Perhaps it would have been better for the garment workers had their lawyer not succeeded in gaining these "rights" for them. A manufacturer would have then been able to send away one or more of the unprofitable property holders in his factory, and not be compelled to close up a department, or close up his entire plant because of some undesirable employees of whom he could not get rid, without due process of law.

"What! give the employers the right to throw me out of their shop? Never! I'd rather work in the smallest shop and be thrown out of it by the landlord, together with my employer, than work in a big factory and give the employer a free hand to do whatever he likes."

With the advent of the submanufacturer, a new and hitherto unknown class of cloak workers has made its appearance—the casual cloakmakers, who, owing to the unstable nature of the submanufacturing establishments, have been compelled to look for

a new job every few weeks, sometimes every week or two. For this class of "floaters," as they are sometimes called, the "right to the job" is a veritable curse. It prevents them from obtaining employment in an inside cloak factory. But why do the workers cling so desperately to this "right," one will ask. My answer is that the union cannot afford to relinquish any of its acquired rights to the employer, no matter what the results of these "rights" may be. The policy of the union is never dictated by the needs of the great mass of the members, but by the privileged few, the men who can put up the biggest fight and make the biggest noise in the organization. (In Chapter VIII the reader will learn how it all works.)

I understand that it is quite ethical for a lawyer to defend a client even when he knows him to be in the wrong, morally. But I question the ethics of a lawyer who tries a case for a client when he knows beforehand that even if his client wins, he will gain nothing. To the International's lawyers I would say, "Had the union always lost its cases, or, for that matter, ever lost one case, try again!" But it has always won its cases before the Boards of Arbitration, and while it may mean glory for you, it has always resulted, eventually, in economic loss for the union, for the worker, for the industry! So why sue again?

I was an interested witness at those hearings be-

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fore Governor Smith's Commission. How the officials and their hangers-on watched their lawyer, Mr. Hilquit. How they hung on his lips. How anxious and eager were their faces. There he was winning another case for the union. Everything would be all right again. All that was necessary was to prove the dreadful conditions of the worker and the Commission would issue a decree in favor of the union, "Limitation of contractors." The jobber would no longer be able to discharge any of his contractors in the middle of the season. This would mean that not only workers, but submanufacturers, would have property rights in their jobs. It also would provide for the establishment for the contractor of a "standard of production," with an Impartial Chairman. Workers have already been provided with such an official. Much good it has done them.

After the union gained all those privileges for the workers, it now became the turn of the sub-manufacturer to gain similar advantages. If the union had a few more lawyers like Mr. Hilquit, the New York City cloakmakers could ride around in their own limousines.

When I was against Professor Hourwich in his fight against the Protocol and the Protective Association, my union policy was then to obtain advantages for the workers by means of friendly conferences with this powerful organization of manufacturers, the main power in the cloak industry. And

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for this, I was denounced as a "black traitor." Now the union, with Mr. Hilquit at its helm, is fighting in the open for the American Association of Sub-Manufacturers, the very dregs in the cloak industry. Now everything is "kosher," because the union has the entire East Side press on its side.

Or, perhaps, it is only right and proper that the Union should combine with the American Association, because it is composed, in the main, of former "true union men," former kempfer, walking delegates? Their own people. And blood is thicker than water. Or, is it because this organization of sub-manufacturers consists of pure proletariats, like themselves? Therefore, it is right and proper for these two organizations to unite and fight the capitalist employer.

CHAPTER VII

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

IF you should ask a cloak worker: who is responsible for the disappearance of the large inside cloak shop, he would answer as follows: "The employers have discovered that it pays them better to have their work made outside than on their own premises." Why is it that only since the strike of 1910 (and in the waist and dress industry since the signing of the first Protocol at the end of 1912), employers have made this discovery? Until then, employers kept on "discovering" that it paid them better to have their work done inside than outside their factories. The migration of bundles of work until then, was from the outside contracting shop into the inside factories. Why is it that this process has been reversed since these industries became unionized? Is it a mere coincidence?

Forty or fifty years ago there were no factories in the cloak industry. There were inside warehouses only. There the cloth was cut and sent outside to be made by "bundle contractors." The styles were few, and ready-made cloaks were low-priced. At

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that time hundreds, sometimes thousands of garments were made up of one style. There were very often "runners." That is, thousands of garments of one style would "run" a whole season. Sometimes such garments would "run" two or three seasons at a stretch. Under such conditions, the manufacture of cloaks in outside contracting shops was profitable.

When the quality of the ready-to-wear garments began to improve, and the number of styles to multiply, the inside factory began to grow at the expense of the outside shop. The manufacturers found it more profitable to have their work made on their own premises, under their own supervision. Rapid change in style made it imperative for them to ship their orders as soon as possible. When they had their orders executed on their own premises they could cut in the morning and ship in the evening, thus saving two days, the time it would otherwise take to send the goods to and from an outside shop. Hence the migration of bundles from the outside contractors' shops to the inside factories. The same conditions prevail to-day, even more so, than prior to 1910. The quality of the ready-to-wear garments has improved and keeps on improving. The multiplicity of styles keeps on increasing. Every woman insists on being dressed differently from her neighbor.

Some people contend that a new method of buy-

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ing, known in the trade as "immediate delivery," has appeared. The buyer gives no orders, but buys what he finds on the racks in the so-called "stock houses." As a matter of fact, the buyer seldom finds in these "stock houses" all the styles and garments he needs. The real buying from the racks takes place only at the end of the season, when the manufacturer or the jobber has to get rid of his accumulated stock at a sacrifice. The big inside factories of years ago, had more goods hanging on their racks at any one time and were in a position to make quicker deliveries than many of the so-called "stock houses" are capable of to-day. There are many jobbers to-day who do a much smaller business than an average size cloak manufacturer of a few years ago.

I know of a jobber who, ten years ago, when I began doing business with him, had an inside factory. Since then the volume of his business decreased to less than one-half, even though he has given up his inside shop. The reason for the decrease in the volume in the business of this man, who is a better manufacturer than a jobber, as he explained it to me, is that he could not afford to have constant fights with the union officials, with the shop chairman, and with the workers, all of which he would have to do, if he attempted to maintain an inside shop. Only such manufacturers as produce the very best, the most expensive class of garments, can afford to run inside shops.

The present leaders of the International Union blame Mr. Schlesinger and his policies for the disappearance of the inside cloak factory. This is spoken of only *entre nous*, for such statements cannot be made in the open. It is true that since Mr. Shlesinger became the leader of the union, the organizaition has pursued a policy which led to litigations, strikes and lockouts, all of which ended in the well-advertised "glorious victories," the intrusion of philanthropists, prominent citizens, eminent politicians and "uplifters" of all kinds. All that hastened the destruction of the big shops. But to put the whole blame on the shoulders of the former President of the International Union is rather unjust.

The real truth is that this fight against the inside cloak factory opened the first day after the signing of the Protocol of 1910. The fight of the International officers for the Protocol began as soon as the workers in the shops began to indulge in promiscuous, unauthorized and illegal shop strikes or "stoppages." A child can see that a large factory cannot live when it is exposed to the tender mercies of a shop chairman, or any other individual or group of individuals in a shop who can stop its operation at will. The so-called "radicals" in the union to whom every strike, every "kampf" is sacred, would never stand for any form of discipline in the

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union. And these radicals soon got the upper hand of the International officers when they found leaders such as Professor Hourwich.

My argument with the present leaders is all that the workers could gain from the cloak industry could be accomplished by means of friendly conference with the leaders of the Protective Association, who then represented the most stable element in the industry. I argued with them that as soon as the present method of dealing with the Association of employers was to change from one of friendly conferences and "give and take method" to that of a legalistic basis, such relation must inevitably lead to endless litigations, to the intrusion of outsiders to arbitration and that, in its turn, must lead to strife and conflicts with the employers' association, from which the workers in the long run must be the sufferers.

"If you continue your present fight against Professor Hourwich, if you stand out against the wish of the masses, you will find yourself outside of the organization." Well, my prophecy and their prophecy, have both been fulfilled. The big factories began to close. The manufacturers became jobbers, or quit the cloak business entirely, and I lost my position in the organization.

To convince you that the fight against the inside shop began long before Mr. Schlesinger entered the

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organization, I will cite the following from the above-mentioned article in the official journal of the union, the *New Post*, of January 21, 1916: "Then something unexpected happened. Soon after the calling of the general strike (of 1910) when we thought that we were going to make a clean sweep of the whole industry, when the smaller employers stood in line waiting to be allowed to sign a full union agreement, something unexpected happened. About 150 of the largest employers in the industry organized into an association and told us "nothing doing." Since then the fight of the union, or rather of the members, was concentrated upon the large inside shop.

"With the signing of the Protocol the fight against the big employers did not cease. On the contrary, from the very first day the Protocol was signed the union forgot the small employer. These shops were left out entirely. The "kampf" was directed against the Protocol shops until everybody got sick and tired of it.

"The best business agents, the most able officials, were employed in dealing with the Association houses. To interpret the Protocol rightly we imported big men from Chicago and professors from Washington. The workers in these shops began to make stoppages and shop strikes. For days the officials spent their time in the big shops where the

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earnings were the best in the trade. The slaves of the Protocol continued to rebel. The work was driven out of these shops and dispersed into the smaller shops of the East Side."

Schlesinger and Hilquit, upon entering the union, simply took over the holy war against the big cloak manufacturers which was first under the leadership of Mr. Bisno, and later under Professor Hourwich and his followers. What followed was exactly what any one with a grain of common sense could foresee. It began with the introduction of the Impartial Chairman; with an increase in the number of arbitrators from three to six; with litigations which in their turn led to conflicts, strikes and lockouts. Unfortunately for the workers in the trade, the union won every one of these fights with the employers. And these "victories" of the union, of "the workers" ruined the industry and the workers with it.

The capitalist type in the manufacture of cloaks and dresses has been practically done away with. In the dress industry there are still a number of (non-union) inside factories left. The union became a scarecrow to responsible employers. Suggest to some one entering the cloak or dress business that he open a shop and take on a set of workers. He will look at you with amazement. Open a factory? Start dealings with the union? One needs Rockefeller's money for that. The union is too

strong for me. Let the submanufacturer be bothered with the union. I can get my work done outside without any trouble.

"Why is it," I was once asked by one of the leading cloak manufacturers, "that since the cloak industry became unionized, the problem of every employer in the trade is how to decrease his plant instead of increasing it?" With the equalization of hours and other conditions of labor, one had reason to expect that the larger operator with bigger facilities for production, and a greater capacity of reaching the consumer, would be in an advantageous position. The reverse seems to be the case.

If workers are laid off in an iron foundry, on the railroads, or in a brewery, they have to look for employment elsewhere. Not so in the garment industry. Here the unemployed worker is a much greater menace to the industry than elsewhere. If the cloak worker finds no employment inside the factory, he looks for it in the outside shops. If he does not find it there, he joins a few idle workers like himself and together they form a coöperative shop, obtain bundles of work from the inside factory and compete with the inside workers. The idle cloak worker will not look for employment outside his industry. He will remain working at cloaks, and there is no means of preventing him from doing this. He will not look for any other occupation. If he

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cannot get work in a legitimate inside shop, he will make cloaks or dresses in a shop tucked away some place where even the "strong-arm man" of the union cannot reach him.

As soon as a shop becomes unionized, although the conditions there be the best, the union begins to regulate and control it until it is regulated out of existence. The discipline of such a shop, its morale, its productivity, becomes lower, its output keeps diminishing, until, instead of being an asset, it becomes a liability to the employer.

As soon as people obtain power they cannot resist the temptation to look for an opportunity of exercising it. It becomes dangerous, indeed, when it falls into the hands of persons as devoid of a sense of responsibility as these shop chairmen, especially the chairladies, God bless them. What good is a union shop if the shop chairman cannot tell the employer: "Mr. Ellis, if this worker does not get more work than he has been getting, I will stop the shop immediately." Or, "This shop is a union shop. It belongs to the union. Your place is in the office, not here."

When Yankel the operator, all at once becomes the shop chairman, the sole power in the factory, do you expect him to sit idly by and not let you know "who is who"?

Union control is a kind of mania with our good

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union people. The union spends millions of dollars "to control the trade," yet the number of the small uncontrollable shops is ever growing. The budget of expenditure incurred by the International office for the organization of the out-of-town shop is growing yearly; branch offices are established and organizers sent to watch the shops all over the states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. It looks as if the out-of-town shops run after the organizers. On all sides, it is conceded that the union is powerless to control these smaller units. Yet in the face of this admission, the officials are determined not to let go its strangling "control" of the inside factory even to this day, as is evident from their strenuous opposition to any attempt on the part of the few remaining legitimate employers to increase the productivity of their workers by establishing some kind of standard of production.

The work of controlling the shops by the union officials mainly consists in "defending the rights of the workers." The "rights" to do what? Nothing else than the "right" of a worker to obtain from the employer the largest remuneration in return for the smallest amount of work.

That the worker does not get his remuneration from the employer, for the employer has nothing of his own to give, but that it all comes from the industry, never strikes the minds of these trade union

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statesmen who direct the activities of the members of the garment workers' unions.

Instead of helping the legitimate union employer, the inside manufacturer, in his competition with the small uncontrollable submanufacturer's shop, the officials do everything possible to handicap him, to make his cost of production as high as possible.

He does that in order to "satisfy the members."

In the small submanufacturing shop, an employer requires no great ingenuity to keep the productivity of the worker at top notch. Here the worker knows that if he does not give his employer, who is working for starvation profits, a satisfactory day's work, his employer, often poorer than himself, will have to close his shop, and the worker will lose his job. In the legitimate union shop the workers' "rights" are fully protected.

From the nature of the demands of the union submitted to Governor Smith's Commission on Mediation, it seems that the union officials are determined to drive out of business the few remaining inside legitimate manufacturers. To remedy the evils of unemployment the union demands "time Guarantee of employment." The only result that could possibly follow such a guarantee is that the employer would try to limit his liability to as few employees as possible, in such an unstable industry. Such a remedy can only increase the evil of unem-

ployment. The Commission was also asked to grant an increase of six dollars a week wages and to limit the hours of labor to forty instead of the present forty-four per week. According to the contention of the counsel for the union at this very Commission, it appears that the greatest evil in this industry is the competition between the large and ever-increasing number of small, uncontrollable submanufacturing shops, which the same council assured the Commission the union was powerless to deal with. This being the case, should the demand of the union for a further increase of wages and a further reduction in the working hours be granted, the difference in the cost of production in the inside shop as compared with the small outside shops will be still greater than ever. The process of migration of the bundles of work from the inside to the outside shops would also be greater!

It is for this very reason that every victory of the union has turned out to be in reality a defeat for the workers in the shops. Every victory brought with it greater privileges and rights for the workers in the shops, with an inevitable effect of increasing the cost of production of the over-controlled larger inside shop, which had to make way for the more productive unit of the smaller uncontrollable shop of the submanufacturer. And all that is needed to put the few remaining legitimate shops in the in-

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dustry out of business is a few more union victories. It will make little difference whether these victories are gained through strikes or arbitrations. The result will be the same. It seems to me that a victory for the union obtained through the medium of arbitration is worse for the industry than when it is the result of a strike. For strikes to-day are a very expensive undertaking. This holds true especially in the women's garment industries. Arbitrations, on the other hand, are comparatively inexpensive, and can, unfortunately, be resorted to frequently. In fact, this arbitration business has proven itself to be a veritable Godsend to the union officials. They take no responsibility. They need not expose the organization to any risks, or to any tests of strength. It is so easy for the officials to raise issues, make promises to the members although they know that they cannot possibly get all they have promised, and yet feel reasonably certain to get something from these arbitrations. The arbitrators are sure to make it fifty-fifty. The union officials know that from experience.

Each time the union has to renew its agreement with the employers, the cloak industry goes into the hands of a receiver, to commissions, to philanthropists, politicians and all kinds of distinguished gentlemen, "disinterested outsiders," who investigate the cloak industry and hand out decisions.

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An industry which is being conducted with the aid of politicians, philanthropists and "friends of labor" of various kinds, must sooner or later go to ruin. An industry can grow and prosper only through the friendly coöperation of the various elements who earn their living in it.

Under the present system of production for private gain, the employer, in his eagerness to keep down the cost of production, to gain a wider market for his merchandise, is too often tempted to accomplish it at the expense of the worker's earnings, his leisure and even at his health. Hence the conflicts and strife between capital and labor. But in the women's garment industries the person who suffers most from this constant fighting with the capitalist employer is the poor devil at the bench. It is he who always gets the wrong end of the stick. For, after all, a person with capital and business ability can find a way of making money in this business. Quite different is the case with the poor fellow, the artisan, who possesses no other capital than his skill.

This union has become so strong, so powerful, it has put the fear of God into the hearts of the capitalist employers. A person with responsibility and business ability is afraid of it, runs away from the workers. Only a poor devil without capital or business ability, one who has nothing to lose, can afford to open a cloak or dress shop and employ

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union labor. Only such a fellow is not afraid to deal with the union.

Many of you, perhaps, still recollect my talks on this very subject when I was still with you. "If anybody would ask me what would be better for the 50,000 cloak makers in the city of New York: should they work in fifty shops and have no union, or have a very strong union and work in five hundred shops, I would not hesitate one moment to say: "Let there be no union and work in big shops, rather than have what you may call a strong union and work in innumerable small shops."

It appears that your present officers entertain a quite different opinion on this matter. They are satisfied that you should work in 10,000 small shops. But these shops must be "union shops." The unionism in these shops, as is generally known, consists in seeing that the workers in them shall be financially in good standing with the union. In the smaller shops your "pull committees," or as you sometimes call them, "organizing committees," can compel the workers to be "members in good standing" with the union.

Did you ever hear the story of the fisherman and the golden fish? I will tell it to you in short. Once upon a time a poor fisherman lived in a broken hut and his furniture consisted of an old trough. He had the extraordinary luck one day to catch a

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golden fish. The golden fish asked the old man to let him go and as a reward it would grant him anything he might desire. The fisherman let the fish go, and went home to tell his wife of his wonderful experience. The old lady got cross and told the old fisherman to go back to the ocean and ask the golden fish to let her have a new hut and a solid new trough. The fisherman did as he was told, and asked the golden fish for a new hut and a solid new trough.

"All right," said the golden fish, "she shall have it." On his return home the fisherman found the new hut and the solid new trough. The old lady was still dissatisfied. She sent him back to the sea to ask the golden fish to let her have a big new house with a new stable. The old man obeyed his wife, and when he returned from the sea he found her desire had been fulfilled. Again she was dissatisfied. "Go back to the golden fish," said the old lady. "I need a palace with stables, with servants and lackeys." The old man again obeyed the command of his wife, and when he returned home from his errand, he found her in the front of a big palace scolding her servants. When she noticed the old man she began to find fault with him, called him an old fool and told him to return again to the golden fish and ask that she be made the Queen of the Realm, and the golden fish come and be her servant.

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The old man went to the ocean and told the golden fish the desire of his wife. The golden fish made no answer, shook its tail and disappeared. When the old man came home he found his wife sitting in an old hut at a broken old trough.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

IT is essential to get closer acquainted with the human element of which the union of the women's garment industries is composed, so that its inner workings, its motives, its methods, and tactics, can be understood. Also, that its difference from other labor organizations in the United States may be appreciated.

To begin with, from 70 to 80 per cent of the workers engaged in the woman's garment industries in this country consist of immigrant Yiddish workers. They are in fact, the predominating majority. And most of them are of the type well known among Jews, of "Shlumiel," or "Moishe the Ass." That is the docile, timid, quiet fellow, the fellow who impresses you that he is afraid of his own shadow. His opposite is "Yankel the Chotzef" (Jacob the Arrogant). That is, the loud-mouthed, aggressive fellow who has very much to say in the shop or at the union meeting. This fellow always carries the cross of unionism on his shoulders. In the shop he is a veritable martyr. He, and he alone, has the

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courage to stand up and fight against the constant attempts on the part of the firm to violate the union rules and regulations, against all attempts of the employer to encroach upon the rights of the workers in the shop. Why, if it were not for him, the shop rules, nay the whole union, would go to the dogs. This Yankel can, and too often does, terrorize a whole shop of Moishes.

I once had an opportunity of conducting a shop meeting where there was a stoppage, a lockout (it is always the employer who throws the worker out of the shop). Yankel, the shop chairman, was shouting away, banging with his fist on the table and relating with all his crude eloquence how he had undergone endless persecution in the shop because of his loyalty to the union. You see, he was always on guard that neither the foreman nor the employer could violate union rules. "Am I not telling the truth?" he shouted at the top of his voice, pointing his finger at the fellow who sat opposite him. "And you, Solomon?" he shouted at another. Both his witnesses nodded their heads in the affirmative, rather reluctantly it seemed to me.

This violent tirade about his martyrdom, the vehemence of his language, somehow did not appeal to me. Neither did it carry conviction despite his constant references to the workers present. I felt that there was very little truth in his story and decided to get at the bottom of it all. I also noticed

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a good deal of talk in low voices going on among those present. "All right," said I to the men, dismissing them. "You can go, I will attend to the case." I closed the door and began to interrogate the few workers who remained. After having made sure that they could not be overheard, I learned from them that the trouble had originated during a game of cards at lunch time in which the shop chairman and the foreman were engaged. A quarrel ensued and some threatening language was exchanged. When work had been resumed the shop chairman began to accuse his foreman of having changed his bundle of work. The foreman vehemently denied the charge. Thereupon the shop chairman stopped the shop. When the workers began to leave the factory the foreman ran after the shop chairman begging him to pick any bundle he liked. The chairman would not listen to the foreman and threatened while leaving the shop, "We will see each other at the 'green table.'"

"Why did you keep quiet all the time he kept telling his stories of persecution which you contend did not contain a word of truth?" I asked them.

"What, start an argument with that fellow? Not us. If no one dares to open his mouth in his presence, why should we?" Here you have a case where one arrogant fellow terrorized a shop of two hundred workmen.

No one takes any notice either in the shop or at

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a union meeting of the quiet fellow. He does not count. The walking delegate does not even know him.

"To satisfy the member," really means that the walking delegate is the errand boy of Yankel the Chotzef, the union official's bread giver. He delivers the vote and the delegate dares not to do anything which might displease him, as it would jeopardize his chances of reelection.

No labor organization can function properly unless the members have full confidence in their leaders and willingly obey their orders. Among the garment workers the case is just the reverse. The leaders are terrorized by the shouters in the mob, and the officers are always at the beck and call of Yankel the Chotzef.

From this you can understand why it is so easy for any trouble maker to stop the operation of a shop. Also why no one dares to check this abuse of power by a chairman in a shop working under an agreement with a union. Incidentally, you also can understand why as soon as the industry became unionized the employers began to decrease the size of their plants and why the number of small shops began to increase.

When the employers begin to decrease the size of their factories, to lay off hands, and to send out work to the small submanufacturing shop, and you are not in a position to strike at the submanufac-

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turer, to prevent him from taking work out of the inside shop, then your fights with the inside manufacturer are worse than useless. In such a keenly competitive industry the shop unit which can produce the garment at the lowest cost wins out. No amount of loud talk, threats or the use of radical language can help change this economic fact. If you cannot reduce the difference in the cost of production between the inside and the outside, either by increasing the cost of the outside shop, or by withdrawing the help from such shops, the only alternative left is to reduce the production cost inside the factory. This can often be effected by allowing the manufacturer to lay off one or two habitual martyrs for unionism, whose union activity is keeping the productivity of the workers in the shop at the lowest level, or who denounces at the shop, or at the union meeting, every worker who tries to give his employer an honest day's work.

But any attempt on the part of a union official to meet the competition of the outside shop by helping an employer increase the productivity of his employees, would expose him to a risk of losing his office. So he chooses the "easiest way." He finds it safer to make appeals to the gallery by raising the members' ire against the "capitalist class," or by earning the reputation of being an uncompromising "kempfer against the bosses," that is, the inside manufacturer. Thus "the member is satisfied" by

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crippling his boss. Something like cutting off your nose to spite your face.

When a union employer cannot get rid of an undesirable employee by means of negotiation with the union, he tries to get rid of such an employee by paying him a lump sum for giving up his "property right" in his job. According to a clause in the union agreement with the employers, the Impartial Chairman of the Trial Board must give ample protection to every "true union man" in the shop.

The price which an employer has to pay to rid himself of such a martyr for unionism depends entirely upon the destructive power such an employee possesses. Usually, it ranges from one hundred dollars up. When the price demanded happens to be too high, or when the union martyr refuses to quit the shop for any price, then the manufacturer closes up the whole department in which this particular "true union man" happens to work. The union, of course, charges bad faith against such a reorganization. And if this reorganization is prevented by the Trial Board, the manufacturer then closes his factory altogether and goes into the jobbing business.

In a "true union shop" where "true union men" are employed, the "horepasnic" (in Yiddish it signifies the worker who loves his work), who turns out an honest day's work, is looked upon as an enemy,

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"a traitor to the shop," a "sold soul," a "boss's man."

You are perhaps unaware that in a "kosher" union of the radical variety, the worst accusation that can be made against a union member is that of being "loyal to the firm." Loyalty to the firm, according to the conception of unionism, as it is understood on the East Side, is treason to the union. Impossible, you will say. Why should loyalty to the firm and loyalty to the union be incompatible? Why should it be impossible to give an employer an honest day's work, and at the same time be loyal to the union?

The "progressive" unionism of the Yiddish worker is based upon the underlying idea of "class consciousness" and "class struggle." The inevitable conflict of interest of Capital and Labor! The worker and the employer! The rich and the poor! Of course, "All is fair in love and war." Therefore, it is the duty of the "true union man" to "be-kaempfen" the boss from the very first day he enters a union shop.

My experience as a worker who spent fourteen years of his life at the bench convinces me that the genuine true union man finds little difficulty in getting along with his employer, for the simple reason that no one can be a true union man without being honest, fair-minded and conscientious. Such a union man tries to avoid giving his employer unnecessary

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trouble and does his best to turn out an honest day's work. Such an employee is always welcomed by employers, especially is it the case when they run union shops.

On the other hand when your "true union man" becomes an employer? What a metamorphosis! I could fill pages with facts and incidents showing what an exacting employer he becomes.

The brand of unionism presented by the counsel of the union, when addressing a meeting of a board of arbitration, and the unionism taught, preached and agitated in the shop, member and mass meetings, have as much in common as there is between "Socialism of the Chair," and that of the soap-box orator at election times. In the mouth of a Mr. Hilquit, for instance, the union man is a moderate, loyal, efficient worker who is unappreciated by the employer because of the latter's narrow-mindedness. All that the union worker objects to, all that he complains of, is the brutal fact that he is driven by a heartless foreman or designer. The employer dislikes him because the union member insists upon the observance of the union rules in the shop, and because he tries to carry into effect the letter and the spirit of the union agreement. The leadership of the union? Why! it is the quintessence of unselfishness and far-sighted industrial statesmanship.

I recollect, as many cloakmakers of my time must also do, the word picture Brother L——ch drew at

a shop or member meeting. It was his pleasure to liken the unfortunate worker in the shop to the fly in the spider's web. And Brother Z——r in all his speeches referring to the Nigger of the South. "If you treat him gently he will jump at you, but if you call him 'dirty nigger,' he will respect you."

Who, in the end, is the sufferer from all this hot-air talk of the silver-tongued orators and from the convincing speeches of your able council who so forcibly establishes your claims and the righteousness of your case? It is you, the worker, whose chances of obtaining work for a responsible employer in a legitimate shop are constantly diminishing; who so often has to look for some two-by-four shop tucked away somewhere in Lower Manhattan or Brooklyn where even the strong-armed man cannot reach you.

CHAPTER IX

THE RADICALISM OF THE YIDDISH WORKER

IN the radical Yiddish press, and on the platform, the Yiddish worker is reminded constantly of the important fact that he is the "most progressive," "the most enlightened," "the most class-conscious," etc., etc., worker in this country. This has been repeated so often that they are all thoroughly "sold" on the idea.

"Among ourselves," behind closed doors these very same orators, whose superlatives are quoted above, often lament that fact that there are so few genuine workers among these very progressive "Klassen-Kaempfer." They know that the great majority of their listeners come from countries where there are few if any industries. Where commerce still retains the primitive form of barter. That they, along with their fathers before them, were petty traders or market peddlers. Moses is working at pants, Abraham at cloaks, and Jacob at caps. He has been at it, it is true, for many years, but down in his trader's heart and soul, the petty trader is still there. He never does give up

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the hope of "going into business for himself"—of becoming his own boss.

An anecdote, illustrating this fact, comes to my mind. A Russian Gentile cloakmaker, being asked how he was getting along, said, "Nicely, thanks, I have steady employment." A Yiddish worker in the same factory with him, being asked the same question, replies, "No, not so good, I am still a wage worker."

Our New York "vanguard of human progress," the enlightened "kaempfer," did not come to this country to work, but to make his fortune. He had been told of the golden land, America. He came here, and to his great chagrin found himself in a cloak shop.

What makes things worse is the fact that his landsman (countryman), his neighbors, the fellow he went to school with has become an employer, is rich, rides in his own automobile. The immigrant has not the American sportsman's instinct of "you win." He is full of envy and jealousy, and this takes the form of hatred of his employer. In his little town in Lithuania, or Poland, he made his living by selling in the market, or small-town store to customers from whom he got the biggest price for the lowest value. Here he tries the same on his new customer, his employer. He is always on the lookout to "get the best of the boss."

For the Socialist politician, the propagandist, this

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characteristic is a veritable Klondike. "The boss," the "capitalist class." The Socialist begins to stimulate in him his own resentments. Presently, without any great effort either on his part or on the part of the propagandist, he becomes part of the "vanguard of human progress." His lower instincts become rationalized, distilled in the various theories of scientific socialism or anarchism. He joins one or another of the various sects of the Socialist faith and begins to dream of a "society of the Future," "Free Humanity," etc. Here the Jewish religious instinct comes into play, for the Jew, as a rule, is strongly religious, even when he is an agnostic or professes Atheism, paradoxical as it sounds. He cannot live without some cult or another. But with all that "business is business." The boss, the business man is always with or rather, within him. At the first opportunity he leaves the shop and "goes into business for himself." And while praying for the downfall of the capitalist system he opens a shop for himself.

While he is still in the shop however, and wishing something will happen, a union organizer appears on the scene. He tells him that in "unity is strength," or "kaempf," of "compelling the employer," etc. Wonderfully fine. The oratory sounds well. But why should he be the first to join the union? He might lose his show with the foreman. He is afraid. He trusts no one. Let Solomon join

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the union first. What can the union do for him right now? Right here? Wait until next year! Next season he may be in a position to leave his trade altogether. Go out on a strike? Nothing doing. What could he do if the fellow next to him returned to work first?

At last, in July, 1910, the whole mass, fifty thousand strong, all of a sudden rose and went on strike, and within a couple of days enrolled in the Union. The strike ended in a glorious victory. The management of the shop went over to the union. "Moishe" now had a union shop with a shop chairman, a walking delegate, and the whole paraphernalia. And he earned more wages for less working hours.

Wonderful, is it not? The newspapers of the whole country were full of the details of his victory. Yet it was no real good at all. The boss in a union shop still expected him to turn out a day's work and take his orders! He is informed that if he does not do exactly as he is told, he will be discharged. What? Be discharged in a union shop? Make him work the way the employer likes? Then what does he want the union for? Has he not, because of the union, lost the "show" in the shop? "We must find a way to compel the boss to employ me whether he wants me or not. Did I strike, suffer, struggle and starve to build a union, to make it profitable for the

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boss to employ me? Do we maintain a union for our or for his benefit? We must, under all circumstances, maintain our 'property right in the job!'"

Here comes in the radical press, and the silver-tongued orators of the Socialist Party. The worker is constantly reminded that as a member of the "working class" his duty is to fight the "capitalistic class" until the downfall of the present capitalistic order of society is brought about. If he works quietly in the shop and turns out an honest day's work satisfactory to the employer, what will become of the "eternal struggle between capital and labor"? Now, you see why Moishe is such a progressive person, so class-conscious, why the cry "down with the bosses," the "capitalist class," finds such a vigorous response. It awakens in him his primitive instincts.

In the parks of my neighborhood I have many opportunities to meet such a "vanguard of human progress" in conversation. I met one who advocates a forty hours week work.

"Do you believe that the present forty-four hours per week are too many?" I asked him.

"Not at all," was his reply, "but why should my employer ride about in an automobile?"

"But are you not better off when working for an employer who rides in an automobile than for one who may be poorer than yourself?"

"I dare say you are a boss yourself."

"Do you know the firm of J. D. B. & Son?" I

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was asked on another occasion by one of the "kaempfers."

"Yes, I do."

"The old man was once a cigar maker."

"Yes, I know."

"Well, the old man made over a half million dollars in a few years in the manufacture of separate skirts and dresses."

"Yes, I know that he built up a big profitable business," was my reply. "But what has this to do with the subject under discussion: You know that the workers at that firm were as well paid as any in the trade."

"But he made over a half million dollars out of the toil of the workers."

This is the spirit of Count Tolstoy, who taught that every rich man is a malefactor. It does not follow that this New York dressmaker knew of the existence of Count Tolstoy any more than the Ukranian peasants who participated in the anti-Jewish pogroms, ever had heard of the existence of a Count Gobineau, or of a Houston Chamberlain, but their spirit was with them.

There you have the source of the Yiddish worker's radicalism. Dangerous radicals these Yiddish immigrants? Not at all. They are the most harmless individuals going if you only watch them a little closer. Just scratch the veneer, or lack of veneer, and you will at once find that beneath their

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radical vituperation rests the most conservative of any in this country. You just touch their personal interest and "business is business."

You are at a convention of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. A "kosher" radical organization. Its preamble consists of the full Socialist catchism, of all the tenets in which all true and genuine Marxists believe.

The speaker on the platform is a delegate of Local No. 23, who is well known for his disbelief in any of the Socialist tenets. A "reactionary" of course. You wonder how such an infidel can thrive among such a crowd of true, orthodox believers. The speaker criticizes the high initiation fees charged by some of the New York locals. He tells them that while they are fighting against anti-immigration laws, yet, at the same time, they make it impossible for the new immigrant to enter a trade and earn an honest living. He calls their attention to a large picture of Karl Marx, hanging at the entrance of the hall, bearing the inscription, "Workers of All Countries, Unite," and asks them how they can reconcile the action of their locals with the words of their teacher.

The leader of the delegation of Local No. 35 (New York Pressers) takes the floor. The speaker is a onetime I. W. W. man. He has taken a temporary "strategic retreat," a la Lenin, and joined the International Union. He is a convinced anar-

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chist, who solemnly believes that human freedom can be achieved only when governments, laws, all artificial restrictions are abolished and the "sovereignty of the individual" is proclaimed. The speaker declares that the reason his local union finds it necessary to charge high initiation fees is because there are so many pressers in New York working on men's coats, that unless his members can keep these pressers on men's garments out of the cloak trade, they will compete with the pressers of his own local union and thus bring down their wages.

A few days later, the request of the International officials for a higher per capita dues comes up for discussion. The International officials claim that with a larger revenue, the central body will be in a stronger position to organize the women's garment workers throughout the country, and to help the weaker locals in time of strikes, and so forth.

In opposition to their request, the leader of the delegation of Local No. 1 (New York Machine Operators) takes the floor. He is a well-known member of the Socialist Labor Party, a strong believer of "One Big Union." His contention is that the members of his local do not at all approve of the action of the general officers who spend the money derived from the New York membership on the local unions of other cities and on other crafts from which the members of his local derive no benefits. He winds up his speech by declaring, "We

need the money in our own treasury, for we feel that our needs come first."

Watch these zealots of one socialistic sect (but delegates from different local unions) engaged in endless jurisdictional disputes, every one defending the interest of *his* own local union or the members of his own particular craft against the claims of the delegates from another local or craft. A strike is called against a shop because members of Local No. 25 (Waist and Dress Makers) are working, who refuse to transfer their membership to Local No. 23 (Skirt and Dress Makers). When it comes to local matters where their own interests are affected, all their high-sounding phrases and principles are forgotten.

With the non-Yiddish delegates at the convention things are a little different. The Slavonic delegates, introduce to them a new plan, a new idea and convince them of its righteousness and they ask no questions. They are ready to introduce it there and then. An Italian delegate, embellish an idea or plan with fine poetic phrases and he has no patience to find out what it is all about. But an orator can work the Yiddish delegates into a frenzy. The moment you ask them to put it into practice "business is business." They become cautious and try to find how it will affect their interests. There is where their conservatism comes in. There are few conservative American unions who charge

bigger initiation fees and make it harder for a newcomer to join than those so-called progressive Yiddish unions.

The communist leaders of the Fur Workers' Union, after their recent settlement with their employers, insisted upon a clause in their agreement that within the next two years no new apprentices should be engaged by the employers. Is there anything more conservative than that?

CHAPTER X

HOW SUB-MANUFACTURERS ARE MANUFACTURED

I RECENTLY met an old acquaintance, a "kaempfer," an ex-executive board member of my old local union.

"Hello, Mr. Solomon! How are you? I haven't seen you for many years. How are you getting on? What are you doing?" I fired at at him.

"I am in business for myself, a submanufacturer," he replied.

"I congratulate you. I wish you all the luck in the world. How long since?"

"Oh! nearly two years."

"Well, how are you making out?"

"I would have been able to make a living but for the union, for the Bashi Bajouks. They give you no chance. They won't let you lift your head. Genuine Cossacks. They tie your hands, they choke you to death." He lifted his hand to his throat to pantomime how the union was choking him. He elaborated his troubles with the union, wanted my sympathy, knowing that I, too, was an employer of union labor. I blushed with shame. This was the

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"True Union Man," who had caused so many strikes, the "martyr for unionism," one of that class of whom my friend Bisno used to call "a worker with a social conscience." The man which the union must protect under all circumstances! While still an officer in the union, listening to the various stories of persecution in the factories by foremen, superintendents, designers, brought to me by these "true union men," I had never been thoroughly convinced of the justice of their complaints. But I never expected such a tirade against the union from this ex-official of it. Since leaving the organization I have learned many things which were impossible for me to know when on the inside. For instance, I learned of quite a number of cases where factory workers had been making a good living. Prices were high and employment regular. But some "true union men" caused trouble inside these very shops, instigating strikes and stoppages. At the same time, in a roundabout way, they told the employers, "Why all this bother? Better give us the work. We'll do it outside. We can fix up a shop and turn out a better garment at a lower price." This really is one of the chief causes for the closing of the big factories.

Years before 1910, when the trade was disorganized, this kind of gentlemen existed in the shops, but they worked the game differently. They were known as "damned hard men," or, "leaders in the

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shops." They kept the shop in perfect order, kept wages down and the hours of labor long. In recognition for their services their employers would give them bonuses, an extra agreement. And, whenever the bosses themselves refused to come across, these "aristocrats" would cause a hold-up strike. That is, they would go to the union and cause the officials to call a shop meeting. While this meeting was still on they would run back to their employers and make a deal with them. The next day they would go back to work. At such times that the union officials suspected the motives of these "leaders in the shops," thereby refusing to pull their chestnuts out of the fire for them, these "damned hard men" would print themselves handbills and call a meeting. At the same time they would be arranging a private deal with the employers.

Now, things are managed differently. To get what they want they cause a stoppage, sometimes with the connivance of the union officials, who are always ready to please the shouter, the leader in the shop. It is much easier in the shops of an employer who is a member of the Protective Association than in an independent shop. It is not always safe to cause a stoppage at a non-association shop. A stoppage there might turn into a strike, sometimes a prolonged strike, which is generally costly to the union. On the other hand, you may be sure that a hold-up in a protocol shop will

not last long. The officers of the union will in a day or two visit the shop accompanied by a clerk of the Association, and the trouble will be adjusted.

In a big shop a strike is a very interesting phenomenon. The workers assemble in a big hall. They are visited by the general officers. Some well-known officers of the Socialist Party will address them. There the orators get even with the bosses, with the capitalist class, with the Rockefellers, the Morgans, and with the American millionaires in general. Great applause follows and everybody is happy. Moishe's emotion, his religious enthusiasm for the Cause is aroused. In the smaller shops nobody pays any attention to the strikers.

Under union rule the former privileged men who were reduced to an equality with the rest of the workers in the shop did not take their loss of their privileges calmly. They became all at once the "true union men," the trouble makers. Under the name of unionism they began a "kaempff" with the employers. They began to instigate strikes and stoppages resulting in incalculable losses to the factory owners. Under the pressure of these "kaempfers," the new martyrs of unionism, the employers began to diminish their plants, to decrease the production of garments inside their factories and eventually send their work out to these same fellows—the original instigators of these stoppages. And what did the union do? Did it do anything to stop

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these suicidal tactics of the "true union men"? Under the leadership of your naïve professor you denounced every attempt on the part of the International union officials who tried their best to put a stop to these pogroms against the cloak industry. They are stigmatized by your class strugglers as "agents of the manufacturers' association" and declared traitors to the cause of the workers.

CHAPTER XI

HOLD UP UNIONISM

THAT strikes and "stoppages" go on unchecked in an organization calling itself a labor union is a disgrace to the American labor movement. In a genuine trade union unauthorized strikes can happen only on rare occasions. Here it is an everyday affair. It is a form of the "class struggle."

Then there is the Workers' University. I wonder what kind of education is ladled out there? Is it there that this form of "class struggle" is being taught? ¹

Under present methods, or rather want of methods of conducting the union, every would-be contractor or submanufacturer, every scoundrel who is dissatisfied with being a simple employee and aspires to "start business for himself," can make a hold-up on a shop working under contractual rela-

¹ I can imagine a class of "class-conscious" flappers listening to a lecture delivered by some professor on the "Materialistic Conception of History." If only these flappers knew that Karl Marx's principal opponent, the German professor, Wilhelm Wundt, worked out an "Idealistic conception of History"; if they knew that Marx was a materialist, and his opponent, Wundt, an idealist.

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tions with the union. He can do this at will, for he knows that no one will find fault with him for such action. With these men every "kaempfer" is a "true union man," no matter what his motive for the "kaempfer" may be. Did any one ever meet a member of this union who had a quarrel with an employer who was not a martyr for the cause of unionism? In fact, since this union was organized overnight in 1910 every cloak and dressmaker became a martyr for the cause of unionism.

Some shops were held up by shop chairmen because this particular shop chairman was drunk; others, because of attempts on the part of the employers to comply with the sanitary conditions demanded by the factory inspectors; in another place, because the chairman had a fight with the foreman over a game of poker.

It is a kind of sport with these men to make stoppages or call unauthorized strikes. In the woman's garment industries, where styles keep constantly changing, where there is no such a thing as a staple article, a stoppage from work which prevents the employer from shipping his orders on time, causes incalculable losses.

Dr. Levine in his "history" contends: "The principal benefit which the manufacturer had as a result of the introduction of the Protocol in their industry, is that they were free from strikes." I could not help smiling when I read this passage. All the time

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I spent in New York, my principal work was to attend to unauthorized strikes.

I still remember the present cabinet minister, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Brother L——ch, how he would say to the strikers: "Brothers, so far as I am concerned, you can strike as long as you like, I do not tell you to go back to work, but Brother Dyche is my superior. I cannot help myself. If he tells you to go back to work I dare say you will have to do it."

According to the union constitution, no strike can take place without the authorization of the union. For all I know this constitution may have been changed since, in favor of the "hold-up men." But if the officials did not bend all their energies in order to build up a machine for the purpose of insuring their reelection, such things could not take place, for according to the fundamental principle of unionism no greater offense can be committed against the union than to make a hold-up or a stoppage in a shop which is working under an agreement with the union. Now this toleration of unauthorized strikes cannot be taken as proof that the union officials are so liberal, so tolerant, so soft-hearted. Where they find it necessary it is generally "fifty dollars and sharap." (This method of procedure is applied only to our unfortunate Moishe. Yankel the Chotzef is handled with more consideration.)

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Whole local unions have been reorganized when union officials found it to their advantage. In Matt, strikes have been called in shops because an employer refused to discharge one of his employees who had been found guilty by the union for infringement of discipline. However, when it comes to the question of "bekaempfen the bosses" the organization assumes the character of a typical "Hurrah Union," the name used by the East Side workers when they speak of a genuine Yiddish organization where there is no discipline, no order and where things are done at the impulse of the moment with much splash and noise. Has it ever happened that a member has been disciplined by the union for causing an illegal strike?

I accuse the officers of the International Union for violating the fundamental conception of unionism. According to this conception, when a worker joins a labor union, he gives up his individual right to deal or bargain with the employer, to make demands on him or go out on strike. Once a shop is unionized it becomes part of the whole trade union scheme. Therefore, in no union shop can the workers make demands on the employer or go out on strike. Only the organization, as a whole, can accomplish this through its accredited representatives. It follows, therefore, that when the workers in a union shop do go out on a strike without the au-

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thority of the union, their act is looked upon as an act of treason, as an act of secession. It is as if one state of the Union should repudiate the authority of the Federal Government. Such strikers are looked upon as rebels and are considered greater offenders than strike breakers, for the consequence to the organization of such union treason is more serious.

The Industrial Workers of the World do not believe in Trade Agreements. They say to their members: "Work as long as you are satisfied and strike when you find it necessary." The I. W. W. can well afford to allow its members to engage in spontaneous, promiscuous strikes. After some twenty-odd years of existence this organization enjoys a membership of some 12,000, consisting mostly of lumber jacks, that is, of semi-itinerant workers, mostly single fellows, free from family responsibilities, engaged in an industry which is carried on in a simple, primitive method where there is little interdependence of operations, each scattered group of two or three working independent of the other. The discipline of modern industry and modern unionism is here out of place. And the policy of "strike when you please" is undoubtedly the most suitable in an industry which is carried on in such a primitive way.

This policy of "strike when you please," of leaving the weapon of strike to the discretion of the workers in the shop, is a form of unionism which

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was prevalent when the movement was in its infancy. It is suitable only to such industries as are carried on in a simple method such as the lumber-cutting industry of the Northwest, or the small cloak shops of the submanufacturers in New York, where the employers' capital consists of a few sewing machines, a few chairs and a table or two. It is also undoubtedly the most suitable method of dealing with the employers in such undeveloped countries as Lithuania, the country from which most of our Yiddish radicals hail.

Instead of the "strike when you please" method being "advanced" or "progressive," it is in reality a primitive and an obsolete method which unionism had to abandon in order to adjust itself to the modern industrial system with its large productive unit, and to the complicated nature of its operations.

One cannot expect the operation of a modern industrial plant to be left to the discretion of an irresponsible shop chairman or shop committee. Some international unions do not leave it even to the discretion of a local union. The right to call strikes is reserved for the national body as a whole. Modern unions realize the seriousness of strikes, and from bitter experience have learned that one cannot be too cautious about them. No person of any responsibility would care to invest capital in an undertaking which could be made valueless through

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the whim or caprice of a shop-chairman or shop chairlady.

Modern unions, therefore, adhere to the policy of entering into trade agreements with employers for a specific length of time. They believe the "sanctity of contracts" must, under all circumstances, be carried out in accordance with the spirit and letter of the agreement. There must be no strings attached to this, and, it must be accepted with no mental reservation.

This belief in the "sanctity of agreements" is not, as the East Side radicals contend, due to the conservatism of the A. F. of L. leaders, but to the fact that labor organizations want to guarantee the union labor employer freedom from strikes and stoppages in return for the higher wages and better conditions of employment. The union agreement is the employers' "insurance policy" against strikes, so to say. These "conservative" leaders realize that it is to the advantage of their individual members, and to the organization as a whole, to place a union employer in a position where he can expand, and increase his business and employ more union labor.

With the so-called "progressive" unions, the case is just the reverse. As soon as a shop is unionized and an agreement is signed, an employer's troubles begin. To diminish his troubles there is only one way left to this employer, and that is to diminish his

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business, to decrease his plant. Jobbing, sending work to the submanufacturer is his safety valve.

But aside from union agreements, no responsible labor organization leaves the wielding of the weapon of the strike to a shop chairman, or to a few disgruntled workers in the shop.

The International pursues a policy which is neither that of the I. W. W. nor of the A. F. of L. In fact the officials have no known union policy, and do not feel the need of one. It is true that the International pays per capita to the A. F. of L. and sends delegates to the annual convention of that organization. They are Federationists in the same manner as some of their own "true union men" who pay dues, attend all regular and special meetings, and at the same time when opportunity presents itself, work on Saturday afternoons or on Sundays or make odd jobs after regular working hours in some submanufacturing shop at piece rate.

At every stoppage or unauthorized shop strike which the International union tolerates, excuses, or tries to explain away its leaders betray the fundamental principles of unionism. This is done in order "to satisfy the members." That is to say, those few shouters in the shop who can deliver the members' vote at the time of the election of officers.

The leaders of the union may proclaim their Americanism from the housetops; they may swear allegiance to the American flag every day in the

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week; their demand, however, for "time guarantee of employment" which means that the employer will have to pay his workers wages even when he has no work for them, and the persistence in the "right of the worker to his job" which means that the employer must keep and pay the workers wages even after the employer finds that he has no use for such an employee, is anything but unionism.

I am not aware of any International union official who has ever been found guilty of misappropriating funds belonging to the union, or of taking bribes from employers, or of forging checks. But a union official who signs a union agreement with an employer, knowing that the workers may go out on strike without their finding any fault with them for doing so, cannot be honest. Or take such officials of the International who, when presenting an agreement, assure those members who object to certain clauses as being inimical to the union, that they need not fear any trouble will ever arise because of these objectionable clauses, since a way can always be found how to get around them. No amount of high talk about the "cause of the workers" can make such action on the part of these officials less despicable.

The union representatives often talk of "a fair day's work for a fair wage," but they always interpret it according to the exigencies of the moment.

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When they find it suitable to their purposes they tell the workers, "You know what you have to do," or "call a French strike," that is, reduce the output.

Oh, Moishe, the demagogue-politician is waiting for you. He recognizes you from a distance. No wonder you believe that you are the most enlightened, the cleverest, the most progressive class of workers in the world.

The International Union differs from all other labor organizations that I know in that it permits shop strikes, that it does not permit the employer to select his employees, or the right to hire or fire, or permit a reduction of wages even when they are above the union scale. These three things tend to destroy, to hinder the standardization or the equalization of labor cost. I therefore do not consider this organization a legitimate labor union.

The primary object of any labor union is to try as far as it is within its power to equalize the price or cost of labor in the industry, to see that the hours of labor as well as the rates of wages and other general conditions are on an equal basis in all shops under its control. This is exactly what is meant by union standards and union conditions. Not as a question of abstract justice and fairness to the employer, but because it is of vital importance to the members of the organization. And union activity not directed in this channel will do the work-

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ers more harm than good. Just as the union must watch that an employer in a particular shop does not reduce the labor standards, so must the organization be equally on the alert that the workers in a particular shop do not abuse the power of the organization, to raise the wages above those agreed upon by the union and the employers in the industry.

Assume, for instance, that the union in a particular industry controls two competing establishments. In establishment A, the wages are, let us say, eight dollars, while in establishment B, the wages are ten dollars a day. If the union forces the earnings in establishment A from eight to ten dollars a day, thus equalizing the price of labor in both shops, it has benefited the workers in the whole industry, and incidentally the employer of establishment B. On the other hand, should the union force the ten-dollar-a-day establishment to pay more than it does while leaving the other competing firm alone, the probabilities are that the trade of establishment B will drift to the lower paying firm and the earnings of the rest of the workers in the trade will drop accordingly.

It is only natural that the same motives prompting employers to reduce union standards should prompt the workers to force their earnings above union standards, and obtain from their employer a higher rate or other advantages which are not obtainable

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in the other shops of his competitor. The so-called illegitimate strikes or "outlaw strikes" are all of this nature, which the union officials try to prevent or to put down with all the forces at their command.

A conspicuous example of an outlaw strike recently was witnessed in the printing pressmen's trade in the city of New York in which all the local unions participated. In this instance Major Berry, the General President of the International Printing Pressmen's Union, of which organization the New York local unions formed a part, imported union members from other cities to take the place of the New York members. In this way the General President succeeded in breaking what he considered an unlawful strike of the New York local unions.

This action of Major Berry called forth the wrath of the radical press of this country, also that of some well-meaning persons ignorant of trade union ethics and practices of modern unionism. At the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor this action of Major Berry was unanimously approved by the representatives of organized labor in this country.

The primary object of the union in the garment industry is "to get even with the boss." The peculiar psychology of the garment worker makes it difficult for the officials of these organizations "to take the part of the boss." Hence strikes

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without either the knowledge or the sanction of the union are of daily occurrence, and no official dares to lift a hand against any "kaempf" of the workers with their employers, no matter what issue may be involved. Whenever the workers in a shop feel like it they may, and as a matter of fact, do force their employer to make concessions or to submit to conditions which the workers in the shop think fit.

When the spokesmen of the union speak of "labor standards" they know that they are giving the workers lip service. In an organization where the members in any union shop may strike to their hearts' content and no number of officials would dare to stop them, where, in fact, it is considered the right thing to do, the standardization or equalization of the cost or price of labor is an impossibility.

The only real service such an organization gives to the workers and the only reason why the workers stick and fight for it is that it gives them a chance "to get the best of the boss."

This peculiar psychology of the garment workers will explain the strange phenomenon why an organization so imbued with the principles of "the class war" and "class struggle," so often resorts to outside interferences of all kinds, to impartial chairmen, disinterested arbitrators or mediators (always recruited from the ranks of the "enemy class"). Outside mediators and arbitrators serve as a light

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ning conductor or a safety valve against the "kampflust" of the members. Without this "class collaboration," which even our pure-blooded communist leaders in the organization find necessary to resort to, the union would go to pieces from internal combustion, from the "kampflust" of its own members.

The conservative American unions who see in unionism a form of coöperation and collaboration of employers and employees understand that they can manage their affairs and get along with their employers well enough without the friendly offices of all sorts of politicians and philanthropists. In these organizations the officers are not intimidated by the shouters in the mob. Neither are they driven by the threats of a few shop leaders. They are in command of the situation. They have learned from experience that through friendly conferences and give-and-take methods, they can get along and adjust their trade problems and differences with their employers, without having to refer them to strangers in the industry.

The two other points in which the garment workers' unions differ from American unions, also tend to prevent the equalization of the price of labor. The "property right to the job" leaves the productivity of the shop entirely to the good will of the employees in the shop.

The interference of the union in matters of rates

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of wages when these rates are above the minimum scale, something unheard of in other labor organizations, also tends to destroy the standardization or the equalization of the price of labor.

The failure of unionism in the women's garment industries is due, as I have said before, to the non-union methods and tactics employed by these organizations.

A few years after my arrival in this country I met the well-known revolutionist Nicolas Tchaikovsky. The following conversation passed between us:

"Hello! How are you? What are you doing?" (in revolutionary parlance, "what are you doing" means, what are you doing for the "movement").

"I devote all my time to unionism."

"And for socialism?"

"Nothing at all," was my reply.

"But is not unionism only an introduction to socialism?"

"What can one do if the workers are not ripe even for unionism?"

"What a pessimist you have become."

"If you knew the workers as well as I do, if you had lived and worked with them as I did, you would realize how far they are, not only from socialism, but even from unionism."

And the Bolshevist revolution has convinced this old revolutionist that the Russian people are also

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far from being ripe for socialism. With all my pessimism, I never dreamed that after so many years of unionism among the members of the International Garment Workers' Union they could evolve nothing better than "hold-up-unionism."

CHAPTER XII

WHY FACTS ARE WITHHELD FROM THE WORKERS

"THIS is true, unfortunately, but we cannot come out with it in the open; it must not be told publicly." How often have I heard this repeated when I discussed the various phases of the so-called progressive labor movement with my former colleague-officials of the International.

This hiding the truth, this hiding of the real situation from the members is a real crime, a treason its leaders commit against the true interest of the union. By hiding the truth, they mislead. This is the worst, the most deadly form of betrayal. How can they lead workers in the right direction if they are not told the truth, the whole truth? If they are not informed of the real situation as their leaders know it to be? Besides, workers follow leadership only when they have full confidence in its disinterestedness. The moment anything is hidden from them they begin to feel that they are being mistrusted and sooner or later, as effect always follows cause, they cannot help but mistrust and lose confidence

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in their leaders who automatically, so to say, become useless to them.

Leaders are leaders because the members believe that they understand their problems better than they do themselves. They are in office so that they may have free time to study the needs and various economic problems connected with the industry, so as to have an opportunity to appraise the labor situation more clearly than the worker sitting at his bench. They are in office so that the workers in the shop may be in a position to profit by their experience. Yet in all matters of importance leaders find it expedient to withhold the truth from them and do so simply because to-day they are afraid that if it is told then they will come into disfavor with the membership. In order to retain their friendship and votes, leaders tell them something that they themselves know not to be true, or else they withhold from them something that is true, in both cases, putting a false aspect upon the situation. In other words they bluff them. And they do this because it serves their political interest.

A worker in the shop knows only his own problem, he knows what he is short of. An official, possessing the necessary ability, understands that the problem of each individual worker constitutes a part of the problem of the whole industry. This knowledge comes to him from going about from shop to shop attending to the needs of many individual

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workers. This is an economic fact that the individual worker himself finds it rather difficult to comprehend. In fact, he can rarely, without the aid of his union official, learn that the cause of his own troubles sometimes lies outside of the shop in which he is toiling, that his employer, like himself, is caught in economic forces over which neither has control.

A union leader really is the industrial adviser of the workers. He is their industrial specialist. That is, he should be. Imagine a physician knowing that his patient is suffering from indigestion but keeps this fact from him, while he tells him that he is troubled with lung disease. What would you say of a physician who in fear of losing a patient by forbidding him to indulge his appetite, permits him go right on eating the wrong kind of foods?

How is it that in the Yiddish press, and on the open platform, one reads and hears so often of the high degree of intelligence and the progressive character of Yiddish workers, the "vanguard of human progress," while behind their backs, their union leaders refer to them as the "besgramotnaya swolotch" (Russian equivalent for illiterate trash)? Why do these leaders talk of class-consciousness, while privately lamenting the fact that there are comparatively few real workers among them. That the majority of them retain the psychology of the

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petty bourgeois, the employer, the business man. Why at the shop and member meetings do they keep dwelling on the sufferings of the workers, the persecutions they suffer at the hands of the foremen and employers, when among themselves they refer to the workers by the popular name of Paskoudniak (nasty fellow, blockhead)? Why is it that instead of informing the members of the situation as they find it, do they decide at a caucus meeting just what to tell them, and what "open declaration" to make to them?

"Learn to think aloud," I used to repeatedly warn my union lieutenants, now superior union officials. Their opinions may prove erroneous, their estimates of the situation may not be correct. They may be mistaken. The conditions in this industry are highly complicated. It is difficult to tell beforehand with any degree of certainty how things will turn out, but as soon as they find out that they are in error and have made a mistake, they should be the very first to inform the members of their findings, while notifying them that they are looking for other remedies, and are about to adopt other methods of dealing with the problems confronting them.

But what are these leaders really doing? They are eternally busy with publicity campaigns. With the East Side press at their behest which keeps shouting "Victory," they bluff the union members, and

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the result is tumult. Tell the members the truth, for this is the surest way of keeping order in your ranks. The truth of the matter is that their whole campaign of propaganda, of enlightenment, actually consists in "miseducating" the workers, an expression used by Louis D. Brandeis while sitting on the Board of Arbitration, when referring to some editorial articles which appeared in the *New Post* then the official journal of the Joint Board of the Cloak-makers' local unions.

How is it that when these leaders talk among themselves, they lament the eternal "discharge" troubles in the organization. In their own offices, they wish employers had the right to discharge or lay off their workers when the circumstances made it necessary. They wish employers were not forced to appear before an impartial chairman, or a trial board to prove they are not exercising discrimination when they fire an incompetent or idle worker. In their own offices, they wish employers were free to hire and fire workers, the same as in other industries, and other labor organizations. In their own offices, they regret the endless disputes and restlessness in the shops, and the unauthorized strikes and stoppages caused by this discharge business.

These workers believe that by striking against the discharge of a union member, they are showing their sense of solidarity with the discharged em-

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ployee, performing an act of heroism. Leaders are aware that this is the principal reason that so many factories in the cloak and dress industry have been closed, and that the small uncontrollable sub-manufacturers' shops are taking their places. They are also aware that even to-day many of the jobbers would prefer to manufacture their own garments on their own premises, under their own supervision. But the leaders are afraid to tell these facts to the members. Instead, they hire high-priced lawyers to bring the case before a Board of Arbitration, and gain a well-advertised victory of the "property rights" of the worker in his job, which right, according to the Constitution of the United States, no man can be deprived of without due process of law.

They are also well aware that in the long run this victory reacts to the workers' detriment, that is, more factories will be forced to close. Bundles of work will roll from the bigger inside factories to the smaller outside submanufacturing shops. Shop units will decrease in size, but the number of these outside shops will multiply. Nor do they seem to care that the problems of handling labor conditions in the smaller shops will become even more difficult. This "victory" enhances their political prestige with the workers, and the East Side press praises them up to the sky.

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During the thirty years which I spent in the labor movement I had opportunities of discussing various phases of the labor problem with labor leaders of this country and of most European countries. During these discussions the idea, so prevalent among the so-called progressive labor organization that one needs always to conceal, to hide from the members, had not once been suggested. Until these tactics are abandoned, until the leaders will learn to tell the members "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," the movement will not make real progress.

Some time ago the head of the International, in conversation with one of the leaders of the Protective Association, made use of the following remark, "Do you want that I should meet the fate of John Dyche?"

I am proud of my fate. I remember with pride the fact that when as an official of the International I had to choose between a policy that maintained the union gains in 1910, while effecting improvements by coöperation with the Protective Association, or of giving way to the massed impatience, and to the demands of a set of unscrupulous demagogues that has since led to endless strikes by the union, and lockouts by the manufacturers, I did not hesitate for a moment. I sacrificed my career in the International and made the choice.

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To be sure I could have become the hero of the day if I wanted to make the wrong choice for the workers. All I would have had to do would be to have advised the patient to eat the wrong kind of food, and I would have kept my job.

CHAPTER XIII

UNION AGREEMENTS

THE nature of the various union demands, the arguments by the counsel, in fact, the whole proceedings of the "hearing" before Gov. Smith's Commission on Mediation, struck me as so ridiculous that I had not the patience to attend it longer than an hour or two. However, I read in *Women's Wear* that the President of the International stated before this commission that the employers in the woman's garment industries have violated every agreement they ever made with the union, evading or failing to carry out every decision made by previous boards of arbitration. It is strange, indeed, that such an accusation should have come from the representative of an organization in which unauthorized strikes are the rule rather than the exception, an everyday occurrence between it and the employers with whom it is supposed to have contractual relations.

Under such conditions, as I have said before, the whole business of writing and of signing agreements is a farce, in fact, a fraud, and can have but two effects, viz.: to demoralize both the employers and

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employees, and to disorganize the whole industry. Such practices make for bad faith and duplicity and double dealing between employer and employee. The signing of agreements without any intention of ever living up to them is an original gesture which has been worked out by the so-called "progressive" unions of the East Side. In fact, in the minds of these workers a union agreement signifies not only a pledge on the part of the employer to fulfill the various clauses stipulated, but one to be interpreted strictly in accordance with the ideas, wishes and desires of its walking delegate, shop chairman or any other member working in these shops.

The fact that such signatures of such documents are always exacted from an employer under the stress or the threat of strike, will supply you with some sort of notion of the amount of moral obligation that goes along with his unwilling signature.

This being the case, the president of the International naturally stated the truth when he complained that the employers in this industry were guilty of violating all the agreements they had signed with the union. It could not be otherwise.

And if these employers have been so successful for so many years in evading their obligations, in breaking their pledges, and, if the union has failed to make them live up to their own signatures or the decisions of the previous other boards of arbitra-

tion, of what mortal use is it to arbitrate again the demands of the union?

What exactly does a victorious strike mean, if not a pledge from an employer that in the future he will grant certain improvements in his employees' conditions? When a union can find no means to enforce an employer to live up to his promises, of what use is it either to call strikes or to bother with arbitration?

It is a comparatively easy matter to get hold of a manufacturer at either the beginning or the middle of his season (when his whole capital as well as that of his creditors has been invested in cut-up woolens or silks), and compel him to sign some document submitted by a union official, known as a union agreement. It is still simpler for a union official to raise issues and submit them to a board of arbitration. The official is sure that the arbitrators will decide some points in favor of the men. For is not the primary object of all arbitrators to avoid a conflict from which the community and the innocent bystander must suffer? Besides, the responsibility for any strike that may occur is thrown on the employer.

I have witnessed so many arbitration proceedings in my time, of one sort or another, that I have come to the conclusion that once friendly efforts at negotiations have failed, you might better toss up a coin than engage in these cumbersome, expensive

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ways of making decisions. The fact that these outsiders are "impartial" does not make their ignorance of the intricacies of the methods of manufacture, and of the psychology of the human element engaged in the industry, any the less profound. I realize that such well meaning gentlemen are capable of deciding disputed points connected with an existing trade agreement. But I deny that they can legislate, lay down rules and regulations for an industry touching complex issues, such as inside shop conduct, the exact relations between employer and employees, what terms workers should demand for labor power, etc., etc.

How far could any business man get on in the business world if he had to submit every deal, every business transaction to outsiders. At times he has to drop a customer or even take him to court but he knows that his success will depend on the number of friendly and mutual beneficial deals he can make. Henceforth, the old slogan of the trade unionist that the strength of a union depends on the number of strikes it can avoid. After all is said and done, the employer always remains the worker's customer to whom he sells his labor power. But in the minds of the rank and file of the workers there is a fixed idea that their strength depends entirely upon the number of conflicts they can provoke. Whenever and wherever the leaders recognize that the weapon of strike is too dangerous, they call in outside ar-

bitrators with the hope that in their anxiety to avoid a strike the arbitrators will make it fifty-fifty. But does it work?

It is easy to gain victories on paper, or in a written agreement, or to obtain a favorable decision of a board of arbitration. The utility to the worker of the newly-acquired rights or gains, however, can only be seen when the worker actually returns to the shop. If, as it often happens, an employer perceives that his anxiety to avoid a strike is costing him considerable; that sooner or later, his creditors will drive him into the hands of the receiver, he will naturally try to find ways and means to free himself from conditions leading him into bankruptcy. It may be that his action is not entirely ethical, not in accord with the high moral standards set by the president of the International union for employers in the garment industry, but with his customary human weakness the cloak and dress employer does not care to sit idly by and look on as his capital, credit and business vanish without some effort on his part to save it. He begins by curtailing the volume of his business, closes departments, sends part of his work outside. If this is not enough, he closes up his plant entirely and becomes a jobber. Not all of them are in the position to do what Weinstein Bros. or A. E. Lefcourt have done—leave the industry entirely.¹

¹ Speaking of the firm of A. E. Lefcourt & Co., I am reminded of

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Sunday mornings I visit one of the parks of my neighborhood, joining groups of conversing cloak-makers, trying my best to find one to which I am a total stranger. This time the subject under discussion was piece versus week work. One in the group lamented the fact that piece work had been abolished. It was becoming harder than ever for older and slower men to obtain employment. "Week work forever," replied another, who said he was the shop chairman at Kleinfeld and Renner. One day the workers had called his attention to an operator at the other end of the department who was "shooting," that is, working fast. He walked up to him and said, "Landsman, keep your hands in your

the following characteristic incident in illustrating what a set of shrewd gentlemen the officers and leaders are, how they manage to get the best of the capitalist employer.

It happened in the winter of 1915-1916. I was then manager of local 23. There was a stoppage, or a shop strike, at the firm of A. E. Lefcourt & Co. The case was argued before a full meeting of the Board of Arbitration. The spokesman on the part of the union was Bro. W. He described the conditions of labor at the above-named firm as one of the worst in the trade, the earnings the lowest, and the treatment intolerable. He finished his speech by telling the Board that the immediate cause of the strike was due to the fact that the foreman gave the shop chairman such a beating that he had to be taken home and the workers left the shop to visit their beaten-up comrade. This made a strong impression on all present. With this speech the hearing ended and we, the officers of the union, retired to an adjoining room to wait for the decision. As soon as the door of our room was closed, Bro. W. burst into laughter. For a while he could not draw his breath. We all looked with amazement at him, trying to guess the cause of his mirth. "The case is just the reverse," he said after a while, "the shop chairman landed the foreman such a wallop in the jaw that the poor fellow went reeling." The laughter became general. Bro. W. became the hero of the day. I never felt so small, so humiliated in all my life. I thought to myself: "Get away from these people, there is no place for you among them."

pockets. Better look out, or you will fly." The operator took the hint and slowed down. "Week work is the thing," continued the shop chairman, "the week passes, and you play most of the time (men spilt sich op die tzeit), and at the end of the week you get your pay. It is not like piece work. Let the boss bother his head about the quantity of work produced during the week." A few weeks after this discussion I saw in the *Women's Wear* the name of the firm of Kleinfeld and Renner in the column under the heading "Business troubles."

CHAPTER XIV

LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL

UNION leadership in the International hitherto concerned itself with three things, viz.: "to satisfy the members," to fight, Kaempfen, and to gain victories. Whenever these victories turned out to be paper victories only, and the workers in the shop gained nothing by them, it was, of course, all the fault of the perfidious employers, who had broken all their pledges given to the union, and all other agreements, written or verbal, with the organization.

How long this "policy," this kind of trade union statesmanship, will last is hard to say. I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet. It will last perhaps as long as the present class of work people are engaged in it. The Yiddish worker generally is restless, and disgruntled, loving turmoil and strife. He is never so happy as when he finds some one with whom to find fault and call names; and he will follow any leader, however incompetent or insincere, as long as such a leader talks of "bekampfen the bosses."

The plans of the "Left Wing" leaders seem

puerile to me, as might be expected from such inexperienced men. They believe that with more "democracy" in the organization, more frequent elections, with no officer serving the organization longer than two years' time, they could create a cleaner and a more efficient organization.

A union leader earnestly engaged in bettering the condition of the workers must be certain that his proposed improvements will work. Before he starts an agitation for new demands, or changes in working conditions, before he raises new issues in order to demonstrate his solicitude for their welfare, he must be certain that his proposed improvements will work, that they really are beneficial to the workers, and what effect they will have on the industry as a whole. Otherwise, the proclaimed victory may turn out to be a defeat for the workers, one that causes only turmoil, dissatisfaction and strife, preparing the ground for communistic agitators. The garment workers are now in revolt against the present leadership, because it never takes the trouble to find out if the advantages gained either by means of the strike or by arbitration are of such a nature as to pay the employers to comply with them. I can see my "class struggling" friends smile. "Here again comes the old 'traitor' to tell us that the union must provide the employers with profits. Let the employers look out for themselves. We have a union

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for our own interests, not for the interest of our exploiters."

Yes, my friends, herein lies the chief difficulty of this union's problem and this union's methods. Under the present industrial system based on private initiative and private undertaking, the worker can gain nothing from the industry, nothing from his employer, unless he leaves the latter a sufficient margin to make it profitable for him to keep his plant going, to stay in business, "to provide for the employer," if you insist on phrasing it that way.

This proposition of mine looks outlandish to these garment workers because they have been taught that the union labor movement is a part of the world struggle against their eternal enemy, the employing, the capitalistic class; because in their union, they hear of nothing but "fighting the bosses."

No person exists in this world who will stay in business and run factories just for the pleasure of maintaining a union shop, or merely to give employment to union people. To bother with unionism and union people, for the pleasure of it, is a luxury only childless ladies looking for excitement can afford to indulge in.¹

¹ Soon after I left the International, I tried to establish a mail order business, the Standard Union Merchandise Association, where goods bearing the union label goods were to be sold. This undertaking received the indorsement of the leaders of the trade unions of this country. My first idea was to sell shares of this concern to the wealthy members of the Woman's Trade Union League, "to the friends of Unionism," to various social uplifters. I never suspected that all those ladies and gentlemen who showed such anxiety, and

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Union problems are much more complex, much more complicated, than they appear to be on a platform, or at a mass meeting, when they come from the mouth of a silver-tongued orator who uses high-sounding phrases, rubbing them into the "left" or the "right" wingers, as the case may be, and "getting even," at the same time, with the American capitalists, the Morgans, the Rockefellers. It is simple enough here to be told by the speakers that all the workers need is to be "true union men;" that if they only stick together, everything will go on swimmingly.

When I speak of the necessity of providing sufficient profit for the employer, I do not mean it in the same sense that their present leaders use it, or even as Mr. Hilquit understands it, namely, to provide the sub-manufacturer with "limitation of contractors," to provide him for a whole year with suffi-

were so solicitous about the welfare of the labor masses in this country, so energetic on picket lines, who even went to jail for the cause of unionism, could show such indifference to the cause as they did when the question arose of investing a dollar in an undertaking having for its sole object, in a practical way, the strengthening of the organized labor movement in this country.

I will never forget a conversation I had with a wealthy lawyer in Chicago, an investment lawyer who had helped the International, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, as well as other labor organizations, in time of trouble, and who claimed that he was the "Wet nurse" of the American Labor Movement. He told me frankly that he would neither himself invest, nor advise anyone else to invest a penny in such an undertaking, for it was his experience that when labor unions became strong, they invariably misused their power to the injury of the community.

From this and similar conversations I had with many well wishers and friends of labor, I came to the conclusion that this friendship for labor was only a fad with them.

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cient bundles, that during the year he shall be able to get his own price from the jobber and manufacturer, provide him with a standard of production, an impartial chairman, etc.

I want to point out here that this "limitation of contractors" business constitutes a clumsy deal, or a conspiracy on the part of the union officials with the officers of the American Association, against the cloak workers, as well as against the jobbers and manufacturers in the industry. The only redeeming feature about it is that the whole plan is so clumsy that it is impossible to realize, impossible to put into practice. "Limitation of contractors" means that the union officials would be in a position to tell the jobber to whom he might or might not send out his work to be made up. It is thought that if the jobber is limited to sending out work to only a limited number of sub-manufacturers, then the sub-manufacturer will be in a position to get a better price per garment from the jobber in the first instance, and the union will then be able to press a demand for better wages from sub-manufacturers. The union will then fight first for the sub-manufacturer and in this way the worker will indirectly be benefited.

You will then have two classes of sub-manufacturers: those "within the limit," those outside of it. The sub-manufacturer "within the limit" will be the lucky one. He will be in a position to charge the jobber a higher price than the one "outside the

limit." Naturally, every sub-manufacturer will be anxious to get into the "limit." This will mean thousands of dollars a year extra profits to him. This at once opens an extra source of temptation for the union officials. Being "within the limit" also insures the sub-manufacturer a whole year's work at high prices. The union then will be required to increase its already enormous staff of strong-arm men to harass and keep away the work from the shops which have the misfortune to be outside the "limit." The cloakmakers speak now of introducing another reform into the union, viz., make a rule that a union official can hold office for one or two years at the most. Why? Such an official, if he cares, will be able to provide himself with financial means "to start business for himself" after one year's service.

This remedy(?) of "limitation" means that the union will become a branch of the American Association of Manufacturers. "Moishe" is at present happy over this fact, but I am sure that if his officials ever try to introduce it into practice, and begin to make the cloakmaker the tool of his sub-manufacturer to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for him, he will soon realize his mistake.

Here, I believe, is a much better plan wherein the Union may benefit by this "limitation" business. Let every sub-manufacturer become a member of the union, and let every sub-manufacturer pay into

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the union about fifty dollars a week dues. This will insure the sub-manufacturers a whole year's work and good prices. Two thousand five hundred dollars dues a year from each of two thousand sub-manufacturers. This would mean that the union would have an extra income of five million dollars a year. With this money the union would be able to establish banks, workers' universities, build tenement houses, acquire property and what not, and at the end of the year it would be in a position to pay to each of its members an extra few dollars in dividends or bonuses. All of which would be much simpler than collecting over a million dollars a year in dues and assessments from its members, a sum hardly sufficient to cover the cost of maintaining the organization.

As one can expect, these Lithuanian revolutionists begin with high sounding phrases and finish with low deeds. They begin by calling upon the workers to undertake an uncompromising war against their capitalistic employers and end with urging the union to enter into a conspiracy with the worst class of people in the industry, the former "true union men," the gentlemen who are primarily responsible for the breaking up of the big cloak factories and their being turned into a sweat-shop industry. For it is these very gentlemen who, while working in an inside factory, have instigated shop strikes and have proposed to the manufacturer in a roundabout way

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to take the work outside, they themselves becoming the outside contractors or submanufacturers.

I wonder, Mr. Moishe, how long you will remain the dupe of the loud-mouthed demagogue who knows your weakness, your fondness for beautiful oratory and your childish enmity for your employer.

Although I am arguing that it is in the interest of the union to see to it that, in any arrangements it proposes to enter with the employers the latter is left with a margin of profit, I do not mean it in the way the present officials understand it, but quite in another sense. I mean that the union should try to create a condition which should attract men with capital and business ability to open factories and employ labor directly, that they should be able to make enough profit so that they could make their work inside their own factories, instead of constantly looking about how to diminish their plants, and send their work to be made outside. Also, the present sub-manufacturer should be made to go back to work in the shop where he came from. He will then know what it means to be "true union men."

I recently read of the greatness and the trade-union statesmanship of the Amalgamated Clothing workers. The writer related how this organization found it necessary to send its accountants to the shops of some of their employers to straighten out their books for them. "For," says the spokesman of the Amalgamated, "we have employers in the indus-

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try who possess no more business ability than that of a peanut peddler; they do not know how to handle their own books and accounts." The union in its great generosity and wisdom takes care of these unfortunate employers and teaches them how to conduct their own business.

I can see that the trouble among the men's clothing workers is similar to that existing in the women's garment industries. In the men's clothing industry, too, the union succeeded in driving the responsible employers out of the business of manufacturing men's clothing, and they are being substituted by men with the business ability and capital of peanut peddlers. No, it is not in the interest of the workers, that gentlemen with the ability of peanut peddlers should be in the business of manufacturing garments.

CHAPTER XV

THE DISCHARGE QUESTION

ONLY in the Yiddish Unions is there such a thing as a "discharge question." Workers are employed not because their work is satisfactory to their employers, but because they have a right to the job. Need it be said, that no person with any degree of self-respect would ever think of claiming such "right."

I once explained to one of my employees, an American-born Jew and a staunch unionist, during one of the strikes that periodically convulse this industry what it was all about; why the garment worker was insisting upon this "right." He was amazed at it, commenting, "Do you think I would work for you one minute longer if I thought you did not want to have me in your place, or that you were not satisfied with my work?" He also expressed a hope that Congress would pass laws to prevent the immigration of "such people" into this country.

This so-called "right" really has been the main cause which has closed up so many big factories in the cloak and dress industry and which has caused

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the substitution in their places of small sub-manufacturing shops, as is known to every one who has watched the situation as it works from the inside. One need not argue this point with the officers of the union.

Strange as it may sound, the fact remains that some of the present high officials of the union who in public never tire of dwelling on the evils which the workers may suffer if employers are given a free hand to hire and fire, have in the past and on more than one occasion, found fault with me for not having put my foot down on the whole business of reinstating discharged employees on the first day after the signing of the Protocol in 1910. It may be that they were right in their contention. But then I was practically the first union official who "worked the Protocol" from the union side. Neither I nor the association could possibly have then foreseen that the use of friendly union offices to reinstate discharged employees, would ever be transformed by the workers into a "property right." Mr. Brandeis, the chairman of the Arbitration Board at that time, in giving this claim a legal status under the Protocol, really rendered a very great disservice to the industry, for this "right" has since been the cause of numerous stoppages and shop strikes. Since then, a garment worker considers that the discharging of a member in a union shop is a breach of contract with the union on the part

of the employer, giving him in turn the right to strike.

Writers on economic subjects frequently complain about the injurious social effect of the "large labor turn-over in the factories and shops in this country. This may be true in most of the factories and shops where the actual work is being performed by automatic machines, where the employee is a mere machine minder, and where a newcomer can be broken in in a few days under the supervision of the foreman.

Cloaks and dresses are not manufactured. They are "made," and it is one of the most difficult crafts to master. The one who lacks delicate fingers, "proper eye" and inborn taste can never become proficient worker in that trade.

If the American woman is the "best dressed woman in the world," it is due chiefly to the inborn artistic taste of the immigrant worker. From an endless number of small pieces of woolens, or silks he or she often has to turn out a most complicated garment. Here the style varies with almost every garment. There is nothing automatic about its creation, no repetition of mechanical processes, and careless discharges by employers soon land them elsewhere than in the cloak or dress manufacturing business. To replace one employee by another is a very serious matter. Before a new employee get used to the new class of work, before he learns

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how the garments are made up the way the designer wants it, the season is over.

Previous to 1910 when there were numerous single shop strikes, the union never lost a strike, except in those shops where the employer had persuaded his old employees to return to work. The constant cry of "discrimination for union activity" is raised mostly by these workers who take advantage of this "property right," and who believe that it is the duty of the union to enable the workers "to get the best of the boss." The moment the cloak trade was organized, all of this type suddenly became martyrs of unionism and all this is known to the officials who often discuss it among themselves, when no one is around.

This prevailing cry among the Yiddish unionists of discrimination, is due to the fact that they come from the ranks of the old country market peddlers, who, like their fathers before them, earned their living by trying to get from their customers the biggest price in return for the smallest value. They cannot get used to the idea that even in a union shop they have to give their customer—their employer—a satisfactory day's work in return for higher pay and shorter hours of work.

Years ago, when the garment workers were employed fifty, sixty and even more hours a week, this talk of "being driven," of having "to lay low," may have had some justification. But now

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when these workers are working forty-four hours a week, and still persist in "taking it easy," who is going to make cloaks? I will tell you who. Women and girls who work longer hours for less pay in out-of-town shops will make the cheaper class, the plainer garments. The enormous sums of money which the International union spends on organizing these shops in itself proves to be money wasted.

The medium class of work is being done in greater volume in the small sub-manufacturing shops whose number grows daily, and where the enforcement of union conditions is becoming harder all the time, despite the efforts of numerous and expensive "volunteer committees," "pull committees" and an increasing army of strong-armed men.

Only the better class of work is being done in union shops, and even that is leaving the inside shops, migrating more and more to the smaller sweat shops. No wonder that the work seasons are yearly getting shorter than ever, and that its unemployed problem is more serious than ever.

When you begin to ask any one of the rank and file who realizes the gravity of the situation (it makes no difference whether he is a Left or a Right Winger) what the probable solution to the curse of the multiplicity of the ever-increasing small shops is, you receive the same stereotyped answer: "More strikes, more kaempfe, more 'bekaempfen the bosses.'"

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They seem not to realize that in their eagerness to "bekaempfen the bosses" they are at the same time "bekaempfen" and ruining the industry.

Did you ever notice the big fly known as the "blue bottle," how it tries to get out of the house through a closed window? It rushes with all its might head forward, to the window, strikes the pane of glass, and falls down exhausted. Undismayed, it repeats the process. It keeps on repeating the process until it falls on the window-sill powerless, motionless. If this fly had more sense than a fly, after a few bumps on the head it would try to find other means of exit, or else give up the process of bumping its head on the solid window-pane.

The garment workers in their senseless efforts to improve their positions through "bekaempfen the bosses," remind me of these blue-bottles. Year in and year out, they keep bumping their heads. It is true that this bekaempfen business does not improve matters in the least. In fact it makes things much worse. During every strike a new crop of bosses, of "true union men," open contracting and sub-manufacturing shops. And every year Providence in its great wisdom provides the garment industry with a new set of radicals and revolutionaries from Eastern Europe who learn of things American from the Yiddish publications of the East Side, and who get their unionism from socialists' publications.

Coming from countries where industries are little

developed, these radicals naturally have no knowledge of orderly trade union movements. Yet they know it all. They feel sure that they know it much better than all the "conservative" union leaders of the advanced industrial countries. So they gather about them new forces, and begin the process of bekaempfen the bosses either by calling strikes, or when they are afraid of the issue, they take the employers before a board of arbitration.

Paradoxically, too, there are more discharges in this industry than there are in those industries where the right of employers to discharge employees is unquestioned.

This pernicious "discharge question" has been and still remains the main cause of the strife and turmoil in the garment industry since its organization, and is the principal cause why so often legitimate employers have to close their factories and turn to jobbing. And Governor Smith's Commission by its recent decision in limiting the rights of the employers to reorganize their shops and lay off only ten per cent of their employees at the beginning of the season, once a year, has not in the least changed the situation. Under such conditions, the inside factory will not, and cannot, grow in spite of their best wishes.

CHAPTER XVI

THE THEORY OF MIGHT AND THE THEORY OF RIGHT

THE basis of Mr. Bisno's activity in the union, the foundation of his policy, was the theory of "might," compulsion, coercion. The union, according to this theory, by obtaining a written agreement with the employer, could throw upon him the full responsibility for carrying out all the conditions laid down in the signed document. This is the theory of the "Left Wingers," those people who believe in the uncompromising fight between capital and labor. An agreement in the opinion of these people means that the employer undertakes to comply with certain conditions by which he must abide under the constant threat of a strike. The Damocles sword of the strike must constantly hang over his head, otherwise the union is helpless.

When they so often use the words "Kaempf," they either bluff or they imitate the methods of "Right Wing" officials, or they blindly follow the communist politicians. Years ago, when the cloakmakers talked about "Kaempf," it really meant something. Times have changed considerably. Nowadays a

cloakmaker "kaempfs" no more without a solid guarantee of C.O.D. He knows that his union is rich, possesses banks, properties, builds tenements, maintains "workers' universities," sends representatives traveling throughout Europe and Soviet Russia. Nowadays the cloakmaker does his "Kaempfung" with the aid of hired help.

But they are not aware that if the administration fell into their own hands and they had to "deliver the goods," that they, too, would be lost; would be unable to "make good"; would have to get off the stage! The present administration keeps its regime by means of publicity campaigns, arbitrations, conciliations and what not (but the workers will have to do the actual "Kaempfung" and then there will be *fnita comedia*).

The essence of every organization, be it an anarchist organization, is based on some form of force. Abstract ideas have no need of organizations. Force implies some form of compulsion. Every labor union, every organization, in fact, must possess some force, otherwise no one will take notice of it. Without some power of compulsion it may exist only as a sect of pious idealists similar to the Cloakmakers' union as it existed prior to 1910. Thus far the idea of "compelling the employer" contains some sense.

But before you compel some one to give you something, you must make sure that he is in a position to give it to you. For instance, compel me to

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give you the Woolworth Building! It therefore follows that before submitting demands to an employer, "the workers" (that is the officials) must make sure that the employer is in a position to give his workers the condition demanded.

Take, for instance, one of the recent demands of "the guarantee of employment." How can the average cloak manufacturer guarantee employment when no one is able to know, in such an uncertain, capricious industry, what the next season will bring, or how long it will last, or what orders he might be able to obtain for his factory, or the "fourteen machines" demand? How can it be enforced?

A union leader, therefore, must be careful not to submit "demands" to employers which are incapable, economically, of being fulfilled. In other words, that it will pay the employer to grant them. If all these widely proclaimed "victories" end in actual defeat for the worker in the shops, it is because the officers and leaders never have taken this economic fact into consideration. They called out strikes, gained "victories," signed agreements, shouted "hooray," and off they went to make further conquests.

This idea of "compelling the employer," an idea so popular among the masses of the workers on the East Side, has a certain ground for justification, but the idea of "rights" which Mr. Hilquit brought in and fought for, on which the organization spent

so much money, upon which so much hope has been based, and which has called forth so much enthusiasm, is altogether senseless. Acquire "rights" in such a speculative, highly competitive industry? What rights really has any employer acquired in this industry which he can give or share with his employees?

The idea that the cloak worker can improve his position and earn better wages, by means of wresting "rights" from the employers could only originate in the brains of those politicians who introduced the phrases and catchwords of politics into the economic and industrial field, where they do not belong.

Bisno tried to rationalize, tried to give a theoretic justification for the popular cry of the masses, "coërcing the bosses." Hilquit did the same with the demands of the workers for "rights," "property rights" in the job, the right of the worker to earn a certain wage, to work certain hours, etc. These rights one can acquire in the courts or at the Boards of Arbitration. But once these "rights" are won they turn out to be paper victories.

Who says that a cloak-maker has a right to work as he does now, forty-four hours a week, when reformers are trying to legislate an eight-hour day for women, or forty hours a week, as was recently demanded by officers of the International Union? The members of the Typographical Union Local

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No. 81 are working thirty-six hours a week. Is it because they have a "right" to it, or simply because by force of their organizations they gained it?

Whatever improvements a worker gains, he does not gain from his employer, as is commonly imagined, but from the industry. Both the workers' wages and employers' profits come from the industry. Abstract "rights" have nothing to do with it. They may wrest from an employer all the "rights" imaginable, but if these acquired "rights" are of such a nature that they tend to decrease their own productivity, if they tend to decrease the value of their labor, these "rights" will soon become a curse instead of a benefit to them.

The primary reason why the working season in these union shops is becoming shorter, and unemployment constantly increasing, is because this union is doing all it possibly can to decrease the value of the workers' labor, and to decrease the productivity of the controlled shop. "Union control" having no other effect than to increase the cost of producing a garment in a union shop, is the loser in competition with the non-union shop. It keeps increasing the wages, shortening the hours, insisting upon the "property rights" of the worker in his job, and defeating every attempt of a union employer to obtain a "standard production," or "comparative production."

In a word, all this union does is to see that the cost

of producing a garment in the inside union shop is greater than in the smaller non-union and out-of-town shops. The result is that the amount of work in these over-regulated union shops is constantly decreasing, and the problem of unemployment among its members is becoming more than ever difficult to solve.

And what remedy do the leaders propose for the scarcity of employment? A very wonderful remedy, indeed! "We will spread the season of work, make it last longer by shortening the hours of labor; we will increase the rate of pay during this shorter season, so as to enable a worker to earn enough wages during the few busy weeks in the year to enable him to pull through the long season of slackness in the trade."

A wonderful remedy, indeed. That shorter hours and higher pay, and keeping the walking delegate busy to see that the workers are not overworked, not "driven" by the employer, may have just the opposite effect, never dawns upon the minds of the leaders.

Earn higher wages, work shorter hours, at the same time be in a position to "take it easy"! How wonderfully fine! All of the "friends of labor" in this country applaud you. At last here is a genuine progressive labor organization. But who is going to make cloaks in this country? They are actually being made just now in the thousands in such shops

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as your Counselor Hilquit described in his speech at the City Hall before Governor Smith's Commission. No demagogic cries of "might" or "right" will change it. Neither Governor Smith's Commission nor any other known power in the United States, for that matter, can change it.

The Commission might have addressed the union representatives substantially as follows: "We can do nothing for you. There are no known powers in the United States which can alter the economic forces upon which our whole industrial system is based. It is up to you. You can diminish unemployment in your rank, increase the working season in your shops in one way only, and that is by trying to meet the competition of the small outside, the non-union and the out-of-town shops."

"But from what we have learned so far, we feel that the competition of these shops which your learned counsel has so graphically described to us, is getting keener than ever, in spite of your best efforts. Evidently you must be going about it in the wrong way. To us, it seems there is only one way of finding more work for your members, and that is to try to find ways and means to reduce the difference in the cost of producing garments inside and outside the factory.

"All the remedies which you have submitted to us so far, if carried into effect, will tend, we feel sure, only to aggravate the situation and increase

the competition between the inside factory and the small uncontrollable outside shop, for your proposed changes must inevitably result in increasing the cost of production in all inside shops.

One of the ten articles of "demands" submitted by the union to Governor Smith's Commission was to the effect that no jobber or manufacturer could send work out to any shop which employs less than fourteen machine operators. The idea was to drive out of existence the small uncontrollable shop. As I predicted, the majority of settled union shops today are employing less than fourteen operators. The reason for this is obvious. It took the union fourteen years to break up the big shops, to scatter the trade in small shop units. The whole cloak district has therefore been rebuilt. For, under the "union control," the big unit becomes less productive. In it the cost of producing garments under union control constantly increases. The mere fiat of honorable gentlemen appointed by the Governor of the Empire State cannot change this fact. The result is that the union was compelled, after the demands were granted by these honorable gentlemen, to settle with such shops as were then in existence. And, today, the process of decreasing the size of the shop unit goes on as fast as ever. Nor is there any reason to believe that the decision of this same Commission in favor of "limitation of contractors" will have any different effect on the industry, than the "fourteen

machine decisions of the same Commission." The Commission did not and could not mitigate the many economic evils destroying the cloak industry.

The reason these officials found it necessary to establish banks, acquire properties, build tenements and engage in like activities, which have nothing at all to do with unionism, is their acute realization of the fact that the International as a labor union, as an institution, is utterly powerless to control the industry. In such a keen competitive industry, with so many small uncontrollable shops, the union is powerless to do anything for the worker economically. All the victories this organization has gained through strikes or decisions of boards of arbitration remain on paper only, the same as their last victory from the board demanding fourteen machines.

Some time ago an English labor leader explained to me the reason the members of his organization had the full confidence in their officials, "We are always careful not to promise them something which we cannot get for them. As a matter of fact, we manage to get for them a little more than they actually expect."

Conscientious labor leaders are conservative. They will not promise something unless they make sure in the first place that it is possible of achievement, and that when it is actually obtained, it will bring about desired results. The list of ten de-

mands recently submitted to the Council of Conciliation by the union officials, possesses none of these attributes. Some are impossible of realization like, for instance, the demand for fourteen machines. Another, like the demand for forty hours a week, or limitation of sub-manufacturers, would, if carried into effect, only aggravate the evils from which the workers are at present suffering.

The labor union among the garment workers is a "progressive," nay, a radical one. In its ranks talk is constantly heard of the "enormous power of the organized working class." After such bombastic phrases, how can such advice as prudence and moderation be advanced to them? And of all the forms of pernicious demagogy, and radical catch phrases, none is more harmful than this talk of "the enormous power of organized labor," this raising of impossible hopes in the workers. "Moishe" of course is in seventh heaven when he hears this kind of talk. His eyes sparkle with delight. The poor fellow takes it all in, and goes away from the meeting-place full of wonderful expectations. It is true that labor when organized becomes a power to some extent, but if used carelessly, it soon vanishes and "Moishe" is left with an old shanty and an empty broken-down old trough.

In Italy, the unions went a little too far, accomplishing things that the most radical of the radicals in this country would never dream of attempting.

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They took over the means of production, the factories. Then the Facisti came along and wiped them out. In Russia, the workers are living in a communistic paradise which they are most eager to exchange for American capitalism. Since the International became big and strong, demagoguery has become one of the best paying professions on the East Side. Here gather cranks from all over the world, all with one object, one aim, to defend the poor down-trodden helpless Yiddish workman. And they all make a very good living out of it.

The truth of the matter is that there is no such thing as an "organized working class" except in the imagination of these hot-heads. The so-called "working class" consists of a most heterogeneous element. Among the cloakmakers, for instance, a large number of them cherish all their lives the hope of "starting in business for themselves." A considerable number of "the working class" can never be reached, cannot be organized, and a greater part of those that are in the union are there by compulsion (hence the demand for the closed shop).¹

At the first test or crisis, the members are ready to turn against it. They too often work against

¹ Lenin in a pamphlet issued during the summer of 1917, during the Kerensky régime, copy of which is in my possession, contends—that there is no such a thing as a proletarian class in Russia; even the Russian factory worker retains the instinct of the petty bourgeois and is a helpless "sobstvennic" (one who possesses individual property). It would appear from this contention that the only genuine proletariats in Russia are the Trotskys, and the Zinovieffs, for whose benefit the October revolution was ushered in.

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and betray the organization's interest even while in the shops. Knowing the weakness of his constituents, earnest and experienced trade union leaders are very cautious before making any move, especially before starting a "Kaempf" with the employers. "The strength of a union consists in the number of strikes it can avoid" is an old watchword of sincere union leaders everywhere. With the cloakmakers, the constant clamor is for strikes and "Kaempf." The experienced leader tries all ways and means to avoid conflicts and strife and, wherever possible, he enters into agreements or understandings with the employers, either individually or collectively. Moving slowly, cautiously, he forges ahead gradually. Improvements and gains are recognized after a lapse of time, nor can they be effected by following any abstract theories or sweeping generalizations. Every situation must be handled on its own merits. It, therefore, often follows that the theorist whose knowledge of the labor problem is purely academic, is unfit to handle practical, everyday shop problems, as the case of Professor Hourwich clearly illustrates.

It is rather difficult to explain the great popularity the late Professor Hurwich enjoyed among the garment workers. Did they understand that his policies were the best? The exact fact is that not even his nearest lieutenants had an opportunity to witness his dealing with the employers, nor were

any of them in the council room with him when the broad policies of the union were discussed with the International officers. His popularity, like that of A. Bisno, came from quite different causes.

"Moishe" is well known for his cleverness. You cannot bluff or fool him. He knows that "what is good for the worker is bad for the employer" and vice versa. From this rule, his mind does not deviate. He sticks to it with the tenacity of a bull terrier. It forms the mainspring of his union activity and union policy. He "knows" that when employers entertain a good opinion of a union leader that such a leader is, ipso facto, no good. On the contrary, when employers cannot get along with a union official representative, this in itself proves his fitness to serve the workers.

On the third or fourth week of the general strike of 1910, I received an invitation to a conference to meet Mr. Lefcourt, then President of the Manufacturers' Protective Association at the Knickerbocker Hotel. With me were Mr. John B. Lennon, the representative of the A. F. of L. whom Mr. Gompers had sent to help us along in the gigantic struggle, and a Mr. A. Block, a member of Local No. 10 (cloak cutters). At this conference Mr. J. D. Posener, the gentleman who was instrumental in bringing us all together, produced a sheet of paper containing conditions upon which Posener believed the strike could be settled. I well remember re-

requesting Mr. Posener to lay his paper with the propositions for settlement aside, and turning to Mr. Lefcourt, I spoke to him somewhat as follows:

"Mr. Lefcourt, this is not just a question of settling a strike. In this strike a whole social problem is involved. The trade is unorganized. Until this strike was declared, there was no union of the men strong enough to have any influence on the conditions of labor in this industry. There was no organization of employers. Everything was left to the will and whim of an individual employer, and the bargain he could strike with his working people. The result of this unbridled competition between employers and employees is that the industry is in a complete chaotic condition and, so far as the hours of labor, and the earning of the working people are concerned, complete inequality exists.

"It is also true that the conditions of labor in your members' shops are fairly satisfactory. But you represent a minority of the cloak shops in the city of New York. In most of the shops a normal working day is unknown. When the busy season sets in, people work until the small hours of the night as well as Saturdays and Sundays.

"Our object is to abolish night work, the sending out of work to the homes of the workers after working hours, the carrying from shop to shop of sewing machines, and the elimination of many other evils of which you are well aware. I am convinced that the

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union by itself will never be able to introduce these desired reforms in the industry and make them permanent. However victorious the issue of this strike may be for the men, we realize frankly the difficulties under which our union labors. The workers are a heterogeneous body of men and women and the industry spreads over a large area with employers composed of an equally heterogeneous class of men.

"I doubt very much, Mr. Lefcourt, whether we shall ever be in a position to retain any length of time, the fruits of our victory. Only by the co-operative efforts of a strong union, and a strong manufacturers' association can order be brought into the present chaotic condition existing in the industry, all of which is a result of unregulated competition." I then went to to explain how the union, by regulating the hours of labor and leveling up the rates of earning in the factories of their competitors, would benefit, as well, the best firms in the industry, as represented in their association.

Mr. Lefcourt was frankly surprised at my talk, for both he and his colleagues in the Protective Association were of the opinion that the leaders of the strike had only one object in view, the ruin of their business. On parting he assured me that he would put the views I had just expressed before his colleagues on the executive board, and he hoped he would be able to induce them to extend to the strike

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leaders an invitation to address them. However, the Employers' Association, for the most part, was so distrustful of the union leaders, they refused absolutely to deal with them. Weeks later, thanks to the strenuous efforts of Louis D. Brandeis and the friendly offices of Lincoln Filene, these officials of the executive board agreed to a meeting with the union officials, and a settlement was arrived at.

Who knows! Perhaps if a cessation of hostilities had been reached much earlier in the struggle, if the workers had not returned to work so embittered and hungry, the feeling engendered among them by that prolonged struggle would not have persisted so long to the injury of all concerned.

And, if the ideas of the better element of both sides in the industry are ever to be realized, it will not be the result of the efforts of "distinterested outsiders," of the interference of eminent citizens, philanthropists, politicians and all sorts of "friends of labor." Nor will it be through the efforts of our "class strugglers," of the "Left Wingers," but it will be through the earnest coöperation of all the constructive forces within the industry.

CHAPTER XVII

CAPITAL AND LABOR, AGAIN

THINGS from a distance look quite different than when under close observation. The worker tries to sell his labor power to the highest bidder, to the employer, to the person who pays him the highest price—to the capitalist. The employer, the buyer, on the other hand, tries to obtain labor power at the lowest possible price. Hence, the eternal, unavoidable conflict of interests between buyer and seller, between employee and employer, between capitalist and worker, between the poor and the rich, between the "have's" and "have not's"; "What is good for the worker is bad for the employer," and vice versa.

Let us examine this proposition a little closer. The seller, the peddler, goes to the market to sell his wares. He is looking for a buyer who will pay him the highest possible price. When he gets hold of a prospective customer, he tries with all the eloquence at his command to convince this buyer that he is getting a bargain, that he sells it much below

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the market price, that there is nothing on the market to equal it in value, etc. The article for which he had originally asked a dollar, he finally sells for a quarter. When, however, he gets the "right kind of customer," and sells for the "right price," he is happy. The next day he repeats the operation, looks for a similar "sucker." He goes on that way for years making his living.

When this "merchant" buys the merchandise he is selling, he also tries to strike a bargain. This method of doing business will never take him further than the position he is in now. That is, he will forever remain a market peddler.

If this peddler should ever be struck with the ambition to become a merchant, to establish a permanent business, he must immediately change his methods of doing business. He will not try to sell old, wornout or useless merchandise for the genuine articles. He will not then try to talk a prospective buyer into purchasing merchandise regardless of its intrinsic merits. No, he will endeavor to build up a trade of steady customers; to establish the reputation of being a reliable and honest merchant who sells good values without taking any temporary advantage of any of his customers.

Talk to any successful business man and he will tell you that one of the chief reasons for his success is the fact that he has gained and enjoys the confidence of those people with whom he is in busi-

ness contact. His customers may realize that they could buy merchandise at lower prices elsewhere, but they prefer to place their orders with him because they are sure that he will deliver the stock in exact agreement with the character and quality of the samples which he submitted to them, and from which they ordered. They also know that deliveries will be made on time. Instead of his salesmen trying to get the best of his customers, they are trying to *serve* them.

You see, then, that the eternal and unavoidable conflict between buyer and seller is not always so unavoidable or so eternal, or so "scientific" after all. The more industry, business and commerce develop, the more must the relationships between buyers and sellers become businesslike. That is, it cannot continue to retain the character of primitive barter, where each one tries to take away all that he can from the other, and give as little as possible in return. Instead of trying to get the better of each other in bargaining, they constantly seek out new ways and means to be of service to each other. Mutual distrust and suspicion must be transformed into mutual helpfulness and coöperation, if industry is to progress.

Yet unionism of the International type, however, is based very largely on these elementary conceptions of the relation of buyer and seller, and on the mistaken belief that the interests of capital and

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labor are antagonistic. While there is considerable coöperation between the employers and the union officials in the so-called conservative unions, there is little of this spirit in the so-called "progressive" Yiddish unions. Here the antagonism to the employer stands out in bold relief, because unionism, among the immigrants from countries so backward industrially and commercially, is an entirely new thing.

In those countries from which this "vanguard of human progress" comes, commerce is still carried on in a form not far removed from primitive methods of barter. A sale, or a purchase of an article is effected there only after both parties have exhausted themselves in the process of bargaining. The "progressive" labor man in the cloak and dress trade remains at heart the market peddler which he and his father before him were in the land of their birth.

Instead of these immigrant workers being taught to look up to, to study and adopt as far as possible the methods and practices of American unionism, they are taught the exact opposite. And it will take the garment workers' unions with their alien leaders years before they will be able to assimilate the constructive methods employed by the leaders of the so-called conservative American unions.

It is only on the East Side of New York that one can witness the spectacle of a trade union inviting a gentleman who has never been a member of a labor

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organization, to become the editor of its official journal, a person whose one qualification for the position is his ability to earn his living by preaching anarchistic doctrines in Yiddish.

Whether the theory of the class struggle is scientific or not, labor unionism has nothing in common with it. True, unionism in its first stages has to struggle and fight to gain recognition from the employers. But after this recognition has once been gained, it tries to enter into agreement with employers, which in plain English means it proposes such labor conditions as the latter can accept. For union leaders soon find out that in order to obtain better conditions from the employer, they must find points of *agreement*, not points of conflict and strife.

All socialistic doctrines have one object in common: that the taking away of the means of production and distribution from the present owners and the transferring it to some other agency, either the state, or the community, or the operatives in the factory. In place of the present system of production and distribution of the wealth of the country Socialism proposes to substitute an entirely different one of its own. Labor unionism has no such ambitious object. Nothing so grandiose. Unionism is concerned with the elimination of competition among the workers of a particular trade, so that they may

be able to command a better price for their labor. Its problems and its difficulties are not so much with the employer as with the workers in the trade. It is really more of a struggle between union and non-union man, between the striker and the strike breaker, than between the employee and the employer. Hence the whole theory of the class struggle and class war here does not at all fit in. The only thing Socialism and unionism have in common is the fact that Socialist propagandists and politicians find in unionism a convenient field for their work, just as it seems to have an irresistible attraction for all sorts of demagogues.

Take, for instance, the industry in which I am engaged—cloth examining and shrinking. When I notice a worker in my employ becoming indifferent, slothful, I do not immediately discharge him—not that his union in any way interferes in the selection of my help. The burning question of “discharge” and “discrimination” is unknown and unheard of in our trade. It is unknown among the rest of the labor organizations in this country. I hesitate to discharge an old and tried employee because I do not know if a new one will be any better. And as a rule, an employer always prefers an old employee to a new one. I remind such an employee of his shortcomings. If this has not the desired effect, I take council with the president of the union, see

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what he can do to get the backslider to attend to his work.

This union official, if he finds it necessary, will not hesitate to call the attention of such a member at an open meeting and inform him that the organization will not tolerate, will not harbor, any one who is either unwilling or unable to turn out a satisfactory day's work. In that union one does not hear those constant demagogic cries against the "discipline of the shop," the "heavy yoke" and such like talk. The union tries to coöperate with the employer to make its members more efficient workers and better craftsmen.

The kind of propaganda, of "education," or "mis-education" as Mr. Brandeis once named it, which the members of the International receive from their officers and leaders, must end in sabotage of the worker in the shop. Yankel the Arrogant becomes uncontrollable; the "horepasnik" (the name in Yiddish signifies the worker who loves his work) has almost disappeared. The artist has lost interest in his art. The Yiddish immigrant ceased to be the most productive worker, the most efficient in this country. He is no more the "slave" he used to be. And the first to suffer from this kind of propaganda is the worker himself.

The element engaged in the cloth-sponging industry is approximately the same as in the cloak and

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dress industry, namely, workers of Jewish and Italian origin; with this difference, that they are mostly native-born Americans, and their union is an American union. Therefore, there is not the Siamese Twin of bluff and turmoil, which is characteristic of the "Progressive Yiddish" labor movement.

In the garment organization, when a few weeks pass and the office hears of no trouble in a particular shop, its official becomes restless. A meeting of the work people of that particular shop is called. The workers receive a good dose of union propaganda, and the next day there is trouble between the workers and the employer. A walking delegate is immediately dispatched to try and settle the trouble. All this reminds me of a story about some firemen of a western city, who, becoming afraid of losing their jobs because several months had passed without any fire, themselves took care to earn their salt by setting the whole town on fire.

In the Socialist catechism it is written, and all true and pious Socialists believe it, that the "capitalist class" is in need of a "reserved army of unemployed," because its profits are derived solely from the underpaid labor of the worker; from the "surplus value" which labor creates and which the capitalist appropriates. The lower the cost of labor to the "capitalist class," the greater their profits. The true facts are all contrary to this theory. When employment decreases, when factories close, when

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orders become scarce, then bankruptcies and failures follow in their wake. The factory owners in order to cover part of their "overhead," accept orders at little or no profit. To meet their financial obligations they sell their accumulated stocks at a loss. The stock and share market begins to drop and the "capitalist class" begins to feel its losses rather keenly.

On the other hand, when labor is scarce, when the employers have more orders on hand than they can fill, when the demand for goods exceeds the supply, then the "capitalist class" begins to "coin money." During the last war, when labor was at a premium and wages went up sky high, the "capitalist class" made money galore. "For every extra dollar they pay in wages they take ten in profits" was the cry.

You see then how much truth there is in the popular socialistic assertion that the capitalist makes his money from cheap labor. In the wealthy establishments wages as a rule are higher and the earning of the workers better than in the smaller shop conducted by poorer proprietors. It is only when the employer is compelled to pay *more for labor than his competitor*, that his losses begin. He makes money only when he succeeds in paying *less for his labor than his competitor*. This is something quite different, quite distinct from paying high or low wages. In China, where the cost of labor is so low that it

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is cheaper to transfer goods from one point to another by human labor than the use of mechanical or animal power, there is practically no capitalistic class.

In the cloth examining and sponging industry wages have trebled within the last eight years. The same workmen in my employ who in 1917 received \$20 to \$22 per week now receive \$57 to \$70 per week for fewer hours of labor. This was accomplished without turmoil and strife, without having to resort to arbitration or litigation. Yet the profits of the employers in this industry did not diminish as a result of this trebling of the wages.

In our industry, unionism is appreciated as much among the employers as among the workers, for we are all aware that our competitors can neither undersell us by paying lower rates of wages to their employees, nor by working them longer hours.

It is evident, then, that for an association of employers in a particular trade or industry, it is much better to have labor well-organized, and wellpaid, and its hours shorter. Whenever one witnesses a struggle between a well-organized body of employees and employers, it is generally the result of incompetent or dishonest leadership on one side or the other. The fault is apt to be on the side of the men, because there is, as a rule, less politics in the employers' organizations.

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The fights which constantly take place in the Women's Garment industry are not, as its members of the various Socialistic sects have been led to believe, due to the inevitable conflict of the "capitalist class" and the "working class," but are prompted by the self-interest of paid union politicians who make demagoguery their profession and who are always trying to convince the workers that everything that has gone wrong is the fault of the bosses.

We are at a meeting of the Board of Grievances of the cloak industry. On one side are the representatives of the employers' association, none of them paid officials. They leave their factories to attend to the adjustment of disputes between their members and their workers because of the interest they feel in the work of the Board. They sit in a judicial capacity. They show their liberality and independence by invariably giving the union representative the benefit of the doubt. They are the first to make a motion in favor of the union, whenever in their judgment a representative of the union succeeds in establishing his case. And they do so unhesitatingly because of their independence.

One of the employer members of the Board complains of the liberality of the representatives on his own side. He declares that the other members are grumbling because of excessive leniency shown to the union, and the various concessions made to it by

their own representatives on the Board. In reply to this, the employers' chairman on the Board states that if their own members are dissatisfied with the action of their own representative, they know what they can do. He turns to the complaining one, and asks him to inform those disgruntled members, that while they, the grumblers, and kickers are free to attend to their factories and their business, they, the members of the Board, are devoting their own valuable time attending to other employers' troubles.

The officers of the union are paid officials. They cannot address their members in the same way. Neither are they free to act in a judicial capacity as the employers are. They cannot act judicially because they are paid by the plaintiff. I have said all this before, but I think, like some other facts I have stressed, that it bears repetition.

I believe I have made clear my contention that the struggle between capital and labor is not at all inevitable when and where both sides are rightly organized. When the interests of both sides are clearly understood and no job politics obscure the issues, there is little room for antagonism. Especially is this true in such a competitive business as the manufacture of Women's Garments.

I feel sure that the failure of unionism in the Women's Industries is due chiefly to the fact that the workers invariably look out upon the individual

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employer as their natural enemy and upon an organization of employers as the "enemies' country."

You see, "Moishe" is a fellow whom you cannot bluff. His unionism is based upon the solid ground of what is good for the worker is bad for the employer and vice versa. The empty headed blather-skite, the unscrupulous demagogue, has no difficulty in finding out what most appeals to "Moishe," and directs his mischievous activities accordingly. And it does not take him long to find the best way to satisfy him.

A union official in reality is a sales-agent of the union of the workers. Imagine a salesman or sales-agent being unable to make any sales for his employer. Would the argument that the customers are a bad lot hold good with the employer? In "radical" (?) unions, this is exactly the kind of argument that is used. When a leader cannot make good, when he lacks the ability to argue his case, or to convince the employers of the justice of his contention, then it is "the boss," the "capitalist class." "So what can you expect?" And all this poppycock satisfies "Moishe."

Unionism in the Women's Garment industry will be of any use to the workers only when it is based on the principles of coöperation with the "capitalist employers," and not with an organization of boot-leggers in the garment industry; by that, I mean,

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the sub-manufacturers, and the outside contractors with whom the union now is trying to enter into a conspiracy against the manufacturers and jobbers by demanding "limitation of contractors."

From "Kaempff" to coöperation, from antagonism to mutual interest, in this direction is the march of progress, of evolution, in the relation between Capital and Labor.

Until 1910 the Women's Garment industry was completely disorganized, as I have said before. The conditions of labor were in a chaotic state, an inevitable condition where nothing was regulated and where everything was left to private bargaining between individual employer and employee. Since 1910 when the union, or rather the organization which is known by the name the "Cloakmakers' Union" got the upper hand of the employer, things have become worse than ever. That they are getting worse, the "Rights" as well as the "Left Wingers" in the industry, all recognize. How is this going to be remedied? I think it can be helped by copying the methods of "big business," viz:—coöperation between buyer and seller. Why not try to gain better prices for union labor from the employers, their customers, not by constantly holding over their heads the big stick of the strike. Drop pursuing the method of the market peddler of the old country.

Adopt the methods of American Big Business. Try to gain the confidence of your customers, your

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employers, by coöperating and trying jointly to find ways and means to make your industry yield a better remuneration for both of you.

You have had enough fights and conflicts. Try the other way.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TROUGH

THE radical element in the cloakmakers' union reminds one of the Anti-Saloon League of America, which after years of agitation succeeded in having the Eighteenth Amendment adopted and the Volstead Act passed. As a result of this act, two classes of people made their appearance in this country: the bootlegger and prohibition enforcement, or Dry Agents. Both need each other. Without the bootlegger there would be no need for the dry agent, and without the dry agent, bootlegging would not be a profitable business. Every now and again there is a clamor on the part of the dry forces of this country for more agents and more money to keep "dry," a people who are naturally "wet." This agitation despite the fact that the United States government already spends millions of dollars annually on the enforcement of the Prohibition Act. Almost daily you read in the newspaper reports of newly-discovered graft and corruption, and of collusion between bootleggers and dry agents. The Anti-Saloon League is constantly clamoring for changes

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in the method and the personnel, and in the staff of the dry enforcement agents.

The radicalism or the radical element, in the cloak-makers' union, has made the manufacture of garments inside the large factory unprofitable. Only poor devils without capital, and without responsibility, running a "two-by-four" shop, can nowadays make it pay. The unit of the cloak and dress shop becomes steadily smaller, while their number grows larger. To control these ever-growing number of units, an ever-larger staff of walking delegates is needed—more managers, more "out-of-town" committees and "volunteer committees." But even this is not enough. In the small social shop, workers make their own arrangements with their employer, and snap their fingers at both the union delegates and "pull committees." Ergo, the help of strong-armed men is called in. The expense of trying to control these uncontrollable units grows heavier all the time, as does that part of the expense for which no receipt or vouchers can be produced. Thus, the cost of enforcing union conditions, ever increases in this industry. Even the periodical assessment of twenty dollars per head is insufficient, apparently.

The number of bootleggers and dry law enforcement agents, sub-manufacturers and organizers, and walking delegates, grows larger each year. Last year the cost of enforcing union conditions amounted to over one million dollars. This is the *Trough* of

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the Joint Board of the Cloak and Dressmakers Locals of the International union of the city of New York. Can you imagine what kind of a machine is being built around this *Trough* of a million dollar annual expenditure, of the larger part of which a detailed account cannot be kept and no balance is ever made public?

The opposition, the "left wingers," believe that by changing the personnel of the officials, there will be less graft and corruption in the administration of the enforcement of union conditions in the sub-manufacturing shops. That they can substitute a cleaner, purer administration. Perhaps. But even if they do it can only be for a short while, under the whole system as now constituted.

As long as there is an ever-increasing number of small shops to be controlled and periodically reorganized, as long as there is any need of an endless number of "pull committees," who for a substantial consideration are willing and ready to enforce union conditions in the bootleg shops of the sub-manufacturer, there will be graft and corruption, as well as a well-built machine to divide this million dollars a year among the "deserving unionists." A million dollars a year is a terrible temptation even for pure-blooded, one hundred per cent communists.

It is not a question of parties or persons, but of the system that has made the manufacture of cloaks and dresses in the City of New York profitable only

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to those persons employing less than a half dozen machines. The evil of the small uncontrollable shops will never be cured by the spending of enormous sums on enforcement agents, with their legitimate and the ever-growing number of illegitimate helpers. And all the proposed remedies, the "limitation of contractors," advocated by both the Administration and the Opposition, is utterly useless. The Administration proposes it, because it is not in earnest, hoping thereby to raise future issues. Something to talk to the members about, part of their old method of the art of bluff. The new administration proposes it because it consists of a set of hot-heads without experience, who do not in the least understand the nature of the problems confronting the industry.

Those who are anxious to eliminate graft and corruption in the union should try to see to it that instead of combining with the American Association of Sub-manufacturers (thus making the Union a branch, an accomplice of that organization), the union should come to an understanding with the manufacturers and jobbers in the cloak and dress industries. Let the union, in coöperation with the capitalist employers, find ways and means to abolish the small shops, by having the garments made inside the factories.

When the manufacture of women's garments becomes a legitimate business, when the number of

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walking delegates and union officials and the cost of their maintenance are reduced to a minimum, when the employment of hired thugs is no longer necessary, when the entire cost of maintaining the organization will have been reduced to minimum, then and then only, will there be reasonable ground for hoping that corruption and graft likewise will be reduced to a minimum.

Above all, the International must first of all become a genuinely honest labor organization. Once an agreement is entered into with any individual or body of employers, it must be done with no strings to it, with no mental reservation. Oriental diplomacy must be dropped.

If, on the other hand, things are as bad as the President of the International union asserted at the "hearing" in the City Hall last year, viz:—that the employers in the dress and cloak trade make no attempt to live up to the terms of agreement into which they enter with the union, then make no agreements, either verbal or written, but say to the members to do the same as the I. W. W. are doing: "Work as long as the terms of your employment suit you and strike when they don't."

The only remedy for the evil of sub-manufacturing is to abolish it, not to strengthen it by "limitations." When a building is constructed on a false foundation sooner or later it topples over. No amount of changing a girder here or a beam there

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will help. The present internal fight is not due to the personal corruption of this or that leader, but to the false principles upon which the union is based, and the impracticable and unbusinesslike method by which it is led and conducted.

CHAPTER XIX

THE REMEDY

I READ somewhere that Mr. Sidney Hillman, of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, in an address to his members told them, "You are the Industry." This is half a truth, which in reality is the worst form of untruth. Of all men, the president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers should be the last one to talk to his members in such a manner. Mr. Hillman's organization once tried to do away with private employers. It actually established "union shops," that is, shops run by the organization itself, where the private employer and private capital, were both eliminated. The result was that the union had to close these union factories after incurring very heavy losses.

Despite the fact that the "Amalgamated System," the name under which this experiment became known, entered the field of manufacture of men's clothing during a general lock-out, when nearly all the men's clothing shops in the city of New York were closed and despite the fact that the Amalgamated shops had little or no competition, this experi-

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ment disclosed so much mismanagement, sabotage, corruption, and graft, that the organization was very glad to get rid of them.

The same was the case with the "Building Guild" in England.

In the ears of the workers the words, "You are the Industry" sound very nice. With such talk you can "bring down the gallery." Of course you win the good graces of the worker by telling him that he is "the whole cheese," and that the private capitalist is only a useless parasite. All the more reason, therefore, that the mind of the worker should not be fed with such talk. That is probably the reason Mr. Hillman's membership lately became unmanageable and began to kick against his leadership. The workers are not the Industry. In order to begin manufacturing clothing, like any other article of commerce, it is hard, very hard, to get along without the "confounded capitalist."

To tell the worker that, "he is the industry" reminds one of the kind of demagoguery of which one hears so often on the East Side: "The tremendous power of the organized working class." In order to start manufacturing, in order that the worker should find employment at the manufacture of clothing or any other article, it is first necessary that some individual, or group of individuals, furnish the necessary capital for the venture. And this individual, or group of individuals, must devote his energy and

ability to the undertaking. Whether the venture turns out successful or not, the worker cannot afford to take chances. He must get paid for his labor even if the promoters are unable to sell a single article which the worker produced.

Before the worker is able to enter the "industry" some one has risked his capital, opened a plant with the necessary machinery, tools and accessories, furnished the suitable raw materials and designs, organized a staff of salesmen, etc. Any child must understand that a person who does all this must expect more from the industry than an individual worker.

Evidently, the worker is not the "industry," not "the whole cheese." *The worker plus the employer together are the "Industry."* It is important that both the employer and employee should bear this in mind, that neither should believe that the other is the "industry." It is important that both indispensable elements in the industry realize this fact thoroughly, and thus cooperate with each other to build up the industry.

If the employer thinks that he alone is the industry, if he runs his plant for his sole benefit, giving the worker as little as possible, the result is sullen discontent ending in open warfare to the injury of all parties concerned. It is no different where workers believe that they alone "are the industry," that their employer is simply a useless para-

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site, an exploiter of labor, who by legal or illegal means, came into possession of the means of production in order to be able to tax and fleece them of the fruits of their toil.

This frame of mind with its resultant strikes and lock-outs and sabotage is the cause of more waste in the American industries than any other single form of industrial waste. When both sides come together, after a struggle, with the object of entering into a peace agreement, to work out and establish labor standards, these standards seldom are the result of thorough investigation, just as the rules and regulations then adopted are seldom based on exact data. The facts and data furnished by both sides at such meetings, as a rule, are of most flimsy character, hurriedly brought together to establish a case for one or the other side.

During the Fall season of 1912, when the leaders of Local No. 25 (New York Waist and Dress-makers) began to make their preparations for a general strike, statements appeared in the press to the effect that the average earnings of the women and girls employed in that industry amounted to about fifteen cents per hour, while many cases were cited to show earnings of between five and ten cents per hour. These statistics of underpay emanated, of course, from the union side. These assertions were later denied by the employers who cited cases showing earnings of 40 and 50 cents per hour.

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When, in order to avoid an impending strike, the representatives of the union and of the employers began to negotiate terms of settlement, and the question of a standard rate per hour upon which the prices should be based came up for discussion, the representatives of the union and the association immediately changed places. The union officials contended, and they brought facts and figures to prove their contention, that the average earnings per hour in the shops were much higher than what the representatives of the employers were offering. The employers, on the other hand, who, a day or two previous, were proclaiming before the world the high rate of earnings of their workers in their shops, now were arguing with all the zeal and eloquence at their command that the actual earnings of their workers in their shops were considerably lower than the union representatives claimed.

When the terms of the settlement were submitted to the strikers, at first they howled down their leaders for having accepted a rate per hour, which one union speaker after another claimed to be much below their earnings. "But if your earnings are as high as you claim them to be why did you clamor for a general strike?" I asked.

Even if it is ever realized by the rank and file of the International that its gains from its various strikes are only apparent, not real, that will not

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solve the difficulty. It is much more difficult to drop gains already made than to obtain them.

The ten legal holidays have also turned out to be anything but a blessing. The great majority of the workers in the garment trades consists of Jewish men and women, already burdened with an abundance of religious holidays, and the enforcement of ten additional ones, against their wishes can be better imagined than described. In the smaller shops it became a dead letter right from the beginning. Only the larger shops suffered from it. But it was impossible to drop this gain because of the non-Jews working in the industry.

To give another example: In 1910 the International gained the abolition of the "inside contractor." A more pernicious gain could not have been obtained. Instead of keeping the contractors inside the factories it really dispersed them all over the territory of New York and its vicinity.

In 1919 the union won the great blessing of week work. This gave the finishing touch, so to say, to the migration of the bundles of work from the large inside factory to the small sub-contracting shop. For piece work, it appears, can only be enforced in the large inside shops. The difference in cost between manufacturing a garment in an inside week-work shop, and an outside piece-work shop became so great, that an actual race began among the various firms as to which would have its merchandise made

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up at the outside shop first. The union leaders were so busy with their publicity campaign, with proclaiming far and wide their great victory of week work, that they could not possibly think of making a strategic retreat. Neither could they afford to admit the possibility of ever having committed an error.

I know a number of jobbers who would open factories where all the work could be done under their own supervision, if the union were to allow them to have it done on the same piece-work system which is in operation in their contractors' shops. But the moment it is suggested to any "true union man" that the union is losing its strangle-hold on the big shop, he goes up in the air immediately. Let the boss in the big shop do what he wants? Give him a free hand in managing and conducting his factory the way he sees fit, and permit him to lay off at the end of the season such employees as have proved themselves unsuitable for his shops and replace them by other union members to work regular hours with a guarantee of minimum earnings? Treason! True, prior to 1910, there were quite a number of non-union shops where the earnings were considerably higher than they are to-day. But of what use, or consideration, are facts when the idea of "union control," as the cloakmaker understands it, is at stake? A shop must be controlled, must be regu-

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lated by the shop chairman, and the walking delegate. Otherwise, it cannot be "a true union shop." Whenever a strike is either avoided, or terminated, through the intervention of "disinterested outsiders," ridiculous spectacles are to be witnessed. Both sides hire a staff of big lawyers and a duel of words takes place lasting sometimes for days, if not weeks. The gentlemen of the Board of Arbitration are initiated into the intricacies of the highly complicated character of the trade through arguments by those learned in law counsel. After the minds of the "disinterested outsiders" have been surfeited and befogged by arguments from both sides, they proceed to legislate, establish labor standards, and to lay down rules under which certain processes should be carried on and certain articles manufactured. The most important thing is to avoid or end the strike. Something must be done, and a decision must be handed down. Of course that decision can be nothing but pure guesswork. And it very frequently happens that after a decision has been handed down, the representatives of the union and the employers have to come together and substitute something workable in its place.

The Cloak and Dress industry needs a permanent Board of Labor Standards, of Industrial Engineers or economists working with the aid of a staff of statisticians; not of "disinterested outsiders" but "interested insiders" to work out and suggest la-

bor standards. Above all the Board should be charged with the all-important work of enforcing these standards with the help of competent inspectors. In adjusting shop disputes these inspectors should perform and carry on their work, having in mind definite trade policies and not, as it is the case today, when the walking delegates have only one policy in view and that is "to satisfy the members." These inspectors should do what the present walking delegates are supposed to do.

The members object to and constantly find fault with their union officials and job politicians, because the members contend that these officials do nothing for them. Their contentions are perfectly correct. They do nothing for them, not because of unwillingness, but because they are absolutely unable and incapable of doing anything for the members.

Nor when the personnel of the administration is changed will it be able to do any more for them. Neither will they give up their jobs if they meet with no more success than their predecessors. "Plus il change, plus il est la meme chose."

When the number of officials paid and elected by the union will be materially reduced, when the labor standards are enforced by an appointed body of inspectors, like the inspectors of the Board of Sanitary Control, who hold office as long as their work is satisfactory, then only can a change for the better be expected.

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Such a body could be maintained at the joint expense of the union and the employers' Association. Its business should be to watch and follow all those changes taking place in the manufacture and sale of women's garments throughout the country.

There is now a Board of Sanitary control to which employers also contribute, and whose object is to compel the employers to maintain sanitary conditions in their shops. You never hear any one of them complaining against these sanitary inspectors. The employers carry out their recommendations because they respect these inspectors and the plan and scope of the work they are engaged in. It stands to reason that these employers will more readily comply with the instructions of a Board of Labor Standards than with any received by a union delegate. Especially will this be the case when an employer knows the non-compliance with these instructions will call forth pressure and punishment on the part of both union and the association. Also, when he knows that those standards demanded from him are fixed by an independent body of experts appointed and maintained for and by the whole industry.

Employers, however, hate the union and respect its officials no more than do the workers. They are proud when they can "get the best of the union," and boast of it. Quite different would be the case if they were to deal with officials appointed by an in-

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dependent body of experts maintained by the whole industry.

You have a "Workers' University." I have no idea of what subjects are there taught. I can well imagine that this institution is little more than a toy, a kind of show maintained to please American intelligencia, a part of the publicity campaign on which your officials are in the habit of spending money so lavishly. If your "Workers' University" was of any use to the members of your organization, the prevailing conception of unionism could not be the same as it is to-day. I feel sure that that institution exercises no influence on the policies and activities of your organization. But a "Workers' University" which would educate and train a body of competent men and women for work of inspecting and enforcing labor standards, would be of great help to every one. These inspectors could be recruited from the ranks of the workers in the trade.

The object of the union should be to coöperate with the employers, to train its members to be loyal to the firm they work for, to raise their efficiency as producers and to impress upon them the necessity of giving an honest day's work in return for the higher wages and shorter hours which the union employer gives his work people. The employer would then willingly give preference to union members, because union labor would mean honest labor, steady labor, competent labor.

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If a worker has trouble in a shop, when he becomes dissatisfied with the conditions of labor in his place of employment, he could make complaint at the office of the Board of Labor Standards, which would send one of its inspectors to investigate and adjust it, or else refer it to the Board for adjustment. The union is to give preference to association employers. The idea of mutual coöperations to be the basis, the Protocol, so to say, of the relations between the union and the Association of Employers.

The union should look upon the non-association employer as it now does upon the non-union man, and the associated employer should look upon the non-union man in the same way. For the object of both non-associated employer and the non-union man can be no other than the breaking down of the labor standards to which the whole industry has given its consent; and finds it necessary to live up to.

It is not my object to work out in detail a plan for the "Society of the Future." I can only indicate its general character and the form of organization of workers and employers the industry needs. Details will be worked out as a result of experimentation by the method of "trial and error."

When the basis of these relations is coöperation and construction, the next sixteen years, I am sure, will show better results than the past.

If "industrial democracy" is not an empty phrase, a hobby for silk-stocking men and professional radi-

cal; if the workers are not forever to be the playthings of the union politician, if their activities are ever to be based upon "enlightened self-interest" instead of blind, obstinate hatred of the "capitalist class," then this, I am sure, must be the goal to which their activities will be directed.

"Workers' education," of which we hear so much lately, should be the kind of education which a workers' university undertakes to give the workers of a particular industry, so that they will have a better knowledge of the economic, industrial and labor problems confronting them.

"Industrial Democracy" can only exist where the worker has developed a sense of responsibility, and this can be brought about only through close study and acquaintance with the nature of the problems of the industry in which they are engaged. The worker must become acquainted with the various elements and interests which go to make up the whole industry upon which, in the long run, his earnings and well-being largely depends.

I have already indicated the qualities that are to be found among the Yiddish workers, qualities which should enable them, sooner or later to remedy and change their present methods of conducting their organization. These are roughly—absence of blind obstinacy, reasoning abilities, and a capacity to change and adapt themselves to changed conditions.

It would be much better for the Yiddish Unions

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if they were not harassed by the East Side press, which is always seeking to interfere with their internal affairs. The socialistic *Forward* has been the blister of the organized Yiddish worker. The gentlemen who direct that newspaper really believe that they have a monopoly on the East Side unions. They believe Karl Marx handed over to them the exclusive right to look after the unions, to be the guardians of the Yiddish immigrant workers' organizations. Their editorial offices are the headquarters where many union politicians are to be found. This is the place where it is frequently decided beforehand what kind of an "open declaration" the officials should make to the members. These and these tactics have brought forth a new set of politicians, those communist politicians who undertake for themselves the task of looking after the welfare of the Yiddish workers.

The union, too, should not be in a hurry to sign agreements with jobbers or sub-manufacturers, either singly or collectively, but should try to do away entirely with the whole cursed system of sub-manufacturing. The sub-manufacturer is not a legitimate employer and should be driven out of business. Nor does his membership in the American Association of Manufacturers make his business legitimate. Sub-manufacturing is the cancer which has grown in the body of the cloak industry, and one from which the worker suffers the most.

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Above all, the union has no right to furnish the sub-manufacturer with a "sanitary label." By doing so it really legitimizes and gives sanction to this bastard system of producing garments. In my opinion, no garment can be "sanitary" that is made in a sub-manufacturer's shop.

But it cannot be abolished in the usual way the union tries to effect improvements for the workers. It cannot be done by the method of coercion and threats. It must be clear by now that the principal reason for the failure of unionism in the cloak industry is due to the fact that the union relies mainly on coercion. These coercive methods are effective only in the larger shops. The union officials have always been working overtime in the larger inside shops, while the smaller, illegitimate employers have been thriving and multiplying.

The union representatives might invite the jobbers to a conference and address them as follows:

"Gentlemen: our object is to abolish the cursed system of sub-manufacturing in our industry. This, however, cannot be accomplished without your co-operation. Open up inside factories, have your merchandise manufactured on your own premises, under your own supervision, and engage our members to do your work. We, on our part will co-operate with you and we will see that it should pay you better to have your work made on your own premises than to have it done outside.

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"We are ready to spend all the money needed for an advertising campaign to inform the buying public of the merit of the garments made on the premises of the manufacturer and under his direct supervision."

Let the union issue an "INSIDE-MADE SANITARY LABEL." Let the union take its heavy hands off the inside factory. Let it stop clamoring about the "rights" of the worker in the shop and let it direct its "kaempflust" against the illegitimate small shop. Let the migration of bundles of work begin again from the small outside to the bigger inside factory the same as it did prior to 1910.

The experience of the last sixteen years proves conclusively that the old methods of strikes and litigations bring nothing but destruction in their wake. If the cloak industry needs an administration of "left wingers" to demonstrate the obvious truth that in the cloak and dress industry force and coercion are no remedy, then the sooner they come into power the better.

The reason why the old administration was so eager to submit their demands to arbitration or mediation is that they realized that strikes have been played out in this trade. They see that even after a successful strike the conditions of the workers in the industry are getting worse than ever. Now it has become apparent that even arbitration is useless. It will be a long time before the workers will submit

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their demands to arbitration again. The new administration are at present eager for a fight is due of course to their inexperience. There is no reason in the world to think that even if they win the workers will get as in the past no more than what they gained in the past.

There remains one more remedy, that is, to take the advice of the "old traitor" and enter into negotiations with the big jobbers and the remaining few capitalist-manufacturers with a view to eliminate the present illegitimate way of manufacturing garments. Only by eliminating these bootleggers—the sub-manufacturers and the dry law enforcement agents—the walking delegates with their inevitable aids, the "strong-armed men," will the union ever be in a position to rid itself of the corruption in its ranks and the terrible waste of members' money against which evil the members of the union are rightly up in arms.

Victories on either side, be it the result of strikes or arbitration decisions, can bring the industry no other fruit than Dead Sea Apples. Only when the responsible elements on both side will reach A BASIS OF UNDERSTANDING will the lot of the workers in the industry begin to improve. Such an understanding can be achieved only when the union leaders will pick up courage, face the facts as they are and drop peddling with demagogic, high-sounding phrases. Their constant refrain that the employers are out

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to smash the union and bring down wages can deceive nobody. For any one with a grain of common sense can understand that in such a keen competitive industry the only parties that can gain by lower cost of production will not be the employers but the consumer and perhaps the retailer.

EPILOGUE

ONE of the periodical general strikes, which so often convulses the garment industry is on again! It is being predicted that this struggle will be the bitterest yet fought in the industry and will last the longest.

Since 1916 the industry went through about a half dozen of them. At the beginning of each of these strikes the leaders assured the members that this time the nature of the settlement will be such as to make it impossible for the employers to evade their obligation to their workers; that this time they will have to provide them with a living wage, etc., etc. Each one of these strikes ended, of course, with a complete victory for the union. Yet at the end of these victories of the union over the employers, even before the leaders were through celebrating it, the workers in the shops found that the conditions there were worse than ever. To meet these complaints of the workers, the leaders began talking of another conflict, of another strike, assuring their

members that this time the nature of the demands from the employers and the settlement with them will be of quite a different nature; that at last they found a real remedy for the evils from which the workers are suffering.

One would like to know how long these tactics, these unfulfilled promises, these methods of cajoling the workers will last. How long Moishe will stand it. Some of these Moishes are already beginning to realize that it is these very victories over the employers that are at the root of their trouble (see page 52). Let us hope that the number of such Moishes will grow to such an extent that they will compel the leaders to change their tactics which hitherto brought within its wake nothing but destruction and ruin to the industry.

THE END