

ILGWU NEWS-HISTORY

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION ISSUE

THE ERA OF THE SWEATSHOP

CHAPTER 1

UP TO 1900

ILGWU IS BORN

52nd Congress Urged To Prohibit Commerce In 'Sweated' Garments

WASHINGTON, Jan. 20, 1893—The Committee on Manufactures today called on the 52nd Congress to enact legislation which "with least interference with the business of the citizen, and least exercise of Federal jurisdiction will effectually prevent interstate commerce in articles of clothing or personal wear made under unhealthy conditions."

The committee found that conditions in the tenement sweat shops are growing worse. "The proportion of female labor," it notes, "arises to a much larger proportion than in the first contractors' shops, and child labor is generally used, and as to wages they average from 25 to 33½ per cent less than in the larger shops, and as to hours there is practically no limit, except the endurance of the employee, the work not merely being paid for by the task, but the task so adjusted as practically to drive from the shop each employee who is not willing to work the limit of physical endurance."

15 in One Room

By comparison with the home-workers, however, the committee found the lot of the tenement house shop worker enviable. The tenement shop is a subcontracting establishment in a tenement house, employing generally six to 15 "sweating" employees working in one of the flat's rooms which has been converted into a shop. "The other large room of the flat is the domestic headquarters of the 'sweater,' his living, sleeping, and cooking arrangements overflowing

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3,500 in Boston Strike Against 50% Wage Cut

BOSTON, Sept. 20, 1894—Thirty-five hundred coatmakers struck today for higher wages, the abolishment of the piece system and a nine-hour day. But few of the contractors had absolutely refused the demands, but the men thought they only wanted to delay to prepare for a harder fight, and so decided to bring the issue at once. Wages have been cut on an average of 50 per cent during the past year, and the result of the recent strike in New York caused the men to attempt the enforcement of their demands.

—NEW YORK TIMES

Cloakmakers' Rally to Protest Slaying of Hazleton, Pa., Miners

NEW YORK, Sept. 17, 1897—Cloakmakers are expected to overflow the great hall at Cooper Union tonight to protest the brutal killing of striking miners in Hazleton, Pa., by hired henchmen of the mine owners, and to express their solidarity with the strikers. Doors will be opened early to accommodate the crowds coming directly from the shops.

Seven Cloak Unions At Convention - Aim To Unite Nation's Garment Workers - Dues Stamps and Labels Issued - Vote To Join AFL - Minutes of Historic Meeting

NEW YORK, June 3, 1900—The first national convention of Cloakmakers, called by the United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers, No. 1 of New York and Vicinity, was held on Sunday, June 3, 1900, at Labor Lyceum, 64 East 4th Street, New York City. At 10 A.M. the meeting was called to order by B. Braff.

After considerable deliberation a motion to form an International Union was unanimously carried. It was moved and seconded, the name of this organization shall be "International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union."

The following temporary officers were elected: B. Braff, of New York, Chairman, and M. Silverman, of Baltimore, Secretary. The temporary chairman in his opening address declared that the Cloakmakers of New York had come to the conclusion that, in order to improve the condition of the working people in the trade, it is imperative that besides having local organizations in their respective cities the Cloakmakers should be united the whole country over. To this end the convention has been called by the New Yorkers.

After the chairman had concluded his remarks, credentials were presented and the following delegates were seated:

Cloakmakers' Protective Union of Philadelphia—Goldberg and Solat.

United Cloak Pressers of Philadelphia—Schwartz and Schweiger.

Cloakmakers' Union of Baltimore—Silverman.

United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers No. 1 of New York and Vicinity—Braff, Grossman and Lubner.

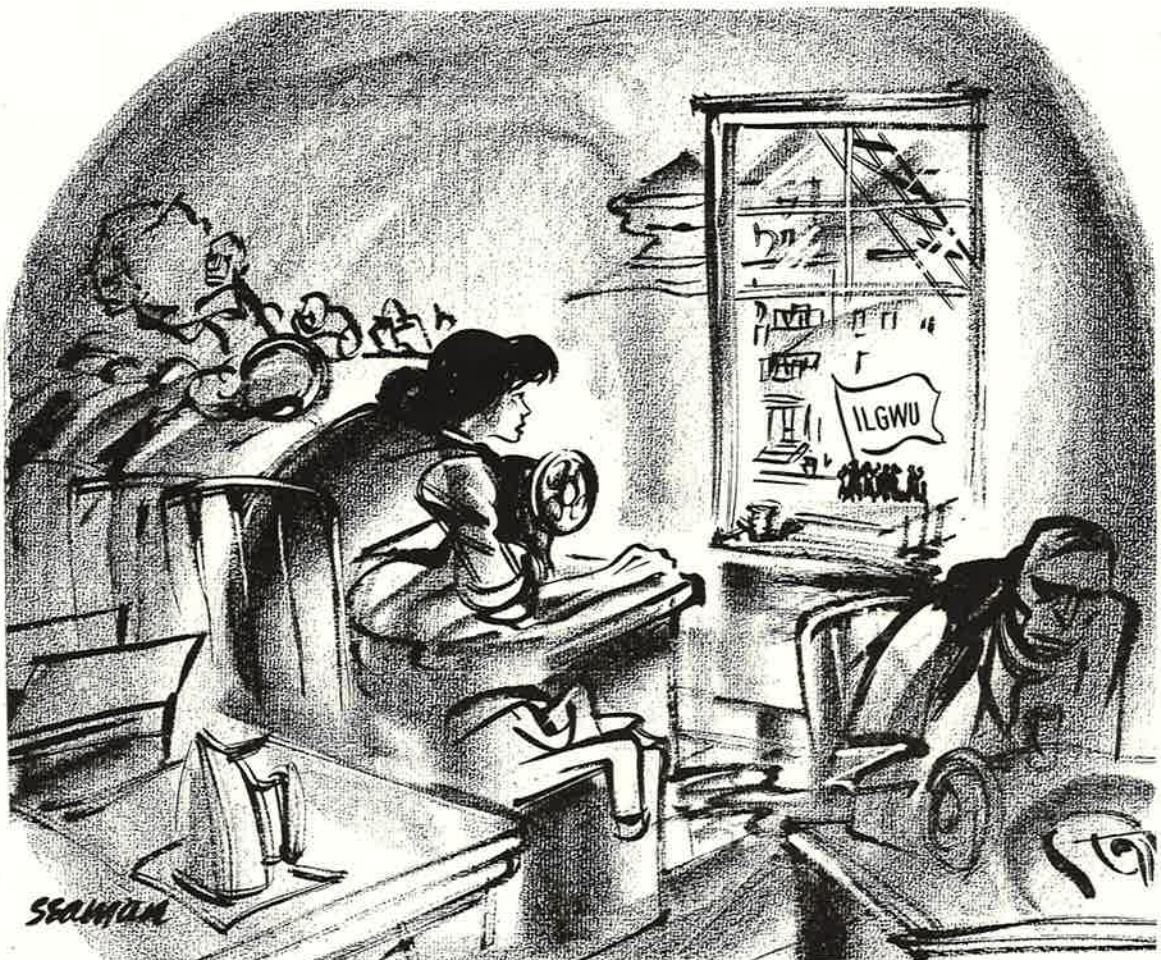
Newark Cloakmakers' Union—Leibovits (2 delegates absent).

Skirt Makers' Union of New York—Pulman and London.

The meeting then proceeded with the nomination and election of permanent chairman and

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"Hope"



Walkout Called by Philadelphia Union

PHILADELPHIA, March 24, 1899—The Executive Committee of the Garment Workers' Union tonight ordered a strike of the 6,000 garment makers of this city, beginning tomorrow at noon. The purpose of the strike is to secure the abolition of sub-contracting, as well as to secure higher wages and increased rates.

A Striking Committee was appointed tonight to devise plans to conduct the strike and to station pickets near the shops to induce any non-union or new workers from going to work. It is expected that the strike will affect nearly every establishment in the city. The strikers claim that a more opportune time for a strike could not be chosen, as there is a rush of work in all directions and the contractors will have difficulty getting hands.

—NEW YORK TIMES

Attention, Cloakmakers!

NEW YORK, Jan. 28, 1898—Working hours for inside shops henceforth will be from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. only.

Working hours for outside shops will be from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.

All cloakmakers are expected to observe strictly this new union rule.

UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CLOAKMAKERS

UNION'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Birth of the ILGWU

(Continued from Page 1)

Secretary of the convention. Brother Goldberg, of Philadelphia, was duly elected chairman and Brother Braff of New York, Secretary.

Brother J. Barondess greeted the convention. In his speech he demonstrated the importance of an International Union and declared that at the first convention a corner-stone would be laid for the sacred edifice of unity in the cloak-making trade, and he expressed hope that this enterprise would bear good fruit in the future.

The first point was next taken up. The delegates of the Philadelphia Protective Union reported that they were instructed in favor of an International Union. United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers of New York reported that they numbered from three to four thousand members in good standing, and that they were instructed in favor of an international union.

Cloak Pressers of Philadelphia, that they are well organized, have no instructions. Baltimore Cloak Makers Union, instructed in favor of forming an International Union. Skirt Makers of New York and Newark Cloakmakers Union, instructed in favor of an International.

At 12:30 recess was taken. At 2 P.M. the convention reconvened. A credential was presented from Brownsville Cloakmakers for delegate Ginsburg, who was duly admitted.

By Bernard Braff

First Secretary-Treasurer, ILGWU

NEW YORK, (Special)—In the spring the United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers of New York sent a call for a convention to the various organizations throughout the country, representing those trades which come under our jurisdiction.

Lack of unity among the ladies' garment workers in the various sections of the country made it possible for the manufacturers to view without fear every effort on the part of their employees to increase wages, to throw off some particularly odious condition of employment or to gain some recognition of their rights.

In answer to the call of the New York Cloakmakers' Union, there met in that city 11 delegates. In a one-day session an executive board was elected, a label was adopted, but not a constitution.

We hope to organize the great mass of toilers in our industry, to implant in them a conception of and love for trade unionism and trade union principles.

—AMERICAN FEDERATIONIST

Moved, seconded, and carried, each local shall be taxed \$10.00 for a preliminary fund. In the future due stamps shall be provided by the Executive Board of the International for all locals, and the locals shall pay the International for the stamps at the rate of one cent a piece. These stamps shall be sold by the locals to their members as weekly due stamps.

Moved, seconded and carried to issue a label. The Executive Board instructed to attend to this.

Moved, seconded and carried, that all unions in the ladies' garment trade shall be eligible to admission.

Resolved by a unanimous vote to join the American Federation of Labor. The question in regard to an organizer left to the Executive Board.

Moved, seconded and carried, to call upon the labor periodicals and request them to publish all reports and announcements of the International Union.

Officers Elected

Nomination for election of officers was next proceeded with. Elected: H. Grossman, New York, president; B. Braff, New York, secretary and treasurer. Brother Braff volunteered to serve his term without any compensation and promised to furnish the necessary books. A vote of thanks was unanimously carried.

Executive Board: Silverman of Baltimore; Solat, Schweiger and Schwartz of Philadelphia and Leibovits of Newark. Resolved, that the President be authorized to require security of the Secretary whenever in his judgment it may become necessary.

Moved, seconded, and carried, to request the United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers of New York to permit the Secretary-Treasurer, Braff, to have a desk in their office. Braff, Silverman and London were appointed a committee with power to draw a set of resolutions.

Motion carried, to submit the actions of the convention to a referendum vote of the locals composing the International Union, and to request them to send in their reports of their votes upon all subjects decided by this convention, not later than within fourteen days.

Closing exercises then followed. All delegates expressed great satisfaction with the formation of the International Union and pledged their best efforts to the advancement of the new body.

The United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers of New York tendered to the delegates an invitation to an entertainment. Amid universal enthusiasm the convention adjourned sine die.

—MINUTES OF JUNE 3, 1900 MEETING

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

Certificate of Affiliation

To Herman Grossman, Samuel Silverman, Jacob Lebowitz, Bernard Braff, Samuel Solat, Joseph Schwartz, Ralph Schweiger.

International Ladies Garment Workers Union... provided, that the said Union do conform to the Constitution, Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR...

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

In Witness Whereof, We have subscribed our Names and affixed the Seal of the American Federation of Labor...

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: Sam L. Gompers, President; James P. Sullivan, 1st Vice-President; James P. Sullivan, 2nd Vice-President; John Mitchell, 3rd Vice-President; John Mitchell, 4th Vice-President; John Mitchell, 5th Vice-President; John Mitchell, Treasurer; Frank Morrison, Secretary.

Police Club Paraders Before Permit Comes

NEW YORK, Oct. 12, 1894—The parade of the striking cloakmakers began with something like a riot last night. In the disturbance the police of the Madison Street Station used their clubs freely and with vigor. More than one striker was removed to neighboring drug stores and doctors' offices to have wounds from clubs dressed.

Joseph Barondess, the strikers' leader, was taken to the Elizabeth Street Police Station, but was released.

March Was Announced

It had been announced that several thousand strikers, men and women, would form in Rutgers Place last evening and march to Union Square, where a mass meeting was to be held. It was about 6 o'clock when the cloakmakers began to assemble.

At that time a Roundsman and six patrolmen of the Madison Street Station were on hand, and they ordered the gathering to disperse. The strikers refused to do so. The Roundsman ordered his men to draw their clubs and clear the square. Then a scene of confusion followed. The strikers were clubbed. As many as could escape fled, closely followed by the policemen, into Essex and Division Streets, where they ran into hallways and saloons.

Cops Fire Revolvers

Leader Joseph Barondess, who was in the committee room at 412 Grand Street, was summoned. He reached Rutgers Square, where the strikers again endeavored to form a line, just as Capt. Grant and a squad of police from the Madison Street Station arrived on the scene. Policemen again drew their clubs when the strikers refused to disperse, and a conflict with the crowd took place. Policeman No. 720 fired his revolver into the air, and sev-

eral other policemen followed his example.

Barondess forced his way through the crowd and urged the police to cease their clubbing. He says that Policeman No. 2,227, who was whacking a striker, replied, with an oath: "I'll kill them!"

The square was nearly cleared for the second time when Joseph Bowlofsky arrived with a permit from Superintendent Byrnes allowing the parade to take place.

—NEW YORK TIMES

Militant UBC Reports All Strikes Victorious

NEW YORK, Oct. 7, 1897—An unbroken record of victorious strikes is reported by the United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers. Within the past week, union agreements have marked the successful conclusion of strikes at Silberman Brothers, involving some 300 cloakmakers; at Bailin and Co. on Division St.; and at the Danziger, Horowitz, Scheier, Belin and Lapidus firms.

In the face of the militant fighting spirit displayed by the cloakmakers, the bosses have had to grant many of the workers' just demands. As a result, all of the strikes that were conducted by the UBC during the year have been won.

—DAILY FORWARD

Tailor's Insanity Laid To Smoking, No Work

NEW YORK, Sept. 3, 1897—Charles Scheyer, who lives with his wife and four children and his father at 25 Lewis Street, became insane early yesterday morning and was taken to Bellevue Hospital. He was so violent that it took the combined efforts of his wife, father, and several neighbors to prevent him from throwing himself out of the window. Scheyer is a tailor, and has a little shop in Manhattan Street. Lately he has received little work from the firms by whom he had been employed. This fact, together with excessive cigarette smoking, is said to have been the cause of his derangement. When he was taken away he shouted at the top of his voice: "With God's help I will be back with you all in a short time."

—NEW YORK TIMES

AT FOUNDING OF GARMENT UNION



SWEATSHOP

The horrors of homework and the heartless exploitation that flourishes in the industrial Gehennas of New York's East Side and the slums of other great American cities

make children old before their time and cut short the lives of working men and women. Society must rid itself of this cancer.



"The capitalist who gives out work to be done at home has an interest in retaining a great many persons on his books; he is tempted to give each of them a little employment occasionally and play them off one against another; and this he can easily do because they do not know one another, and cannot arrange concerted action." — ALFRED MARSHALL



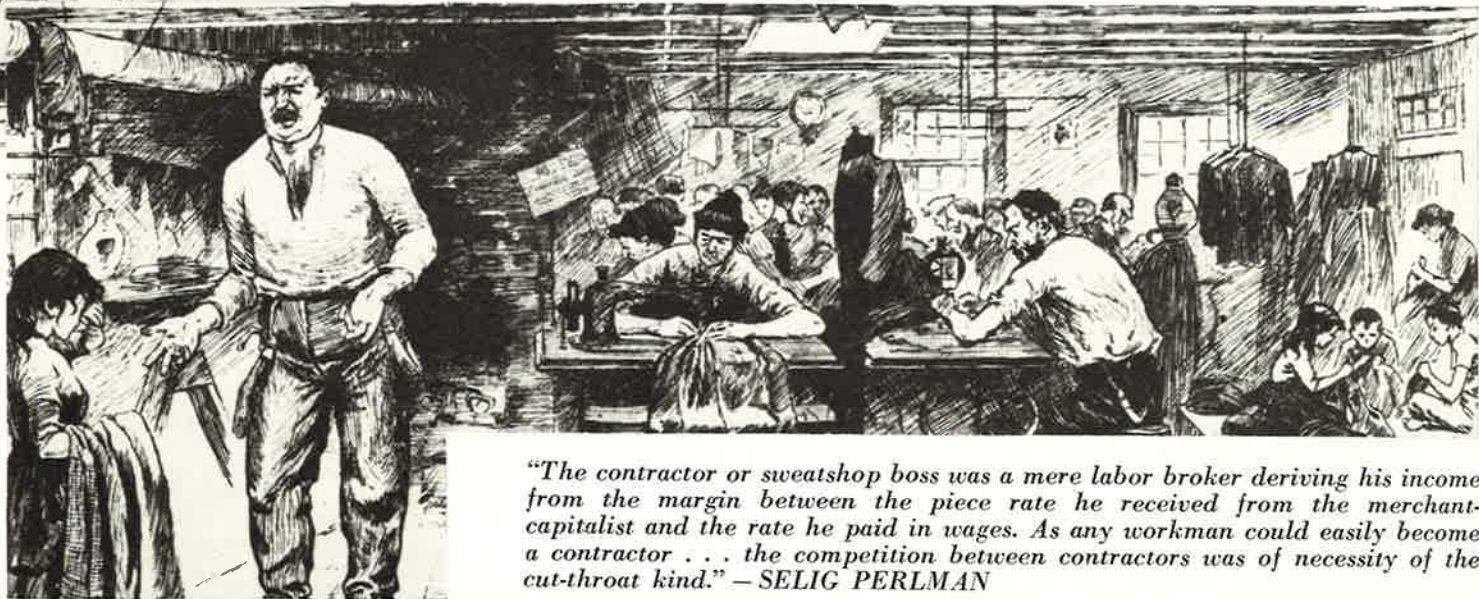
"... earnings barely sufficient to sustain existence; hours of labor such as to make the lives of the workers periods of almost ceaseless toil, hard and unlovely to the last degree; sanitary conditions injurious to the health of the persons employed and dangerous to the public..."

— HOUSE OF LORDS COMMITTEE ON SWEATING



"Some of the sweating trades . . . are said to be maintained by the economy which can be effected by employers who use no expensive plant or machinery, and who are able readily to increase or diminish the number of their employees so as to keep pace with the demands of some 'season' trade . . ."

— JOHN A. HOBSON



"The contractor or sweatshop boss was a mere labor broker deriving his income from the margin between the piece rate he received from the merchant-capitalist and the rate he paid in wages. As any workman could easily become a contractor . . . the competition between contractors was of necessity of the cut-throat kind." — SELIG PERLMAN



"Human beings confined in small, unventilated rooms inevitably lose vigor; the process of oxidation of the blood being checked, the process of making blood . . . is checked. With foul air, therefore, a smaller amount of muscular force is generated from the same amount of food . . . Moreover, in close rooms,

unventilated and uncleaned, the germs of certain diseases . . . are preserved and readily communicated, to the impairment of health and the destruction of life." — FRANCIS A. WALKER

— Pictures from LESLIE'S WEEKLY



First-Hand Picture Of Sweatshop Life

By Jacob A. Riis

Crusading journalist and reformer, battled against the evils of slum living in New York's East Side.

NEW YORK, 189 —Take the Second Avenue Elevated Railroad at Chatham Square and ride up half a mile through the sweaters' district. Every open window of the big tenements, that stand like a continuous brick wall on both sides of the way, gives you a glimpse of one of these shops as the train speeds by.

Men and women bending over their machines, or ironing clothes at the window, half-naked. Proprietaries do not count on the East Side; nothing counts that cannot be converted into hard cash. The road is like a big gangway through an endless work-room where vast multitudes are forever laboring. . . . Men stagger along the sidewalk groaning under heavy burdens of unsewn garments, or enormous black bags stuffed full of finished coats and trousers.

Up two flights of dark stairs, three, four, with new smells of cabbage, of onions, of frying fish, on every landing, whirring sewing machines behind closed doors betraying what goes on within, to the door that opens to admit the bundle and the man. A sweater, this, in a small way. Five men and a woman, two young girls, not fifteen, and a boy who says unasked that he is fifteen, and lies in saying it, are at the machines sewing.

The boys and the woman alone look up at our entrance. The girls shoot sidelong glances, but at a warning look from the man with the bundle they tread their machines more energetically than ever.

Learners Get \$2 to \$5

They are "learners," all of them, says the woman, who proves to be the wife of the boss, and have "come over" only a few weeks ago. She is disinclined to talk at first, but a few words in her own tongue from our guide set her fears, whatever they are, at rest, and she grows almost talkative.

There are ten machines in the room; six are hired at two dollars a month. For the two smoke-begrimed rooms, one somewhat larger than ordinary, they pay \$20 a month. She does not complain,

though "times are not what they were, and it costs a good deal to live." Eight dollars a week for the family of six and two boarders. How do they do it? She laughs, as she goes over the bill-of-fare, at the silly question: Bread, 15 cents a day, of milk two quarts a day at four cents a quart; one pound of meat for dinner at 12 cents, butter one pound a week at "eight cents a quarter of a pound." Coffee, potatoes, and pickles complete the list.

Coal at ten cents a small pail . . . milk at four and five cents a quart, "according to quality." The sanitary authorities know what that means, know how miserably inadequate is the fine of fifty or a hundred dollars for the murder done in cold blood by the wretches who poison the babes of these tenements with the stuff that is half water, or swill.

Cloak Wages Down

Turning the corner into Hester Street, we stumble upon a nest of cloakmakers in their busy season. Six months of the year the cloakmaker is idle, or nearly so. Now is his harvest. Seventy-five cents a cloak, all complete, is the price in this shop. The cloak is of cheap plush, and might sell for eight or nine dollars over the store-counter.

Seven dollars is the weekly wage of this man with wife and two children, and nine dollars and a half rent to pay per month. A boarder pays about a third of it. There was a time when he made ten dollars a week and thought himself rich. But wages have come down fearfully in the last two years. Think of it: "come down" to this.

The other cloakmakers aver that they can make as much as \$12 a week, when they are employed, by taking their work home and sewing till midnight. One exhibits his account book with a Ludlow Street sweater. It shows that he and his

partner, working on first-class garments for a Broadway house in the four busiest weeks of the season, made together from \$15.15 to \$19.20 a week by striving from 6 A.M. to 11 P.M., that is to say, from \$7.58 to \$9.60 each.

—"HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES"

HOME, SWEAT, HOME



—Jacob A. Riis

The living room is the workshop.

Contractor Is at Center Of the Sweating System

By John R. Commons

America's pioneer labor economist and historian who taught at University of Wisconsin.

WASHINGTON, 1900—The term "sweating," or "sweating system," originally denoted a system of subcontract, wherein the work is let out to contractors to be done in small shops or homes. "In practice," says the report of the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics, "sweating consists of the farming out by competing manufacturers to competing contractors of the material for garments, which in turn is distributed among competing men and women to be made up."

The system to be contrasted with the sweating system is the "factory system," wherein the manufacturer employs his own workmen, under the management of his own foreman or superintendent, in his own building, with steam, electric, or water power.

In the sweating system the foreman becomes a contractor, with his own small shop and foot-power machine. In the factory system the workmen are congregated where they can be seen by the factory inspectors and where they can organize or develop a common understanding. In the sweating system they are isolated and unknown. . . .

The position of the contractor or sweater now in the business in American cities is peculiarly that of an organizer and employer of immigrants. The man best fitted to be a contractor is the man who is well acquainted with his neighbors, who is able to speak the languages of several classes of immigrants, who can easily persuade his neighbors or their wives and children to work for him, and who in this way can obtain the cheapest help.

Housewives Called

During the busy season, when the work doubles, the number of people employed increases in the same proportion. All the contractors are agents and go around among the people. Housewives, who formerly worked at the trade and abandoned it after marriage, are called into service for an increased price of a dollar or two a week. Men who have engaged in other occupations, such as small business and peddling, and are out of the business most of the year, are marshalled into service by the contractor, who knows all of them and

can easily look them up and put them in as competitors by offering them a dollar or two a week more than they are getting elsewhere. . . .

Usually when work comes to the contractor from the manufacturer and is offered to his employees for a smaller price than has previously been paid, the help will remonstrate and ask to be paid the full price. Then the contractor tells them, "I have nothing to do with the price. The price is made for me by the manufacturer. I have very little to say about the price." That is, he cuts himself completely loose from any responsibility to his employees as to how much they are to get for their labor.

The help do not know the manufacturer. They cannot register their complaint with the man who made the price for their labor. The contractor, who did not make the price for their labor, claims that it is of no use to complain to him. So that however much the price for labor goes down there is no one responsible for it. . . .

Cut-Throat Competition

There is always a cut-throat competition among contractors. A contractor feels more dependent than any of his employees. He is always speculating on the idea of making a fortune by getting more work from the manufacturer than his neighbor and by having it made cheaper. Usually when he applies for work in the inside shop he comes in, hat in hand, very much like a beggar.

He seems to feel the utter uselessness of his calling in the business. Oftentimes the contractor is forced to send work back because he cannot make it under the conditions on which he took it, yet he does not dare to refuse the offer for fear the manufacturer will not give him more of his work. So he tries to figure it down by every device, and yet, perhaps, in the end is forced to send it back.

The futility of directing the energies of reform solely against the contractor may be seen in New York in one branch of the clothing trade, that of ladies' ready-made garments, including cloaks and so-called "tailor-made suits."

Already in this line of manufacture fully 75 per cent of the product has passed out of the hands of contractors into those of "manufacturers." Ten years ago probably 90 per cent of women's clothing was made by people who worked for contractors, while now only about 25 per cent of the trade are working for contractors.

Manufacturers' Increase

But so far as the people employed in the business are concerned there has not been any material change for the better, since these small manufacturers retain all the abuses of long hours, small pay, and insanitary shops. The way in which this new class of manufacturers has arisen in the clothing trade and has driven out of business the large manufacturer on Broadway who sent his work out to contractors is one of the remarkable developments of this remarkable trade.

These former large manufacturers who have abandoned the ready-made business have gone into the retail or custom trade and have set up model "inside" factories on Broadway, where they cater to the more well-to-do purchasers. Small manufacturers on Division and other streets have absorbed the former wholesale trade. . . .

The saving by this small man as against the large cloak manufacturer is in the following ways: he does not have to pay a high-priced designer, since he designs his own patterns; he does not have to pay a superintendent, since he manages his own business; nor does he pay high rents, since he is usually located in the poor quarter of the city. He can get labor as cheap as any contractor because he runs his shop in the same method when he becomes a manufacturer as he ran it when he was a contractor; that is, his shop is open day and night, and people can work as many hours as they wish.

—REPORT OF THE INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION, VOLUME XV, 1901

HEART OF SWEATSHOP AREA



Corner of Essex and Hester Streets

—Scribner's

HOOPS, MY DEARS



— After Lebron and Clouzot

Dressmaking in the crinoline days of 1865.

Cellar Deathtraps Shock State Sup't

NEW YORK, Nov. 21, 1900—The truly sordid and sad state of affairs in the women's garment shops of New York City is finally being brought to the attention of state officials in Albany as the result of a tour of inspection made by State License Superintendent Daniel O'Leary this past week.

Workers toiling in dark, humid, stuffy basements on Division St., children of eight years and women, many of them far from well, sweating their lives away in these hell-holes were some of the scenes that shocked the Superintendent on his New York tour.

O'Leary is investigating charges of factory law violations leveled by the Cloakmakers' Union against these East Side death traps. He was accompanied on his tour by Herman Grossman and A. Rothman of the union.

Stores on Division St. were found to be operating factories in their unlit, unheated basements. Even in places where the most expensive garments were being made, the superintendent found workers huddled over a smoky kerosene lamp.

In many cases, O'Leary stated, he could do nothing because the law does not forbid working in the dark. But in other cases where existing statutes were being violated, he sent the workers home and sealed the factory. Many employers were

summoned to the factory inspector's office.

Daniel O'Leary was so terribly shaken by what he saw that he has asked the union for help and advice. Only four inspectors now serve the whole city and they are powerless, he said, against these sweat shop bosses who always find ways and means of evading the letter of the law.

In many cases the law makes matters even worse, O'Leary stated, citing the bill signed by Gov. Theodore Roosevelt two years ago which allows special licenses to be issued to those who work in their homes for needle factories.

At the time there were about 26,000 finishers working in their homes in the vicinity of Mulberry, Mott and Elizabeth Streets, O'Leary said. But only 8,000 could obtain licenses because theirs were the only homes considered suitable for work. The others simply moved to other neighborhoods where they too became cut-throat competitors to the cloakmakers working the shops.

—DAILY FORWARD

The Sweat Shop Problem

The action of the clothing contractors of this city with reference to their workmen is not a lock-out, but it is a distinct repudiation of an agreement as to terms of employment entered into last September, and it is intended either to force a strike or compel submission to new terms more in the interest of the contractors.

A great industry in the manufacture of clothing has been built up in this city, largely on the cheap labor of poor Jews who have sought refuge here from oppression in other countries. They began with a competition which forced down the pay of others and kept down their own. The tailors and clothiers could not advantageously employ their labor directly, and it came to be exploited by a class of middle-men, or contractors, who understood their characteristics and their needs. They did work by the piece in shops or in their own homes, and were tempted to long hours by the extra pay to be made. Out of these conditions grew up what is known as the sweat-shop system.

Out of the cheap labor of this system came the growth of the business of clothing manufacture in this city, until the squalor and distress of the system were revealed and the struggle for better conditions began, with the encouragement of philanthropic persons. They wish to get rid of the long hours and the "task work," and to be paid regular wages the year through, with a ten-hour day, and for this their union is maintained.

The effect of competition at both ends—among the laborers and among the manufacturers—cannot be avoided, and what cheap labor has built up dear labor may pull down. The alternative of low wages may be no work. The problem cannot be worked out by sentiment or sympathy or by legislation. It will be better to lose something in the clothing trade than to have it flourish by the sweat-shop system, and yet, when it goes, how will it better the workmen unless they go with it?

—EDITORIAL, NEW YORK TIMES, DEC. 17, 1895.

Early Strikers Ask \$15 a Week And 10-hr. Day

By William M. Leiserson

Noted labor economist who has worked with U.S. Dept of Labor and National Labor Relations Board.

Of the purely trade union organizations the first that the immigrants of 1882 formed was the Dress and Cloak Makers' Union. It arose out of a strike of about 700 men and women in July, 1883. The New York papers made considerable comment on this first "Emigrants' Strike," as they called it.

The strikers wanted a rate of \$2.50 per day, hours to be from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. Piece work was to be arranged so that an operator might earn about \$15 a week. Prior to the strike wages had been \$5 and \$6 a week.

Nearly half of the strikers were women and they met in separate halls from the men. Delegates from unions affiliated with the Knights of Labor encouraged the strikers and promised them financial aid.

The character of the new unionists was thus described in a daily paper:

"The members of the new Cloak and Dress Makers' Assn. have never before been on a strike, and had never before taken part in labor movements. Nevertheless, the men and women who compose the union have realized all the hopes of the leaders in standing by the association and holding out against the bosses.

"There were fears that the great poverty of many of them and the wealth of the bosses, who at first stoutly declared that they would make no concessions whatever, might induce these poor people to return to their daily toil for the pittance they were receiving, but the weak ones were encouraged and now they all seem determined to stand out until their wages are raised."

The organization was completed during the strike. It became a local assembly of the Knights of Labor and also sent delegates to the Central Labor Union.

During the strike the first Cloak Manufacturers' Assn. was also formed. The purpose of this association was to fight both the contractors and the workmen. The contractors offered to strike with the cloakmakers if they would refuse to work for certain contractors who were taking out work at rates lower than the rest. No agreement was reached, however, between the strikers and the contractors.

—"HISTORY OF THE JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT IN NEW YORK CITY"

Goons Hired by Roth To Assault Strikers; Waistmakers Resolute

NEW YORK, Jan. 8, 1900—Despite assaults by hired thugs who tried to break up the strikers' meeting, over 60 waistmakers are maintaining solid picket lines at the Max Roth Co. of 54 Walker St., with only one scab remaining in the shop.

One striker was severely beaten by the company's hired goons, and the boss' brother, who seems to have had experience in using strong-arm methods, was arrested on charges of felonious assault upon strikers in another fracas.

The Max Roth strikers, who are members of the Manhattan Shirt-waistmakers Union, are receiving financial assistance from other unions.

—DAILY FORWARD

Reingold Freed; Union Cleared in 'Jamaica Affair'

NEW YORK, Dec. 15, 1892—Frank Reingold, last of the members of the United Brotherhood of Cloakmakers who were accused of conspiracy and of throwing vitriol during the Jamaica strike last year, has been freed by the Governor of New York. Reingold was jailed on a trumped-up charge of burglary.

The incident that led to the trial occurred at the Greenbaum shop located in a wood near Jamaica. It was only one outgrowth of the attempt by the manufacturers to drive a sharp wedge between the contractors and their employees.

The past year has seen a definite trend by such giants as the Meyer Jonasson firm to strip themselves of their contractors and to gather all shops.

But this January the contractors took fright and tried to show the manufacturers that they knew where their best interests lay. About 2,000 cloakmakers were locked out by some 300 contractors who soon had to call the lockout off.

Some of the manufacturers, however, ordered their contractors not to make or sign agreements with the union Blumenthal Bros. and Benjamin A. Caspary, with about 800 workers were struck for this reason.

Committee No. 1

These firms tried to escape from the union by sending their work to such out-of-town contractors as Greenbaum in Jamaica. To plug up this leak of work out of the city, the strikers formed "Committee No. 1" which was a highly disciplined group of unionists. The committee worked in secrecy because of the incessant hounding of the strikers by New York police working under Detective Burns.

Scab production at the Greenbaum shop was done largely at night. On the evening of March 9 "Committee No. 1" tried to approach the shop. For as far as two miles before they came to the shop, coming quietly through the woods, they found huge dogs chained in the area. They had in previous attempts set up a howl that warned

the scabs. This night a way had been found to eliminate the dogs.

The committee members entered the shop. In the fracas that followed, the stove on which the pressers heated their irons was overturned and its hot coals went scattering over the floor. The little daughter of Greenbaum had her foot burned.

Next day New York newspapers carried screaming headlines about strikers pouring vitriol on children in Jamaica. Fantastic pictures were concocted to scare the public.

Reingold Caught

The committee members had escaped by boarding the East New York trolley car out of Jamaica and mingling with other passengers. But the police arrested Reingold when he left the trolley because his jacket was torn and spattered with mud.

On the evening of March 10 the police raided the union offices where an executive board meeting was in progress and made additional arrests including that of Manager Joseph Baroness. Bail was set at \$10,000 for each person arrested—such a high figure that the union was able to raise bail for Baroness only. During the 10 weeks the prisoners were lodged in the Jamaica jail, numerous specially staged and provoked disturbances took place in the neighborhood of the jail, all made to appear the work of the union. These disturbances were obvious attempts to prejudice the Jamaica farmers—from whom the jury would be drawn—against the defendants.

Now with the freeing of Reingold, the union stands vindicated of the horrible charges made against it by anti-union manufacturers.

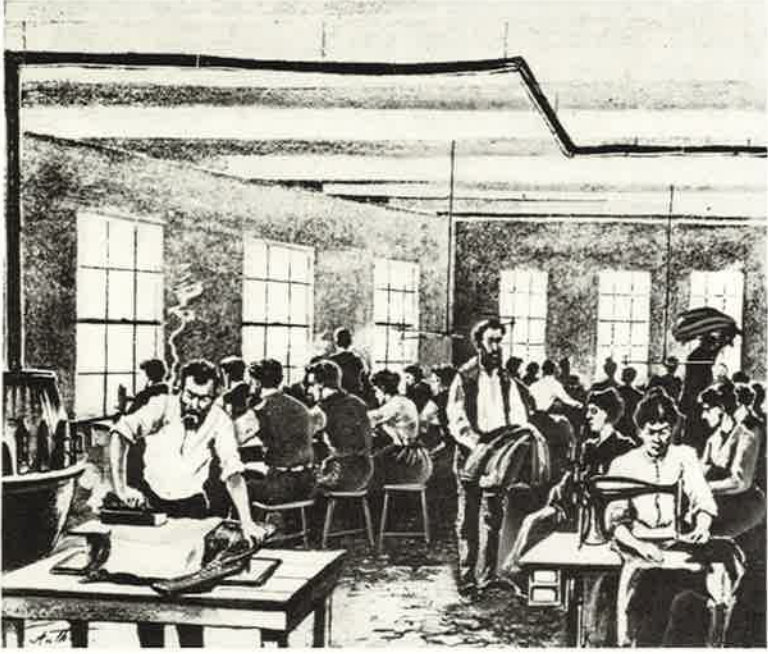
—"MEMOIRS OF A CLOAKMAKER"

A HESTER STREET SHOP



—Report, N. Y. Bureau of Statistics of Labor, 1885
Cloak shop on the top floor of 12 Hester St.

MODEL FACTORY



—“The New Metropolis”
The latest in equipment and lighting is used in this shop.

3 Rules Govern Woman's Dress In Our Society

By Thorstein Veblen

Dissident American economist who urged study of human institutions rather than abstract law as key to social understanding.

The cardinal principles of the theory of woman's dress are:

1. Expensiveness: Considered with respect to its effectiveness as clothing, apparel must be uneconomical. It must afford evidence of the ability of the wearer's economic group to pay for things that are in themselves of no use to any one concerned—to pay without getting an equivalent in comfort or in gain.

2. Novelty: Woman's apparel must afford *prima facie* evidence of having been worn but for a relatively short time, as well as, with respect to many articles, evidence of inability to withstand any appreciable amount of wear. Exceptions from this rule are such things as are of sufficient permanence to become heirlooms, and of such surpassing expensiveness as normally to be possessed only by persons of superior (pecuniary) rank. The possession of an heirloom is to be commended because it argues the practice of waste through more than one generation.

3. Ineptitude: It must afford *prima facie* evidence of incapacitating the wearer for any gainful occupation; and it should also make it apparent that she is permanently unfit for any useful effort, even after the restraint of the apparel is removed.

Within the past few years has come, and very nearly gone, a recrudescence of the element of physical comfort of the wearer, as one of the usual requirements of good form in dress. The meaning of this proposition, of course, is not what appears on its face; that seldom happens in matters of dress. It was the *show* of personal comfort that was lately imperative, and the *show* was often attained only at the sacrifice of the substance.

These three are essential and constitute the substantial norm of woman's dress, and no exigency can permanently set them aside so long as the chance of rivalry between persons in respect of wealth remains. Given the possibility of a difference in wealth, and the sway of this norm of dress is inevitable. Some spasm of sense, or sentiment, or what not, may from time to time create a temporary and local diversion in woman's apparel; but the great norm of “conspicuous waste” cannot be set aside or appreciably qualified so long as this its economic ground remains.

—POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY, NOV., 1894

Electric Machines Operate Thrice as Rapidly as Shears

NEW YORK, 1900—Cutting machines are rapidly displacing cutting with shears.

In his report this year the United States Commissioner of Labor makes the following comparisons between hand labor and machine productivity:

Cutting machines, cutting 16 thicknesses, would accomplish in 4 hours and 32.5 minutes the same amount of work that would require by hand 11 hours and 40 minutes; button holes for 100 coats require by hand 3 hours and 20 minutes, by machine, 17.5 minutes; the seams sewn in 1,000 hours by hand required only 66 hours by machine.

—Adapted, POPE: “CLOTHING INDUSTRY IN N. Y.”

Garment Workers Get Lowest Pay in Chicago Inspector Kelley Finds

CHICAGO, May 3, 1899—Florence Kelley, chief factory inspector of the State of Illinois, today told a Congressional Committee investigating the sweated industries that the manufacture of government uniforms in sweat shops should be abolished as it has been ended in Great Britain.

In describing for the committee the evils of sweating as they exist in the garment shops of Chicago she declared:

“There was an organization of the cutters in 1893 and 1894 which was broken up by the combination of 28 manufacturers. That was the only relatively strong organization in this trade, because there are no women and children in the cutting branch; they were all men. They were the most intelligent people in the trade. They had built up the organization in a year and a half, and the manufacturers broke it up like that,” she said snapping her fingers.

“I never found anyone who worked at home who made a living. Invariably, if she is a married woman, her husband keeps the family; she receives relief from the county charitable agencies or private agencies.

“I believe that the sweated trades are the most wretched that we have in Illinois. The season runs virtually in all the garment trades for three months, then comes a

Cops Arrest Wounded Indig & Berg Striker, Let Assailant Go Free

NEW YORK, Feb. 9, 1900—A striker at the Indig and Berg cloak firm was stabbed in the back and seriously wounded yesterday when he attempted, together with other strike committee members, to persuade scabs at one of the firm's contracting shops to quit and join the ranks of the strikers.

When police finally arrived, they made no attempt to apprehend the culprit who wielded the murderous knife, but instead arrested the committee of strikers!

This was even too much for the strikebreakers, who quit their jobs in protest.

—DAILY FORWARD

LODGING FOR A NIGHT



—Kenyon Cox
To save time these operators sleep on bundles in the kitchen.

Trade Expanded by Immigrant Tailors

By AB. CAHAN

Editor of the Jewish Daily Forward since it was founded in 1897.

The late Eighties and the early Nineties are connected with an important and interesting chapter in the history of the American cloak business. Hitherto in the control of German Jews, it was now beginning to pass into the hands of their Russian

Hundreds Sacrifice Rings, Brooches to Keep Strike Going

By Abraham Rosenberg
ILGWU President from 1908 to 1914.

NEW YORK, Aug. 1, 1890—Amid unforgettable scenes in which rings, watches, earrings, brooches and other personal jewelry and mementoes were piled high on the chairman's table in a matter of minutes, the cloakmakers of this city voted to continue their nine-week strike which began as a lockout.

The action was taken at a mass meeting of all strikers in the biggest hall in New York City, the New Everett Hall on East 4th St.

Earlier in the strike, when the workers realized that public opinion was with them, they fought with their lives. Not even arrests could frighten them. When one of the strike committeemen was shot down in front of a scab shop at the corner of Eldridge and Rivington Streets, the effect was just the opposite to what was intended. The workers pledged to continue the fight until victory.

After several days of negotiating, a settlement was reached and signed by Prof. Garside, acting for the cutters, and the contractor's association.

At the mass meeting Abraham Cahan and Baroness made the meaning of the settlement clear. The vote was more than 2,000 to 24 to continue the strike.

The outburst of enthusiasm was indescribable. After the uproar subsided the chairman warned there was no money to continue the strike. One of the workers immediately came up to the chairman and removing a ring from his finger placed it on the table. In the next few minutes hundreds followed his example.

—“MEMOIRS OF A CLOAKMAKER”

co-religionists, the change being effected under peculiar conditions that were destined to lead to a stupendous development of the industry.

If the average American woman is now easily the best-dressed average woman in the world, the fact is due, in a large measure, to the change I refer to.

The transition was inevitable. While the manufacturers were German Jews, their contractors, tailors, and machine operators were Yiddish-speaking immigrants from Russia or Austrian Galicia.

The German manufacturers were the pioneers of the industry in America. It was a new industry, in fact, scarcely twenty years old. Formerly, and as late as the '70's, women's cloaks and jackets were little known in the United States. Shawls were worn by the masses. What few cloaks were seen on women of means and fashion were imported from Germany.

But the demand grew. So, gradually, some German-American merchants and an American shawl firm bethought themselves of manufacturing these garments at home. The industry progressed, the newborn great Russian immigration—a child of the massacres of 1881 and 1882—bringing the needed army of tailors for it.

There was big money in the cloak business, and it would have been unnatural if some of these tailors had not, sooner or later, begun to think of going into business on their own hook. At first it was a hard struggle. The American business world was slow to appreciate the commercial possibilities which these newcomers represented, but it learned them in course of time.

—“RISE OF DAVID LEVINSKY”

Strike Forces 15% Rise From Philly Cloak Firm

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 21, 1897

—Workers at the Strawbridge and Clothier Co. have just won an outstanding victory as the result of a strike conducted by the Philadelphia Cloakmakers' Protective Union. They will return to work with a 15 per cent increase in pay.

Jacket Victory Sparked by Boy

NEW YORK, Aug. 13, 1898—The children's jacketmakers' strike is as good as ended. The first settlements were made yesterday, and one of the wits among the strikers entertained a crowd of his fellows by pointing out to them that the first agreement between a boss and the union had been signed at the same hour as the peace protocol was signed by the representatives of the United States and Spain.

The settlement presented the same scenes which attended the conclusion of every tailors' strike, but there was a novel feature in addition, and that was the role played in them by the so-called boy agitator of the East Side.

Harry Gladstone, who is about 15 years old, is a machine tender or "basting puller" in a sweatshop. He has been in this country eight years, only three of which he spent in the Chrystie St. Grammar School. Still he speaks English fluently enough, and prefers that tongue to his native Yiddish in addressing the boys, whom he is fond of referring to as his "fellow workmen."

One Member 12 Years Old

His prominence in the children's jacketmakers' strike was due to the initiative he took in organizing the boys and girls of the trade. The union he founded is 75 strong, the youngest boy in it being 12 years old. Asked about the age of the biggest girl in his organization, Harry said with a smile which looked 10 years older than himself: "We have very big girls, but they won't tell you their right age."

The average machine tender, or "turner," or "basting puller," gets from \$2 to \$3 a week, and the strike was for an advance of the scale of wages.

"What we wanted was \$1 per machine," said Harry. "While the operators are workin' on them jackets we must keep turnin' the sleeves and the flaps and the collars, and sometimes three or four operators commence to holler at us, so that we get mixed up and nearly go crazy tryin' to attend to them all. But the boss, he don't care; he pays us the same. That won't go. We want a dollar for each machine and no more'n nine hours a day. It's enough, ain't it?"

"Sure!" put in one of the group of boys of Harry's union, who had been following their leader's talk breathlessly.

"Shut up! Let Harry talk to the reporter," whispered the others. "He is pannin' it out nice, ain't he, Mosey?"

Outlines Today's Address

The next meeting of the Machine Tenders' Union will take place this afternoon at 78 Essex St., the headquarters of three of the striking tailor organizations. Young Gladstone will be the principal speaker, and when asked to give an outline of today's address, he said modestly that there was nothing to tell, that he was not much of a speaker, and that his "fellow workmen" were too worried about their bread and butter to have a mind for speeches, anyhow.

"I'll tell them to stick together and to think about their poor fathers and mothers they have got to support. I'll speak to them of the schools and how they can't go there to get their education, but must spend from 14 to 15 hours a day in a pesthole, pulling bastings, turning collars and sleeves and running around as if they were crazy.

"If you don't look out for yourselves, who will? You have not had time to grow up, to get strength for work, when you must spend your dearest days in the sweatshop.

Think of the way your mothers kiss you, how they love you, and how they shed tears over you, because they see their dear boys treated like slaves.

"Try to make a few dollars for them at least. Then you will come home and kiss your mammas and say, 'Don't cry, dear mamma. Here, I've brought you some money for rent, or for a Sabbath meal.' The only way to get the bosses to pay us good wages is to stick together, so let us be true to our union."

As he spoke, his voice now and then trembled with emotion, and his deep, dark eyes shone. He gave the impression of one who meant every word he said. There was not a trace of affectation about his manner, and the expression of his face bore that stamp of melancholy which is characteristic of much older representatives of his race.

—THE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER

PIN MONEY



—John Leech in Punch, 1854

Demand Congress Ban Unsanitary Garments

(Continued from Page 1)

into the work room—employees whom he boards, and who eat at their work and sleep on the goods, frequently completing the intimate connection of living and manufacturing conditions."

The homeworkers, however, are generally entire families, supplemented by sub-tenants. "The conditions of squalor and filth," the committee reports, "are such as in a large proportion of the cases to make even inspection impossible except by one hardened to the process."

Among homeworkers, "the women are more numerous than the men, and the children are as numerous as either. The work is carried on in the one, two or three rooms occupied by the family, which probably has, as sub-tenants or boarders, an equal number of outsiders. No pretense is made of separating the work from the household affairs, if such a term can be used to describe the existence of these people. The hours observed are simply those which endurance or necessity prescribe. Children are worked to death by the side of their parents, who are dying from overwork or disease."

The committee estimates that one-fourth of ready-made clothing and an even larger proportion of children's wear is manufactured under these circumstances.

Disease is rampant in these shops. Dr. Annie S. Daniel, visiting physician for the N. Y. Infirmary for Women and Children, told the committee that nothing is being done to rid the clothing made in these hovels from contagion or its dangers.

The committee dismissed claims by a number of garment manufacturers that ironing was sufficient in almost all cases to kill the disease germs carried out of the sweatshops by the clothes.

"So long as interstate commerce in this regard is left free," the committee charges, "the stamping out of the sweating system in any

particular state is of practically no effect, except to impose peculiar hardship upon the manufacturers of that state, and to encourage development elsewhere of the obnoxious conditions."

—REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MANUFACTURES ON THE SWEATING SYSTEM, 1893

Bisno Says Homework Is Sweatshop Breeder

CHICAGO, Apr. 6, 1892—Charging that workers must wage a "continual struggle" against the efforts of "sweaters" to cut wages, Abraham Bisno, Chicago cloakmaker, yesterday told the House Committee investigating the sweating system: "If I were a lawmaker I would make it punishable by a fine to produce cloaks in a tenement house."

Bisno told how in desperation workers are compelled to take work into the home.

"I work in a shop for a manufacturer. The manufacturer runs his shop 10 hours a day only; but I, who have a desire to work longer than 10 hours, take work home every night. The manufacturer says, 'You can take the whole work home and produce it at home.' He takes it home, and he has the use of his wife and children and neighbors. He employs others, and these are the germs of the sweatshop.

"When I started to work I worked for Beifeld & Co., who employed some 200 to 300 inside help. Beifeld Brothers saw that sweat shops would pay him and his business, and he in proportion increased the sweat shops and diminished the inside help, so now he employs only about 75 people inside. Leigh Brothers employed about 300 people inside, and now he employs none."

—REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MANUFACTURES ON THE SWEATING SYSTEM, 1893

Operators Strike When Firm Fires Active Unionists

NEW YORK, Aug., 1899—Production has been almost completely stopped at the huge J. M. Cohen Silk Waist Co. of 191 Greene St. as the result of a strike in which 450 of the 500 operators walked out.

The strike was provoked by the action of the forelady in firing waistmakers who were active in the highly effective organizing campaign among the workers, which was instrumental in winning wage increases demanded for all of the firm's 1,000 employees.

One striker was arrested and fined \$10 for urging a strikebreaker not to scab. The spirit and strength of the picket lines remain unbroken, however, with the strikers voicing their determination to stay out until every waistmaker is taken back without discrimination.

On Friday, strikers will hold a mass meeting at Apollo Hall. Speakers will include Joseph Baronness, Meyer London, Morris Winchefskey.

—DAILY FORWARD

Philly Sq. Mile Yields 600 Foul Sweaters' Dens

By Rev. F. M. Goodchild

PHILADELPHIA, Jan., 1895—There are seven hundred sweaters' dens in Philadelphia. Not long ago only five hundred were reported for New York. Of the nearly seven hundred that Philadelphia has, nearly six hundred are in the square mile of area in which my church stands. A few squares below the church they are most numerous, in a neighborhood celebrated for foul odors and stagnant gutters. Inside the houses the sanitary conditions are still worse. The rooms are small and crowded. In a room ten feet by twelve, will be found huddled together seven or eight people and several machines. Air space is contracted. I have often stood squarely on the floor and laid my hands flat on the ceiling. The walls are as grimy as though they had never known the use of a brush. The floors are at times inches deep with dirt and scraps of clothing.

The whole place wallows with putrefaction. In some of the rooms it would seem that there had not been a breath of fresh air for five years. One whiff of the foulness is enough to give you the typhoid fever; yet what you cannot endure for minutes these people live in from year to year.

In those human stys the creatures who make the clothing we wear work, eat, sleep and perform all the operations of nature. Sometimes they have not the time, at others they have not the spirit, to clean them up, and some of the abominable kennels no amount of cleaning could much improve. The men and women who bend over the machines and ironing tables are ill fed, unwashed, half clad.

Proprietaries do not count for much in a sweatshop. Conveniences and common decencies are unknown. Nothing counts there that can not be turned into hard cash. The dearest things on earth are given for that. Health goes with the rest. The toilers' hands are damp with slow consumption. Their breath is like that of a charnel house.

Even their children's lives are sacrificed to get the work done. The child is set to work just as soon as it can draw a thread. The factory age in Pennsylvania is thirteen years. They know it, and so if you ask them their age, even if they cannot yet speak plainly, their prompt answer is "Thirteen." And sometimes before you ask, they will say mechanically, "I'm thirteen."

It is pretty sure to pull strongly on your heart when you see the little children toiling with the look of age on their faces before they are out of babyhood.

—ARENA

TASK FORCE



Family of four begins its daily task in 8x9 ft. room in an East Side tenement. They will work until they finish the task set for the day.

—Harper's Weekly

NEWS-HISTORY

Editorials

New Star in Our Firmament

June 3, 1900 will remain for many generations to come a red-letter day in the lives of tens of thousands of cloakmakers—in New York, in Philadelphia, in Chicago, in Boston and other big cities in our country.

For on this day there's come to life, after many sterile attempts, an international union of women's apparel workers. True, there was only a handful of delegates in attendance at the opening session of the tiny convention of cloakmakers and skirtmakers which gave birth to this brand new ILGWU. It is also undeniably true that these eleven cloakmakers' delegates represented only about 2,000 union men and women as compared with the 150,000 workers estimated to be employed in the ladies' wear shops all over the country.

But these few courageous delegates represent a fighting spirit of submerged workpeople, who for more than twenty years have been trying frantically to rise through unionism from the jungle of sub-contracting and tenement house labor.

This little infant, our ILGWU, will find its cradle days tough and bitter. Born in dire poverty, it will have to pull itself up slowly, by its own bootstraps, before its voice is heard and its existence recognized. There are still a number of cloak and skirt unions in the country which must join the ILGWU to make it representative of all garment workers in this country and in Canada. There are also some waist unions which belong properly to the new international union and which should join it on a basis of full equality.

And so, we doff our caps and shout a hearty welcome to this newcomer in the world of labor, this puny International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. May its protective young arm grow apace—to embrace within our own lifetime every worker in every branch of the industry over which its jurisdiction extends.

The AFL Our Home

The warm greeting extended by Brother Herman Robinson, the regional representative of the American Federation of Labor in New York, to the small group of stout-hearted cloakmakers who met on June 3, to form an international union in the ladies' garment industry, is a fine augury for this fledgling in American organized labor.

Many of our cloakmakers still remember the appearance of Samuel Gompers, the president of the AFL, at our big meeting in Cooper Union on October 6, 1894, at which he strongly advised against a sympathy strike in the cloak industry because such an action would lead to breaching contracts with many manufacturers against whom we had no grievances at that time. If only we had heeded his sage counsel then!

We hope that we have matured a good deal as trade unionists since 1894. And we are looking forward eagerly toward favorable action by the AFL on our application for a charter as an autonomous international union and toward taking our place in the fighting ranks of the general labor movement of our country.

"On the Sidewalks of New York"



—Scribner's

How N.Y. Cloak Union Started

By Joseph Barondess

Worked devotedly to organize a permanent cloakmakers union in the last decade of the 19th Century.

The first attempt to organize the cloakmakers on a real trade union basis was made in the year 1889.

I called the first meeting to order, as the secretary of the United Hebrew Trades, and from that time on remained at the head of the organization, which assumed the name "The Operators and Cloakmakers Union of New York and Vicinity."

From the first day of its existence the Operators and Cloakmakers Union was a militant organization, and we achieved one victory after the other and our power for good grew to immense proportions.

The manufacturers, frightened at our power, organized a manufacturers association, and in the month of October, 1889, all of them locked out all of our members, who then numbered about 10,000.

This lockout lasted for nearly six months, during which time we succeeded in entering into a treaty with the outside contractors.

Aside from our victory, we also succeeded in compelling the manufacturers to pay to the Cloak and Suit Cutters somewhat near \$20,000 for loss of time.

Strikes followed one after the other on the least provocation. We did not understand at that time that in the labor movement as well as in any other branch of activity and reform, things must develop by the process of evolution, and that reforms and improvements can only have a lasting influence there where they have been achieved gradually.

Our employers saw fit to invoke the aid of the courts and the police force in order to break up our union. Most of the prominent members of the Executive Board, including myself, were arrested on all sorts of charges, thereby compelling us to spend all our means and energies to defend ourselves instead of assuming the aggressive position against the unscrupulous employers as a labor organization.

It was then that we became convinced that no matter how powerful an individual organization might be, it must have the backing of a national union which would aid it in its struggles, and also influence the consuming public to stand by it against the atrocities of mean and oppressing employers.

Today the International Ladies Garment Workers Union is no longer an ideal in the far distant future, but a reality.

—SOUVENIR JOURNAL, FOURTH ANNUAL ILGWU CONVENTION

This Time for Keeps

Almost every year the cloakmakers have been organized and every year the union went to pieces. One reason for this was that all the business was left in the hands of a few.

Then there is the contract system. This system is constantly making the cloakmakers' condition worse. Because of this system they cannot keep up their organization. They cannot struggle for higher wages. They cannot shorten the work day. Under this system the men work like oxen one season and the next they go around idle.

Now the cloak operators are organizing on a new basis. Experience has taught them to keep their own kind together. They can have nothing in common with the contractors.

—N. Y. VOLKS-ZEITUNG, Sept. 10, 1886

"Task for the Day"



—Harper's Weekly

1st Chicago Union Had its Struggles

By Peter Sissman

Was an active Chicago cloak unionist and became law partner of Clarence Darrow.

CHICAGO, 1890—About seven or eight names were included as the organizers of a union which consisted of not more than a dozen members. One clear idea of the initiators was that this was to be a union of workmen only and that contractors would not be accepted as members.

A call was issued during the spring of 1890 and a mass meeting was held in a room which ordinarily would hold comfortably about 50 or 60 people. That was the club room of the Educational Society which was on the second floor of an old building on Canal St. near DeKoven St.

Cloakmakers Jam Hall

The attendance of the meeting carried the organization almost off its feet. The meeting was attended by almost 200 cloakmakers. Almost all of those who attended joined the union by paying 25 cents to apply on an initiation fee of \$1, and of course their names and addresses were taken by the secretary.

At the next meeting, it was felt by the initiators that in justice to the new members, a new election should be held so as to give them an opportunity to elect their own officers. The new set of officers consisted in the main of the old, with the exception of the president and vice-president, who were elected from among the new members, not against the will, but really with the design of the old officers.

Plush Workers Strike

When the union with these new accretions was not quite two weeks old, the plush workers of F. Siegel & Bros., one of the leading manufacturers of that day, went out on strike. That involved only about 50 workers.

The usual psychology of the worker on strike, particularly before any discipline or self-control is developed, is the desire to see

everybody else on strike when he is striking.

That pressure was of course potent to turn the strike of 50 plush workers into a strike of the entire factory, involving several hundred people, the greatest proportion of whom were not even members of the union.

A strike committee was appointed, and the first thing it did was to call on the firm to present the demands of the men. Mr. Siegel received the committee in person and asked what the occasion of the visit was. He was informed that the committee represented his men. He wanted to know whether they were working for his firm. It so happened that none of them did. He thereupon stated to them that he could not see what business strangers had to come and talk to him about his business. He was rather polite about it and wound up by saying that they had better present their grievances in writing.

Ask Union Recognition

When it came to formulate the demands in writing, the first demand was "recognition of the union." Recognition of the union meant no more than the consent of the employer to talk to a committee representing the workers.

When the strike was won, that was really all that was won—the right to delegate a committee to present grievances to the employer or his representative; but that was really the beginning of a union.

—SOUVENIR JOURNAL, 10th ANNIVERSARY, CLOAKMAKERS UNION, LOCAL 5