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The Ladies' Garment Worker, Volume 9, Issue 2

International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU)

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The Ladies’ Garment Worker, Volume 9, Issue 2

**Description**
First published in April 1910, *The Ladies’ Garment Worker* was the official publication of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU) through 1918. The journal appeared monthly and included sections in English, Italian, and Yiddish. *The Ladies’ Garment Worker* was discontinued at the end of 1918 and replaced in January of 1919 by the new weekly journal of the ILGWU, *Justice*.

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**Publisher**
International Ladies’ Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU)
## Directory of Local Unions

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**Named shoes are frequently made in Non-Union factories**

**DO NOT BUY ANY SHOE** no matter what its name, unless it bears a plain and readable impression of this UNION STAMP

All shoes without the UNION STAMP are always Non-Union

Do not accept any excuse for absence of the UNION STAMP

**BOOT AND SHOE WORKERS’ UNION**

246 Summer Street, Boston, Mass.

JOHN F. TOBIN, Pres.  
CHAS. L. BAIN, Sec’y-Treas.
FALSE CONCEPTIONS REGARDING WEEK WORK.

By Benj. Schlesinger

We are anxious and determined to introduce week work into all branches of our trades because we are convinced that the workers have much to gain and absolutely nothing to lose by the change from piece work to a week work system. It is not merely a question of sizing up advantages and disadvantages and finding out which of these systems has more value and which less faults. We have studied both systems thoroughly. We have watched their practical workings for years, and we say with the fullest conviction and in all sincerity that week work has on its side all that is good for the workers, while piece work has all that is bad and injurious for them. From whatever angle we look at the question we come to the same conclusion.

In my previous article on week work I discussed some of the objections urged against the proposed system. I showed that when these objections are analysed more deeply they prove to be hollow and devoid of substance. They may, on the contrary, be turned into arguments in favor of week work. In this article I shall try to answer some more queries against week work, and in summing them all up we shall see whether they have any value.

1. Some people hold the opinion that week work is a "slavish system." They claim that the week worker must come to work on the minute. All the time he sits at the machine he is watched by the foreman, so as to waste no time. The representative of the employer keeps a vigilant eye on him and all his movements. The piece worker, on the other hand, is perfectly free. If he spends an evening with friends he need have no fear of oversleeping and being late, or of feeling drowsy while at work. The employer is not concerned how and when he works or how much he produces in a given time. If he wants to suspend work for a while to go somewhere, to take a rest or smoke a cigarette he is at liberty to suit himself. He is, in short, his own foreman, his own boss. If he wishes to work hard he can do so. If he wants to take it easy he can kill time to his heart's content.

This is one of the sort of arguments which sound very plausible when read in a paper, but has no substance in cold reality. I admit that in a non-union shop where he has no protection, the week worker is a veritable
slave. But it is by no means the case in an organized trade, where the union has power and influence.

Theories aside, let us see how it is in actual practice. In every cloak shop there are week workers and piece workers. The true facts are known and seen. Which of the two classes of workers is more enslaved? Who subjects himself to a severer strain? Who can better afford to leave the work table for a few moments, to rest awhile or smoke? Who, in general, is more harnessed to the yoke, dreading to feel drowsy or tired while at work—who, indeed, the week worker or piece worker?

The union has two main aims in view—wages and hours. It fights for a wage sufficient to afford the worker a livelihood and such hours of labor as should not overtax his strength. We have now a working week of forty-nine hours. If we shall find that these hours are too long, too arduous for our workers, we shall endeavor to have them reduced. For the union the health and strength of its members is just as important as their wages.

But the union is powerless to protect the health of those working piece work. It has no means of controlling the energy they spend on their work. He works harder in one hour than the week worker in two hours. It depends how he uses his vitality. The shorter the hours the greater the strain put forth by the piece worker. Knowing that the day's work is limited to eight hours, he will try to do as much work in the eight hours as in ten hours.

When a day's work will be limited to six hours he will put forth double the energy. This is a feeling that no union and no power in the world can control.

It is by no means true that in a union shop the week worker is hurried or driven. The union has a standard to go by. It knows how much an average worker can produce during the day, and the employer cannot demand of the worker to produce in excess of that standard. That in itself makes driving or undue hurry impossible. The union assures the employer that for a certain wage the employee will perform an average day's work, and to us an average day's work means as much as an ordinary worker is able to accomplish in a natural way without extra strain.

The week worker is protected against being driven by others, and he has no reason for any urge within himself. He is not driven by the foreman and he has no motive for hurrying himself. The piece worker, it is true, is not being driven by others, but the slave driver dwells within his own soul and whips him on to unnatural strain. There is a check against a tyrannical foreman bent on driving the week worker; the union may restrain him. But there is no check against the slave driver intrenched in the heart of the piece worker. This fiend cannot be overcome. No one has a right to restrain him.

It is practically a question of human nature, and nature cannot be resisted. The piece worker knows that the more he will exert himself the more he will earn, and he is urged on by his own inner feeling, sometimes quite unconsciously, until the self-driving becomes almost mechanical, actuated by a desire to increase his earnings.

And it is because the union is interested in seeing the workers not only less prone to sell their souls to the employer and foreman, but also less
chained to their work; it is because the union is interested in preserving the workers' health as well as safeguarding their wages that it favors the week work system instead of the piece work system.

2. Let us now consider a second objection urged by the skeptics against the week work system. They fear that week work will lead to the development of the section system. They look at it from this point of view: When the employer pays the worker by the piece he cannot divide the garment in parts and give every employee a section of the work, but under week work he will be eager to do so and will consider it worth while. But does this tally with the facts? In Cleveland there are two colossal cloak firms, the largest in that city—Prins, Bieredman & Co. and the H. Black Co. Both operate by the method of piece work. Yet the section system is rampant in both. So that piece work does not prevent the operation of the section system.

The truth of the matter is that the cloak trade in general need not fear the development of the section system. Its introduction is a very remote possibility in most of our shops and factories making a better grade of garments. Should it be introduced at some future time it will have no connection with either piece work or week work. The manufacturer who will seek to introduce section work will find piece work no bar to it anymore than week work. This point will not at all enter into his calculations. It was so in Cleveland.

* * *

Now let us consider the advantages of week work as compared with piece work. We might as well look things straight in the face and tell the whole truth about them. Just compare the condition of the piece worker—the operator and finisher—with that of the week worker—the cutter and presser. Each time the union succeeds in raising wages and shortening hours of labor the week worker knows that he has made a positive gain. He can feel it as something substantial as soon as the higher scale comes into force. And the piece worker? Each time we secure an increase for the presser we also secure a raise for the operator and finisher. The trouble, however, is that the operators' and finishers' increase is in theory, in the abstract and not in concrete, definite results. Under the piece work system it is the only thing the union can do. It can raise the standard. It can stipulate for the operator and finisher a price that shall afford them a possibility to earn a certain sum per hour. In actual practice, however, extraordinary powers are required to enforce the principle, for it is almost beyond control. Whatever the stipulation might be, the ultimate carrying out of the principle—price fixing—is in the hands of thousands of committees. That in itself is a sufficient drawback. But there is yet another evil: Each committee must separately haggle with the employer, and the whole process is turned into a fight.
between a few workers and the employer. As in every struggle, the stronger, shrewder and cleverer party gets the upper hand; and naturally the workers are not always the most skilled experts in this sort of game.

The result is that while the condition of the cutters and pressers in the cloak shops is growing better every year, we are quite at sea in regard to the operators and finishers. After every renewal of the agreement with the employers the condition of the operators and finishers has been much improved, but we have no means of knowing precisely how far the improvement is carried out in practice. It is impossible for us to exercise strict supervision over the wage conditions of the operators and finishers. Under the operation of the system the situation soon slips away from our control.

Or let us take the question of the hours of labor. Each time we succeed in cutting an hour off the week worker's weekly hours of labor we know and realize the gain. He now gets the same wages for less hours. If he is required to work the same number of hours as formerly he is paid for overtime and at the rate of time and a half or double time. What, however, does the piece worker gain by shorter hours? Nothing, so far as wages are concerned. In the busy season, when he works overtime the piece worker does not get bigger prices. A day off on holiday for the week worker is a true gain: he is at home, resting and being paid for it. The piece worker, on the other hand, loses the day's earnings.

All this is because piece work cannot be controlled by the union. How can we insist on the employer paying the piece worker for holidays if no one knows how much he might have earned that day? Piece work really means that every worker is a sort of contractor, taking a certain amount of work from the employer and doing it in his own time and at his pleasure and not being, properly speaking, an employee of the manufacturer. That really is the principle of the system, and it is from this point of view that the matter is negotiated with the employers.

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THE UNITED GARMENT WORKERS

The U. G. W. of America is publishing a weekly paper edited by their secretary, Mr. Larger. In some of its recent issues there have appeared disgraceful attacks on the delegates of our International Union to the Buffalo convention of the American Federation of Labor. Mr. Larger is very angry with our delegates for having introduced a resolution at the convention calling for a Needle Trades Department that would embrace all the unions in the trades of wearing apparel for men and women.

Mr. Larger doubts the honesty of the motives that actuated our delegates in proposing that resolution. He insinuates that we intended to entrap his union. He writes in a tone of impudent and silly arrogance, declaring haughtily that if his union would think it necessary to have a Needle Trades Department organized, its representatives would submit the proposition to the American Federation of Labor and then it would be carried out.

The U. G. W. of America has evidently lost every spark of self-
respect, and therefore allows itself to speak disrespectfully of other organizations. A union which has alienated and driven out seventy-five per cent. of its former members, and is now strenuously opposed by organized workers in its industry might have been more restrained, less pugnacious and less arrogant to an organization that has won the respect and esteem not only of its own members but of the entire labor movement in America.

Mr. Larger is consumed with indignation because at the recent conventions of the A. F. of L. we have defended the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Larger's reference to the "secessionist" union does not frighten us, because we know the whole truth of the matter. He cannot bluff us that way. He might assume an innocent mien and tell his tales to those who are not familiar with the history of the tailors covering a period of twenty-five years. But we do know it. We know every sin committed during these years against the tailors by the United Garment Workers. We know too well what it was that impelled all the tailors to leave as one man the United Garment Workers and organize their own separate union. And because we know the truth of the whole story we take the position on this question which we have defended at the conventions of the American Federation of Labor. There is not the slightest doubt in our mind that had the rest of the delegates to the A. F. of L. conventions been as familiar with all the details of the tailors' question as we are they would support our position in the matter.

At the next convention of the American Federation of Labor the "United Garment Workers and Amalgamated" question will again come up for discussion, and we hope that this time our representatives will succeed in proving to the delegates who it is that should incur the blame for the severance of the tailors from the United Garment Workers.

**SIMPLE SINCERITY**

From the Poems of James Whitcomb Riley.

"I pray not that
Men tremble at
My power of place
And lordly sway,—
I only pray for simple grace
To look my neighbor in the face
Full honestly from day to day—
Yield me his horny palm to hold
And I'll not pray
For gold—
The tanned face, garlanded with
mirth,
It hath the kingliest smile on earth—
The swart brow, diamonded with
sweat,
Hath never need of coronet."
Our Next Convention

By Ab. Baroff
Secretary-Treasurer of the International Union.

On May 20, 1918, the fourteenth convention of our International Union will be opened in the city and place soon to be decided.

Conventions are important events in the life of an organization; they are means of registering progress achieved and they set the pace for the future progress of its locals or branches. At such gatherings the representatives of all locals in every part of the country meet together, reviewing their varied activities and occurrences of the past, which guide them in mapping out new plans for future actions—plans of insuring for the organization and its members greater progress and better conditions of life and labor.

The coming convention of our International will be of far-reaching significance for our numerous membership.

During the years that our local unions have played a great part in the lives of our members many problems have come to the surface in our industries. Many evils have obstructed the progress of our organization and caused suffering to our members. True, the officers and active members have tried hard to solve these problems and grapple with the evils. To a certain extent our methods have been successful, but we have not succeeded in eradicating the evils altogether.

Thus it has become clear to the responsible officers of our International and its locals that the course we have pursued so far has not been quite effective, and that it would not be right to continue the same policy. At the next convention all the evils alluded to are bound to be reviewed and will call for a remedy. We shall have to devise new plans and indicate a new course of action, in order to strengthen our unions and uplift our members. Thus we are looking forward to the next convention hopeful of its great promise.

Aside from the usual order of the day prescribed by our constitution, the following important questions will occupy absorbing attention:

- Week work or piece work.
- Reorganization of our locals.
- Future organizing work.
- Education, Unity Houses and co-operative enterprise.
- Our official organ, the Ladies' Garment Worker.
- Our Auditing Department.
- The Union Label.
- A strike fund.
- Benefits.
- Increase of per capita.

I shall try briefly to analyse these questions.

**Week Work.**

Much has been already written in favor of week work. President Schlésinger, in his articles on the subject has, in clear, logical and sustained arguments, shown the great benefit which the workers of our union will derive from the introduction of week work in our industries. I know how hard it is for our people to assimilate new ideas. For years our members have been used to piece work. The system has almost become a part of their very being. Consequently we shall have to apply much energy to the task of moving our members to part with the old system of work.

Trade unions are only successful insofar as they have in their ranks intelligent, courageous and active members. We cannot expect a hundred per cent. of activity among our membership. It will not be exaggerated to say that the highest number of active, intelligent workers in our locals and in the factories is probably no more than twenty per cent. The rest are of weaker caliber, passive and yielding. Thus it is imperative that the more active and bolder spirits shall not be discriminated against, shall not be the target for the hostile and insulting shafts of foremen or bosses. The members of this character are indispensable to us; but owing to their constant activity in the shops, especially in the price committees, they are placed in a position where employers seek to get rid of them. And when such injury is added to the insult, it has the effect of discouraging them; it fills their hearts with pessimism and disappointment. Our union has sought to meet the situation; but the system of work is against us; it compels the workers to stand up boldly as fighters for fair prices.

Were we to search our records and study the nature of the shop complaints, which have caused our members much pain, soreness of heart and unceasing trouble, we should find
that ninety per cent. of the suffering might be ascribed to the constant haggling over piece prices.

Take, for example, the shop of Mr. "A," who employs about 100 workers. It is not to be expected that all of them should be brave and active members in the shop. Probably only about twenty of them have the courage to assume leadership and be the spokesmen for the rest of the workers.

The shop chairmen and price committees representing the workers in the shop seek to maintain union conditions; and as our industry is subject to frequent style changes, it means that the price committee must daily bargain with the employer about prices. Thus it is borne in upon the manufacturer that if he could only get rid of these committee men he would be able to impose his will on the workers. Naturally he resorts to every kind of subterfuge to replace these fighters against him, and in most cases he succeeds in driving them out of his shop.

Then what happens in this shop is this: It becomes even harder to get a proper price committee. So long as some men of courage are left in the shop, a satisfactory price committee might still be got together. But if the fate of the previous price committee lingers in their memory, it will demoralize the new price committee into becoming less aggressive and more yielding to the employer. The result is poor wages, followed by a demand for a resettlement of prices.

The employer, on the other hand, finding that the method of discrimination against the price committee has been effective, proceeds to spread a net of discrimination against the new price committee, with the result that the standard of earnings in this shop sinks lower and lower.

The effect of the haggling and wrangling about prices has been that our bolder and more active members have been victimized in the hundreds, or perhaps in the thousands. This destroys unity in the ranks and undermines the integrity and power of our union.

Piece work is the cause of the growth and multiplication of contractors and sub-manufacturers, who have become the curse of our industry. It has actuated almost all the large, legitimate manufacturers in diminishing their working force, and, in many cases, to give up manufacturing and go into jobbing. It has led to dangerous competition among our members. It has given the better element of workers attractive price lists, while their work is sent to shops employing a weaker and more yielding set of men.

Our union has done all in its power to stop this dangerous competition among our members. We have resorted to various expedients in order to solve these problems. But we have not succeeded in controlling the situation by the old methods. This failure has opened our eyes. Comparing the condition of the week workers with that of the piece workers we have been driven to the logical conclusion that the only solution is week work.

True, week work will not solve all the problems. Much will remain to be done; but one thing is sure:

Week work will diminish the number of discriminations. It will check the dangerous competition among our members. The race for bundles will vanish. Our people will work like human beings, and the seasons will be lengthened.

Week work will enable our active members to devote their energies to the advancement of the union and to a more ennobling work. It will afford them opportunities for educational and co-operative effort. It will give them zest to turn the union into an agency which should not only fight for higher pay, but also cultivate the souls of our members. This will render our unions stronger and more influential.

LIBERTY FOR ALL.

They tell me, Liberty, that in thy name
I may not plead for all the human race;
That some are born to bondage and disgrace,
Some to a heritage of woe and shame.
And some to power supreme, and glorious fame.
With my whole soul I spurn the doctrine base,
And, as an equal brotherhood, embrace
All people, and for all fair freedom claim!
Know this, O man, what'cher thy earthly fate—
God never made a tyrant nor a slave.
Woe, then, to those who dare to desecrate His glorious image! For to all He gave Eternal rights, which none may violate; And, by a mighty hand, the oppressed He yet shall save!

—William Lloyd Garrison.
Sections, Branches or Locals

Our Present Form of Organization—Large Locals Divided into Sections or Branches—Is Not Satisfactory. We Need Smaller Locals, So That the Members Should Know Each Other. A Suggestive and Thoughtful Discussion of a Vexing Problem in Our Union.

From the January Yiddish Edition of the Ladies' Garment-Worker.

By A. Rosebury

For more than seven years we have been continually discussing internal problems connected with our organization—problems which rise to the surface again and again before and after every season or every year.

They who are familiar with our organization know that in this matter we have been practically in the same position ever since. True, from time to time we make progress in a certain sense. We organize a new field, win a strike and increase our membership. But our progress is not permanent. At the end of every season or year we find that it is necessary to make a fresh start. Let us consider one of these problems in detail.

First, both our International Union and our local unions separately spend large sums of money and much energy to bring the unorganized in line. In the main it is gratifying to think that these efforts succeed. Many new shops and hundreds or thousands of new members are thus brought under the influence of the union. But the changed condition lasts only a comparatively short time. Gradually the wheel turns back; the hold of the union on the workers relaxes, and after a while the loss of strength becomes apparent. We find that certain shops have dropped out of the ranks; that the workers have stopped paying dues and that it is necessary to start organizing and calling a general strike over again.

Secondly, ever since we have become a great organization we have repeatedly waged strenuous conflicts accompanied by waves of enthusiasm. Our people are brave, consistent strikers. How then are we to account for their indifference to the union in time of peace? Why do most members of our locals take little or no interest in the union and its problems? Why do so few of them attend the meetings or read our trade organs? A very small number of members take part in the semi-annual or annual election of local officers. Not infrequently they have to be compelled to pay their dues, and it is a matter of indifference to them as to who manages their local union and how it is managed.

Indifference is worse than opposition. With an honest opponent we can debate the question, submit evidence and hope to convince him of his error, while the indifferent person remains unmoved. His reason is inert, and his ears are deaf to appeals. In the tensest moments in the life of the union he is absorbed in nothing more serious than his personal amusement.

Thirdly, even though some of our locals have thousands of members, yet, when the question of capable leaders and officers crops up the thousands of members do not yield the right human material to select from. Frequently the elected ones may possess native intelligence, but they are only half-baked trade unionists, impractical and incompetent. Naturally much dissatisfaction is bound to arise, for in such circumstances shop complaints are not properly settled, urgent work is neglected and the workers suffer in consequence.

Fourthly, in all our big local unions there has developed an unnatural state of affairs that has nothing like it in the trade union movement of the entire world. The dangerous crises our union has passed through which at one time or another have actually menaced its existence, have arisen entirely from that unnatural state of affairs. The point is of more than passing interest and deserves a clear analysis.

To reach a large public extraordinary means must be employed, for in a large public there is also a large measure of indifference. In our local organizations indifference has become so rooted that when we want to move our masses we must resort to a big sensation, take the people by storm. This method, no doubt, is of service to political parties, which appeal to the people once in two years. Yet even in political campaigns it is well known that where the direct personal method—cavcassing from door to door—is not employed, the candidate has small chance to be elected. But trade unions cannot compare with political parties. For them the direct personal method of agitation and propa-
ganda is the best and most effective. The trade union is busy acting every day of the year. Here it is required that the members should be in touch with one another and with their officers as often as possible; that they should see each other personally, look into each other's eyes, speak to each other's heart and soul; for in no other way is confidence inspired.

In our big locals we have no possibility for this direct personal method. The shop meeting presents the sole opportunity to meet the workers of the shop. But the shop meeting does not meet regularly and it meets to consider shop interests exclusively and not general union matters. After the shop meeting has considered the urgent questions brought before it no time is left for general union matters that should be considered at members' meetings.

Unfortunately members' meetings in our big locals are practically impossible. When a local has thousands of members it would be absurd to say that they can be gotten together in one hall to discuss the business of the union, and that everyone or most of them can get the floor and express their individual opinions. Assuming for a moment that a meeting of 12,000 members could be held in Madison Square Garden. At such a meeting it would be impossible for the people to express their opinions. Here one must speak to the people and the people must keep silence. From time to time it is very essential to speak to the people at this kind of meeting. But it would be absurd to speak to the people at a members' meeting, where it is essential that the people themselves should speak. Such members' meetings would reduce our democracy to a farce.

Our active men in the big locals have realized this difficulty and have sub-divided the locals into sections and branches. But after years of experience it is very plain that the sections and branches are a failure, for the following reasons:

First, because they have no executive power. True, the sections and branches have the right to vote on matters submitted to them by the local executive board. They have a right to vote for or against certain candidates, but they cannot undertake anything before submitting the proposal to the local executive board. Consequently the sections and branches cannot develop the spirit of enterprise and initiative which are so indispensable to every trade union.

Secondly, the sections or branches are not well attended because they lack the sense of independence and self-reliance, because they are dependent on the local executive board in everything and are not permitted to foster the feeling of responsibility. Responsibility develops individual character and has a high educational value for organized groups. The sense of responsibility teaches people grouped together to act carefully, with deliberation; but that is only possible in a self-reliant local, having its own officers, its property and funds, whatever these may be, and feeling responsible for its existence, its undertakings and its future.

Thirdly, as the sections and branches are powerless to form decisions or plan undertakings all that the few who attend the meetings can do is to talk; and mere aimless talk soon degenerates into a ventilation of personal grievances and unbridled criticism. So that, instead of these meetings helping to strengthen the bond between the members and the union, they often become an agency for sowing the seeds of distrust and indifference.

Thus true democracy in our case loses its meaning and purpose. In theory our members have every democratic right, but in practice "Madam Democracy" pays them a visit once or twice a year, when our members follow her blindfolded, casting ballots into a box, and very frequently casting out true, devoted servants, while casting in incompetent and unfit people. The trouble with Operators' Local No. 1 is an example in point.

Thus true democracy has given place to demagogy, and certain persons who possess more tongue than common sense and upright purpose overwhelm and confuse the people with noisy clamor in the true political style, seeking to attain honor and leadership not through personal worth, experience, ability, integrity, earnestness, but through throwing mud at others. Precisely these methods of appealing to the masses are employed in the political world and they are employed in some of our locals because these locals are so large that it is impossible to employ the personal method, because it is impossible to meet face to face every member separately.

Hence a new problem has arisen among us—leadership—a problem which does not cause anxiety to other unions. With them leaders develop within the ranks. With us it is ever a question of finding a leader for locals of tens of thousands of members—a leader of unfailing qualities, of knowledge and wisdom.
and gifts of speech and diplomacy—qualities that rarely if ever unite in one person.

And these internal problems react on our external problems, on our relations with the employers, and hinder our work of improving conditions.

Our form of organization is inept and undemocratic, too costly in money and energy, hurtful to our interests and thwarting our development, because our locals are too large and unwieldy. If our locals were so organized as not to exceed 500 members, an opportunity might be afforded to them to know every member personally and meet his or her situation. At present our officers are unable to get in touch with all the members to the extent of knowing them personally. Our present business agents and secretaries are officials rather than leaders.

In the great American international unions—the miners, carpenters, painters, bricklayers, machinists, car men, molders—not an instance can be cited of any of their locals numbering tens of thousands of members. Their locals are scattered in all cities and towns of the United States and Canada, but their thousands of members are permeated by the spirit of unity. In our case some of the locals like to parade their local prominence before the world. In their case the prominence belongs to their international which holds the locals together. We attach importance to the outer form of organization; they insist on the inner kernel—the principle of unity in the economic struggle.

In every local of the American unions two important things are never lost sight of. These are the local's obligations to its members and its obligations to the international union. In regard to the first point the local officers bend all their efforts through unity to secure higher pay, shorter hours, a closed shop and the highest degree of union control. As to the second point, the locals feel their obligation of being in financial good standing with their international unions in accordance with the constitution. Locals failing to comply with this rule are characterized as delinquent.

Their locals, however, are free from such painful, mostly personal, problems so vexing to our union and consuming so much of our energy and money. With them it is an unheard-of occurrence to look outside of their ranks for a manager or high officer clever enough to cast a spell over a mass of 10,000 or 20,000 people, win their admiration and respect, inspire them with fear to ensure their individual obedience and unanimous approval of all his actions, and involving the danger that, if he should fail in any of these essential qualities of character, he might demoralize the masses—something which has already happened in our union.

In a small local all the members know each other personally. There, the brotherly sentiment of a personal nature prevails among the members, whether they meet for union business, or whether they meet with their families at a union entertainment. Every local question and every question connected with their international union or with all the other locals is determined by referendum vote, and there the referendum vote is carried out in a more democratic manner than in our big locals.

The International Typographical Union, for instance, wields considerable power over its locals; yet its 50,000 members are ruled by a larger number. This union has about 800 or more locals all over the country. Every local has a president, a secretary and several vice-presidents. So that the 50,000 members are governed by probably 7,000 to 8,000 members in any one year; and even if a thousand local officers remain in office for years a chance is afforded for the inflow of fresh blood and energy in the shape of 6,000 or so new local officers, and thus the rule of the union remains in the hands of the people.

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**LABOR'S FREE LAND.**

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Call no chain strong which holds one rusted link,

Call no land free that holds one fettered slave.

Until the manacled slim wrists of babes
Are loosed to toss in childish sport and glee;

Until the mother bears no burden save
The precious one beneath her heart; until
God's soil is rescued from the clutch of greed,

And given back to labor, let no man

Call this the land of freedom.
There is a distressing lack of information about Russia. Not only is there an absence of knowledge of present events, which is bad enough, but there is a failure to grasp the meaning of those forces the working of which has resulted in the greatest change in modern history.

While Russia was ruled by a Czar our press was reticent about Russia. The Duma, Russia's parliament, had been for years the storm center of the inevitable revolution. The parliamentary battle of the people with their Government, a struggle waged fearlessly and unflinchingly, went unnoticed.

The revolution came as a surprise and looked to the uninitiated as the work of a handful of men. I cannot undertake in the brief space allotted to me to enter into a historical analysis of the causes of the upheaval.

The average newspaper correspondent, no matter how well intentioned, unfamiliar with the language of the country, seeing things that strike the eye only, necessarily limiting his observation to the surface of things, cannot give us an adequate idea of the most significant factors in the remaking of Russia.

That is why some of the slogans of the revolution appear so ultra radical and so impossible. Many fear a return to previous conditions. Such a thought is inconceivable to me.

The autocracy was a mere superstructure. The people never knew the Government except as an oppressor. The Government was never a source of help. It was there to check, to prevent, to obstruct, to postpone. The removal of the old Government did not involve an organic change. A heavy stone was rolled down from the shoulders of a people.

The spiritual as well as the material needs of the people had no connection with the existence of their Government. It was not the case of destroying an institution that permeated every branch of life of the people. It was the cutting away of an unhealthy growth from the body politic.

One should not fear a return of the old regime.

The country is essentially democratic. There is alarm here over the demand for the redistribution of land. To the uninitiated it looks like the old-fashioned agrarian rebellions. It is nothing of the sort. The principle of collective ownership of land is strong in the community life of the people. The village community owns the land in common today. The efforts made since 1905 to introduce private ownership in the village community have proven abortive.

While the theory of collective ownership of land is firmly imbedded in the thought of the people, only twelve per cent. of the land is owned collectively by the people, while eighty-eight per cent. is under individual ownership. Of this eighty-eight per cent, one million square miles (610 million acres) was the property of the Czar and his family. All this of course will go to the people. The property of the church will also go to the people. The problem of endowing the farmer with sufficient land to live on is a practical problem, not a dream of dreamers, but an immediate reform the accomplishment of which is within the reach of the people. Not a theory to be debated, not a new gospel, but a mere application and extension of a principle strong in the lives of those who live by the work of their hands and in the sweat of their brows. Those who still reap the benefits of the old feudal system and who own millions of acres of land may not grasp the importance of it. To them the demands of the Russian peasant may mean bloodshed, violence and all sorts of horrors, but to the student of Russia it means only the next step to be taken in building Russia's future.

The program of the peasantry consists of the two words "land" and "liberty." This was the slogan of the Russian people for more than sixty years.

Russia's peasantry wants access to the land. Their demand is no more revolutionary than the American Homestead Law was revolutionary. The platform will now become a reality. It is only a question of method, of tactics. Russia's sacrifices will have been in vain unless the great masses of the people will gain access to the land.

Take the subject of woman suffrage. A smile goes over the face of the American who reads about the enfranchisement of women in Russia. He cannot get himself to understand how that Slav democracy, only a day old,
seeks to outdo him, to outstrip republican France, to excel old England. How presumptuous, indeed. But there is nothing peculiar about it. The emancipation of woman has been for more than two generations an accomplished fact in that strange land. The Russian woman was probably the first woman in the world to obtain the privilege of attending universities. She was the first to rebel against stifling conventionality. And then her part in the revolutionary movement.

The martyrology of that sad people abounds with the names of women. Out of a batch of seven hundred and seventy political prisoners during three months in one year, one hundred and fifty-eight were women.

The chief of the secret service reported to Alexander II in 1874 that in the most aristocratic families the women were the most dangerous revolutionists. Three of the women mentioned in that report are alive today and are shaping the course of the revolution. Vera Zasulich, Catherine Breshkovskaya and Vera Figner, who has survived twenty years of solitary confinement.

Women marched under convoy to Siberia and ascended the scaffold along-side of men. She did not claim superiority and no one dared to question her equality. The extension of the suffrage is but a recognition of her share in the rejuvenation of a people.

The problem is not so simple when one approaches the industrial situation. Russia's industries are still undeveloped. The efficiency which come from the organization and concentration of capital is unknown. While there is plenty of striving for industrial democracy the necessary preliminary for democracy in industry is absent. There is no foundation upon which to build. The prerequisite of a highly organized capitalistic state is missing, and it will be up to Russia to show whether democracy in industry can be attained by the mere strong desire to be democratic. In any event, the barbarity which accompanied the growth of industry in other countries will be avoided. There will be no exploitation of women, no crushing of children, no suppression of labor organizations, no class legislation by the money bag.

And if anybody had any doubt as to the genuineness of Russian democracy, that doubt should be dispelled by Russia's attitude in the war. Hungry, exhausted and bleeding at every pore, Russia announced her readiness to support her allies. All she asked was the elimination of selfish designs and the proclamation of a higher code of international morality. What a pity that the Allies have not grasped the full import of her plea.

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**Battle Hymn of the Russian Republic**

God, give us strength these days—
Burn us with one desire;
To smother this murderous blaze,
Beat back these flames with fire.

Let us not weaken and fail
Or spend ourselves in a shout;
Let our white passion prevail
Till the terror is driven out.

Give us the power to fling
Ourselves and our fury, employed
To blast and destroy this thing

Lest Life itself be destroyed.

Friends in all lands, arise—
Turn all these fires to shake
Against their refuge of lies;
Force it to crumble and break.

Rise, ere it grow too late
And we have not strength enough.
Sweep it down with our hate!
Trample it with our love!

—Louis Untermeyer.
UNITED MINE WORKERS IN ANNUAL CONVENTION.

On Monday, January 15, the United Mine Workers of America opened its annual convention in Indianapolis. Some 1,500 delegates were reported to have been present representing more than 400,000 members.

There are one or two pending questions, very serious alike for the miners as well as for the organized workers generally, which were reported on and warmly discussed at this convention. One of these was the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of the Hitchman Coal and Coke Company. The Supreme Court has ruled that it is illegal to induce workers of an open shop to join the union, if they have individual contracts with the employer. If permitted to be carried into practice, this decision is pernicious enough to cripple not only the big miners' union but every union in the country.

Another decision against this union is that of a Federal court in Arkansas, awarding employers $200,000 damages alleged to have been sustained by a mine company as a result of a strike. The union had been sued under the Sherman Anti-Trust law, and under its provision the sum awarded is trebled.

A third question is contained in a resolution calling for federal control over the mines as in the case of the railroads.

The decisions of the convention on these points are bound to be in harmony with the opinions of all organized workers. Their strong protest against court decisions, which breathe the spirit of eighteenth century ideas on labor, will be backed by the entire labor movement. For it is indeed a matter concerning the hard-won liberties of organized labor as a whole. No doubt, the American Federation of Labor is considering a plan of action and of advice to the affiliated unions in regard to possible future cases of this kind.

THE NEW YEAR FOR THE RAILROAD WORKERS.

Hardly has the new year had time to tell us a thing or two, when President Wilson issued a proclamation announcing the taking over by the government of the railroads from their private owners. A few days later the President appointed Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo as director general of the railroads.

As a war measure this government ownership is to extend until the dove of peace will appear on this blood-soaked planet. But all thoughtful people and true citizens, except the more interested railroad owners—the biggest shareholders—believe and wish that the national railroads should remain forever the property of the government and eventually be controlled in the interest of the people.

Thus the new year has, in a sense, brought a happy change for the railroad workers. The
workers of all large industries, particularly those toiling in the steel and iron industries, might wish a similar change of employers. The railroad workers are naturally satisfied with the change of ownership. They feel certain that under the new government control, their loyal service to the country and the people will be appreciated at its right value. Their wages and working hours will be regulated in accordance with justice and present circumstances and they will be recognized as the most important element of the railroad service without which the railroads cannot do their work.

As yet in the old year the four railroad brotherhoods had presented demands for higher wages to the previous owners. These demands were turned over to the government. Director General McAdoo has been conferring with the chiefs of the brotherhoods, and the workers' demands at this writing are being sympathetically considered.

ASPIRATIONS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

As has been reported in this column some months ago a strong movement for trade organization and affiliation with the American Federation of Labor prevails among the various federal employees.

Time was when these workers were not permitted to maintain their own organizations; when it was not thought consistent with government service for these workers to belong to unions and, maybe, engage in an occasional strike for improved conditions. Some years ago, however, after a hard struggle, a law was enacted by Congress and approved by the President giving government employees the right to be organized for the protection of their interests, without interference by heads of departments. That law also guaranteed them the right of direct petition to Congress.

It so happens that Postmaster General Burleson does not share the advanced opinions of the present generation and seems to be opposed to unions of government employees. In his annual report the Postmaster General recommends the repeal of the said law. He opposes the effort to secure an increase of wages for workers who have not received an increase in ten years.

In the American Federationist for January President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor observes:

"To deny the right of workers in our largest governmental agency to organize is to make a mockery of our faith in democracy. If autocracy is harmful to the morals of our alien enemies abroad, then let us not introduce a species of it into our largest federal institution by attempting to disfranchise industrially the army of postal workers."

"At a time when governmental activities are being extended into every industry connected with the successful prosecution of the war and thousands of workers are either already in the government service or potentially government employees, it is important that their right to organize and to petition Congress be not interfered with. We can conceive of nothing more harmful to the necessary extension of government control and regulation at this time than the adoption of the Burleson idea by our government in its capacity of an employer."

"The A. F. of L. stands prepared to-day to back up its position of 1905, when it fought for the rights of the government employee. We differ from Mr. Burleson in his view that the anti-union law has operated to build up organizations of employees that are a menace. We fear that the menace lies not in the employees' organizations but in the denial to citizens of fundamental rights."

It will be interesting to watch the action of Congress, if any, on Mr. Burleson's report—whether the recommendation to repeal the law guaranteeing these workers their rights will find favor in these days of democracy and the rights of the people.

THE WORKERS IN THE PACKING TRADES.

As already said in connection with the railway workers, those of other industries would similarly wish to be saved from their subjection to private owners and come under government control. One of these industries employing numerous workers is the meat-packing industry located in Chicago, East St. Louis, Kansas City and Omaha.

Great unrest has been prevailing in the industry for years, and there is no way of allaying it, so long as the employers treat the workers with heartless indifference.

Last month a committee including representatives of twelve international unions, headed by James Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and accompanied by President Samuel Gompers and Secretary Frank Morrison of the American Federation of Labor, called on President Wilson and requested that the federal govern-
ment take over and operate all the packing plants. With President Wilson were Secretary of War Baker and Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson. The committee described in detail the conditions of brutal treatment, low pay and long hours, which, if not speedily remedied, would lead to a general strike in the industry. The employers had repudiated a proposal to settle questions of wages and other labor conditions by mediation and were discharging union men in large numbers. It was evident that they were anxious to provoke a strike and throw the blame on the workers.

The committee assured the President that the government in taking over the industry would find the organized workers willing to give the most loyal and devoted service.

The President listened to the delegation for an hour and forty minutes and said that he would consider the request very carefully, first taking it up with the federal Mediation Commission in the hope of finding a way to allay the unrest.

**BIG LOCAL UNIONS GROWING UP IN THE WEST.**

The American trade unions are not accustomed to big locals of thousands of members, not because of any lack of ability to place such locals on a basis of effective organization, but because a single local of thousands of members cannot continue to be in a healthy democratic condition. It requires unusual powers of leadership, places great responsibility on the leaders and prevents the development of the sense of individual responsibility, which it is desirable that every member of a local should develop, if the local is to realize a high degree of usefulness.

In Seattle, Wash., a condition of affairs has arisen similar to that of the waistmakers and cloakmakers in New York in 1910. Large masses of workers heretofore unorganized have joined the Boilermakers, Iron Ship builders and Helpers' Union, Local No. 104, which now counts 10,000 members.

The local has adopted the plan of dividing the membership in sections to secure democratic action. Each section will have its separate executive board and hold separate meetings. But the local officers—business agents, assistant business agents, financial secretaries and subordinate officers will be the same for the entire local. A general meeting of the local will not be a members' meeting but a meeting of executive board members held every month. The section composing the Helpers consists of 5,000 members. It remains to be seen whether this system will operate beneficially to the union.

**WOMEN'S TRADE UNION LEAGUE HELPING THE NEW WOMEN WORKERS.**

Taking advantage of the alleged shortage of labor, managers and captains of industry engage women workers in men's places in trades hitherto untouched by women. This has given rise to a new form of exploitation of women's labor.

Trade unionists have no objection to women entering the service of the street and other railways, machine factories and similar trades. But they hold it to be a grave injustice to these women to be paid less wages for the same work and to be exploited by the profit-seekers.

To call attention to this condition of affairs the Women's Trade Union League of New York held a conference on January 12 and 13, where this exploitation of women workers was discussed in detail. It was stated that the women on the New York street cars receive 27 cents an hour for presumably a ten hour day, but practically a twelve hour day, as they cannot go home during the two hours they get off in the afternoon and must spend the time in the car barns or other uncongenial places.

The State laws are constantly violated and the hard work, long hours and frequent exposure affects the delicate health of these workers.

In the Chicago packing plants on investigation women were found accepting employment for night work in the plants after working at home in the day time, allowing themselves only one hour of sleep. Frequently these were mothers of children under six years of age.

A representative of the State Industrial Commission attended the conference. Among the speakers at the conference was a representative of the Board of Health, who showed how injurious this kind of work was for the health of women workers.

Resolutions were adopted urging the State Labor Department to take strict measures against employers violating the State laws and calling on the State legislature to protect the rights of these workers, while all labor organizations were called upon to aid the
Women's Trade Union League in its good work.

Miss Fannia M. Cohn, Vice-President of our International, was elected chairman of the Committee on Labor Standards and Legislation.

Declaration Adopted at the Conference.

Facing the dawn of a new day in the world’s history, we the newly enfranchised working women in conference assembled for the maintenance of labor standards, the only organized and articulate expression of the proletarian womanhood of the state, demand that the great army of women workers now in the trenches of industry, shall be guaranteed healthful, safe working conditions and a wage sufficient to meet the cost of living, wholesome surroundings and opportunity for education.

Towards this end we pledge ourselves to use our power of organization and newly won political weapon in behalf of our unorganized sisters of the state, whether in factory, field, office or shop, to help them obtain working conditions that shall guarantee Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

And that we further declare that only through organization of the workers and the solidarity of their class can these conditions be obtained. We call upon them to sink all differences and prejudices of race, creed and nationality and join the ranks of the great organized labor movement—the greatest living force for industrial democracy.

From Washington comes the report that a clearing house for woman labor of the nation has been established under the supervision of William B. Wilson, Secretary for Labor.

HARD CONDITIONS OF WORKERS’ FAMILIES.

Recently Edward L. Keenan, President of the-Philadelphia Central Labor Union, made a statement, supported by statistics, to the National Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board that the head of a family of five must earn more than $4.50 a day to support his family.

Mr. Keenan was the chairman of a committee which investigated the food prices and other expenses now borne by the workers in industry, and has come to the conclusion that the food bill of a family of five under prevailing price schedules could not possibly be figured at less than $12.14 a week.

Including housing, fuel, lighting and other necessary expenses, as well as insurance and doctors’ fees, the figures proved that it would cost a family of five $1,442.80 a year just barely to exist, living from hand to mouth.

GIVE LABOR EQUAL VOICE IN MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIES.

In an address before the Board of Trade of Cambridge, Mass., a short while ago, Roger W. Babson, an eminent statistician of Boston, unfolded the following unique plan for the management of industries in the future.

He advises three directors, one elected by the stockholders, one by the employees and the third by the management of the different departments of the industry. These would select the president and devote their whole time to the duties of directors.

The plan requires unanimous action on the part of the board in all cases, so that all interests would be satisfied with the policies formulated. Where unanimous opinion could not be reached, he would have a court of appeal composed of experts.

The plan of giving labor a voice in the board of directors has been advanced before, but Mr. Babson’s idea would give labor one-third of the board and hold it responsible for labor problems, for furnishing the necessary help and adjusting grievances. Such a plan would be beneficial to all interests involved and the labor member would be able to bring about many useful and beneficial reforms, with a full knowledge of what was being done.

The assurances of a square deal would lift a heavy burden from industry, and would greatly enhance its efficiency. The employees would have a great deal more interest in its success.

This would necessarily mean the complete organization of all employees, so they could select the labor member of the board, who would make a report to them from time to time.

LABOR WOMEN FOR BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

The National Executive Council of the British Labor Party is reported to have submitted a plan to its annual conference held last month in Nottingham, providing that four seats in Parliament be allotted to women to be elected by women’s organizations.

"The newly formed National Parliamentary Representation Committee of the Co-operative Movement," adds the Woolwich Pioneer, "provides two places for women, out of a total of 22 seats. We echo Miss Lewellyn Davies’ appeal for a more generous allocation. A large proportion of co-operators are women, and a vast amount of the educational work is carried out by women.”
The Biggest Local of Our International

By Fannia M. Cohn.

Our Ladies' Waist and Dressmakers' Union, Local No. 25, is a source of inspiration to thousands upon thousands of radical and progressive persons. One need only mention its name to bring enthusiasm to many of its members and active workers in the labor movement. Why is it so; whence this magic? These questions will be asked by those who do not know the history and accomplishments of this local union, uniting some 25,000 men and women, and exercising a profound influence over one of the richest industries in New York City.

But those of us who know the history of this local and have watched its progress from nearby, can account for the position and standing that this biggest local of our International Union occupies in the family of trade union organizations.

When we recollect the numerous struggles which the waistmakers, many of whom are young girls, seemingly in their teens, have fought against an enemy superior economically, possessing political influence and acquired experience; when we recall the past events in connection with the waist and dressmakers of New York, we cannot but be proud of the members of this union, who never laid down their weapons and who never gave up their fight, even after the most crushing defeat. The union withdrew for a while from the battlefield, only to reorganize its army of proletarians for a new vigorous struggle. Every strike the waistmakers declared against their masters was with an iron determination to fight to the last ounce of energy. Suffering, persecution, cold or starvation, could not force them into submission. Their strikes if opposed by the employers never lasted less than the season period, because the loss of a season to a manufacturer means, besides the loss of thousands of dollars, also, what is even worse for him, the loss of his trade. Only then, when the season was over, did the waistmakers give up their strike.

The numerous strikes of the waistmakers had as their main motive the recognition of their union, as a guarantee that promised union conditions of wages and hours would be lived up to; that there would be no discrimina-
would not get away without injury to their business.

But I confess that even this hopeful outlook did not satisfy me entirely. Are the members supposed to stand or fall with the union only while it is threatened from without, or are they attached to their organization as good revolutionary workers all the time? This question occupied my mind while I was discussing the situation with members of Local 25, and I began to doubt whether the members of our locals are properly enlightened and educated to the point of intelligently appreciating the trade union movement and have a proper understanding of the part it plays and will play in the emancipation of the working class. If our sisters and brothers of Local 25, whose revolutionary spirit I do not doubt possessed this appreciation and understanding they would consider it their sacred duty to organize the membership for practical enterprises within the union, on the style of their Unity House, for summer vacations.

When we consider the activities of the Philadelphia Waistmakers' Union, Local 15, with only about 4,000 members, we can readily imagine what Local No. 25 with its 25,000 members can accomplish. A city with such a population keeps up numerous institutions, with many activities and costly enterprises.

Imagine what would happen if the intelligent and more energetic members of Local 25 should come together and earnestly take advantage of their great organization and organize groups for different activities and let every member be free to join any of the groups appealing to him or her, as in the case of Local No. 15 of Philadelphia.

For instance, if Local No. 15, with only 4,000 members could purchase a farm for a summer Unity House that will cost about $20,000, and the funds for this enterprise are being raised by the sale of Unity bonds among the members at $2.00 a piece, there is no reason why the 25,000 members of Local No. 25 should not have a country place but also a cooperative house in the city where a large number of its members would reside. Furthermore, there is no reason why the members of Local No. 25 should not have their own cooperative lunch-room, where they could have fresh and wholesome meals. Nor is it impossible for such a big organization to have their own office building in a modern structure, with a decent assembly room for the members to come together, and also an adjoining library room, with suitable tables and comfortable arm chairs. If the waistmakers of Philadelphia can have these things, there is no reason why Local No. 25 cannot have it.

All these activities afford the members an opportunity to develop their abilities and enterprising spirit, and to learn how to manage their affairs and be responsible for their success. Such responsibilities strengthen character, and impart self-confidence and faith in the power and possibilities of their union.

What the waistmakers need, to my mind, is a better appreciation of the trade union movement. Not knowing its full significance they are apt to undervalue it, but if they would think, as many do, that the trade union is really a big co-operative organization, destined in the near future to take over the industries for their own workers, they would apply themselves to its tasks more seriously. Once realizing this, the waistmakers would feel inspiration and enthusiasm, not only during strikes, but in peaceful times. This would make the union a part of their life.

They all agree that the development of the sub-manufacturing evil in the trade is responsible for the existing dissatisfaction among the members and for their indifference towards the union.

Realizing fully that this evil can be most effectively combatted by spirited organizing work, why then should it make the members indifferent? I would rather expect the members of Local No. 25 to be stirred to the necessity of fighting this evil by a united front, by energetic effort, making it their sacred duty to invade the districts where the sub-manufacturing shops are located and enlighten their sisters and brothers, the victims of the evils, to the necessity of organizing, as they did before the trade was organized. There was a time, and not long ago, when the whole Waistmakers' Union consisted of a few thousand members, and within a short time its membership mounted up to tens of thousands. That was not accomplished by indifference—but rather by determination and self-sacrifice. Therefore I heartily support the effort on the part of the management to start a campaign to organize the unorganized shops. I believe that this will awaken the giant from his slumbers.
Local News and Events

(In this department, which is a regular feature of this journal every month, local life and movement is being reported for the information of our members and readers.)

Compiled By M. D. Danish

LADIES' GARMENT CUTTERS' UNION, LOCAL NO. 10.

Secretary Sam Slemker, writes:

"In giving a report of Local No. 10, I shall confine myself to internal conditions. It is true that we have made some splendid gains without a day's stoppage for the men in our trade, which have netted the cloak, suit, skirt, reefer, raincoat, waist, dress and children's dress cutters a weekly increase of $2.00. We feel, nevertheless, that no single local in the cloak industry has a right to credit itself individually for local improvements in the trade, for it is the combined strength of all the locals in our industry that makes such gains possible.

"The most interesting occurrence in our local recently was the sweeping change at our last elections, held on December 29th, 1917. The results of this election are striking because the new set of men elected to office, represent certain new ideas. This will mean an administration along different lines from the former ones. One may get a fair understanding of the contributory causes which led to this upheaval when a bit of the history of the local has been told.

"We need not go very far back, indeed. Following the demonstration of the waist and dress makers in the early part of 1916, Local No. 10 was subdivided into sections, as follows: Section A, embracing the cloak, suit, skirt, reefer and raincoat cutters; Section B, the waist and dress cutters, and Section C, the miscellaneous trades, which include the children's dress, underwear and wrapper and kimono cutters. Soon after the local was subdivided into sections, a sifting-out process was started in the waist and dress division. The apprentices, assistants and mechanics were classified according to the number of years they had been in the trade and according to the amount of experience and knowledge of the trade they had. From time to time apprentices and assistants were called before an examination committee, and if they passed the test, their employer was notified that they were raised to a higher grade accordingly, and were entitled to a corresponding increase in wages. This system has been working very well, and the results are that while, when the branch was first organized, there were more assistants than mechanics in the trade, the opposite is true at present. Assistants are gradually being raised to the grade of mechanics.

"The cloak division, however, has no such system. In this section each man must receive the mechanic's scale of wages, whether or not he measures up fully to the test. Of course, it is demanded that he be in the trade a certain length of time, but many assistants were able to enter the union before the system of examination was put into effect, and even at present, with the system of examinations in operation, business agents are unearthling delinquents, who, because of their lack of full experience, are not paid the regular scale. For, while one may be able to pass the examination which the union requires him to take, he will not command the regular scale unless he has the amount of experience required in the cutting rooms. If the cloak division were to adopt the graduating scale prevalent in the other sections, many of these cutters at present working below the scale, would be raised to the grade of mechanics by the same process and with the same results as in the waist and dress section.

"Another cause which led to the revulsion of feeling among the cutters, and the subsequent change in administration, was the problem of the sub-manufacturers. This evil has been growing since 1910 to large proportions, and at present the cutters are displaying keen dissatisfaction with it. Many suggestions and remedies were offered as to how cutters may be put to work in these little shops where many of these so-called employers are doing their own cutting, yet none of these suggestions has so far managed to do away with
this evil. Day work as a trial has been suggested to cope with this problem, and, while not absolutely an ideal solution, since no other check was put upon the growth of this evil, it would do no harm to try it. But this proposition is being attacked on the ground that it legalizes scabbing; the same charge could be made against the waist and dress branch for permitting the inexperienced cutters to work for lower wages than the mechanics receive.

"These and many other questions prepared the ground for the change, which was rather more of a change of ideas than of men." In other words, those who attempted to espouse ideas that were applicable to conditions of ten years ago, lost out.

"A few words as to our membership. Our local is perhaps the best disciplined one in the International. It has a large, good standing membership. It is different from the rest of the locals in this city because it is composed of either Americanized or native born men. That is why the clash of ideas in our local is more like the clash that is taking place today in the ranks of the American Federation of Labor. We are an American trade union, and the changes which the American labor movement is undergoing at present arc reflected in our local."

PHILADELPHIA CLOAKMAKERS, LOCALS NOS. 2, 53 AND 69.

Brother A. Neubauer, Secretary of Local No. 2, writes:

Very few cloaks have been made in Philadelphia during the last few months, and consequently we have little to report about the cloak trade. On the other hand, our unions faced a very difficult problem during that period, and thanks to the able leadership of our manager, Brother Amdur, the question was satisfactorily solved. I am referring here to the shops where military garments are being made. When this work first began our members came to us with complaints that they were earning little, even though the work was very difficult and the hours long. We made several appeals to Washington, but received no satisfaction and decided to take our own measures to relieve the situation. The great difficulty was that these shops were full of workers of various trades and nationalities. Apart from that, our friends, the men's clothing workers, were claiming that these shops belonged to their jurisdiction, even though the majority of the workers in the shops were cloakmakers. At first they attempted to have our members join their locals and pay dues to them. In order to avoid a fight, we decided to work jointly with them, and then succeeded in coming to a full understanding that the members of the respective unions should pay dues to their own organizations and a joint committee was formed to do organization work in this field.

"This organization work is bringing good results. We are calling shop meetings and have asked raises from the employers, and in most cases difficulties are settled in a few days. Being desirous to avoid stoppages, the manufacturers have increased the prices on the work and at present the workers are earning a living on these garments. "We hope to be able to organize the entire trade in a short while.

"As regards the cloak trade, we can say that work is already beginning to come into the shops, and we arc doing our best to keep our members on guard in reference to proper price settlements. Our workers understand the situation very well and are settling prices on a proper basis. There are difficulties, as many employers try to forget that the dollar of today is worth only forty cents, as compared with prices of a couple of years ago. We have, however, made it clear to these employers that we mean business, and a few shop strikes have convinced them of the earnestness of our purpose.

"We have just completed elections for officers in our locals. All the old officers were re-elected, with but a few exceptions. Our members being employed in various other trades, did not display very great interest in these elections. This is an old evil in all our unions, even where the workers are not as scattered as the members of our locals are here in Philadelphia."

BOSTON CLOAKMAKERS' UNION, LOCALS NOS. 12, 24, 56 AND 73.

Brother H. Hurwitz, manager, reports:

"I have touched in my last report on a certain condition in the Boston cloak trade which was threatening to become a real danger to the union and to the workers. I am referring to the decision of some of our manufacturers to close down their shops and to give up their business.

"The employers, however, had only closed down the shops during the slack time and as
soon as the season approached they again opened them.

"The situation is that not only are there fewer shops in the trade, but we have a few new ones that opened quite unexpectedly. Samples are being made everywhere; in some shops prices are being settled and in others work has already begun. The workers employed during the slack time in various trades, particularly in munition shops, are beginning to return to the cloak shops, and the trade is again assuming its normal run. All during this time the workers have not neglected their duty to the union and have been paying their dues regularly. They have thus clearly proved that they understand the purpose of having an organization.

"On January 14th we had a general meeting of all the workers in the trade and discussed present conditions and plans for the future. In order to be able to exert a better control over the small shops, the Joint Board appointed, an additional business agent who will take charge of these shops and will see that union conditions are fully observed there.

"Finally, I wish to express my hope that the convention of our International will be held in Boston the coming May. This is the sincere wish of all the members of the Boston locals, who have demonstrated this by voting unanimously for Boston. We are awaiting with impatience the result of the referendum vote."

CHICAGO CLOAK MAKERS' UNIONS, LOCALS NO. 44, 18 AND 81.

Vice-President Hyman Schoolman, Secretary of the Chicago Joint Board, reports as follows:

"Ordinarily, the prices on most of the garments in the majority of our shops are being settled by the shop price committees. Only in cases where the workers can not agree with the employers the price adjuster is called in to have the final say in the matter. It often happens that the workers are not fully satisfied with the judgment of the price adjuster, notwithstanding the fact that in some cases many garments settled by price committees themselves are settled at lower rates than by the price adjuster. But, of course, our people are not inclined to put the blame on themselves in such cases. I do not maintain that the price adjusting system, as it exists to-day, is entirely satisfactory. It would be far from the truth, and we should like to change it just as

"In Chicago, as well as in all other big and small Jewish centres, a strong campaign has been inaugurated to raise a substantial sum of money for the war sufferers, and here, as well as everywhere, the workers are taking a great interest in this movement. Each union of Jewish workers in this city has undertaken to do everything within its power for this fund. The cloakmakers' locals of this city have adopted a resolution which in substance is similar to the resolution adopted by our brothers in New York City. But we have designated February 12th, Lincoln's Birthday, which is a legal holiday in Illinois, as the Relief Day. We expect that this day will bring us about $10,000.

"Chicago is lying under heaps of snow these days, and as we walk along the streets we feel as if we were passing through trenches dug out for a passage way in the streets of the "windy" city. All the schools in the city have been closed for a week, and the young folks have been busily engaged in clearing away the snow. The sight of thousands of youngsters shovelling snow with zeal and enthusiasm is rather cheering. Indeed, the work of these kids has made possible the proper distribution of milk, coal and other necessities in snow-bound Chicago.

"Our Joint Board has sent out a circular to all the locals of the International all over the country, asking them to vote for Chicago as the next convention city. How this request will be complied with remains to be seen. We, however, hope for the best and are willing to guarantee the membership of the International that by May there will be no sign of snow left in Chicago to impede the progress of the convention of the International Union."

CINCINNATI CLOAKMAKERS, LOCALS NOS. 63, 30 AND 98.

Vice-President Meyer Perlstein reports as follows:

"I came to Cincinnati at the end of September. The shops, after the strike here in the early part of 1917, when agreements had been entered into with all the manufacturers, except four, were completely organized and better conditions established. I found the situation quite satisfactory. The several hundred members of the Cincinnati locals were paying their dues regularly and attending meetings. There was, however, a noticeable lack of "life and spirit" within the organization. The meetings of the union, which are in the smaller towns the very basis of the organization, were considerably neglected by the
men and women members alike. Quite naturally, this indifference became noticeable in the shops. The principal reason for this apathy was the fact that soon after the general strike the organization was placed under the management of a person who had never held a responsible position and who let matters drift along.

"I first of all put through a rule that any member failing to attend two consecutive meetings during a month would be fined 50c. This had its effect. At the beginning we had considerable difficulty in collecting these fines. Gradually, however, the members became tired of paying fines and started to attend the meetings. The majority of the members here are women, among them a number of Gentiles, and we have gradually broken them into the habit of coming to local and shop meetings.

"The agreement made with the manufacturers last March is for two years. However, owing to abnormal conditions, we were forced to demand a raise in wages for our piece and week workers. We asked a 10 per cent, increase for certain week workers, among whom were cutters, trimmers and all the women workers. One prominent local manufacturer came out with a personal attack on me, stating that during the last general strike the union promised him a number of things which it did not carry out. We got in touch with the workers of the shop immediately and soon settled the matter to the perfect satisfaction of the union, and the week workers in that shop received the demanded raise. The piece workers, operators and pressers, also received raises in all the shops, as the price committees were instructed to settle prices 10 per cent, higher than last season. We expect to get a raise for the week workers in all other shops without much trouble. The sample and duplicate makers will also receive higher prices during the coming season.

"The operators and pressers pay 25c a week dues in Cincinnati, 5c of which is being put away for the sick benefit fund. The cutters have been paying 20c a week and the women 15c. The dues are hardly enough to cover the most necessary expenses and it is almost impossible to save a cent for a reserve treasury. We began an agitation for higher dues, and having convinced the Joint Board of the necessity of this measure, we called a mass-meeting of all the members and adopted a decision to raise the dues for all men and women 5c per week. Beginning February, the pressers and the cloak operators will pay 30c a week; the cutters will pay 25c and the women members will pay 20c a week.

"The cloakmakers, like all other workers, have been accustomed to spend their idle hours at headquarters in playing games. I did away with that the very first day I came to the office, and I have started to interest the cloakmakers in useful and more enlightening work. We have taken part in the People's Relief Committee, in the local co-operative movement and even in the Poalei Zion organization. In order to put a little more life into the organization we decided to publish a weekly newspaper in Yiddish, the "Cincinnati Arbeiter," and have secured enough advertisements to cover its expenses for the first few issues. In order to make its existence secure, we are going to incorporate a publishing society, together with the aid of a number of other local organizations, and we expect to be able to have a live local organ for our organized workers in Cincinnati. Only those who have lived here for a considerable length of time can appreciate the importance of a weekly of that kind for our Cincinnati people.

"We are doing our best to organize the few shops that are not yet within the fold of the union, and we have just recently organized a small raincoat shop, the only one in this town."

ST. LOUIS CLOAKMAKERS, LOCALS NOS. 78 AND 16.

Organizer Ben Gilbert, reports:

"The dull season is over and the advent of the spring work has brought along with it the old price wranglings in the shops. We had to make stoppages in every shop before we could settle prices that would enable us to meet the high cost of living. In some shops the union had to call strikes even after the prices were settled, as we have learned that some underhand work had been used in connection with these settlements, and after such strikes re-settlements were made to the satisfaction of the workers. We are having some trouble with the so-called "family" shops. There are quite a number of shops in St. Louis where members of the employer's family are working. When the time for settling prices comes around, these relatives settle up between themselves the prices in such manner that it is next to the impossible to make a living in that shop any longer. We have employed every effort to weed this evil out, and it looks as if it is becoming gradually a matter of the past."
"We had a very successful general meeting here lately, at which we discussed some demands to our employers. We also had a shop chairmen's meeting at which instructions were adopted that each shop chairman is obliged to see to it that all the workers in his shop are in good standing with the union. The news that President Schlesinger was to visit us here during January was very enthusiastically received by all the cloakmakers."

TORONTO CLOAKMAKERS, LOCALS NOS. 14, 70, 83 AND 92.

Vice-President Koldofsky reports as follows:

"The Toronto cloakmakers have just passed through a long and trying period of unemployment. We scarcely had any winter season at all. During the last few months a number of shops have been closed, and no one is able to say with any certainty what the coming spring season will do for us. The general economic conditions here are just as uncertain, and our workers are in constant fear of the day after; we are contented to have bread, coal and sugar and think very little of nicer clothes. Everyone is trying to get along with last year's garments, especially as new clothes are unusually expensive.

"Besides, it is very hard to get piece goods for the garments. The importations from England of piece goods were cut off long ago, and the only remaining source for the importation of garment materials—the United States—has been recently barred to Canada. The embargo placed by the United States on all materials containing wool has curtailed our manufacturing in Canada to a great extent. We have not enough mills in Canada, and most of those we have are being used for supplying military garments. Another point is that the embargo does not extend to ready-made clothes from the United States. These garments are permitted to have bread, coal and sugar and think very little of nicer clothes. Everyone is trying to get along with last year's garments, especially as new clothes are unusually expensive.

"Of course, unemployment affects employers as well. The employers, at any rate, manage to make profits from whatever orders they have; the workers cannot do that. Less work means less bread, less coal and other living necessities, and it affects the conditions in the shops. Unemployment has given the employers an additional whip in their hands. Knowing that they are not so dependent on their
new elected officers were installed at a general members' meeting by myself. On Sunday, January 13th, three shop chairman, Brothers Abe Weiss, Charles Shatz and H. Konikoff, were presented with gold watch fobs for their devoted activity to the best interests of the workers in their shops."

MONTREAL CLOAKMAKERS, LOCALS NOS. 13, 19 AND 67.
Organizer S. Labensohn, writes:
"As you know, after the strike our employers changed their tactics. Although they considered themselves victors, they did not display the strong hand toward the workers. They showed a "friendly" attitude, and the effect was that some of the cloakmakers soon became apathetic toward the union. The fall season was a very poor one; the earnings in the shops were very small, and this affected the income of the union considerably.

"Small wonder, therefore, that now after the long slack season, only about 50 per cent. of the workers in the local trade are in good standing with the union. The employers are conducting a relentless fight against the organization, and have introduced a "black list" system in all the shops. Men are accepted to work only when they can produce a satisfactory account of their past behavior and a promise that they will behave like good fellows in the future. Some of them are even refusing to settle prices with shop committees.

"These are the black sides of the local situation. There are, however, a number of bright spots, which give us hope that the situation will soon improve. On all sides people begin to feel that it does not pay to stay away from the union. We get committees daily from all shops asking for assistance and advice and begging for shop meetings. We are taking advantage of this reawakened interest, and are confident that by concerted effort we shall succeed in solidifying the ranks of the Montreal cloakmakers into a strong union."

BRIDGEPORT CORSET WORKERS' UNION, LOCALS NOS. 33 AND 34.
Mrs. Mary G. Pepper, Secretary, writes:
"Following the custom here in our trade, the factories closed down during the holiday season, but have now started again and we expect plenty of work, for a little while at least.

"I reported a short while ago that during the dull times in the corset trade, many of our girls went to work in munition factories. As expected, they have returned now, and have again taken up their work for the union. Many of our members who have in the recent past been inactive and indifferent to the organization, have again come to the front and are doing their bit to keep up that which they have gained through our organization. Although some of our members may be inactive for a while, yet, just as soon as they realize that their inactivity hurts the organization, they awaken and become loyal and more active than ever.

"We had a very fine entertainment here on December 14th. Local No. 40 of the Polishers and Buffers Union joined us. We had very fine talent, dancing and refreshments, all of which was free, and all were satisfied and admitted that it was the best affair ever held by either local. Miss Mary Scully was with us on that evening and gave us a very fine talk.

"The election of officers for Local No. 38, held on December 21st, resulted in the following choice: President, Carrie Hamborg; Vice-President, Sarah Bright; Secretary-Treasurer, Mary (Gould) Pepper; Guard, Emma Nagle—all re-elected—and Mary Chase, Recording Secretary and Nora Iles, Sergeant-at-Arms, newly elected.

"We have decided to change our place and also date of meetings, from every Friday, to the first and third Fridays of the month, as we feel it too great a strain on the officers to meet every week.

"In the Warner Brothers factory preparations are being made to start work on leggings and belts for the soldiers. This gives us all the more reason for keeping a watchful eye on our organization. The members of the Corset Workers’ Union wish all the members of the International a prosperous and happy year."

CHICAGO WAIST, SKIRT AND WHITE GOODS WORKERS' UNION, LOCAL NO. 100.
Brother H. Rosen, Secretary, writes:
"Of course, you are interested in our Local No. 100, which passed through such a difficult general strike eleven months ago, which called forth the admiration of the workers of the entire country. I can say with pride that even though that strike was officially called off, it has brought us many gains. To begin with, we have a solid, strong local with a permanent influence on the trade in our city.
Secondly, we are dictating the working conditions in the shops of Chicago. The larger manufacturers, fearing a second strike, are paying their workers good wages, which are in certain instances twice as high as a year ago. The hours have been reduced to forty-nine and fifty, with the exception of only a few shops. The workers in the shops, particularly the Jewish workers, understand very well that if it were not for the union they would still have been working fifty-two and fifty-four hours a week for miserable wages. Only recently we circulated a leaflet in the shops which worked like magic. The men and women of the trade are coming to the union in large groups, and committees from shops are requesting us to organize them. Even the English-speaking workers are beginning to feel the importance of the union and are receiving our committees in a friendly manner.

NEW YORK CUSTOM DRESSMAKERS UNION, LOCAL NO. 90.

Brother A. Ellner, manager, writes:

“At this writing Local No. 90 is making preparations to celebrate its first anniversary, with a concert and ball, on Saturday, January 19th. We have invited all our sister locals of the International to this affair and the general officers of our union. Socialist Judge Pankcn has promised to deliver a greetings oration to our girls. The local has spared no trouble to make this evening a memorable one for the members of our organization.

“We are not celebrating any particular event in our trade or in our union. The trade and the workers have not had such a long period of idleness within our memory as this year. Two days' work a week is about all that our members have managed to get during the last four months. This has interfered a great deal with our organization plans.

“We have recently organized our best forces and got together a big organization committee of the most active members, and as soon as work will begin in the stores and shops, we will get on the job without much delay. A very good and long season is expected in the trade now. In spite of the crisis that we have passed through, our members have sufficient cause to be happy with the results which this local has accomplished during the first year of its existence.

“The members of this local were organized as a branch of Local No. 25 some seven years ago, and as part of the extinct ladies' tailors local, No. 65. Local No. 25, however, paid little attention to this branch, and consequently the membership dwindled down from year to year. All of us were rather pessimistic concerning the future, and no one ever believed that we would be able to have a local of our own.

“The greatest drawback in our ranks was our members' indifference. This was because they had no say regarding the administration of the union. Now our members feel at home in their own local, which has grown to be strong.

“During this year our local has quietly won a number of demands from the employers. We have gained a forty-nine hours week, an additional legal holiday and a considerable increase in wages. The workers are being respected in the shops and their complaints are being listened to and attended to in time. All this entitles us to be satisfied with the results of the first year of our existence.

“We have decided to work on February 22nd and to give up that day’s wages for the International Relief Campaign, even though Washington's Birthday is not a holiday in our trade.

“Our members are well represented in the educational courses of the International, and they know how to appreciate this good work undertaken by our union.

“Beginning March 1st, 1918, our dues will be 2¢ a week higher than at present.”

MANY STRIKES AVERTED.

Mediation by the federal department of labor has averted strikes that would involve thousands of men engaged in war work, according to a report covering the last three months. During this period the department's good offices were invoked in 244 cases, including 117 strikes, 104 controversies and 23 lockouts. Mediators settled 138 amicably and failed to settle only 6. Local agencies adjusted 18 cases. The total number of workers directly involved in the disputes of three months was 130,070, while 251,706 more were affected indirectly.

Collective bargaining is now considered a matter of course by many and will soon receive universal approval, thanks to organized labor's persistency.—Ex.
Comment on Trade Gossip
From the Yiddish Edition of the Ladies' Garment Worker
By a Correspondent.

THERE WILL BE A GOOD YEAR— FOR WHOM?

As the new year started on its career the leading spirits of the ladies' garment industries wished themselves and each other a prosperous year, as is the custom. These wishes were, however, coupled with the prediction that the year 1918 will be a prosperous business year for all branches of our industry, provided the manufacturers will use sound business sense and keep up a calm, cool disposition in mapping out their plans for the season. It was pointed out that conditions are unfavorable, and yet, in a large sense, also favorable.

The unfavorable conditions are due to the element of uncertainty that the war imparts to the ladies' garment industries. The lack of certain materials causes anxiety to many manufacturers. Others, treading the old paths unable to adapt themselves to a changed situation. Some manufacturers still have the ancient employers' psychology, hanging on to notions that are fast disappearing, and never advancing a step, unless they are forced to do so.

But the leading spirits also stress a point which is truly favorable for good seasons; namely: Women are now earning higher wages, and when women have money they "just love to" dress stylishly and in brand new clothes. Consequently we shall have a busy season in all branches of the women's garment industry.

The last fall season was the first since our country entered the war. Naturally the season was not as good as it might have been. Imagination carries human minds beyond ordinary limits, and the registration of husbands, brothers and betrothed in the first military draft caused widespread alarm among wives, sisters, brides, friends and relations. Everyone thought that she would be deprived of her nearest. Under such a cloud of dread the most stylish women will not think of dress as of the first importance.

Then as it became known who was and who was not liable to military draft, the all-absorbing habit of knitting set in. Most people, women in particular, are not so many-sided as to engage in knitting and attending to personal attire at the same time. One thought dispels the other. Gradually, however, dread and uncertainty is disappearing. The women will get tired of knitting by hand articles that can be done as well or even better by factory and machine. The style instinct has already revived, as in all the warring countries. Frequent reports refer to the fact that the women of France and England have never dressed more gaily and stylishly than in 1917. This also partly explains why, soon after the first year of war had passed, a great demand arose for cloakmakers and ladies' tailors in those countries, and high wages have been the rule ever since.

Thus the hope of the manufacturers that 1918 will be a banner year is seemingly well-founded. The question is, however: Will the year 1918 discriminate in favor of one party as against the other, play fair for the employers and foul for the workers, as in the last few seasons? The answer depends on the workers. If 1918 is to be a prosperous year for our industries a sound and solid organization of all the workers united in a bond of solidarity will succeed in securing for them their fair share.

IS THE SPRING SEASON ALREADY IN FULL SWING?

It seems certain that the beginning of February will find the spring season fairly begun. If trade reports are not exaggerated the season set in earlier than usual, while some of the manufacturers were scarcely prepared to meet increasing demands. Last month many buyers were said to have complained that manufacturers had no merchandise to deliver and some had even few for exhibition in their show rooms.

The year 1918 has opened with a different outlook upon the world than all previous years. Nature, time and circumstances have, as it seems, combined to teach the people of
our country something which they had refused to consider in peaceful times. Our country is in the world war, and in the grip of the high cost of living. In addition, nature—unthinking, unmerciful nature—is breathing defiance, sending us unusually trying weather conditions. So we are shivering with cold, unable to obtain a proper supply of coal. Our prospects for the near future are marred by the means of transportation being ice-bound and held up by snow storms. Then come orders from higher up to shut down the industries on certain days of the week. This will add starvation to shivers. Clearly, we seem to be going from bad to worse.

One drop of sweet is contained in the bunch of bitter experiences, namely, the taking over of the railroads by the federal government. Of course, so far we have not tasted the sweet. If the railroads could be compared to a fruit-yielding orchard, then, the orchard has only just changed hands, but the fruit has yet to grow and ripen. Yet if it was not for the bitter experience the nation would not have realized that railroad service under private ownership was inefficient though very costly. The new government control has for us a great significance, because it is the beginning of government control over industry. It is not Socialism because Socialism means control by the people for the benefit of the people, but it is at any rate a step in that direction.

The previous owners of the roads have left the system in a bad condition. For more than a year the freight trains have been congested. A business sinks when its methods cannot be relied on. The railroads, most of them, had been in that state before war was declared by the United States. Since then the system of transportation has become worse confounded, and we are freezing in New York, not because of a shortage of coal but because the railroads were not managed with sufficient wisdom, energy and devotion to the peoples' interest.

Until transportation will be reduced to greater order the buyers and store keepers fear that failing to order their supply of garments on time delivery will be delayed. It is this which is said to have brought many buyers to the city a month in advance of time, and they are reported to be buying largely. They believe that the economy craze among women has subsided and that they have been robbed of the war-dread. Most of them are earning good wages and there is a great demand for ladies' garments.

IS PHILADELPHIA SHORT OF WAISTMAKERS?

The last season in the waist and dress industry was a very poor one for the workers. But long before the manufacturers of Philadelphia thought of good future seasons they had already become anxious as to their future supply of labor, and they seek to encourage the training of new workers. This apparently not so much because of actual need as because employers generally seem to believe that if the supply of labor is greater than the demand, wages may be forced down and the union weakened.

In Philadelphia the waist manufacturers want to take time by the forelock and provide for the future. One of the reasons for their undue anxiety is the belief that when peace comes many girls will return home to families and friends and they, the employers, will remain without "hands" and shorn of profits.

There was in Philadelphia a small private school founded by women social workers, where young girls were taught needle work. The Waist Manufacturers' Association urged the Board of Education of that city to take over this school and manage it as part of its system of public education. The Philadelphia Board of Education has agreed to the plan and will teach girls dressmaking on a large scale.

One of the problems of the Waist and Dressmakers' Union, Local No. 25, is the fact that some 5,000 to 6,000 workers are annually leaving the trade and are replaced by newcomers. So that trade schools in themselves are perhaps useful institutions. The question is, however, what means does Local No. 25 employ to turn these new waistmakers into true union girls? Another question: Can the local do this effectively under the present circumstances, when it must rely on the shop chairladies (most loyal souls, indeed) to guard the union hearts of the waist and dressmakers? The union, that is, the office, having to supervise some 20,000 members, can only have a sort of official control—receiving the dues, keeping track of the membership roll, attending to complaints—and only in a very limited way guard the hearts or control the human side of the membership. In this connection the question raised elsewhere in this issue of
the Ladies' Garment Worker as to the unwieldy size of our big locals is very much to the point.

WHO IS TO BLAME—RETAILERS OR MANUFACTURERS?

In certain circles of the garment industry the following question is occupying serious attention: Who is to blame for the high prices? Or in other words: Who are they that fleece and skin the consumers; who are they that make the bigger profits—the department stores or the manufacturers?

The question has arisen in view of the expectation that sooner or later there will have to be government control of prices. (It is high time already.) So the department store managers try to shift the blame on to the shoulders of the manufacturers. The department stores, they claim, are quite innocent and above board in the matter; they are on the level with all their customers. It is the manufacturers who are the guilty parties.

The latter pay high salaries and reap inordinate profits, so that the manufacturers should be controlled. The manufacturers on their part would retort pointing the finger of guilt at the department stores.

Let the investigators and students of this problem consult us—the working class consumers. We should say: Seize them both! They are both guilty. No one knows so well where the shoe pinches in this matter as the workers. Both the above-said parties live on the fat of the land in the shape of profits, and excess profits, while the workers just manage to exist. First a big slice is taken off our wages before they reach us, in employers' profits. Then several slices are cut off by an army of skinners. The surprising thing is: They who propound this question—are they really so ignorant or are they trying to drag a dead herring across the path of truth?

But the matter of spending our wages is really up to our sisters and brothers in the unions. Of late the question of cooperation and co-operative undertaking has come to the front again. Why should not working people learn to derive a little fair profit, not from other peoples' toil, but from their own wages? Why should they freely and thoughtlessly and often recklessly allow others to cut slices off their wages—why?

INTRODUCTION OF WOMEN TO KEEP WAGES LOW.

The Seattle Union Record says:

Now is the time for women to show that they really have a capacity for thinking and reasoning. Employers at this time are prone to work upon the feelings of the more emotional sex, and by appealing to their patriotism, which has risen to the point of hysteria in many cases, are endeavoring to induce them to enter into fields of labor which are wholly unsuited to them and utterly beyond their power to properly occupy. For all that is necessary to do is to look about and see for oneself the number of unemployed men who are willing and able to take any kind of work offered them. Women should bring their reasoning faculties to bear on this question and learn to think for themselves calmly, and they should not be satisfied with a superficial survey of existing conditions, but should investigate carefully all matters pertaining to this question. For instance, take the street railway employees. These men would most undoubtedly prefer to retain their positions with the street railway company than to break into an entirely different line of work from that to which they had so long been accustomed. Let us look into this and find out why so many of them are going to the shipyards.

Many of those men are married and have families, while the salaries they have been receiving have been inadequate for the needs of a single man, that is if he wants to live like a human being, and just because a man or woman works it does not follow that they should be satisfied to live like cattle. So, looked at from this angle, it is plain that there is in reality no shortage of men, but rather a shortsightedness and lack of principle on the part of the employers in most cases.

This is mainly a move on their part to make it impossible for workers to secure a legitimate wage which would correspond in some degree with the increased cost of living. And there is no reason why women should take the place of men in work for which they are unfitted. The workers should stand together, whether they belong to a union or not, as long as capital is so firmly and formidably arrayed against them. War has nothing whatever to do with patriotism.
What Is the Human Cost System?

No one knows what wages ought to be. We gently venture to suggest: about $40 a week as a minimum. We admit that we have no scientific basis for this figure—it is only our guess. But we believe it a good guess, and are willing to let it stand until figures are offered to prove it too low.

The trouble is that the cost system has not yet reached human life. We are getting close to estimating the cost of producing a ton of steel or a loaf of bread, but none has yet ventured into the field of humanity. How much does it cost to produce human labor?

All that the average man ever thinks of the wage problem is that some labor union or other is disturbing the peace by trying to get higher wages for its members. He wishes they would find some way to stop this endless agitation so that business could settle down. It may be that even the wage that the workers are asking for is inadequate to support human life; he doesn't know; he has no means of knowing. Various commissions, and boards, and departments and bureaus in the Service of state and nation have delved into every other cost but this. On the question of human life he has no data. He has only the opinions of the press, the platform and the pulpit, almost all of these being controlled by economic interests diametrically opposed to his ever finding out the truth. They are purchasers of labor power; it is to their interests to hold down the price they buy; if it is below the cost of production, it is no concern of the purchaser.

This used to be the attitude of all business, but of late years there has been a tendency to learn the truth, a movement recently given impetus through official recognition by the Federal Trade Commission, headed by the far-seeing Edward N. Hurley. The government has accepted the principle of cost-plus-ten-percent on munitions and supplies contracts. It is good as far as it goes, and now it needs but one step more—to give to labor power the same compensation. We must insist upon cost— even without the extra ten per cent profit.

What is the cost of labor power? The human machine should have the same consideration as a mechanism of steel and brass. The cost of the raw material, of erection, of installing, of maintenance and of depreciation, which is duplication—all these are figured in the case of a machine; why not in the case of a human being?

Consider the average worker. He is supposed to be married, and have at least three children. And he lives up to the supposition. Now he must feed and clothe himself, wife, and the three children. This for himself and wife is the cost of maintenance, for the children it is the cost of erecting and installing them as workers to take his place when he is scrapped.

The cost of maintenance, then, is the food, clothing and shelter for himself and wife. The cost of preparing their children to take part in the machinery of industry is the cost of their food, clothing, and shelter, and of their education and development, mental and physical. For himself and wife there must also be the deduction for the days of non-production—in the form of their own savings, or the payments toward an old age pension or endowment insurance. It is reasonable to assume that these added costs will total, at present prices, $40 per week. The only sources in the family through which this can come, at least during the days that the children's early childhood, is through the husband and father, the wage earner.

And this must come, in sickness or in health, in idleness or work—or something sufferers. If the cost is $40, and through whatever causes, he can work but 40 hours a week, then the cost to him of producing his labor is $1 an hour. But if he can work but 20 hours, the cost is $2 per hour. There is no paternalistic government to tell him to produce his cost sheets, and pay him all these costs, plus ten per cent! He must sell it for the best price it will bring him in the open market. And the same thing happens with the worker that has happened with business and manufacture under unrestricted competition—95 per cent fail! They fail in that they cannot get the cost price for the labor they have to sell, and they go into financial, physical and spiritual bankruptcy. Some of them get
into the poorhouses, some of them into asylums, some into the gutter. And the best the most of them get is to live the dreary, painwrecked days of their old age among their children—children already overburdened with the living cost of themselves and their own children.

Society will never be safe and sane until it recognizes these costs of producing human labor—the most vital contributing factor to all our processes of production and distribution. Society may continue for a while to stand for profit in industry, but self-preservation will demand the ultimate recognition of labor power to at least the actual cost of its own production. Until then, the least that we can do is to cease to grumble when a labor union tries to get a few cents more an hour for its members.

Note by the Editor—The above article was sent us by Walter B. Hilton, editor of the "Wheeling Majority," with a request for a comment. While we consider it interesting and suggestive we hold that it does not go far enough.

Our view of the entire matter of labor and wages is that profits from production are unjust and should be entirely eliminated. The laborer is not only worthy of his hire but worthy as a matter of right and morality and honesty of all the fruit of his labor.

We believe the time is not far distant when society and industry and life will be ordered and regulated on this principle. The war is leading up to it, and even such captains of industry as Mr. Schwab are beginning to see this time approaching.

If the war should last much longer there will be starvation everywhere. Food and other necessaries will grow scarce and mount in price, while money will continue to fall in value.

Even now, wise and far-seeing men recognize the indispensable factor of labor. Only labor can save the world now and in the years to come.

The trouble is that all laboring men and women do not see this yet. But they are waking up, and it is the duty of all leaders of opinion in the labor movement to keep hammering away at this truth, so as to prepare working men and women for the great part they are destined to play in the coming social and industrial reorganization.

A WORD REGARDING OUR EDUCATIONAL BOARD

By the Editor.

In the December issue of the Ladies' Garment Worker a lengthy editorial appeared on the Educational Institute, then about to be opened by our International Union. The Institute opened early in January, and it is now possible to give one or two details about its work and progress.

Considering that it is a first effort at something not before attempted in our union, except locally, the progress of the undertaking is naturally slow. Perhaps it is right that it should be slow, for thus it can be made more sure and permanent. The membership of our International in New York and Brooklyn is somewhere around 75,000, and if 10,000 or 15,000 out of this number were to be fired with the ardent desire to get the benefit of the higher sort of education now given in these classes, the system, which needs careful handling and improving as it goes on, would probably break down. The active workers of the Educational Committee—Miss Joliet Stewart Poyntz, Fannie M. Cohn and Elias M. Lieberman—could not in the present exceptional circumstances find so many lecturers and halls to accommodate several thousand pupils.

The exceptional severity of weather conditions and the scarcity of coal has already compelled the committee to move its main center from the Washington Irving High School to the Twenty-Third Street public library.

I attended one or two lectures and found that, notwithstanding certain drawbacks inevitable in every beginning of a new enterprise, on the whole the effort of the teachers to benefit the pupils is the best possible, and the spirit of enthusiasm of the pupils attending the classes is the most hopeful, having regard to the fact that they are engaged in manual labor every day of the week. I believe that the movement, if not relaxed, will grow and spread.

I attended a well-attended lecture on Public Speaking, given by W. G. Schultz, the other day, and my impression was that it is a most useful course.

I hope to further convey personal impressions in the future issues of this journal.
Recognized

A Story by A. Wiener of One of the Girl Workers in the Russian Revolution.
From the Jewish Daily Forward.

By A. R.

(Editor's Note.—Our readers have no doubt heard of the Bund—a Jewish workers' militant organization in Russia—which has contributed much toward bringing about the revolution in that country. The Bund up to the time of the revolution was, of course, a secret organization. It organized secret trade unions, conducted strikes, made public demonstrations, and secretly printed and distributed revolutionary literature. Its members scattered all over the industrial and other cities of European Russia took part in all political movements against Russian despotism and many suffered death; many others were exiled to Siberia and suffered indescribable cruelties at the hands of prison wardens and similar officials. The following story shows how plucky girls braved everything to help the cause of freedom.)

The friends from Warsaw (up to 1915 the capital of Russian Poland and now occupied by Germany—Ed.) probably still remember "Maya the Pinskerin." (We shall call her here for convenience sake Eva Pinsker.—Ed.) I cannot now recollect her true name. In 1905 she was a member of the Warsaw Committee of the Bund, a devoted, sympathetic and active worker in the movement. Like all active workers in the revolutionary movement of that time she went by another name, carrying identification papers issued to someone else. In every city she assumed a different name, so as not to be recognized. Naturally her parents did not know her whereabouts or what became of her. She never wrote to them for fear that the letter might fall into the hands of the police and thus give them a clue to her movements.

One morning, upon my attending a session of the Warsaw Committee of the Bund I found Eva in a radiant, happy mood. Her face betrayed no sign of her usual melancholy seriousness. Her pensive dreaminess had given place to an expression of jolly good cheer.

I remembered that the previous night Eva had been at an illegal jolly party arranged for the purpose of wishing godspeed to a comrade and brother about to leave the city. "Are you still under the influence of last night's hilarity?" we asked her.

"Oh, that was a good thing, of course," Eva replied brimming with inner happiness. "But I came across my own sister," and she began telling us how that happened.

"The affair was over about 2 o'clock in the morning, and I did not care to go home so late. Just then I was not inclined to risk meeting a police patrol. Dora, too, did not wish to go home so late and gladly consented to keep us company. So we sat thinking and asking each other what to do. It was impossible to stay overnight in the house where the jolly party had been held. Happily, one of our comrades was reminded that next door two girls of the Poali Zion Party (another semi-secret organization) lived together. He did not know them quite intimately, he said, still, he would venture to inquire whether they would afford us shelter for the night.

"And translating words into action he immediately ran around and knocked at the door of the two girls (who had not retired for the night yet). They obligingly offered to accommodate us as best as possible. We went over, struck up an acquaintance, talked for a while and waited for our temporary beds being arranged on the floor, as there was no other room.

"While waiting, my eyes fell on a photograph taken in Minsk, my birthplace. I felt annoyed, thinking that I had chanced among people of my city and they would probably recognize me. So I decided to cut short the conversation and hastily retire to my lair.

"When I started dressing my hair one of the girls remarked to me: 'I had a sister, you know, whose hair was exactly like yours.' To bring this awkward conversation to an abrupt end I curtly replied that it was my luck to be thought familiar to everybody, and I turned to Dora and asked her to come to sleep quickly, as I was feeling very tired.

"We were already at rest on the floor, and the lights turned out, when I began to shudder at the thought of my parents, sister and brother, of whom I had not heard for a long time. Perhaps these two girls hailing from the
city of my birth could give me some information regarding my nearest and dearest.

"I could not restrain myself any longer, and, suddenly deciding to throw off the incognito mask, I asked:

"Are you from Pinsk?"

"Yes," they replied.

"Perhaps you know so and so," and I uttered the name of my sister of whom I was particularly fond.

"Why, that's I, myself!" I heard a wild shout coming from a corner of the room, and in a few moments my sister fainted in my arms.

"To cut a long story short," Eva continued, "I ought to tell you that my sister recognized me as soon as I stepped into the room, because when I had left home I was already fully developed and have not changed much since. My sister was then only twelve years old, and her general appearance had changed so much that I could not possibly recognize her.

"As soon as she caught sight of me she was so overpowered with inward joy at having met her long-lost sister that both her words and her courage failed her to fall into my arms and disclose her identity by calling out 'my sister!'. The very thought that there, so unexpectedly, her sister, whom she had for years so longed and hoped to see, stood before her very eyes—the thought deprived her of speech and of the impulse to express her feeling. This sudden good fortune dazed her. She was dumb-struck with fear and amazement and waited for an opportunity.

"My sister had been staying in this house for more than a year. I, on my part, had visited the house next door almost daily. How many times had we sat and dreamed of the other, not knowing that only a thin wall was the partition between us. My sister was a constant reader of the revolutionary literature, particularly the latest bulletins issued by the Bund. She wanted to come upon the trace of my name among the arrested or dead revolutionists. She had taken particular care to enquire whether the true name of a revolutionary losing his or her life in any way was being published in those bulletins and similar printed information."

This is only one of many true dramatic meetings and occurrences that happened so often in the active and eventful life of the revolutionary secret organization—the Bund.

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MORAL COURAGE NEEDED.

One of the conspicuous qualities necessary to successful work in the sphere of labor organization is that of moral courage. It is the distinguishing mark of real manhood or womanhood. Without it no human being is really free, without it no individual commands respect. The disappointments incident to human effort, the heartaches and the losses are usually attributable to the lack of this admirable trait on the part of those who fall in their undertakings.

What is it that distinguishes the successful from the unsuccessful? Why is it that so many working people are content to plod on in their daily routine of poorly-rewarded physical effort, while others, with no more real ability, pass on and excel in the struggle for existence, achieving and winning where the larger number seem content to serve and to barely exist? The question may be answered briefly by calling attention to the fact, apparent to all close observers, that relatively few possess the courage of their convictions and are willing to risk failure by putting their convictions to the test.

"He either fears his fate too much, or his deserts are small, who fears to put it to the test and win or lose it all," was written by a poet who understood frail human nature. Organized Labor needs development of and exercise of moral courage. Then will it come into its own, and not before—Tacoma Labor Advocate.

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Ab. Baroff - - - General Sec'y-Treas.
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