

ILGWU NEWS-HISTORY

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION ISSUE

CHAPTER 2

1900—1909

FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

Boston ILGWU Presses Fight for Closed Shop; 38 Firms Initial Pacts

BOSTON, 1907—Thirty-eight concerns out of 50 have signed contracts and deposited negotiable notes with the union as security that they will adhere to their agreements. Strikes continue against 12 manufacturers who are still fighting for the open shop.

A conference was held between the manufacturers' association and representatives of the locals at the request of the Civic Federation. Louis Brandeis, a member of the Civic Federation and attorney for the employers' association, was the one who helped bring about this conference.

The manufacturers would not come without their attorney. It was therefore necessary to invite the union's attorney to the conference, which took place the early part of April and lasted from 10 A.M. until 5 P.M.

The following were present: Henry Abrahams, secretary of Central Labor Union of Boston; Dennis D. Driscoll, secretary of the State Branch of the American Federation of Labor of Massachusetts; Frank McCarthy, general organizer of the AFL, and Meyer Bloomfield, a distinguished citizen of Boston and prominent in the labor movement.

The conference was opened by Mr. Robbins of the Civic Federation, who acted as chairman at the request of both sides. Representatives of the union, upon advice of other labor representatives, were willing to concede to every demand of the association with the exception of the open shop.

Mr. Brandeis was the chief opponent to the closed shop, and said that he would rather concede to anything else than the closed shop.

Not being able to get the one point—that is, the closed shop, which was practically the only demand of the unions—the represen-

(Continued on Page 2)

Successful Ottawa Shirtmakers Vow to Organize Whole Trade

OTTAWA, Feb. 9, 1907—The workers of the Universal Skirt Co., Ottawa, Canada, won their 12-day strike. There was no union in this line. Now the victorious skirtmakers have resolved that they are going out to organize the whole trade in Ottawa.

What Became of Other 42,500 Cloakmakers?

By Benjamin Schlesinger

NEW YORK, Dec. 3, 1906—There are 45,000 cloakmakers in New York. But only 2,500 are members of the union. What about the rest of them?

About 5,000 women, widows and wives of husbands who can't provide for the entire family, finish cloaks in their miserable tenement flats where they are compelled also to raise their children. They earn from 80 cents to \$2 a week working all hours of the day and night.

Then there are about 2,000 cloakmakers who came to America from the old country just to make money and go back across the seas. Their hearts are not here; they work day and night, eat nickel meals, sleep in the shops, save every penny. They are unorganizable.

Another group of cloak finishers

Cleveland General Cloak Walkout Is Now in 2nd Week

CLEVELAND, Jan. 20, 1908—The cloakmakers, skirtmakers and pressers of Cleveland organized themselves into three unions and formed the Cleveland Federation of Ladies Garment Workers. The bosses didn't like it. The Cohen Manufacturing Co. was the first to start the attack by refusing to pay its workers for the Christmas and New Year's holidays, which had long been the custom. Hundreds of workers have gone on strike. The Cleveland bosses have sent their agents to recruit scabs in New York. But this time they will have a hard job finding strikebreakers among New York cloakmakers who understand the meaning of a union.

—DAILY FORWARD

Bloody Strike in Reefer Industry Won by Local 17

By Jacob Heller

NEW YORK, 1907—The reefermakers have been put to the test: they have shown they are able to withstand the brutal offensive launched against them by the bosses—beatings, arrests, hunger and poverty—in their efforts to break the Reefermakers' Union, Local 17.

One Philly Shop Still Gets 50¢ for Power; Workers Intimidated

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 1, 1906—Although the Philadelphia waistmakers recently won a strike against having to pay for power, there is still one shop in which workers are forced to pay the boss 50 cents a week for the use of machines and electricity, 5 cents a week for the use of a mirror and a towel and another 5 cents for taking drinking water from the faucet.

Altogether, workers are paying the boss 60 cents a week for these "services." In spite of this outrageous fee, the union has been unable to organize this shop. The workers are afraid to strike. The boss has 11 children and threatens that if the workers walk out he will use them as strikebreakers.

—DAILY FORWARD

Until 1907, the reefer manufacturers still thought that Local 17 was only a temporary phenomenon in the trade, just like the other Jewish unions up to that time, which used to arise during the season and disappear with the slack. In 1905 they eagerly awaited the end of the season to be able to celebrate the end of the union too. . . . However, when the union failed to "accommodate" them, they decided to take active steps to destroy it.

At first, they used a "friendly" approach. They gave beer parties for the workers, organized societies, promised them sick benefits, and even offered to buy cemetery plots for them.

However, all these inducements didn't help. The situation came to a head precisely at one of these parties, which was given by the largest reefer firm at that time, Weinstein Brothers. The event was

(Continued on Page 2)

Maryland Judge Invalidates Law On Sweatshops

BALTIMORE, MD., Nov. 17, 1902—Judge Ritchie of the Criminal Court today decided that the so-called "sweatshop" law is unconstitutional. There are 25,000 persons directly and indirectly affected, and about \$20,000,000 is invested in the manufacture of clothing in Baltimore. The case came up on a demurrer, on the ground that the law infringed upon the rights of the citizen to free use of his property under the declaration of rights. The court says:

"The prohibition against the manufacture in every tenement or dwelling house of any of the articles in question except by the family, and by the family except on the conditions prescribed, impairs the right to the free and profitable use of property, whether occupied by the tenant or owner, thereby reducing its value, and interferes with the right to pursue any lawful occupation, not injurious to others, in one's own home. Unless this sweeping prohibition is demanded by the public health it cannot be sustained."

—NEW YORK TIMES

D.A. Hears Complaint Bonwitt Hires Gangs To Rough Up Pickets

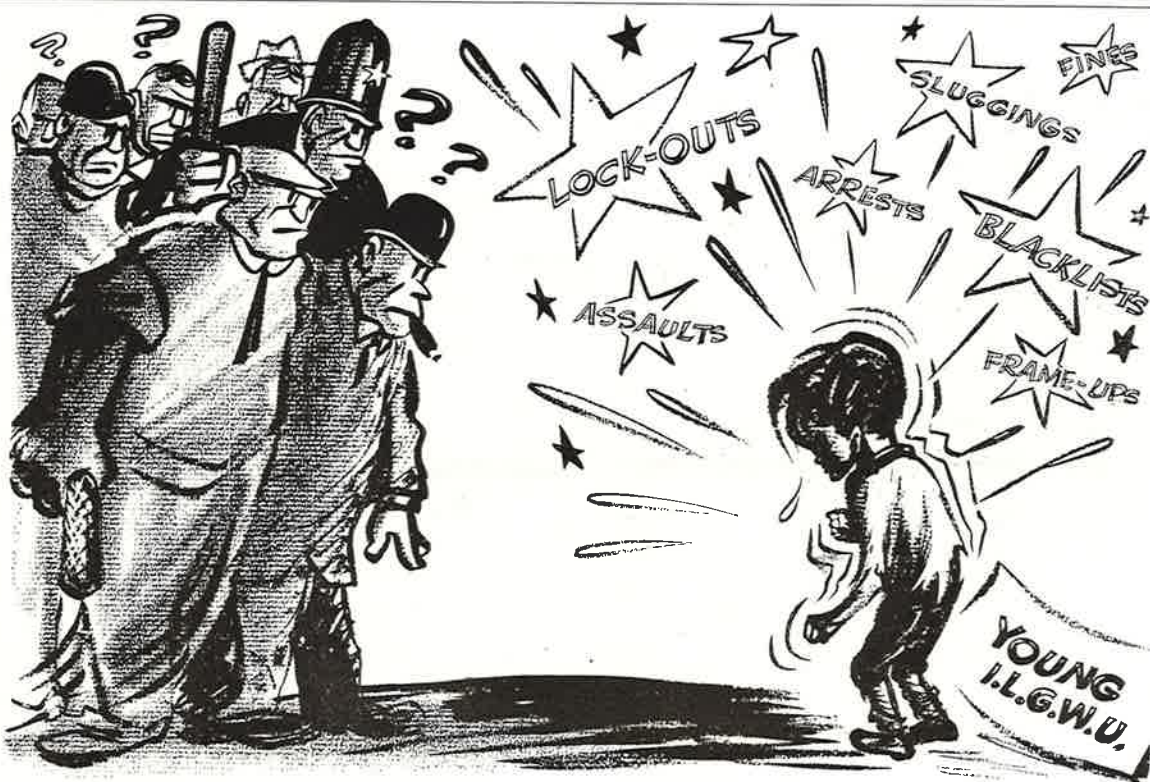
NEW YORK, Aug. 25, 1905—The union has complained to District Attorney Jerome that the John Bonwitt Co. is hiring men of the notorious Paul Kelly gang to beat up the skirtmakers picketing the shop.

Yesterday the District Attorney sent special detectives, who witnessed a few gangsters entering the struck shop and coming out soon afterward, attacking the peaceful pickets. A number of the attackers were arrested and detained without bail.

The District Attorney promised a thorough investigation, which will also cover the peculiarly neutral attitude of the policemen who stood and watched peaceful pickets being mercilessly beaten. The incident strengthened the determination of the strikers to continue the walkout against the firm.

—DAILY FORWARD

"Still on His Feet!"



11-Week Strike in Reefer Industry Won by Local 17

(Continued from Page 1)

held in an East Side hall, back of a saloon.

The hall was gaily decorated, the floor covered with sawdust. Long tables were set up in the middle of the room, so that the hungry crowd would surround them from all sides. At "strategic" positions on the tables there were heaps of bread, herring, corned beef and other delicacies that would be certain to win the good will of the workers. Beer flowed freely for all these thirsty, lonely Jewish workers who apparently had gathered together on the advice of their boss to organize a society of "hometown" brethren.

Union Stages Invasion

But then, in the midst of an impassioned speech by one of the bosses, there marched in a union committee, which upset the bosses' happy little plans. For the unfortunate bosses hadn't known that most of those present had informed the union in advance of the event, and were waiting impatiently for the union's "invasion."

Aware that their "friendly" tactics had failed, the manufacturers turned to their only remaining weapon—the use of force—to destroy Local 17. They organized themselves into an association and decided to remain together until they had accomplished the destruction of the Reefermaker's Union.

As their first step, they decided upon a lockout. Towards the end of March, 1907, they hung up signs in their shops reading, "Beginning Apr. 1, this will no longer be a union shop."

Workers Answer Challenge

These signs only aroused the workers further. They considered each word on the signs to be a challenge to their unity and strength. There was an immediate, spontaneous feeling among the reefermakers that an answer must be given the bosses on the spot—and the answer came swiftly.

Shop after shop quit work. Within a few minutes, the streets in the factory area were filled with reefermakers, streaming by in compact columns, singing the "Marseillaise." That was how the his-

toric battle of the Reefermakers' Union began.

The first thing the union did was to declare an official strike in reply to the lockout. Then it drew up the conditions under which the reefermakers would agree to return to work, and then it set up the organization for conducting the strike activities.

The fight continued for 11 weeks, in a strike which was one of the bloodiest in the history of the Jewish labor movement. The city officials realized that most of the strikers were "greenhorns" and therefore could not produce any votes in the elections. The hired thugs of the bosses realized it also, so both they and the city's law enforcement personnel did their "work" without fear. Not a day passed without numerous strikers being beaten up severely.

Blood Flows Freely

Strike headquarters took on the appearance of a hospital. Bandages were evident wherever one turned. The gangsters used two methods of attack: either slashing with knives, or splitting strikers' heads with blackjacks. The reefermakers' blood colored the whole factory district. The police were no better than the thugs. In fact, they were actually their comrades-in-arms.

On one occasion, it seemed as if Brother Schlesinger would have to deliver a funeral oration over a striker who was beaten up so terribly that he appeared almost lifeless. Schlesinger, who was deeply moved by the scene, delivered one of the most outstanding speeches in his union career. His talk was so effective that it was evidently able to revive the seemingly mortally-wounded striker, for he remained alive, and in a few days he was again active on the picket lines on Lispenard St.

These acts of brutality did not frighten the reefermakers. They merely adjusted themselves to the developments. Instead of confining themselves to picketing two abreast, marching up and down, (as per official instructions in accordance with picketing laws) they began

to march around the shops in whole groups, until all the strikers became one huge mass, completely surrounding the reefer shops.

These "mass attacks" served to scare off somewhat the hired thugs of the bosses. And although the brutal attacks against the reefermakers did not cease, the strikers at least were able to defend themselves, and no longer provided the only casualties of the strike.

Hunger No Threat

Neither were the strikers intimidated by threats of hunger. They managed to exist on the free lunches which were served in saloons with the purchase of a glass of beer. Many strikers used to have their "meals" at Edelson's saloon at 88 Monroe St., where their plates always were heaped high with bread, herring, peas, etc.

Glorious Victory Won

Finally, in the 11th week, victory was in sight. The bosses were tired of working themselves and decided to give in. All demands of the union were won. No longer would reefermakers have to drag along their own sewing machines on their shoulders. Needles and machine straps would henceforth be provided by the employers. Inside subcontracting was abolished. Working hours were shortened to 10 hours a day, and earnings were substantially increased.

The bosses' association fell apart, and they came individually to sign agreements with the union. The employers learned that a union cannot be destroyed when the workers believe in it and wish to remain in it. Workers in other crafts of the industry were shown that it was possible for unions to exist all year round, in the entire industry. The victory of the reefermakers in 1907 thereby had a very significant effect on the progress of the whole International.

—SOUVENIR JOURNALS, LOCAL 17, 1920, 1935.

Heller was an ILGWU vice president and manager of Local 117

Heroes of the Reefermakers' Strike



Eight of the union's pickets who were beaten and slashed by the bosses' hired thugs.

—Daily Forward

Pursuit of Happiness



—N. Y. State Factory Investigating Commission
The entire family works in this railroad flat.

Boston ILGWU Presses Fight for Closed Shop

(Continued from Page 1)

Boss Amazed as 150 Girls Stage Walkout For 10-Hr. Work Day

BROWNSVILLE, May 4, 1906—One hundred and fifty children, ranging from 14 to 17 years in age, are striking against the waist contractor Izzi Lock, who never suspected that these girl slaves would be able to stage such a walkout. The strikers are asking for a 10-hour working day instead of 11 and recognition of the Ladies Waistmakers' Union.

—DAILY FORWARD

Scranton Workers Hold Out for Union Shop, Better Treatment

SCRANTON, Pa., Sept. 27, 1905—The cloakmakers of Lillienthal, Kaplan & Meyers of Scranton, Pa., are on strike against low wages, bad treatment and for union recognition.

tatives of the unions decided that they could not come to a settlement, and the conference ended.

The general strike of Locals 12, 13 and 26, involving the Skirt and Cloakmakers' Union, Pressers' Union and the Cutters, began early in March. Unbearable conditions practically forced the locals to declare a general strike.

As soon as the manufacturers were aware of the fact that the locals were organizing, they began to victimize the union members by discharging and blacklisting them. The Boston organizations did their utmost to protect the interest of their members.

The manufacturers immediately formed an association and began to use the same methods as the New York manufacturers, hiring ruffians to help them beat the members of the union. In addition to this, they obtained injunctions against the leaders and the officers of the various locals.

They were using threats to put out of commission the best men of the locals, especially Brother Goldstein who had charge of this strike. The locals were compelled to keep constant guard over Brother Goldstein since he was being followed wherever he went.

In spite of all these hardships and the very little outside assistance which the locals received, the expense which was needed was covered by their own membership. Workers employed by the 38 firms conceding to the demands of the locals taxed themselves 20 per cent on each dollar of their earnings to assist their sisters and brothers who are still fighting for their rights and their just demands.

—REPORT TO THE EIGHT CONVENTION, ILGWU, JUNE, 1907

300 Skirtmakers in Kalamazoo Join ILGWU; Secure 15% Raise

KALAMAZOO, Mich., May 19, 1904—The ILGWU organized some months ago 300 girls in Kalamazoo, who were making skirts for the Henrietta Skirt Co. During this short period the girls won a 15 per cent raise in wages and a five-hour cut in the work week. Last week they also won the union label; every skirt produced in that shop has a union label sewn onto it.

—DAILY FORWARD

Seven Locked In, Call on Fireman To Unlock Door

NEW YORK, Aug. 4, 1904—The seven cloakmakers who work at the Harris and Samuels Co., on the eighth floor of 97 Fifth Ave., decided last night to knock off early, at 9 P.M.

But when they wanted to get out of the place, they discovered that the boss wasn't back yet to open the locked door. One of them had a key to the shop that would open the door only from the outside. So they waited some time. But the boss forgot to return.

After waiting for an hour and a half, they opened the windows and yelled down their predicament to passers-by who called the firemen, who brought a ladder that was just a few inches short of the eighth floor.

Finally one of the trapped cloakmakers remembered his key. He threw it down and one of the firemen unlocked the door from the outside.



Weighed down by the work that oppresses and yet sustains them, the sweated homeworkers of the garment industry are learning to walk erect. The burden of bundles, the burden of living is heavy. But the hunger for dignity is strong and the desire for a decent life is irrepresible. Only through a powerful union will they be able to end their enslavement and walk as unfettered citizens in a free America.

Bundles...



—Photos by LEWIS HINE, Photo League;
Drawing by JACOB EPSTEIN

Newer Immigrants Have Not Undercut Wage, Check Shows

By Isaac A. Hourwich, Ph.D.

Special agent for the Bureau of Census, chief clerk of the New York Joint Board in 1913.

The statistics of the Immigration Commission do not disclose any tendency on the part of the new immigrant races to accept lower wages than the immigrants of older races. On the other hand, the variation in the earnings of representatives of each race indicates that the rate of wages is not determined by racial factors, but depends upon the personal qualifications and opportunities of individual workers.

The Immigration Commission speaks in general terms of the "availability of cheap woman and child labor of the immigrant households" for locating "men's and women's clothing manufacturing establishments" in certain districts "developed in connection with some of the principal industries of the country." But the statistics of the Commission show that the earnings of recent immigrant women and children in the clothing industry are higher than those of native Americans.

Confronted with these facts, Professors Jenks and Lauck seek to explain them by the assumption that "the lower earnings of the American women" are due "to their inability and disinclination to work such long hours as the foreign-born females in the case of certain piece-rate occupations, as, for example, the clothing industry."

This explanation, however, is purely a matter of conjecture, since the Immigration Commission has made no inquiries regarding hours of labor in the clothing industry.

Because the native American country workers were willing to accept lower wages than the recent immigrants in the cities, the contractors found it profitable to give more steady employment to country than to city workers. While the latter averaged but 28 working weeks in the year, the former were given 44 weeks, with the result that their annual earnings at lower rates of wages exceeded the earnings of city workers at higher rates.

Another—no less important—cause of the "low standard of

wages" of native American country workers is their isolation, in consequence of which "they must accept his (the contractor's) rate of payment offered through the driver who delivers the goods."

Recent Immigrants Organized

The Southern and Eastern European clothing workers in the cities, on the contrary, are comparatively well organized. The percentage of organized workers among them is above the average for the country. Their capacity for concerted action finds full expression only in strikes which rally around the unions many workers not regularly affiliated with them.

The percentage of thoroughly successful strikes of clothing workers for the period 1881-1905 was much above the average, viz.: the percentage in establishments manufacturing women's clothing 66.37, whereas the average for all industries in the United States was only 47.94.

The strike statistics published by the United States Bureau of Labor permit a comparison between the recent period beginning with the fiscal year 1895, when the immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe for the first time outnumbered all others, and the earlier period from Jan. 1, 1881 to June 30, 1894. During the 80's the principal nationalities employed in the clothing shops were the Germans and the Irish: since 1895 the Jews and the Italians have become the predominating element among the workers.

It appears that during the 13½

In the Black!

NEW YORK, Apr. 2, 1904—The Cloak Pressers Local 35, ILGWU, issued the financial report for the first quarter of this year:

Income	\$551.76
Expenses	551.75
Cash on hand	.01

years previous to the fiscal year 1895 the average annual number of strikers in the clothing industry was 9,094, and during the 11½ years following it rose to 38,683.

Generalizations False

This is the unbiased testimony of figures in answer to the sweeping generalizations of the Immigration Commission about the reluctance of the Southern and Eastern Europeans "to enter labor disputes involving loss of time," their "ready acceptance of low wages and existing working conditions" and "willingness seemingly to accept indefinitely without protest certain wages and conditions of employment."

—"IMMIGRATION AND LABOR"

To the Freedoms of America



—Lewis Hine Collection, Photo League

An Italian immigrant family waiting to be debarked at the Ellis Island immigration station.

East Side Tailor Sings Lament of the Ghetto

By Hutchins Hapgood

Noted author, teacher and editorial writer.

Morris Rosenfeld, poet and former tailor, strikes in his personality and writings the weary minor. Full of tears are the man and his song.

The sad little Rosenfeld, unpractical and incapable in all but his songs, has had the hardest time of all. His life has been typical of that of many a delicate poet—a life of privation, of struggle borne by weak shoulders, and a spirit and temperament not fitted to meet the world.

Morris Rosenfeld was born in a small village in the province of Subalk, in Russian Poland, at the end of the last Polish revolution. The very night he was born the world began to oppress him, for insurgents threw rocks through the window.

He married when he was 16, "because my father told me to," as the poet expressed it. He ran away from Poland to avoid being pressed into the army.

Hearing that the tailors had won a strike in America, he came to New York, thinking he would need to work here only 10 hours a day. "But what I heard," he said, "was a lie. I found the sweatshops in New York just as bad as they were in London."

In those places he worked for many years, worked away his health and strength, but at the same time composed many a sweetly sad song. "I worked in the sweatshop in the daytime," he said to me, "and at night I worked at my poems. I could not help writing them. My heart was full of bitterness. If my poems are sad and plaintive, it is because I expressed my own feelings, and because my surroundings were sad."

The first song that Rosenfeld printed in English is this:

"I lift mine eyes against the sky,
The clouds are weeping, so am I;
I lift mine eyes again on high,
The sun is smiling, so am I.
Why do I smile? Why do I weep?
I do not know; it lies too deep.
"I hear the winds of autumn sigh,
They break my heart, they make me cry;
I hear the birds of lovely spring,
My hopes revive, I help them sing.
Why do I sing? Why do I cry?
It lies so deep, I know not why."
—"SPIRIT OF THE GHETTO"

From Old World Oppression



—Lewis Hine Collection, Photo League

New arrivals in America wait to have their papers cleared.

Tenement Life Breeds TB Even Among the Hardest

By Antonio Stella, M.D.

To have an idea of the alarming frequency of consumption among Italians, especially in the large cities, one must follow the Italian population as it moves in the tenement districts; study them closely in their daily struggle for air and space; see them in the daytime crowded in sweatshops and factories; at night heaped together in dark, windowless rooms.

From some tenements in Elizabeth and Mulberry St. there have been as many as 12 and 15 cases of consumption reported to the Board of Health since 1894. But how many were never reported? How many went back to Italy? How many moved away to other districts?

In many tenements, on account of the overcrowding, the quantity of air left for each person is reduced to three or four cubic meters, and the expired air in the sleeping-rooms represents one-half or one-sixth of all the air available.

What deleterious effect on the lungs and on the system in general the sojourn and sleep in these rooms must have, is beyond all calculation.

Low Vitality Apparent

Among those—and they are the large majority—who seek work in factories and shops, instead of pursuing their natural occupations in the open air, the stigmata of progressive physiological deterioration and general low vitality are most apparent.

Six months of life in the tenements are sufficient to turn the sturdy youth from Calabria, the brawny fisherman from Sicily, the robust women from Abruzzi and Basilicata, into the pale, flabby, undersized creatures we see, dragging along the streets of New York

and Chicago, such a painful contrast to the native population! Six months more of this gradual deterioration, and the soil for the bacillus tuberculosis is amply prepared.

This high susceptibility is not due to any inherent lack of vitality in the race. The Italians otherwise show the most wonderful elements of resistance and recuperation.

The statistics show that the higher we move up in the social scale, the lower the mortality from consumption; or as Gebhard puts it, "the death-rate from tuberculosis among the various classes, in large cities, is in inverse ratio to their individual income."

In view of these facts and the present state of our emigration, we must then consider the prevalence of tuberculosis among Italians as a function of their special economic and social conditions in their new environment, and if any remedies can be expected in the future to stop the spread of the scourge among them, they must be found in the betterment of those conditions and a thorough change of their present aspirations.

—THE SURVEY, 1904

Striking Terkel Tailors Refuse To Be Bribed by Passover Wine

NEW YORK, Mar. 18, 1907—The strikers of Terkel and Bergman Cloak Co. were promised, in addition to matzo, wine for Passover if they go back to work. But the strike against the arbitrary discharge of the shop delegate continues unabated. Among the strikers are tailors with white patriarchal beards who man the picket line with admirable courage. Even the policemen watch with awe.

—DAILY FORWARD

Sympathy Walkout of 40,000 Looms in Triangle Strike

NEW YORK, Nov. 13, 1909—The strike of 200 women employees of the Triangle Waist Co. of New York has been going on for several weeks according to the most approved strike methods. The management of the company has tried to "protect its rights" against these girls by calling into commission a regiment of police, plainclothes detectives and other burly men who, the girls declare, are nothing more than neighborhood thugs, sufficient in number to handle a general industrial disturbance, quite willing to strike women and to hustle them off to court on flimsy pretexts.

The strikers declare that the management has brought pressure to bear upon the employees to prevent their forming a union, discriminating against union members by giving them less well-paid positions and dismissing them.

The Triangle Waist Co. girls have been entirely orderly, but police interference has made them appear otherwise. The officers break in upon any who are talking together; men loafing about in the employ of the company have insulted the girls; and the least resistance or answering back by the women is made excuse for a prompt arrest. Unfair treatment has not stopped there, for in court the judges have railroaded through



Each of these girls has been arrested at least five times while picketing the Triangle Co.

—N. Y. Evening Journal

a whole batch of girls at a time without so much as a hearing.

A somewhat different aspect was put upon the matter and a vast amount of publicity in behalf of the girls secured by the entrance into the field of the Women's Trade Union League and other interested people, largely women settlement workers, which resulted in the arrest of their president, Miss Mary Dreier of Brooklyn.

These volunteer workers have formed themselves into an organized patrol, six or eight of whom place themselves in front of the shop at opening and closing time, look-

ing after the rights of the girls and going to court as witnesses with strikers who are arrested. Miss Dreier was discharged upon arrival at the nearest station house, and the police attitude toward the women was deliciously revealed when the officer in charge upbraided her for not having told him that she was "the rich working girls' friend," had he known which, of course, he would not have arrested her.

—THE SURVEY.

Nov. 10, 1909 — The striking waistmakers were jubilant today when they learned on good authority that by next week 40,000 girls and women would be with them in their strike for better wages and shorter hours.

—N. Y. EVENING JOURNAL

'Schnapps' Fail to Persuade Cloakmen To Work as Scabs

NEW YORK, Feb. 26, 1905—The strike at Reibstein Cloak Co., 100 East Broadway, is continuing. The boss is still using his original strikebreaking strategy without success. He invites many cloakmakers to the corner saloon, pays for their drinks and offers good scab jobs. The cloakmakers drink the "schnapps" but refuse to scab. The boss got so desperate that he agreed to talk to the strikers, but in a hall of his own choice. The strikers answered: Union hall or nothing.

A mass meeting of strikers will take place today at 2 P.M. at Manhattan Lyceum, 66 East 4th St. Joseph Barondess will be the main speaker.

The strikers are veterans of the general strike of 1894 and they know how to picket—and drink—effectively.

—DAILY FORWARD

400 Workers Go To Astoria But It's All a Ruse

NEW YORK, May 3, 1905—A new agency at 49 Prince St. hung out a sign yesterday saying cloakmakers are wanted in Astoria, L. I. Four hundred workers offered their services, but all they got was the address of the place, for which they had to pay 50 cents to the agency, which gave them each a receipt for the money.

When cloakmakers arrived at the place in Astoria, the receipts were taken away from them and they were told: no workers needed. The workers refused to budge without the receipts, which were finally returned after the police intervened. When the cloakmakers got back to the Prince St. outfit, they demanded the return of their money, which was refused. The case is now in court.

—DAILY FORWARD



—N. Y. American

Arrested for picketing, these strikers are being led to the patrol wagon which will take them to Jefferson Market Court for trial and sentencing.



Contractor Skips; Help Holds Work Till They're Paid

NEW YORK, Dec. 29, 1905—Morris Train, a shirtwaist contractor, of 5 Rutgers Pl., owed his waistmakers \$1,000 for four weeks' wages. When the workers came to the shop yesterday, they found a new boss who had bought the business and said he does not owe anything to anybody.

The old boss could not be located. So the workers grabbed bundles of unfinished work together with some waists, and declared they would not give up the goods until they were paid the wages due them.

The new boss called the police and had them arrested for theft and robbery. But the Essex Market Court magistrate released all the workers under very small bail. The workers are not members of the union.

—DAILY FORWARD

Use Model to Show Judge Shirtwaists Not Properly Made

NEW YORK, April 6, 1907—Olive Ford, a model, stood before Judge Giegerich, a jury and a crowd in Supreme Court yesterday while fitters for companies waging a legal battle over a contract for shirtwaists, gowns and skirts pinned on disputed garments to show how they did and did not fit.

Suit by Robert McBrathny to recover \$1,224.52 from the Danzig Waist Co. for shirtwaists, gowns and skirts occasioned Miss Ford's appearance as the model, a silent witness.

The defendant refused to pay for the garments on the ground that they were not made according to proper measurements.

—NEW YORK HERALD

Boss Calls Police When Workers Try To Stop Scabbing

NEW YORK, July 21, 1905—The children's cloakmakers of the Edelson and Shapiro Co., 38 Lispenard St., who struck last week, found out yesterday that their work is being made in the shop of Loker, 364 Canal St. They immediately went there to stop the scabs.

The boss and his henchmen attacked the strikers, who knew how to defend themselves. The boss called the police, who arrested 25 strikers. The judge demanded \$300 for each.

Gang Leader Arrested After Striker Is Brutally Beaten

NEW YORK, Oct. 27, 1909—Johnnie Spanish, a notorious gang leader and scab protector, and two other thugs were arrested last night at the shop of the Triangle Waist Co., 23 Washington Pl., charged with felonious assault for beating up Joe Zeinfeld, a striker against the Triangle Co., at the corner of Clinton and Broome Sts.,

Monday night. The gang of thugs under the leadership of Spanish, it is alleged, set upon Zeinfeld who, in company with four girl strikers, was out with credentials to visit labor unions and solicit funds for the strikers. They punched and kicked him until he fell with his face cut.

—THE CALL



Joe Zeinfeld, Triangle striker, who was slashed by thugs.

—The Call

Sadie Skirtmaker Relates Her Story

By Sadie Frowne

I work in Allen St. (Manhattan) in what they call a sweat-shop, making skirts by machine. I am new at the work and the foreman scolds me a great deal.

I get up at half-past five o'clock every morning and make myself a cup of coffee on the oil stove. I eat a bit of bread and perhaps some fruit and then go to work. Often I get there soon after six o'clock so as to be in good time, though the factory does not open till seven.

I have heard that there is a sort of clock that calls you at the very time you want to get up, but I can't believe that because I don't see how the clock would know.

At seven o'clock we all sit down to our machines and the boss brings to each one the pile of work that he or she is to finish during the day—what they call in English their "stint." This pile is put down beside the machine and as soon as a skirt is done it is laid on the other side of the machine. Sometimes the work is not all finished by six o'clock, and then the one who is behind must work overtime.

The machines go like mad all day, because the faster you work the more money you get. Sometimes in my haste I get my finger caught and the needle goes right through it. It goes so quick, though, that it does not hurt much. I bind the finger up with a piece of cotton and go on working. We all have accidents like that. Where the needle goes through the nail it makes a sore finger, or where it splinters a bone it does much harm. Sometimes a finger has to come off. Generally, though, one can be cured by a salve.

Hopes to Earn \$7

All the time we are working the boss walks about examining the finished garments and making us do them over again if they are not just right. So we have to be careful as well as swift. But I am getting so good at the work that within a year I will be making \$7 a week,

and then I can save at least \$3.50 a week. I have over \$200 saved now.

The machines are all run by foot power, and at the end of the day one feels so weak that there is a great temptation to lie right down and sleep. But you must go out and get air, and have some pleasure. So instead of lying down I go out, generally with Henry.

I am very fond of dancing, and, in fact, all sorts of pleasure. I go to the theater quite often, and like those plays that make you cry a great deal. "The Two Orphans" is good. The last time I saw it I cried all night because of the hard times that the children had in the play.

A Girl Must Have Clothes

Some of the women blame me very much because I spend so much money on clothes. They say that instead of \$1 a week I ought not to spend more than 25 cents a week on clothes, and that I should save the rest. But a girl must have clothes if she is to go into high society at Ulmer Park or Coney Island or the theater.

Those who blame me are the old country people who have old-fashioned notions, but the people who have been here a long time know better. A girl who does not dress well is stuck in a corner, even if she is pretty, and Aunt Fanny says that I do just right to put on plenty of style.

I have many friends and we often have jolly parties. Many of the young men like to talk to me, but I don't go out with any except Henry.

Lately he has been urging me more and more to get married—but I think I'll wait.

—THE INDEPENDENT, SEPT. 25, 1902

Highlights of a Shirtwaist Maker's Day

—Scribner's



At a shop meeting, Business Agent Minnie Rosen tells what must be done.



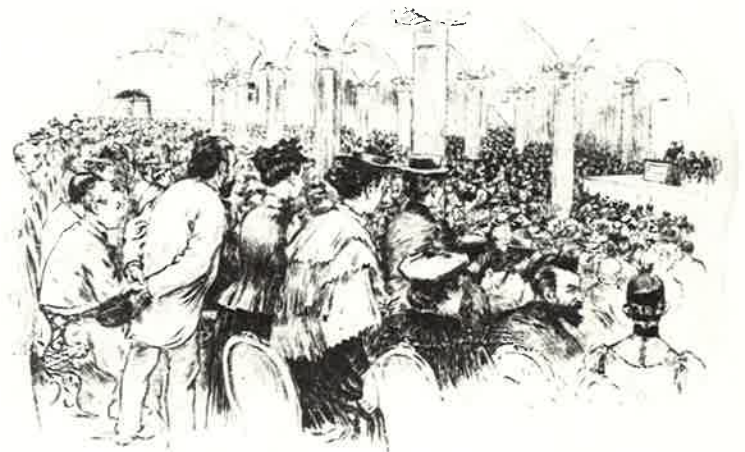
She finds time to take her turn on the picket line.



With her working sisters in the pressing department she stages a sit-down strike to support the demands of the cutters.



On the street, she frowns at a scab.



In the evening she listens to speakers, in the great hall at Cooper Union, explain the necessity for united action.

Union Benefits Worker, Employers and Society

By Ray Stannard Baker

Famous muckraker, editor of "McClure's"

If the undoubted right of the employer to hire union or non-union men indiscriminately is exercised without resistance, it means that the employers will gradually fill up their shops with non-union men—because non-union men, unprotected by organization, will work cheaper.

In the clothing trades of New York, therefore, the breakdown of the union would not only pull down the better, more ambitious workmen, but it would let in also the piratical, dishonest, small employer, who, if he could, would return to the diabolical sweatshop system and force the decent employers to follow, directly or indirectly.

I went through a great clothing establishment, one of the largest in the country, where the conditions were really ideal; where the best wages were paid; where there was at present no apparent need of a union, although unquestionably the excellence of these conditions was due in large measure to the agitation for years of the union in other quarters.

On the other hand, the union

always has against it the unscrupulous employer, who sees in this organized force a hindrance to his plans for sweating a little more profit from the abject necessity of the workers.

Broadly speaking, therefore, if an "open-shop" policy rigidly pursued by the manufacturers (no matter what their abstract rights may be) disrupts the protective union and reduces the garment workers to sweatshop conditions, drives them down to a plane below that of decent American livelihood (and there is no question that it has this tendency), then it is a public wrong and a detriment to society.

The union is not only a benefit to both workers and employers, but it has become, in our complex democratic civilization, an absolute necessity; and it should be as jealously protected by society as any other great institution.

—MCCLURE'S MAGAZINE December, 1904

Fast Workers on Week Work, Slow on Piece Work—All Quit!

NEW YORK, Sept. 28, 1906 —The employees of M. Kassowitz, 56 East 11th St., have gone on strike. They are asking either piece work for the whole shop or week work for the whole shop but not half and half. The boss put all of the fast workers on week work and all of the slow workers on piece work.

What Became of Other 42,500?

(Continued from Page 1)

union and out they go, with no job, no money and no opportunity to learn the trade.

Add to these about 2,000 cloakmakers who are 50 years or older. They are devoutly religious; and they are getting older and older. They are haunted by the fear of being told to get out.

Nor can the union expect help from the 3,000 hustlers who dream only of the day when they will themselves become bosses. Why expect them to join a union they will shortly be fighting?

We mustn't forget the favorites. Every shop has a few "good boys" who get the breaks from the boss for services rendered. There are about 3,000 of them.

Then there are about 2,000 cloakmakers who manage to get by thanks to the help they get from their children. Why should they spend money for dues?

Next we must take into account the few thousands of seasonal cloakmakers. For most of the year they work in different trades making pants or vests or shirts. But as soon as it gets busy in cloaks they come flocking back and suddenly become cloakmakers. Then they work 15 hours a day, make \$20 a week, and as soon as the slack starts again they leave the trade. Would it be fair to ask them to pay dues all year round when they work as cloakmakers for only the best weeks of the season and after that don't care what happens to the trade?

The same answer may be expected from those whose ties with the bosses are thicker than water—the thousands of bosses' relatives and "landsleit" and "paysanos." The union would be going too far if it expected these workers to turn on their own flesh and blood even though they are more mercilessly

exploited than they would be if they worked for strangers.

And what about the thousands of oldtimers, the veterans of the general strike of 1894? They bask in the glory of their memories about which they never seem to tire of talking. But ask them to join the union and they raise their hands in horror, cry they are disgusted with present-day cloakmakers and grow nostalgic about the "good old days."

Yet from these elements we must build a union. Each one walks in a different direction, but they must be taught to march together if the garment industry is ever to be organized, if its workers are ever going to be able to make a living, if they are ever going to regain the human dignity which is rightfully theirs.

—DAILY FORWARD

Schlesinger was ILG President 1903-4, 1914-23, 1928-32.

Task Work Bowing To Factory System

By Ernest Poole

Social worker on New York's East Side who became the first winner of a Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Go tonight at nine or even ten o'clock down through the Ghetto; you will find scores of small coat shops still lighted. These are non-union shops, and a glimpse into one of them reveals the task system running at full speed. The room is low and crowded. The air is close, impure, and alive with the ceaseless whir of machines.

The operator bends close over his machine—his foot on the treadle in swift, ceaseless motion; the baster stands just behind, at the table; the finisher works close between them. On the table is a pile of 20 coats. This is their "task"—the "day's work," which most teams never accomplish.

Of the three teams here, the swiftest can finish their task in 14 hours' labor. The other two seem forever behind and striving to catch up. Five tasks a week is their average. They need no overseer, no rules, no regular hours. They drive themselves. This is the secret of the system. For three men seldom feel sick or dull or exhausted at the same moment. If the operator slackens his pace, the baster calls for more coats; and if at six o'clock the baster gives out, the finisher spurs him on through the evening.

Operators Are Old at 45

The positions are tense, their eyes strained, their movements quick and nervous. Most of them smoke cigarettes while they work; beer and cheap whisky are brought in several times a day by a peddler. Some sing Yiddish songs—while they race. The women chat and laugh sometimes—while they race. For these are not yet dumb slaves, but intensely human—young, and straining every ounce of youth's vitality. Among operators 20 years is an active lifetime. Forty-five is old age. They make but half a living.

This is but the rough underside of the system. Widen the focus, include employers, then employers of employers, and the whole is a live human picture of cut-throat competition. At the top the great New York manufacturers of clothing compete fiercely for half the country's trade—a trade of sudden changes, new styles, rush seasons.

When, three years back, the Raglan overcoat came suddenly into favor, at once this chance was seized by a score of rivals, each striving to make the coat cheapest and place it first on the market. Each summoned his contractors, and set them in turn competing for orders. He knew them all, and knew

Bosses Use 'Security' To Stifle Unionization

Dec. 25, 1904—Benjamin Schlesinger has issued a strong denunciation of the new trick of the cloak bosses who ask "security" from the cloakmakers. In the better shops, a worker must now deposit a \$50 cash guaranty that he will neither belong to a union nor try to organize the shop, nor even dare protest against wages or working conditions.

If a cloakmaker does any of the above listed things, he not only loses his job but also forfeits his \$50 deposit. In some shops a \$25 deposit will do. In the cheaper line a \$10 "security" is accepted.

The sad fact about all this is that many cloakmakers are only too willing to deposit "security" in order to get a chance to slave for starvation wages.

—DAILY FORWARD.

how desperately dependent they were upon his trade. Slowly the prices were hammered down and down until the lowest possible bids had been forced. Then enormous rush orders were given.

Task System Falling Behind

This system is now hard pushed by a swifter rival, and is falling behind in the race. In these days of machine invention, a process to live must not only be swift and cheap, it must be able, by saving labor, to grow forever swifter and cheaper. This the task system can no longer do.

The factory system, so long delayed by the desperate driving of the task, began in 1896. In New York today 70 per cent of the coats are made by the factory. The small shops—on task or week wages—are mere survivals of the past.

Endless saving, dividing, narrowing labor—this is the factory. Down either side of the long factory table 40 operators bend over machines, and each one sews the twentieth part of a coat. One man makes hundreds of pockets. On sewing pockets his whole working life is narrowed. To this intensity he is helped and forced and stimulated at every possible point. His strength is no longer wasted on pushing a treadle; the machine is run by other power.

The coat passes down the long bench, then through the hands of a dozen pressers and basters and finishers—each doing one minute part swiftly, with exact precision. Through 30 hands it comes out at last 14 minutes quicker, four cents cheaper; the factory has beaten the task shop.

Is Worker's Lot Improved?

And the human cost—is it, too, reduced? Is the worker better off here than he was in the sweatshop? To consider this fairly we must compare the non-union factory with the non-union sweatshop.

Wages by the week for the most skilled workers are slightly higher in the factory than they were in the sweatshop. They are lower for the unskilled majority. This majority must slowly increase. For the factory system progresses by transferring skill to machinery.

Hours are shorter; work is less irregular; the shop is sanitary; the air is more wholesome—but the pocket-maker is often as exhausted at six o'clock as the coat-maker was at ten; for his work is more minute, more intense, more monotonous. This concentration, too, is growing.

Workers Have Gained

Still, the workers have gained most decidedly. The factory is a help to the union. Through the past 20 years labor unions were formed again and again only to be broken by new waves of ignorant immigrants. In this system of small scattered shops the unions had no chance. The free American workman bargained alone, with a contractor who said, "I have no power," and a manufacturer who said, "I have no workmen." All this is ended. Contractor and manufacturer are slowly becoming one. The bargain is direct, and the workmen are learning to strike it together.

—THE OUTFLOOK, NOV. 21, 1903

In Exchange for Italy's Sunny Fields



In the New World the sunshine is barely able to penetrate the canyons of tenements. —Lewis Hine Collection, Photo League

New Singer Machine Only Brings Cut in Piece Rates

NEW YORK, Apr. 9, 1905—Until three years ago, even the poorest boss had to supply machines for his workers. But then some cloakmakers began to realize that the new Singer machine works much faster than the household sewing machine that was used in cloak shops. And since the bosses were not interested in spending money for the new machines, the cloakmakers themselves bought the speedier sewing machines in order to produce more work and make more money.

Naturally, the employers did not object. Little by little, the old machines were replaced by new ones. And now if a cloakmaker wants a job, he must bring his own machine. If he happens to be too poor to own one, he may find a generous boss who has new machines, and for a nominal weekly fee he will let the cloakmaker use one.

One result of the faster machine was a continual cut in the piece rate, so that now the cloakmaker with the fast machine actually earns less than he did three years ago with the slow household machine. Another result of machine ownership is the little pushcart the cloakmaker must use to move his machine whenever he changes jobs, which happens quite frequently in these days of non-union shops and the bosses' right to fire a worker whenever he pleases.

As long as the workers stay out of the Cloakmakers' Union, they will have to pay for their own machines and carry them from shop to shop, or pay the boss for the privilege of being permitted to sweat 12 or 14 hours for a pittance. They must act at once to end this practice by building a strong, permanent union which will fight for them.

—DAILY FORWARD

Midway Through the Workday



—N. Y. State Factory Investigating Commission
Corner of a busy Waverly Place shop.

Barondess Name Brings Crowd to Chicago Meeting

By B. Fogel
Chicago ILGWU Pioneer

CHICAGO, 1908—I was recently walking around the cloakmakers district in downtown Chicago looking for a job. I had been in town only a short while and did not know much about the city.

I was approached by a tall, thin man who handed me a leaflet reading: "Cloakmakers! Come to a meeting in Workmen's Hall. Joseph Barondess from New York will be the speaker, etc."

The meeting hall was packed to overflowing. But when the chairman announced that Barondess had been unable to come, it didn't take more than five minutes for the hall practically to empty out, with only a handful of people remaining. Here is what had happened:

Several cloakmakers had got together and decided to call a meeting in an attempt to organize the trade. In order to attract a large crowd, they hit upon the idea of announcing that the great Barondess would be present. A large crowd was indeed attracted—but not of cloakmakers. There were present many cigarmakers, painters, carpenters—but very few cloakmakers. They had all come to hear the famous Barondess, and when it was disclosed that he would not be present, they left.

The few cloakmakers who remained continued the meeting, and, as usually happens in such cases, they decided to call another meeting.

It might be said that Local 5 was born at that meeting. Further meetings were held, more and more cloakmakers began to attend, and the organization began its career.

—SOUVENIR JOURNAL,
TENTH ANNIVERSARY,
LOCAL 5

NEWS-HISTORY Editorials

Two Important Strikes

Two events have streaked with lightning effect the bleak skies of our union—our small struggling organization which for the past seven years has tried so hard and with such meagre results to win for itself a legitimate place among the great mass of our workers and in our sprawling, profit-sodden industry.

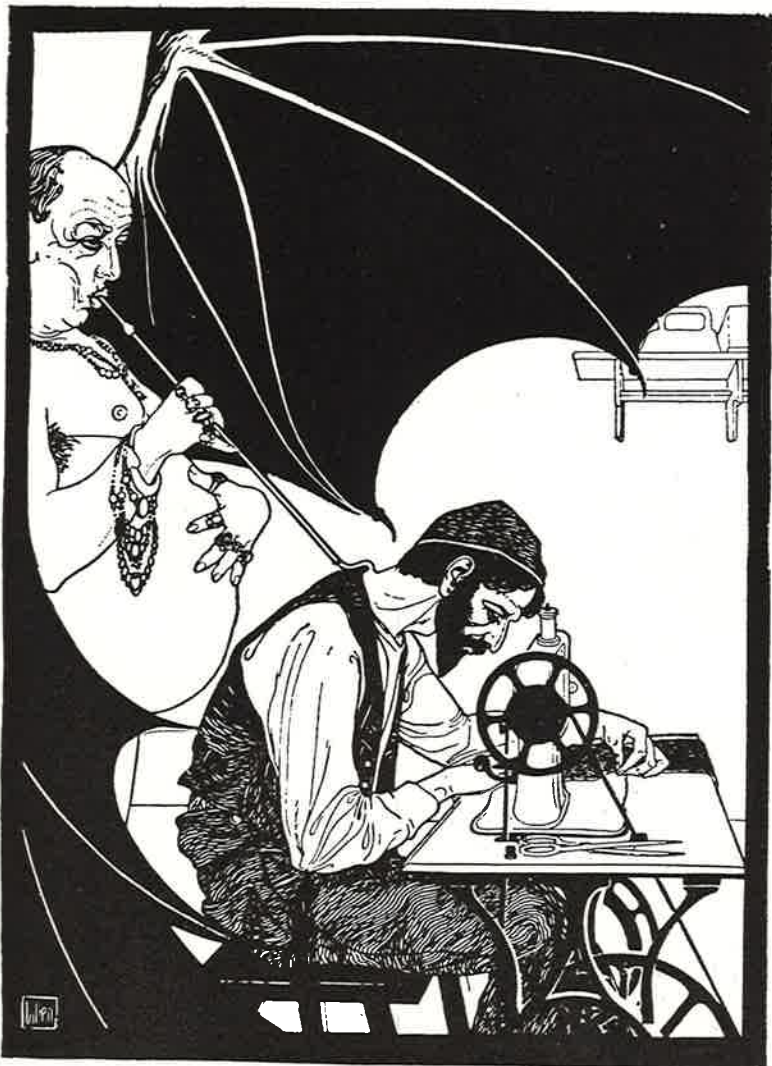
One of these events—a milestone in our lives—was the brave reply by the New York Reefermakers, Local 17, in March, 1907, to their employers who hung out lockout signs in their shops reading, "Beginning Apr. 1, this will no longer be a union shop."

The reefermakers met this challenge swiftly. Within a few hours every reefer shop was emptied and the sidewalks were lined with indignant pickets. The strikers had to fight not only the bosses. Arrayed against them were hired thugs, and the city police lent the employers a helping hand, besides. But the reefermakers and fought their way to a hard-won victory after 11 weeks of struggle. They got higher wages, abolished inside sub-contracting, did away with the dragging of sewing machines from shop to shop, and won the provision that needles and machine straps have to be supplied by the bosses from now on.

And while this bitter and bloody struggle was going on in New York, the sidewalks of Boston in front of our shops, saw another fight between our workpeople, cloak and skirt makers, Local 12, 13 and 26 and the employers' association. For the first time since our International was organized, the Boston manufacturers felt the organized might of our union and 38 out of 50 of them gave up the conflict and signed. But the other 12 remain obstinate on the one main issue—the closed shop.

The fight is not yet over. Mr. Louis Brandeis, the attorney for the association, is our chief opponent, but our strikers, we hope, will soon persuade him and his clients that he is wrong, dead wrong. The men and women in the settled Boston shops, who have assessed themselves 20 per cent of their wages to help those still out on strike, are setting a grand example to their brothers and sisters in other cloak markets. That's how unions are built, that's how strikes are won—in Boston, in New York, in Chicago, in Philadelphia, everywhere in our great land!

"The Vampire"



—M. Lilien

Women Need Protection of Strong Union

By Lillian D. Wald
Founder of the Henry Street Settlement House.

There has not been a valid economic argument presented by the theorist or practical trades unionist that I have not heard from the lips of the leaders among women laborers. They know full well the fundamental economic fact of the essential and permanent inequality between the individual wage earner and the capitalist employer, and that the possibility of an absolutely free contract between them is a delusion.

They are well aware that the danger to themselves and to their countless successors lies in the cutting under of prices by the "sweater" and the "poor widow" who has the "freedom" to work all day and all night at home. They speak with eloquence of the devastation of child labor, the destruction to the homes through long hours and "speeding up" in the shops, their deprivation of leisure and therefore the home. "For all we know," said one, "soup grows on trees."

Women remain in the trades and will for all time, and it is of grave importance that the best conditions should be established, not for favorable discrimination on account of sex, which cannot be defended, but for just pay for such work as her talents and her ability and her general fitness may entitle her.

Labor legislation must of necessity act for the young and the immature, but intelligent trades union regulation for women by women has failed to be effective only because of lack of strong trades unions among them. Unless we speed their day they will be working "The Long Day" for small wage and carrying home the unfinished work to sap the strength of the youngest.

When women have effective organizations and suitable State legislation, home work, which means sweat work and children's work, will be abolished. Legislation cannot accomplish this alone; the women are in a position to regulate and enforce this if backed by public sentiment.

The saving of the homes of the working people rests upon the women. The elimination of the sweated workers is their task ultimately, and their intelligence can be trusted.

They know why tuberculosis so often takes their shop-mates, why the shop work so often injures the eyes, why the "speeding up" with new machinery exhausts them. The best of them believe that the hope of the betterment of women in industry lies in their quickening of industrial evolution, and that with more secure establishment in the trade they will be able to screw up the standard of life and the home bit by bit, and that they are not liable to get this unless they demand it and secure it themselves.

—THE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY, MAY, 1906

Puerto Rican Local of Garment Workers Given ILGWU Charter

PUERTO RICO, Dec. 8, 1905
—The ILGWU has issued a charter to Local 12, Union de Modistas y Bordaderos of Rio-Grande, which has 18 members.
—MINUTES, GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

"Shops in Flats"



—McClure's

60,000 Children in N.Y.C. Sweatshops

By Edwin Markham

Famous American poet who stirred America with his "The Man With the Hoe."

Long before Hannah made a coat for little Samuel, women sat in the home at garment-making. The sweated sewing in the tenement home today is only a belated following of this custom of the ages. But the leisurely sewing of the old times was far away from the nerve-racking work of our hurried age. The slow ways are gone.

In unaired rooms, mothers and fathers sew by day and by night. Those in the home sweatshop must work cheaper than those in the factory sweatshops if they would drain work from the factory, which has already skinned the wage down to a miserable pittance.

And the children are called in from play to drive and drudge beside their elders. The load falls upon the ones least able to bear it—upon the backs of the little children at the base of the labor pyramid.

All the year in New York and in other cities you may watch children radiating to and from such pitiful homes. Nearly any hour on the East Side of New York City you can see them—pallid boy or spindling girl—their faces dulled, their backs bent under a heavy load of garments piled on head and shoulders, the muscles of the whole frame in a long strain. The boy always has bow-legs and walks with feet wide apart and wobbling. Here, obviously, is a hoe-man in the making.

Once at home with the sewing, the little worker sits close to the inadequate window, struggling with the snarls of thread, or shoving the needle through unwieldy cloth. Even if by happy chance the small worker goes to school, the sewing which he puts down at the last moment in the morning waits for his return.

Earns 50c a Week

Never again should one complain of buttons hanging by a thread; for tiny tortured fingers have doubtless done their little ineffec-

tual best. And for this lifting of burdens, this giving of youth and strength, this sacrifice of all that should make childhood radiant, a child may add to the family purse from 50 cents to \$1.50 a week.

In the rush times of the year, preparing for the changes of seasons or for the great "white sales," there are no idle fingers in the sweatshops. A little child of "seven times one" can be very useful in threading needles, in cutting the loose threads at the ends of seams, and in pulling out bastings. To be sure, the sewer is docked for any threads left on, or for any stitch broken by the little bungling fingers. The light is not good, but baby eyes must "look sharp."

Besides work at sewing, there is another industry for little girls in the grim tenements. The mother must be busy at her sewing; or perhaps she is away from dark to dark at office cleaning. A little daughter, therefore, must assume the work and care of the family. She becomes the "little mother," washing, scrubbing, cooking.

In New York City alone, 60,000 children are shut up in the home sweatshops. This is a conservative estimate, based upon a recent investigation of the Lower East Side of Manhattan Island, south of 14th St. and east of the Bowery. Many of this immense host will never sit on a school bench.

Is it not a cruel civilization that allows little hearts and little shoulders to strain under these grown-up responsibilities, while in the same city a pet cur is jeweled and pampered and aired on a fine lady's velvet lap on the beautiful boulevards.

—COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE January, 1907