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Justice (Vol. 13, Iss. 11)

International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)

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

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Editorial Notes

L E R A GE DAY, IN 1931, finds the workers of America as perturbed and depressed as it did a year ago. The unemployment calamity which hit the country in 1929 is as severe as ever. The prospects for the coming Winter are gloomy, in fact no one, however presumably expert, dares utter a word of cheer or encouragement. To the contrary, the tendency on the part of the forecasters is to prophecy even greater employment, and, consequently, more intensified misery.

Of course, there may be just as little basis for this extreme pessimism as there was for the optimism of the official cheer leaders, from President Hoover down, who, when the crisis broke loose in 1929, rushed forth with statements that it would soon righten itself and that it was all a matter of but a few months. But therein lies the most distressing feature of this unprecedented industrial breakdown in American history—no one seems to have the faintest idea whether we are going—is America drifting into a state of chronic economic dislocation, has our system of planless production and distribution accelerated by a miraculous development of machinery decreed that millions of men and women are to be permanently out of employment, a permanent burden upon society and upon industry?

And in the face of this nationwide calamity, of this universal suffering and want—what remedy have the rulers of America to offer, what have they done in the past two years to ameliorate conditions, to stem the tide of idleness, to relieve the needy and to kindle a spark of hope in the hearts of those who had not seen a ray of sunshine for, lo! so many long and dreary months? Little, if anything at all. Save for some sporadic public works in spots, neither State nor Federal authorities have come forth with any fundamental measure of permanent relief or adjustment. The Administration, preferring to play a waiting game, has even refused to summon Congress into a special session to consider the problem of unemployment and to take steps that might abate the effects of the economic crisis that has engulfed us on all sides.

How has American labor fared during the second year of the tragic economic drought, how did it meet its opportunities and defend its positions?

Even a carping critic of the American trade union movement would have to admit that in this dark period of national bewilderment, the voice of labor has been heard clearly and adroitly on the questions of unemployment, retention of wage levels, international cooperation and the planning of production and distribution. Brushing aside palliatives and quack remedies the American Federation of Labor came out with sharp emphasis on the five-day week as the only effective remedy that would adjust working time to the productive forces in all industry and would afford every man and woman employment regardless of the swift progress of machinery. The Federation came out unequivocally against wage cuts forcing public opinion to uphold its viewpoint that wage reductions would tend only to break down further the purchasing power of the consumers and would further demoralize industry, with the practical result that, while wage cuts did take place here and there, the campaign of the wage "defiators," was, on the whole, definitely frustrated and thrown back.

True the American Federation of Labor, as yet, has not changed its position on national unemployment insurance legislation, clinging to the outworn notion that such insurance is a "dole" and therefore un-American, as if it is much more "American" for former soldiers to receive annually hundreds of millions of dollars in pensions and bonuses than for unemployed veterans of industry to receive allowances that would be charged up to their respective industries and to the State as a whole—rather than to have them thrown upon the humiliating resources of private charity and community chests. But there is hope that this antiquated notion still imbedded in the minds of many leaders of American labor is rapidly undergoing a change and that the American trade union movement will soon find courage to change its position on this very vital issue.

The American labor movement has not gained many new positions in the past year. But if Labor Day is a thanksgiving day, it may freely offer thanks that, despite the continuing depression in this country and the world over, it has succeeded in holding its forces intact and has, to a considerable extent strengthened its position as a social force in the general life of the community.

THE NEW SYSTEM of shop control, being planned by the New York Cloth Joint Board in the cloth market, is an innovation which will be closely watched by every active trade unionist in our own ranks and outside the limits of our industry in New York City. The chief novel feature of this plan, worked out by General Manager Nagler of the Joint Board, consists of the stress which it places on the organized cooperation of the active member element in the shops proper in carrying out the enforcement of working standards and in the elimination of all sorts of open and hidden violations and practices that run counter to the let-
ter and spirit of agreement regulations. In other words, while the district managers and their staffs, as before, are charged with responsibility for the upkeep of union conditions in their shops and districts, they are to acquire, by the means of this plan, added patrolling force in the form of shop and building committees who are in immediate touch with shop conditions and who are to serve as an active, live link between the needs of the men and women in the factories proper and the organization outside.

The proposers of this new control system make no secret of the fact that its chief aim is to put a decisive check upon the growing number of violations of union rules in the cloak shops. These violations are a serious threat to the successful maintenance of union standards even in normal times. But in times like the present, when upset and disturbed industrial conditions are likely to tempt even loyal union men and women into secret deals and collusive arrangements with dishonest and irresponsible employers, it is doubly important for the Union to keep a watchful eye on every shop and to insist upon complete observance of legitimate work standards, such as week-work, no overtime permits, no Saturday work, observance of legal holidays, proper pay for overtime when allowed, etc.

The enlisting of an organized force of building committees throughout the cloak market in every section of the Greater City will mean a greatly augmented enforcement power of the Union. It is to be borne in mind, that these building committees, which are to constitute a General Control Committee, are not to work by themselves but are to keep in close touch with the business agents and district managers who are to meet with them regularly to review activities and to receive instructions with regard to further work. This feature should, in our opinion, tend to weld the regular controlling work of the Union with the work of the building committees and prevent the possibility of creating a separate body within the Union that might get out of harmony with the general policy and activity of the organization.

Another attractive feature, in our judgment, of this new plan is the suggestion that the workers of each shop from which the committees are to be formed must take an active part in the planning and in the management of the same. The Committee, at this hour, needs every possible assistance to strengthen their position in the shops. And the proposed General Control Committee to be recruited from shops and buildings, appears to us to be a wholesome and excellent step in the right direction.

**W** **ITHIN** **LESS** **THAN** **TWO** **WEEKS** **there** **will** **be**

**Special** **Meeting**

**Of** **C** **E** **B**

**with which our Union has had business dealings for a number of years past.**

The sudden liquidation of this bank has raised for the International and for many of its affiliated locals an emergency problem that must be dealt with at once. The General Executive Board, next week, will go into session to devise plans that would meet this issue and other pressing financial obligations and would consider ways and means for safeguarding the financial status of the Union as a whole.

**B** **RIGHT,** **ENCOURAGING** tidings are reaching us from the headquarters of the dress workers' organization in New York City.

**Great Activity Among The Dressmakers**

What only a few weeks ago had been a plan and a hope is fast materializing into a genuine movement which is stirring the workers of the entire trade. General Manager Hochman, of the Dress Joint Board, and Secretary Bluestein of Local 22, both report an unprecedented stirring of the dressmakers in union and non-union shops alike.

At last, so it appears, the spathy bordering on hopelessness which had engulfed the workers in the dress industry for the past few seasons, an insupportable condition, is beginning to disappear. The fervent appeal of the Union to the dressmakers to save themselves and their dependents from the despairing and intolerable conditions of semi-slavery in the shop, is meeting with widespread response. Shops where union conditions had become but a memory are turning up at the offices of the dressmakers' organization, holding meetings, paying up arrears, and joining the rank and file committee of volunteer organizers.

The Union is attacking with special force the jobber problem, the sorest spot on the dress industry's map, and the breeding source of that swarm of irresponsible and substandard sweatshops which have made the life of the dress workers a nightmare and an abomination. Within a few weeks, since the beginning of the current drive, the Union has already succeeded in bringing to terms several important jobbers through calling out the workers of their subsidiary contractor shops, and the campaign against the non-union jobbers is steadily gaining in momentum.

But the most hopeful and heartening feature of this organizing drive lies in the charged spirit, in the vastly improved atmosphere among the workers themselves. Obviously the dressmakers are beginning to realize that their economic plight, pitiful earnings and complete loss of standing and prestige in the shops as self-respecting working men and women cannot go on much longer and that their only salvation lies in the direction of rallying around their organization—the International Union. And the other outstanding fact—the approach of the day when collective agreements in the industry would have to be renewed with the organized employers—has added a spark of enthusiasm and determination to this campaign of union building and preparedness.

There is one point that the dressmakers now joining and rejoining their organization should, nevertheless, bear in mind. The Union is not some outside organization which has stepped into the situation to bring the dressmakers together into a powerful, organized group. No, the Union is the workers themselves, and the strenuous efforts which the Union is now making to organize the dressmakers are, therefore, the efforts and the task of the workers themselves. And after the past few lean seasons, it stands to
In the Philadelphia Cloak Organization

Memorial Meeting for Morris Sigman

By SIMON DAVIDSON,
Secretary Joint Board

The meeting came to an end after a resolution of confidence was adopted and forwarded to Mrs. Sigman.

Trade Activity

The Fall season in the Philadelphia cloak shops has already started, though not all our factories are yet at work. Some made a start but came to an abrupt standstill, while others are continuing to work. We were compelled to call strikes in a few shops which lasted for several days before we could straighten out difficulties with their owners.

In the Leistick shop, where the boss wanted to introduce piece-work and insisted upon doing his own cutting, we won our terms after a couple of days of striking. In the Wiener shop, where they manufacture reefer, the owner violated the agreement, but we forced him to live up to the union terms after a brief walk-out. In the Fisher shop we gained our point by placing a cutter on the premises and enforcing the weekwork regulation. We still have to reorganize a few small shops and expect to carry this through in a short time. What we need above all, however, is cloaks, and let us hope that we shall get it as the season progresses.

Dress Pressers Being Fast Organized

As you might recall, the General Executive Board, at its last meeting, gave us the permission to organize the dress pressers under the jurisdiction of the Cloak Pressers' Union, Local No. 71. In accordance with this decision, we have begun in recent weeks to enroll dress pressers into Local 71 with unusual success. A committee of ten dress pressers, together with the executive board of Local 71, are carrying on this work with zeal, and it looks as if we shall soon have every dress presser within this local.

Over a hundred of them have already joined the Union, and by the end of September we expect to have about 300 in the local. In some dress shops we have already succeeded in abolishing the subcontracting system, while in others the pressers received wage increases. On the whole this activity has added life and interest to the routine work in the Philadelphia cloakmakers' organization.

Damsky and Rubin Reelected

In the recent elections of business agents Brothers Damsky and Rubin were reelected to their posts for another year. About 300 members took part in the balloting, with the following results: Damsky got 306 votes, with 28 voting against him, while Rubin obtained 211 votes with 22 against.

ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE,

reason, the Union's financial resources are far from plentiful or adequate to meet the demands that an all-industry drive places upon it.

Understand, dressmakers, this is not a mere appeal for the regular payment of dues. It is an appeal to common sense, to ordinary, everyday logic which requires no special pleas or argument, for its support. If you want the Union to go on with its big constructive program—and we are sure that you do want it—uphold the hands of your organization and give it not only your spiritual and moral support but every material assistance at your disposal to continue the great, good work and to bring it to a successful end.

A Fine, Fighting Spirit in Toronto

Fortunately, it may be safely predicted now, this conspiracy to wreck union conditions in the Toronto cloak shops will prove abortive. It is true, the group of Toronto cloak manufacturers who had seen fit to treat their agreement with the Union as a "scrap of paper," have succeeded in disrupting the employers' association in the industry and have thereby forced upon the Toronto organization a number of annoying shop strikes to fight off planned wage reduction. But the Toronto cloakmakers struck back at these irresponsible manufacturers and brought nearly all of them to realize that they cannot destroy the Union by unfair and dishonest schemes. In fact, the very same firms which had engineered the disruption of the association were later compelled not only to keep up settled prices for fall work but had, in some cases, to raise the prices and to deal with the Union.

No less praiseworthy is the manner in which the Toronto cloak organization has handled the problem of unemployment within its ranks, another factor of weakness on which the faithless employers had counted. The total addition of overtime for the season has already placed four-fifths of the idle workers on jobs, and the Union is seeking to place them all before the season is well under way.

The breakdown of the association will, no doubt, force the Toronto Union, when the time comes to renew agreements in the trade, to seek other effective methods for insuring union work conditions in all Toronto shops. We have faith that the Toronto cloakmakers and their organization will rise fully to the occasion when that hour comes to convince the Toronto manufacturers that they must reckon with the Union as a permanent institution in the local industry and as the guardian of the workers' rights in the shops.

No. 10 MONTROSE, 1931.
Vice President Hochman emphasized the democratic spirit of the dead leader of the I.L.G.W.U., his modesty and wish to die as a rank and file member of the organization which he so loved, a wish which later was materialized.
Cleveland Negotiates New Trade Agreement

By CHARLES KREINDLER, Vice Pres.,
Secretary Cleveland Joint Board

The question that occupies most of the minds of our members in this city at this moment is the renewal of our agreement for 1932.

The readers of "Justice" are aware of the fact that our agreement is a continuation contract dating back to 1928. The first Cleveland agreement was made in that year after a strike that lasted about a month. Since then the agreement has been renewed every year with some changes. Among the most important features added to it during these thirteen years were the time guarantee of employment insurance.

Time Guarantee
Since 1922

These changes were accomplished after hearings held before the Board of Refer ends, the decisions of which were later incorporated into the contract. In 1922, the Refer ends decided that the workers in our industry should be guaranteed forty weeks of work, and in order to secure this, the manufacturers were required to deposit into a special fund 10 per cent of their weekly payroll. If, at the end of the year, the records showed that an employer had provided forty weeks of labor for his workers, his deposit would be returned to him. Should, however, fail in this, his workers were to be paid from this fund one-half of their minimum wages as long as this fund lasted.

Unemployment Fund in 1927

After working under this plan for several years, we, nevertheless, found that, while this scheme worked perfectly in the inside shops, it failed to protect the workers in the outside shops. To remedy this situation, in 1927, the manufacturers were required to deposit into a special unemployment fund. This fund was to be used only by manufacturers who had supplied their own workers the required number of weeks of work out of their own funds.

Wage Cuts Will Not Help

Such was the gist of the discussion at our Joint Board meeting held on Thursday, August 13, at which a committee was elected to negotiate with the employers the renewal of the contract. The committee consisted of the following members:


All indications point that our manufacturers will approach the ensuing negotiations from the wrong angle. Judging from the attitude of one employer who has already attempted, in an undemand

The mailing office of "Justice" urgently requests all readers to notify their local offices of changes of address in the event they move to new living quarters.
How They Make Cloaks in Soviet Russia

David Dubinsky, General Secretary Treasurer of the I.L.O.W.U. who spent two weeks in Soviet Russia in July, brought back some interesting observations on cloakmaking in the land of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," gained from personal investigation of production methods and work conditions in several of the largest women's garment factories in Leningrad, Moscow and Charkov.

A considerable amount of facts and data on this subject has been trickling through Soviet official information sources and the Soviet press. Dubinsky's impressions, obtained through first-hand contact, however, give a fresh, original account, tinged with a human interest element, of the system of labor, factory equipment, factory discipline, work hours, wages, and of other conditions prevailing in the Russian cloak shops.

I warned him that I would make a try to "pump him dry" on everything relating to garment making that he had observed in Soviet Russia, so Dubinsky settled down resignedly for the hour's grill. Within a few minutes, however, I noticed that he fell into the spirit of the story he was telling me, that he was himself relishing the recital of the strange, extraordinary conditions which surround the production of cloaks in the land of the Soviets.

Land of His Younger Days

"There is so much to tell," he declared, "that I am sure I'll miss many of the interesting details. I went to Russia, primarily, of course, because, like thousands of other Americans, I was fascinated from a distance by the new legend of a Communist-controlled empire, a 'land of promises' for the toiling masses, a land, besides, where my younger years were spent in the revolutionary movement, where as a stripling I was incarcerated and later sent into exile in Siberia, from which I escaped to the 'land of the free and the brave.'

"Little wonder, therefore, that when I got to Moscow, and knowing that my stay in Russia would be but of brief duration, I decided that if I am to see and learn anything at all, I might as well take a good look at the manner in which they make cloaks—my own trade—under Soviet rule. I, therefore, made it my business to visit the three largest women's coat making factories in Moscow, Leningrad, and later in Charkov.

An Interview With General Secretary David Dubinsky Who Recently Returned from a European Trip—Huge Factories Turning Out Simple Garments—Production Lags Despite Modern Machinery

From the cutting tables, the cut pieces proceed to the sorting tables where they are laid out, trimmed by hand, as the 'bend-saw' machines never cut accurately, and fitted with lining or padding as the case might be. From these fitting and sorting operations the cut material is advanced to the sewing machines. The women at the machines each has a small minute part of the operating to do, turning her section over as fast as she can to the next operation, and in this manner the garment proceeds to 'grow' until it reaches its final stage.

Work Tense, Production Low

"The work in the Soviet coat shop is very tense, yet production seems to be quite low, despite the amazingly developed section system. The Leningrad factory, according to the figures given to me on the premises, yields 8,000 coats a day, about a garment and a half per worker. In the United States, given such an equipment, the output would be at least about 9 coats per worker. In the Charkov factory, the 'Tsinakovka,' I found the output somewhat higher, about three garments a day per worker, but even here production lags far behind American standards.

"I should not like to put the blame for this slackness of production upon the workers. To begin with, they are hustling and doing their best, first, because they are all piece-workers and have an interest in speedy work; secondly, each and every one of them appears to have an earnest desire to help in the progress of the Five-Year Plan. Yet, despite this speeding-up, their output is wastefully low, I am inclined to believe that the fault rests with the management. They have no craftsmen of the right kind to run the departments and the shops, no managers and foremen, expert in conducting big shops. A few good managers with American training, I should think, might raise their output to the American standard, provided, however, these managers are given the proper cooperation.

"The workers themselves, while on the whole eager, are not what I might term real mechanics or expert in their crafts. Many of them have learned their trade only recently, but this should not be made an excuse as the kind of cloaks they are manufacturing in Russia does not, indeed, require high craftsmanship.
"Americans" Not Much in Favor

"It is interesting to observe that very few workers with American experience in these coat shops succeed in rising to the status of foreman. There are quite a few Communists in Moscow, Leningrad and Charkov who formerly lived in the United States and worked in cloak shops, who are now employed in the Soviet cloak factories. They, however, seem to have no chance of promotion to managerial positions. It strikes me as if these 'Americans' are not much in favor there. And this is all the more startling in view of the fact that the chief slogan around here seems to be: 'Catch up to America and beat it!' If I am, nevertheless, to judge by the progress they are making here in the production of women's garments, it will take a mighty long time before they 'catch up' to America—let alone beat it.

Profits Mount Rapidly

"I had a long talk in Leningrad with the director of the local 'Clothing Trust', M. Bograchev, who sometime ago visited America and who seemed to be very much interested in the American systems of production and shop management. He was greatly astonished when I told him that in the United States we could produce six times as many coats with his equipment and working staff. He explained to me, however, that production has improved regularly in his factories in the past few years, and that they are making huge profits. Last year, the 'Bolsheviks' netted 29 million roubles in profits. This factory, too, has made big strides in the past four years—from an output of 20 million dollars in 1927 to an output of 200 million in 1930. This year it expects to produce 310 million dollars' worth of garments, while the schedules for 1932 call for an output of 450 million roubles' worth of goods.

"In Charkov, where the 'Tinakovka' is working more efficiently and economically than the Leningrad factory, I was informed the cost of manufacture per garment is 1 ruble and 50 kopecks. Such a cost is retailed in the State stores at 20 roubles each. A coat with a bit of fur trimming brings a little more money.

Earnings, Work Hours, Rest Days

"The average earnings of a worker in these coat factories is 140 roubles per month. The fastest workers earn about 100 roubles while most of the girls average 105 roubles a month. The work hours are 7 per day, and this regulation is being strictly observed. Every fifty days the factory shuts down for a rest day. This arrangement frequently creates difficulties for the management, as it interferes with deliveries from the material supply warehouses where the rest day falls on a different day. The chief purpose of the four-days-work, one-day-rest arrangement from its very beginning has been to abolish the religious holidays—Saturdays and Sundays. This aim has been achieved. It is true, but it would have been far more efficient and economical. It appears to me, to have had this rest day in all industries and in all departments fall on the same day to avoid confusion and waste.

"As I have mentioned already all coat makers, from the cutters, work by the piece, with the exception of the markers and the examiners. In the Charkov factory they have 111 cutters for the 3,500 workers, a cutter for every 30 workers. In America the ratio is a cutter for every ten workers, but that, of course, is explained by the complexity of American styles.

Labor Costs Lower Than in U. S.

"In the Russian factories they figure the cost of production as follows: 35 per cent for the material, 5 per cent for labor, and 5 per cent for administrative expenses. In the United States the cost of labor is figured at about 21 per cent.

"In general the Soviet coat factories have created a fine impression on me. They are rosy, big, and are run on a big scale. I cannot frankly say that I have noticed anywhere any outspoken dissatisfaction with the Communist regime, though suffering and want is widespread. There is not enough to eat, not enough clothing and shoes to wear; living quarters are bad, crowded, and very often simply unobtainable. As far as clothes are concerned, you must bear in mind that even with the increased output, Soviet Russia does not produce even one-twentieth of the amount of garments it would need to clothe her 140,000,000 population. Yet, while the population suffers, it appears to be willing, outwardly at least, to bear the burden and to carry on. It would seem that everybody believes that the present misery is but the birth-pangs of a new order. The feeling is widespread throughout the land that once Russia had bridged her temporary woes it will become a paradise on earth.

The Population Supports Soviet Rule

"And this enthusiasm is not artificial either. If I am to trust to my sense of observation," Brother Dubinsky continued, "there are, of course, I do not doubt, people in Russia who hate the present regime, but the population, as a whole, I believe supports the Soviet Government. Look at the thousands of workers who are donating their vacation periods to the State and are going into the fields to help gather in the harvest! Surely, this is not compulsory upon the workers, yet they do it willingly, cheerfully, as their added personal contribution to the Five-Year Plan.

"Like in all other Soviet factories, there is strict discipline and order in the women's coat shops. When one comes late twice in succession his or her name appears on a 'black board' on the shop wall, and, believe me, this not a pleasant prospect for any worker in a Soviet shop. Such an offender is likely to lose some of the workers' privileges, even the food card, or similar opportunities to live the life of a full-fledged citizen.

Individual Does Not Count

"The dictatorship in harsh, but through its harshness there runs a streak of concern for the workers as a class. The individual plays no role in Soviet Russia, but the workers as a class are top dog. They feel that they are 'free people,' or at least, the chosen people in Russia today. They can be seen everywhere—in the former palaces of the nobility and of the wealthy, in the opera, in the theatres, and in all other places where admission was denied to them before. This, perhaps is the outstanding achievement of the Communist dictatorship, and even the staunchest opponents of the Soviet regime should recognize this. Besides, Russia today actually is living and working out its future in accordance with a well-conceived plan, and should even this plan fail of achievement, as many prophesy, it is an absorbing experiment worthwhile watching."
Toronto Cloakmakers Fight Union Baiting Firms

By BERNARD SHANE
General Organizer

In order to give the readers of "Justice" a correct picture of the present situation in Toronto we must refer back to the events of a few months ago.

It was in April that our cloak employers, who were practically 100 per cent organized at that time, had begun to play politics with the obvious purpose of destroying their own association in the hope that they might thereby get rid of the Union which had a collective contract with the association. The Union obviously had got on their "nerves," as before the strike of 1930 they were free to do with their workers as they pleased, keeping them in the shops late hours whether there was work to be had or not. Some of the larger firms, which were in a position to offer the workers steadier employment would pay for labor less than the others and thus secure for themselves advantages in the market.

Plotting to Break Agreement

After the Union had become firmly entrenched in the Toronto cloak shops, the manufacturers became divided on their attitude towards the organization. A majority of them appeared to like the new regime, which, besides having introduced uniformity of labor costs in the local market, has also brought a spirit of freedom and tolerance in the shops. This majority has insisted upon keeping up the association and dealing with the Union, and we have had peace in the industry for a year and a half.

A few manufacturers, however, were longing for the "old times" of long hours and small wages, when they were "the real bosses in the shop," and these began to conspire to break up the association and in that way, as they hoped, automatically to break up the contract with the Union. And so they launched a propaganda among their associates to that effect, with the result that they had practically succeeded in nullifying the association leaving in it only a small number, about 21 firms. The rest either resigned or were dropped for non-payment of dues.

Union Found Prepared

We must admit that it was a shrewdly engineered move on the part of these union-baiters. They had figured that this weakening of the association would disorganize the industry materially and that the Union would be forced into a number of shop strikes as a result, and that during such a state of guerilla warfare the largest firms would succeed in getting away from Union control altogether. The Union, nevertheless, was not caught unaware. It was on guard, and in anticipation of trouble, had fortified itself to be in a fighting position. The members were prepared, especially in the shops of such firms as had taken the initiative of fighting the Union, to put up a battle at the beginning of the Fall season. The slogan of the Union became: "Not a cent in wage reductions—every shop must remain a Union shop!" We carried out several successful stoppages when some of the employers had made attempts to reduce prices, and even succeeded in obtaining some increases over old prices. The interesting part of it is that we got these increases in the larger shops which were instrumental in organizing the fight against the Union.

To the credit of the Toronto cloakmakers, it must be stated, that they have displayed a marvelous resistance to the employers' schemes despite the disheartening industrial depression. Only in one instance, the Bell Cloak Company, were we forced into a strike on account of these maneuvers. The strike in this shop is still on, and we intend to keep it up until these manufacturers realize that they either have to sign a contract with the Union or go out of business. It is true that this shop has recruited a number of scabs, but we are positive that before long they will have to come to terms with the Union.

Placing the Idle on Jobs

There is, however, another obstacle that we have to face at the start of this season. We have on our hands between 250 and 300 unemployed as a result of several firms' going out of business at the end of the spring season. The Toronto employers evidently had counted on these unemployed to help them break down the Union. The Joint Board, on the other hand, anticipating this hard situation, decided that there shall be no overtime work anywhere until all the unemployed have been placed on jobs. Neither did we permit any shifting around of workers from job to job until the idle workers had found employment. At present, all the finishers have been placed at work, there are no idle cutters or trimmers, but we still have about 50 operators and 10 pressers out of work. It is, of course, an uncomfortable situation for such a limited market like Toronto, but we are doing our utmost to find jobs for them. So even in this direction our enemy employers have had so far little success.

By this time, our employers realize that we have here in Toronto a solid organization of cloakmakers who are ready to fight them in the open if necessary. We have checked with success every more on their part to disintegrate our forces thus far. Very soon, however, we shall be confronted with the problem of renewing agreements in the industry, and in view of the fact that we have now no solid organization of employers to deal with, we might have to employ different tactics in obtaining a new contract. The Joint Board is now busy working out plans in that direction. These plans will later be submitted to the membership for approval, and we are confident that our manufacturers will soon discover that they must listen to reason or else find themselves pitted against workers who know how to defend their rights as union men and women.

A Special Appeal to The Members

We want to make a special appeal to our members at this time.

The season is bad, and it is equally true that we had to go through a long slack period. For almost four months we had practically no income. And during this slack time we had to handle about ten strikes for a day or two, with the exception of the Bell Cloak strike which has been on now for nearly fourteen weeks.

Our treasury is depleted, yet the Bell Cloak strike must go on. At a special shop chairmen's meeting a resolution was passed that all cloakmakers pay up five dollars in advance on account of dues and taxes, within two weeks, and then pay up gradually their arrears.

It is not much, we believe, to ask in spite of the bad season, as we consider the financial predicament that Union finds itself in at this hour. Make your payments at once and help us continue the fight for a better living for yourselves and for your fellow workers in the trade. Do not refuse your shop chairmen when he comes for this payment. Make this payment willingly. You are only paying up your arrears and you are thereby helping to free your Union from its present financial worries.
THE CRISIS STILL hangs like a heavy pall over our heads. By common agreement, the coming Winter will crown the misery of the preceding two years. To the already idle millions another two or three millions will be added.

The country is staggering under the burden of an unequally distributed abundance. Too much wheat, too much clothing, too many over-mortgaged buildings in the big cities—many of them half occupied—the fruit crops out West and down South are too great, cotton is too plentiful, and the continually improving machines are throwing out men and women of employment too fast.

And what about relief, not snap, spasmodic relief but fundamental, basic measures that might arrest this cataclysmic state of affairs? After two years of drifting and trusting to luck, our leaders and controllers of government, finance and industry still appear not to know what it is all about. From Washington comes the information that the Administration has a "plan" of relief. The "Ford" Committee is paid, a deafening ballyhoo is obvious but another gesture in the direction of a national charity chest—most probably, too, an attempt to head off the rapidly growing sentiment the country over in favor of unemployment insurance, thus far the only practical proposal looking upon the badly upset industrial situation.

The truth of the matter is that our industrial and political leaders still entertain the hope that somehow or other they might muddle through this crisis. As long as possible those in the saddle will, therefore, continue "passing the buck," postponing serious action and relying upon "individual" enterprise or private charity to avert the shell-shocked American people across the desert to another "promised land of prosperity."

RENT AND HUNGER riots in Chicago negro quarters are conveniently dubbed "red" riots in press dispatches.

A rent riot, even if it runs up a casualty list of several killed and dozens wounded, is a drab, run-of-the-mine affair. There is so much more "color" and thrill in a "red" riot, so the citizenry has to be fed on a diet that the destitute and wicked negroes had been staging a social revolution on the streets of the Western metropolis. And for such an affront to peace-and-order-loving Chicago they certainly deserved no better treatment than to be moved down by police riot guns.

After the dead were carried away to the morgue and the wounded taken to the hospitals, the mayor of Chicago, who had been amply warned that precisely such riots were imminent if the wholesale evictions in the negro districts were to continue, magnanimously gave orders from his vacation retreat to halt further dispossessions. He even recalled that he had some funds at his disposal which may be used for the relief of the evicted families.

IN THE MIDST of the prevailing distress, the only clear voice offering concrete action and sure-footed guidance is coming from the leadership of organized labor.

The Executive Council of the A. F. of L., in session two weeks ago, again sounded the call for the establishment of a five-day working week as a means to abate "the growing menace of unemployment by adjusting working time so that all able and willing to work may share in an equitable distribution of all work available."

The Federation of Labor sees no other effective way of relieving the crisis in America except by introducing the shorter workweek in private industry and in the Government service. The time of dilly-dallying with unemployment is past. Private assistance may have helped as temporary relief in the past, but the situation has gone far beyond the bounds of local or sectional distress. To deal with the unemployment situation and to avoid legislative intervention, the Executive Council is now demanding that the President summon a national conference of representatives of industry and labor, the only kind of an agency that "could deal with the subject."

An emergency industrial congress that would sanction a shorter working week, the Council believes, would stand the best chance of putting such an emergency measure into practice.

On the other hand, the Federation vigorously sets its face against wage cutting and further curtailment of the workers' purchasing power. "Low wages," says the manifesto of the Executive Council, "means further unemployment, human distress and human suffering. The present unemployment situation cannot be relieved until wages are built up so that men and women can buy and consume. We are confident that in assuming this attitude we are contributing toward the highest and best interest of all the people."

THE SOFT COAL INDUSTRY is so sick that mine owners, among them some high and mighty ones, who only a few years ago would have denounced government regulation as rank Socialism, are clamoring for Uncle Sam to step in, buy up and retire surplus mines, regulate output, supervise marketing and generally introduce "more government in business"—a thing heretofore anathema to all conservatives.

This sensational fact became known about two weeks ago when a number of leading mine owners, including spokesmen for the $200,000,000 Mellon-controlled Pittsburgh Coal Company, made public their intention to appeal to Congress to save the industry from the chaotic conditions it has been suffering from for years past, most of which come from a single source—overproduction.

In brief, the proposal means stabilization by reducing production—and nearly everybody agrees there is no other way. But that, of course, means that a large number of workers would be left permanently without jobs. The question that concerns these men is—What is to become of them should the government buy the mines and close them?

There is probably no easy solution in sight, but a number of remedies have already been suggested in union circles. One is that old men who have been worn out by the industry be pensioned off and retired. That would be a long step in reducing the surplus of miners. If further reductions were needed, young miners might be offered a cash bonus to quit the industry and start in other lines of work. The five-day week or the six-hour day should also be introduced.

Of course, these problems so vital to the workers, can only be worked out in conference between the mine owners and the miners and their union. The significant thing about this news is that the mine owners are finally coming to see the situation from the same angle of government regulation and control of production which the mine workers' organization has so persistently advocated for a number of years past.

THE WICKERSHAM CRIME Commission has issued a scathing condemnation of police methods in handling prisoners before trial charging the New York police in particular with lawlessness unfit for a civilized community.

It is hard to say why New York is
being singled out by the Wickersham Commission. There is little doubt that beatings and other forms of barbarous coercion, contrary to law, are employed by New York policemen wholesale in order to extract confessions from criminal and apprehended suspects. But the "third degree" is in vogue not only in New York. It is common practice in every police precinct in every city, town and hamlet in the country.

What, however, shines by absence from the Wickersham report on police brutality is the treatment of workers on strike. It would seem to be the only thing left out by the investigators. It is common knowledge that in practically every strike the police is behaving with reckless brutality toward strikers, that the rights of people on strike in every part of the land are insolently and flagrantly being violated. The Wickersham commissioners, doubtless, knew about this, just as they are aware that counts of equity are granting injunctions to employers right and left in industrial disputes denying strikers the right of peaceful picketing and of lawful assemblage. Yet, not a word concerning these grave abuses appears in their report, not a syllable suggesting remedial measures that would do away with these judicial or police misdeeds.

But, of course, this brutality and these denials of elementary rights concern only wage earners. So why should the eminent lawyers who compose the Wickersham Commission bother about it?

THE GERMAN FASCISTS, or Nazis, and the Communists right now engaged in a bitter controversy as to which of the two parties supplied the largest share of the nine million votes cast in the recent plebiscite on the proposed dissolution of the Prussian Diet. Only yesterday communards-in-arms in an alliance to wreck the Republic in Germany, the Hitlerites and the Communists are today accusing each other in treachery and in failure to deliver their full party strength in the common attack upon the Republic.

The undeniable fact, aside from these venomous recriminations, nevertheless, remains that the Communist-Fascist alliance in Germany has suffered a humiliating defeat. Together they had polled only a little more than one-third of the entire German voting strength, and it is safe to assume that this abortive union, born out of a common hatred for the republican institutions of Germany, has done considerable harm both to the Hitlerites and to the Communists.

There will be very few people in Germany and outside of it who will regard seriously this post mortem cries of treason which the Nazis and the Communists are hurling at each other. Rather will the world accept the verdict of the German people as conclusive testimony that the republic has come to stay in the Reich if it only can weather the economic and financial gales through which it is desperately battling its way now.

IT IS ENTIRELY TOO EARLY at this writing, to pass judgment or even to attempt an appraisal of the significance of the downfall of the English Labor Cabinet and of its replacement by a make-shift "national" cabinet headed by Ramsay MacDonald.

The facts that stand out in connection with this second retirement of Labor from power in Britain are to be that MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas finding themselves unable to balance the budget, decided, under the constant hammering by the great English and foreign banks and by their threat to break down the stability of sterling, to reduce the "dole," or unemployment insurance to decrease salaries and to carry out other economies. The majority of the Labor Party vehemently dissented from this viewpoint, preferring rather to go down in defeat as a minority party than to curtail the care Great Britain was giving to her unemployed.

What appears most baffling is the entrance of MacDonald into this new "patriotic" cabinet. Had the Labor Cabinet simply resigned, as a party without a majority in the House of Commons, refusing to contaminate anycurtailment of relief for the millions of British jobless workers, it appears to us, it would have emerged out of this crisis in a much more commanding position on the eve of the forthcoming elections and far better qualified to demand from the British workers a mandate as a majority party to carry out the "full program of Labor reforms it had pledged itself to accomplish.

French Ambassador Notifies Pres. Schlesinger
Alexander Berkman Will Be Permitted
To Stay in France

Alexander Berkman, well known anarchist and writer, whose deportation from Paris was ordered by the French Government last June after his sojourn in that city for five years, was again permitted to remain in France after a protest against this action had been made by a number of distinguished Americans and Europeans.

Berkman has for a number of years been pursuing literary work. He has also been doing Red Cross relief work for political prisoners in Soviet Russia, but has engaged in no political activities whatever. His ordered deportation, therefore, came as a shock to all friends of freedom who had come to regard France as a traditional asylum for political refugees.

President Schlesinger, in the name of the I.L.G.W.U., sent on July 8 the following telegram to the French Ambassador in Washington, M. Paul Claudel, on behalf of Alexander Berkman:

"International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union composed of eight thousand members respectfully request you to use your kind offices with the French Minister of the Interior to reach ordered expulsion of M. Alexander Berkman from France. To our best information M. Berkman during the 5 years of his sojourn in France has engaged in no political work confining himself solely to literary activity and committing no act that should deprive him of the time-honored privilege of asylum which France always generously has given political refugees.

BENJAMIN SCHLESINGER,
President."
Montreal Items of Interest

As these times are being written, work in the local cloak shops is still scarce, and the earnings of our workers are correspondingly small. And when one considers that the slack period this time has been rather a long one, one may realize that the situation is not any too pleasant. One must also bear in mind that in times of slack many employers are only too eager to take advantage of the workers in the shops; and that, naturally, causes trouble.

Complaints Pour In

Since the arrival of the season we have, therefore, had more than our usual quota of complaints from the workers. We have tried our best to straighten out the disputes with the employers, and in most cases did succeed. In some instances, however, we could not obtain complete satisfaction, which only confirms our opinion that in bad times union leaders cannot be too careful with their activities and in their dealings with employers.

I am satisfied, indeed, that the leading element among our workers here has a clear grasp of the situation here and is making no rash steps. Yet, we are on the lookout for any chance to strengthen the Union here. We have recently made an attempt to organize a few non-union shops and have encountered some difficulties. These shops are of the contractor calibre, owned by fellows who attempt to run away from the machine in the Illusory hope that somehow or other they might succeed in becoming big manufacturers, but who invariably fail.

Fighting the Sub-Contractors

We are trying hard to bring this thought home to all our workers, that attempts to “get rich quick” at the expense of others, as far as the Montreal cloak market is concerned, certainly are worth less than a collection of soap bubbles. The Union in this city will do all in its power to make these would-be employers of labor understand this point clearly and convincingly—that we shall not tolerate this sort of cut-throat “manufacturing” at the expense of the regular workers who depend for their living on the work conditions in the shops.

And we shall make this point no less clear to the manufacturers in Montreal, too, that it would be to their interests to stop sending work outside. For not only does this demoralize conditions in the local market, but it is against our contract arrangements with them, and the Union will see to it that the offenders are properly punished. The manufacturers association has already punished one of its members for such a violation, and while this fine was not a heavy one, we hope that it has served as a warning for the rest of them. The Union surely will demand heavy fines in the future every time it is brought out that a firm had sent out work to contractors.

On the Lookout

As you know from my previous letter, we had here an outing of the entire cloak maker family in Montreal. We made no profits, but we had a lot of fun, and I take this opportunity to thank the committee for the excellent manner in which this affair was carried out.

In general, things are rather lively here. We are making preparations this season to be ready to discuss with our employers conditions and terms of future employment for the next year.

Our meetings are well attended. We have here an active element, and I feel confident that our men will supply the Union with the necessary moral and material equipment to meet any situation that might develop. All we ask for is that they keep up their steady interest in the affairs of the organization and be constantly on the watch.

Philadelphia Dressmakers Begin Drive

By Vice President ELIAS REIBERG
Manager Local 50

The past month was thickly crowded with events in our local organization, the Waist and Dressmakers’ Local, No. 50.

First, as soon as the Spring season came to an end, several of our union dress firms, as if acting through an organized understanding, had made a move to eliminate the influence of the Union from their shops and at the same time to lower work conditions. The method they adopted was to close the shops and to declare that they would become jobbers and buy ready-made dresses suggesting to their work people to seek jobs elsewhere.

Attack Repulsed

Local 50 met this issue with vigor, and by this time we may report that without exception, each of these attacks had failed and that our workers were placed back in their original shops. Realizing the hardship of the times, the Union did not make any adjustments here and there, but these were not of a major character and will not in any way affect existing standards.

Another important development, which is bound to have an influence on work conditions in the local dress shops, has to do with a decision adopted by the G.E.B. at its last meeting in Atlantic City.

Some weeks ago there began to develop here in Philadelphia an earnest and intense movement for organization among the dress pressers. A meeting of pressers was called by a special committee and it turned out to be a big meeting, more than two hundred men responding. That meeting elected an organization group of twenty-five people who were instructed to work out a plan and to present it to another pressers’ meeting shortly to follow. This group of twenty-five unanimously agreed that there is but one way the Philadelphia dress pressers could ever hope to improve their conditions and that is by joining the international.

Dress Pressers All Join Local

A second meeting soon was called, which was as well attended as the first, and the committee recommended that the pressers all join the Union. This recommendation was adopted amidst cheers. The Atlantic City decision with regard to the dress pressers was that these workers were to join, as soon as the organization drive begins in the dress industry. Local 71, the existing pressers local in Philadelphia. We saw fit to carry out that decision without further delay, and a call was issued to all the dress pressers to come to a meeting under the auspices of Local 71. We are pleased to put it down on record here that the pressers responded to the call of the Union.

Two meetings were held already since then. The majority of the dress pressers in this city have now joined Local 71, and a working plan was established to regulate further activity between the two locals—Local 50 and Local 71.

It seems to be invariably true that whenever an organization drive on a large scale is being started the pressers are the first to respond. And this time, too, true to the old tradition, the pressers have fallen in line. Both locals and their leadership are working in union in this common drive. We honestly believe this is the beginning of a new era for the Philadelphia dressmakers.
Underwear Workers Pass a Stirring Year

By SAMUEL GRADIN, Secretary Local 62, I.L.G.W.U.

It is just a year since President Schlesinger and Secretary Dubinsky had recommended, upon the request of a large number of members of our local, to our executive board that Bro. Samuel Shore be asked to resume management of the underwear workers' organization in New York City. That decision marked the opening of a new chapter in the history of Local 62.

Only a Year Ago

I shall, in a brief way, give here an outline of the last year's work of our local, of the achievements already made, and of our prospects for the near future. A few weeks before Bro. Shore stepped into our office as our representative, the situation in Local 62 was anything but bright. The change of cotton to silk in the industry, the upturn in styles, and the effects of the "left" agitation for several years prior, had created havoc among the workers and bewilderment in the shops. So much so, that even the optimists and veterans among us had begun to feel that the eclipse of our local was pretty nearly in sight. The few shops that were under union control were losing ground, most of our members had become disheartened, and, you may readily imagine, that the condition in the non-union shops was even many times worse. In the "open" shops the normal hours were from 48 to 56 a week, while twenty dollars per week for fifty hours of labor was considered good pay. Firing girls at the end of each season became a regular practice in all these shops, and this naturally tended to force down prices for work even lower.

Withinconst one month after Bro. Shore's assumption of office a turn to the better in the affairs of the white goods workers became at once perceptible.

New Life Starts

The employers, many of whom had known Bro. Shore since 1913, at once became aware of a revival in Local 62. The immediate result was that the epidemic of price-cutting and of indiscriminate treatment in the shops came to a halt. A wide organizing program was laid out, and workers from non-union shops began to appear at the office. Very shortly a strike was called in the shop of J. N. Levine, one of the important firms in the underwear trade. The strike in the Levine shop created a stir in the industry, as a result of which it became possible to call together a conference of a group of leading manufactur-
Chicago Takes Final Leave of Sigman

BY MORRIS BIALIS
Manager Chicago Joint Board

It is 8 o'clock in the morning with a group of several hundred cloakmakers we are heading in the direction of the Illinois Central Railway station by Lake Michigan. The morning is unusually pleasant, the sun sends down a clear and bright glow which a refreshing breeze from the lake tempest down to a comfortable warmth. A beginning of a truly beautiful summer morning which wakes and calls to life!

The glory of this summer morning, however, seems to irk and distress us. The sweetness of the early hours of this day does not harmonize with our spirits. We get away from the bright outside into the dreary semi-darkness of the old dilapidated station of the Illinois Central which seems more adapted at that moment to our state of feelings. Soon the train will arrive bearing the remains of a true, loyal friend, the body of Morris Sigman.

The Labor Lyceum

The great hall of the Labor Lyceum is crowded with cloak and dress workers.

The members of the Chicago organization have just learned of the demise of their former president, and dropped work to pay their final tribute to a dead friend and leader. There is a deadly silence in the hall, and the eyes of the assembled hundreds are riveted upon the platform, where upon a simple undertaker's cart rests the casket where Morris Sigman rests in final sleep. The casket is buried beneath flowers sent by the Chicago locals and a guard of honor in a semicircle stands about it. Upon the platform there are assembled representatives of every branch of the Chicago labor movement who came to mourn with us the untimely departure from life of Morris Sigman.

Chopin's funeral march from the piano breaks through the silence in the hall. The writer of these lines delivers a short talk, but tears choke his voice and brings his speech to an abrupt close.

He is followed by Peter Sissman, the Union's attorney and an old friend of the deceased leader, by P. L. Straube, of the Chicago Federation of Labor, N. Fagin, representing the Chicago Workmen's Circle, L. Siegel, representing the Vorwarte, Agnes Nestor, of the Women's Trade Union League, M. Gerrier, of the Federation of Jewish Unions. They all speak of Morris Sigman's great contribution to the cause of the cloak and dressmakers and to the whole labor movement.

A very impressive and touching speech was delivered by Dr. Z. Loeb for the Jewish Socialist Verband.

Mayer Baruch, the secretary of the Chicago Joint Board expressed the deeply felt sympathy of the membership of our Chicago locals for Mrs. Sigman in the hour of her greatest bereavement.

A large crowd of workers, again in a railroad station, the LaSalle Street terminal of the New York Central, on the way to New York. The railway employees and officers, upon learning our mission, are giving us the fullest cooperation in handling our sorrowful charge.

The train with Sigman's body is speeding to New York. But behind it there is left a great host of friends and admirers who will never forget his services and marvelous devotion to the cause of his fellow workers. The record of his life will always stand out as a shining example of true, unselfish leadership and inspire us to follow in his footsteps.

Ladies' Tailors Face New Clash

BY HARRY GREENBERG
Manager, Local 38

The Ladies' Tailors' Union, Local 38, is facing right now quite a serious development which may grow into a fight with some of the leading firms in the trade.

September 15 is agreement renewal day in the ladies' tailoring trade. Under the terms of our agreement with the firms in contractual relations with us, the contract is considered as automatically renewed if no notice is given to the Union on or before July 15. Up to now, the local has received no notice from the majority of the union employers, except from the firm of Hattie Carnegie, Inc., the largest shop in the industry, which some weeks ago informed our organization that it would not renew the contract.

After an exchange of correspondence between the administration of Local 38 and the Carnegie firm, in which the Union, in the hope of averting a clash, had notified the firm that it would desire to meet it in conference to discuss points of difference prior to the expiration of the agreement and thus avoid an unnecessary loss of time for both, the shop committees, at a meeting held on August 17, authorised the officers of the local to meet the situation with a strike if all peace efforts prove futile.

Injunction Suit Against Milgrim Firm

Local 38 has also filed an injunction suit, through Attorney Emil Schlesinger, on August 18 to restrain Milgrim Gowns, Inc., 6 West 57th Street, from violating the agreement between this firm and the Union. This agreement, signed in October, 1930, was violated by the firm in four major points. The firm had dismissed union workers and replaced them by non-union men; it had reduced wage scales without authority; it set up a sub-manufacturing system operating on a non-union basis, and finally refused access to its books for union examination as the agreement provides.
Underwear Workers Pass a Stirring Year

By SAMUEL GRAKIN,
Secretary Local 62, I.L.G.W.U.

It is quite natural that both our strike movement and the negotiations with the employers are led by Bro. Samuel Shore, who is tirelessly working on all fronts to advance the interests of our workers. It need hardly be emphasized that a great amount of tact was required to bring these parleys with the employers to the point they had reached now. It is, of course, still difficult to say whether these negotiations will be crowned with success or not. It is quite likely that a general strike through the whole industry would have to be called in the end. Yet, it is our wish that, even in the case of a strike, the results of these parleys will be felt materially in the inevitable victorious outcomes of such a walkout.

President Schlesinger, who has been back at the helm of the International for the past few months, has helped Local 62 greatly in this revival movement. At one of the conferences with the employers attended by Bro. Schlesinger, his clear-cut stand has, no doubt, convinced our employers that the International is wholeheartedly behind Local 62 in all of its efforts. It is worthwhile to observe here that in many shops the employers have already begun to shorten work hours and to raise wages in an effort to stem the tide in favor of the Union. We doubt, however, that these maneuvers will succeed, as the workers are fully aware that these "gains" will amount to nothing unless they are protected by the arm of the Union.

Thus, in brief, is the resume of Bro. Shore's activity for the past year as supervisor of the underwear workers' organization.

Our Line of Defense

On the second line of defense, so to say, in Local 62 there is Bro. Abraham Snyder, our manager, who has been with us for the past eight years. It required a lot of devotion and loyalty to our cause to have stood unflinchingly with and by the Union in these past years. Bro. Snyder, despite obstacles and attacks from all sides, has, nevertheless, succeeded in keeping intact a part of the organization apparatus which Bro. Sibbe had found of such great service to start his drive with. Bro. Snyder has also loyally assisted Bro. Shore during the past year in every activity and undertaking.

Our organizing work, besides, is being carried on with the help of Sisters Mary...
 Builders of British Labor

2. Philip Snowden

Looking closely at a recent photograph of Philip Snowden, I noted to my surprise that the passage of years had changed him but little. There were, it is true, a certain deep etching under the eyes, and a stern grimness to the set of the lips and jaw, that were not there when I first saw him. One who is accustomed to note the particulars of a man's features could glean from those of Snowden characteristics common to certain professions. In his case, the examination would indicate the lawyer, actor, and scholar. Curiously enough, Snowden is a combination of the three. However come by, it is difficult to determine, for his parents were poor and hardworking cotton weavers. From the deposit of generations of subject compliance to the ruling class was born a rebel, who, as he grew to maturity, demonstrated remarkable powers of resistance to tradition and antiquated authority. Perhaps, the soil on which he was born had something to do with the cultivation of those qualities which lay dormant within him till long after the first flush of manhood.

From A Yorkshire Textile Village

The Village of Cowling in Yorkshire is a tiny hamlet nesting on the edge of the Moors. It is less than a dozen miles from an industrial town, and yet it is so remote from the busy-burly of urban industrialism that it appears strange to observe the greater number of inhabitants working in the textile mills. Indeed, although the scene appeared at the time I visited it, all was not well in the relationship of employers and workers. The textile barons, whether in town or village, are as ruthless in their methods of exploitation as it is possible for any class of profit-gatherers to be. I write with first-hand knowledge, for I am also a Yorkshireman, and born within a few miles of the locality from which Snowden came. The Yorkshire people are a blend of the Scandinavians and the Anglo-Saxons with an admixture of the Celtis. Once they were aroused from the apathy of the centuries, they rebelled against a system that forced boys and girls of tender years into the mills and factories, and herded them like cattle subject to the whims and desires of those who took full advantage of their helplessness. Any and all expedients were used to press out the greatest margin of profit.

The Early Days of Oppression

The industrial history of Lancashire and Yorkshire is by no means pleasant reading. This accounts for the fact that these districts are fertile for intensive labor propaganda. Perhaps, at this stage I ought to tell a story which should be appreciated by all sincere American labor unionists. About half-way between my birthplace and that of Snowden, and forming the apex of a triangle are a few acres of ground sacred to British labor. Little more than a century ago, the Combination Laws were in force. Those laws prohibited any form of labor organization; violation meant imprisonment and transportation to a living hell across the seas, and in some cases—death. So terrible, indeed, were the conditions under which the workers were compelled to till that desperation drove a number of them into close association to protect their puny interests. In the opening years of the nineteenth century, small groups of men were to be seen making their way from the industrial towns bordering the moorlands, into the heart of the moors.

Meeting in Fearful Secrecy

About midway between the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire is a large boulder. It is now weather-beaten, and the inscription on it denoting that it was the meeting place is no longer decipherable. These men met in fearful secrecy. Betrayal meant brutal punishment. Out of these small gatherings of anguished and misery-ridden men grew the great British labor movement. The names of these men have long since been forgotten, but the workers keep enshrined within their memories the record of their labors. From one of the groups developed the powerful union of iron-molders. My father was an iron-molder, and it was while I was with him on one of his periodical visits to pay respect to the memory of the early labor pioneers that I first saw Philip Snowden. In 1835, I was but a youth, but my father's devotion to the Cause had taught me many things of labor's history and its aspirations.

An Unforgettable Speaker

In my native town of Halifax (Yorkshire) was a very active organization of labor men and women. During the Sundays of the summer months, they would wend their way onto the moors which were but a few miles from the town. They were usually accompanied by the Clarion Choir, a group of working men and women. Arriving at the meeting place they would arrange a portable platform, and around this the choir would sing labor and socialist songs. The audiences were gathered from the nearby towns and villages. On the Sunday I have in mind, the choir had concluded the 'Comrades' Song of Hope.' A peculiar stillness followed, and a wave of deep sympathy and pity swept through the crowd as a badly-crippled man was being gently lifted onto the platform. It was Philip Snowden. Physically broken and old before his time, he presented a picture not easy to look at. Soon after he began to speak, the image of John Bull, the hero of the Peasants' Revolt of the fifteenth century, rose before my mind. It seemed as if he had come back to life to be reincarnated in Philip Snowden. In clear and emphatic language, Snowden spoke as did John Bull. In ringing tones as resonant as a bell, remarkable in so frail a man, he preached of human brotherhood, of the carrying into daily life the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, of closer association of all workers, so that the Commonwealth be established. With magnificent eloquence he urged his hearers to work with all their energies to overthrow a system wherein poverty and suffering was the common lot of the working-class.

The impression of that meeting has never left me, and in later years when I became intimately acquainted with Snowden as a labor propagandist, I learned of his deep earnestness and sincerity of purpose. Like most Yorkshiremen, Snowden is opinionated, and stubborn to a high degree. His inaccessibility to argument, maintaining his ground with the tenacity of a Scotch covenanter.

No Pussy-Footer

One cannot accuse him of pussy-footing on any important issue, in fact, should occasion arise he will defy his Party if he believes he has the right solution. He is a remarkable debater, with a capacity for clearly reasonned analysis of economic problems that makes him very dangerous to the upholders of the status quo.

Intellectually, I regard him as superior to MacDonald, and in quality of leadership would run him very close.

Snowden was an intimate friend of the late Ken Hardie. Hardie told me that Snowden was one of the most brilliant men he had ever met.
The Month in Local 10

BY SAMUEL PERLMUTTER

Dubinsky Will Address Cutters
On Monday, August 31

Brother David Dubinsky, Secretary-Treasurer of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union, and former manager of the Cutters’ Union, Local 10, returned on Wednesday, August 12, on the steamer Homeric, from his eleven weeks’ trip abroad. A large group of I.L.G.W.U. officers and members came to bid him “welcome home” at the West 18th St. pier, where the boat docked.

On Thursday night, Secretary Dubinsky was officially greeted by our Executive Board, at which he was invited to address the membership meeting on Monday, August 31.

Among the many countries visited by Secretary Dubinsky was Soviet Russia. A large attendance is expected at the August 31st meeting, as great many cutters are eager to get first hand impressions of Brother Dubinsky regarding the situation abroad, particularly in Soviet Russia, and every one is, therefore, advised to be on time.

Many Cutters Returning to Work

Notwithstanding the decline in the cloak market in the past two weeks, it appears that buyers are again beginning to crowd the showrooms in an effort to buy what is commonly known as the “second line,” submitted particularly by the contractors.

Quota a number of cloak manufacturers have been busy in July, but during the early part of August most of them were compelled to stop cutting owing to the sudden dullness which descended upon the market and which lasted until the early part of this week. Within the last few days, however, an investigation of the showrooms reveals an encouraging spirit prevailing all over, with the result that a number of firms are gradually calling in their cutters.

With regard to sub-manufacturers it may be said that, with the exception of a small percentage of men engaged in the cutting of samples and duplicates a few days a week in their shops, they are practically idle. It seems, however, that in view of the new policy adopted by the jobbers, to start the season late, there is reason to believe that, within a few days, the cloak season will be on in full force in these shops, too.

Cutters Benefited by “One Side Effect” Style

A check up of the working cards issued to cutters this season shows that, notwithstanding the depression existing in every branch of industry, the cloak and dress trades included, there are more cloak men at work this fall season than there were in the fall of 1930. Strange as it may seem this is, nevertheless, the truth. What accounts for this situation is the “one side effect,” which is very much in demand and which requires much more labor in the cutting and marking of the garment, as for the most part the marks must be made on the open and it requires two men to handle one lay. Quite a considerable number of shops such as H. Mandelbaum, Krull Bros., Carmel Bros., Carmel & Paul, and even plie fabric firms, such as Siegel & Alenoff, Philip Schilansky and a host of others, were obliged to put on additional men in order to meet the requirements.

Cheap Dress Houses Busy

After Stoppage

A survey of shops made by business agents and controllers shows that most of the dress houses operating in full force are those producing the cleaner line of merchandise, the $4.00, $5.00, and $6.75 firms. As an example we may point to such firms as the Grayside Dress, Platt Bros., Character Dress, Lustberg & Lifshitz, Transite, and the like. This may be accounted for by the fact that the cheapest type of dress is very much in demand. This, of course, is to be attributed to the lowered consumer demand. A glimpse at the better line houses, such as Patella Gown and Samuel Flohrshelm, still further corroborates this fact.

Firm of Ben Ginsberg Compelled to Call in Cutters

The firm of Ben Ginsberg, a member of the Industrial Council, has on several occasions caused the Union to file complaints charging it with sending out work while the workers in the shop were idle. The cutters of this shop called at the office again on August 7, and informed us that all the cutters, with the exception of one, were laid off. Manager Perlmutter instructed the cutters to stay out, and communicated with the Joint Board requesting that all the workers be stopped off. Subsequently, Perlmutter, together with the chief clerk of the Industrial Council, visited the firm and warned it that, unless all the cutters were put back to work and definite assurance is given that no work will be sent out in the future before the inside workers are fully supplied, the outside contractors as well as the inside workers would not return to work. The firm, thereupon, agreed to put all the cutters back to work and the stoppage was called off.

Two New Cutting Rooms Unionized

Several additional cutting departments were recently unionized, among them the Character Dress, employing seven cutters; most of whom were either dropped members or non-union workers. These cutters only a few weeks ago were working under conditions arbitrarily decided upon by the firm. The office succeeded in stopping the Character Dress cutters from work, and, after a stoppage of a day, the firm agreed to a forty-hour week and to raise the men to the regular scale of wages by gradual increases of $6.00 within four weeks and the balance within a year.

This settlement created quite a discussion at the last membership meeting. One of the seven cutters, William Zwobvon, expressed the opinion that if the cutters were kept out longer on strike, the firm would have granted the underscaled men the full scale of wages immediately. Zwobvon also appeared before the Executive Board on Thursday, August 6th, and requested the Board not to sanction the settlement, stating that it was his opinion that the settlement made by Brother Ochynsky was premature and had they stayed out another day or so, the firm would have been compelled to grant the full concession.

The Executive Board, however, upon the recommendation of Manager Samuel Perlmutter, approved the settlement made by the office.

Manager Samuel Perlmutter emphasized the fact that the firms against which Local 10 is now carrying on fights operate cutting departments only, and that it is, therefore, much more difficult to obtain union standards from them than from manufacturers employing full staffs of workers. Most of these firms are besides “protected” by underworld factors. He further stated that he admires the spirit and enthusiasm manifested by some of the men at the meeting. He is convinced, however, that in this case a protracted strike would prove as disastrous to the men involved in it as some of the protracted strikes in the past which were led by Communist adventurers.

Organization Work Continued

As the cheaper houses in the Dress trade are now working almost in full force, Local 10 is continually following up the dress cutting departments, con- (Continued on next page)
The Month in Local 10

(Continued from page 19)

centrating all efforts upon unionizing them.

Dress cutters are, therefore, called upon to keep in touch with the office, and they are assured that whatever information they might give the Union in aid of the organization of their cutting departments will be kept in strict confidence. It is through such information received from our members employed in the non-union cutting rooms, that the office has succeeded in establishing union standards in a large number of shops in which hundreds of cutters are employed.

Cloak and Dress Joint Board Organization Departments Established for the Season

As usual the Joint Boards engage in organization work at the beginning of each season. The Cloak Joint Board has already decided this season upon a budget to finance its organization work. Brother H. Freed has been assigned to supervise the Organization Department, and has succeeded in the past few weeks in unionizing a number of new shops.

Among the new large shops unionized in the last few weeks are Stroock & Co., 495 7th Avenue, employing seven cutters, and Leon Lias, 138 S. Broadway, employing six cutters.

The Dress Joint Board is also forging ahead with its organization campaign, particularly against the jobbers, as a result of many stoppages in contracting shops, several important jobbers were made to sign agreements with the Union.

300 Cutters Approve Demands Submitted

A large attendance of cutters was present at the meeting held on August 3, at which the demands of the Union to be submitted to the miscellaneous employers, particularly of the underwear industry, were discussed.

Manager Samuel Perlmutter gave a detailed report of the conference held with a group of prominent underwear manufacturers, among them J. M. Levine, employing about 100 workers, Patricia, employing over 200 workers, De Gacy Underwear, Sussberg & Feinberg, Davidson Co., and many other large firms. Local 10 was represented at these lively discussions with the underwear employers by Manager Perlmutter and Brother Samuel Shore represented No. 42.

At this meeting Brother Perlmutter made clear that Local 10 will stand by the miscellaneous cutters very determinedly to obtain for them the five-day week. Among the demands taken up at and approved by this meeting was the five-day week and a minimum scale of $50 for the cutters and of $30 for assistant cutters. A lively discussion, in which many members participated, followed. Shore also delivered a very interesting address, and the enthusiasm displayed by the members was sincere and earnest.

The following are the members appointed by Vice Chairman Joel Abramowitz to serve on the conference committee: Henry Sapkowitz, Morris Bubitsky, and Alfred Neuborn.

Sub-Committee of Underwear Manufacturers to Consider Union Demands

As a result of the conference held at the Pennsylvania Hotel, on Tuesday, August 11, between the underwear employers and the Union, at which Local 10 was represented by Samuel Perlmutter, Phillips Oretsky, Moe Follman, Henry Sapkowitz, Morris Bubitsky and Alfred Neuborn, a sub-committee of the employers was selected to meet the Union group to consider the demands made by the Union. A conference between these sub-committees was held on Monday, August 17, at which the demands of Local 10 respecting scales of wages, hours and other points were discussed at length. Manager Perlmutter made it clear that Local 10 is very much determined to establish a five-day and 42 hour week and also to obtain the minimum wage of $50 in the underwear shops.

After a few hours of discussion, the employers represented by Ben De Gacy, Mr. Sussberg, Mr. Feinberg, Mr. Wolf of Patricia Underwear, and Mr. Davidson, declared that they would take up this matter with their members and would later inform the Union of their decision. In the meantime, Local 62, in conjunction with Local 10, is making all necessary preparations in the event a general strike becomes the only means through which they might obtain these demands.

A meeting of the Miscellaneous Branch will be called as soon as reports of importance are available.

Discharge of Cutter Submitted For Arbitration

The firm of Halldor & Hessel, 100 Madison Ave., discharged cutter Alex Zigler after he had worked in this shop for seven weeks. Brother Moe Follman, upon the complaint of the cutter in question, visited the firm several times but did not succeed in reinstating him, the firm stating that on a number of occasions Zigler had made mistakes and that they had reached the point where they could not trust him at the cutting table any longer.

Brother Perlmutter later visited the shop, and when the firm appeared to show an attitude of indifference, ordered the cutters of the shop to stop work. A day later, Brother Follman was informed by the firm that they were ready to straighten out the matter but still insisted that the cutter was incompetent.

Manager Perlmutter again visited the shop, and, after negotiating for some time, finally agreed upon arbitration, there being a clause in the agreement that the firm could not make any lockouts and that the Union is not to make any stoppages. The case was finally submitted to Dr. Henry Moskowitz for arbitration. At this writing, the decision is still pending.

It is interesting to note that the firm of Halldor & Hessel has been conducting a non-union shop for the past 25 years, and it was only a few months ago that the Union succeeded in signing up an agreement with them, mainly through the efforts of the cutters.

Cutters Again Warned Against Overtime

At the last meeting of the Executive Board quite a few cutters were charged with working overtime in shops where there was room for more cutters. These men were severely fined.

Cutters are, therefore, requested to refrain from working any overtime before an investigation had been made by the office with regard to room for additional cutters.

ATTENTION

CUTTERS OF LOCAL 10

The meetings for the following month will take place in the order, as herein arranged:

1. Regular Membership Meeting, MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 1931
2. Regular Membership Meeting, MONDAY, SEPT. 14, 1931
3. Regular Membership Meeting, MONDAY, SEPT. 28, 1931

All the above meetings are to be held in ARLINGTON HALL, 23 ST. Marks Place, at 7:30 P. M.

Cutters are urged to attend these meetings without fail. Books will be stamped signifying attendance and the $1.00 fine for non-attendance will be strictly enforced.