

unpleasant words. That is the advantage of being a teacher. Your salary goes on, you know, whether you use unpleasant words or not, or at least it does in Wisconsin where we do have economic freedom.

I think the best days of capitalism are over, and it seems to me that it is hopeless to expect that the foreign countries will go back to the nineteenth century attitude of free economic intercourse between nations. As a matter of fact, of course, we were the ones that contributed more than any other nation, I suppose, in developing that scarcity consciousness in those foreign countries, so it is not up to us to cast any stones.

But at any rate, it would seem that with the development of the industries of the so-called backward countries, with Japan a most potent competitor to the old industrial nations, and with economic nationalism becoming the order of the day throughout the world, including ourselves, we are going to have a permanent bulge of the unemployed, and people who haven't any economic function, or economic opportunity to tie up with.

I shouldn't be very much surprised if, under the influence of the NRA, certain guild-like propensities will be developed. These, perhaps, will not come out as openly as the guilds did in the Middle Ages, because then it was quite in tune with the time. In practice, I imagine, there already is developing this desire to shut out socially marginal competitors by having the will to believe that they are chiselers, or that they "don't play the game."

This is a phenomenon of scarcity consciousness, but, of course, the economic textbooks won't touch upon it because it is not economics,—it is just sheer prejudice.

Now just a few suggestions along constructive lines: Take for instance, manual jobs. There was a time when we had in this country a manual working class in the needle trades. When Coolidge came in and when capitalism was deified and glorified and we experienced an apotheosis of capitalism, the Jewish manual working class began to disappear, to climb, as they thought, up the ladder of economic opportunity. Well, they know better now. It looked like an up-climb, but they reached the cellar when they got to the end. That is a tendency, of course, which is most deplorable as well as most unwise, and it would be very useful, I imagine, if we could arrest it.

There is another impossible reform and that is this: Take for instance, the sons of the Jewish bourgeoisie, the sons and daughters of the Jewish mer-

chants. When they come to college, they come burning with the desire to uproot themselves from the economic soil of their fathers. They despise the kind of businesses that their fathers earned their livelihoods from. Something might perhaps be done along that line—namely, to make them see the hopelessness of trying to reach the top of the economic hierarchy, to make them think more kindly of the smaller opportunities, of the small businesses that are still within their reach. To be sure, those businesses will have to be perhaps fumigated or reformed, but that in itself is a challenge.

Take also the matter of gaining some kind of an entry for the Jewish college graduates into the kind of employment that corporations have to give. It would seem to me that if we could establish some kind of an employment office, with the proper kind of advisory committees, we could undertake the task of selecting the young Jewish people thoroughly free of the objectionable traits that people talk about—and after all, you know of course that we run in all shapes,—there are unobjectionable Jews, too.

Perhaps we could undertake that task of the proper selection, and perhaps also the proper personality training. It is perhaps harder to train people in personality than to train them in mathematics or in philosophy, but it is not an entirely hopeless task.

So, if our social workers, perhaps, and the backers of social work, could cast their eye in that direction and do something, first by way of experiment, that might be another constructive way out of the situation.

Then I have another suggestion which I am sure will sound crazy to most of you, and that is this: that notwithstanding the depression in agriculture, it is perhaps time to reopen the question of agriculture as an opportunity, not so much for the hopelessly displaced people, but for the young people that are casting around for a career that they can enter into.

If I am correct in saying that capitalism has seen its best days, that it is entering into an era of chronic contraction, chronic ailment, of course you will at once ask the question, why worry about capitalism's sickness? It is all to the good, because that will give birth, or force society to give birth to socialism or communism. Unfortunately, I do not share that optimistic view. I look upon the modern western world as a society which, if the world were governed by logic, would have to go on to socialism, but the world, not being governed by logic, but by psychology and by the fear of strong, vested groups, I am afraid that the trend or the next step does not lie in the direction of socialism or communism, outside of Russia.

I was talking about reopening the question of agriculture as an opportunity. Of course, it does sound crazy, does it not? The farmers are now complaining bitterly, and of course the farmers, like the Jews, have developed a technique of complaining, so to that extent we shouldn't be over-impressed by their complaints.

But their complaint is justified, of course, especially in the western states where farming is com-

mercial. Perhaps the future farming is not in the line of commercial farming primarily, but in the line of subsistence farming plus partial commercial farming. Millions of dollars do not lie in that direction, but when opportunity is becoming restricted and constricted, and monopolized by other groups, it is perhaps not altogether amiss to consider that in connection with a worthwhile career for some of our young people.

## The Effect of the New Deal on Jewish Labor

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WITH the exception of very few minor industries, there is no industry today which employs a majority of Jewish workers. The proverbial needle trades are no exception. In the International Ladies Garment Workers Union which numbers at present nearly 200,000 members, less than 40% are Jewish. The largest local in the International Union with a membership of 40,000 is exclusively Italian. In the men's clothing industry, the percentage of Jews is even lower, my last estimate received at the last convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union being around 15%. However, there are still to my opinion about 350,000 Jews employed in the needle industry, the building trades and some minor industries throughout the United States, and the New Deal as expressed in the National Industrial Recovery Act and in the National Recovery Administration, has had considerable effect on their standing as wage earners.

The most important effect of the New Deal is the impetus it has given to organization. For the last 15 years or so, the greatest problem of unions, particularly in the needle trades, was the problem of out of town shops. Millions of dollars were spent by them on attempts at organization, which on the whole failed rather dismally. The out of town shops were located most of the time in small communities where the wages were much lower than in the cities and where working hours and working conditions were at the lowest possible level. The friendly attitude taken by the President and Section 7-A with the publicity attendant upon the coming of a New Deal have made the workers more receptive to organization, so much so that the International Ladies Garment Workers Union since last year practically quadrupled its membership and

the Amalgamated Clothing Workers doubled it. Besides, uniformity of hours and the establishment of a minimum scale have resulted in more uniform costs of production and have made it impossible for the factories in smaller towns to compete with the large markets as effectively as they did in the past.

In the smaller trades, especially in New York, the best effect of the New Deal is the glamor of authority conferred upon labor unions, which makes the small manufacturer feel that Labor has standing with the government. As most of these manufacturers are themselves immigrants and entertain a natural fear of government, it is so much easier for the representatives of Labor to negotiate favorable agreements. However, in order to make the picture complete I shall present to you facts and opinions pertaining to different trades as expressed by labor leaders in these trades. Mr. David Dubinsky, President of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, states as follows:

"The work hours in our industry before the advent of the codes were 40 in most of our industries. In some industries we had no collective agreements at all and in those the hours were practically between 50 and 60. Now, over 90% of our workers have the 35-hour week.

"Wages were increased on the average, 20 to 35%, aside from the stipulated compensation for the reduced number of hours. In many cases where actual sweat-shop conditions existed, wages were increased 100 and 200%, and, in some instances, even 300%.

"Among other improved labor conditions are the closed union shop; recognition of the International; elimination of overtime in most of our industries; the 35-hour week; classifications and definite wage scales for the various crafts and guaranteed minimum wage scales for piece-workers; elimination of home-work;

the right of the worker to his job and, in the event of discharge, review before an impartial tribunal; and, in the cloak industry, limitation of contractors which the Union demanded as far back as 1923 but was unable to get until after so many years of struggle, it finally becoming a part not only of the agreement but of the code as well.

"Code Authorities upon which the Union has representation are a tremendous help for the enforcement of the code, not so much in Union shops as in the non-union shops which were always undermining standards and creating competition so that union shops were forced to violate their agreements in order to preserve their business.

"It is estimated that additional 30,000 workers found employment in our industry because of the curtailment of hours and, more so, because of the more stringent observance.

"Our International is at present involved in 18 codes: Blouse and Skirt, Coat and Suit, Corset and Brassiere, Cotton Garment, Covered Button, Dress, Pleating, Stitching and Embroidery, Schiffli and Hand Embroidery, Handkerchiefs, Knitted Outerwear, Infants' & Children's Knitted Outerwear, Women's Neckwear, Rainwear, Robe, Underwear & Allied Products, Undergarments, Negligee, Children's Dress. On practically all of them, we have union representation with equal rights and equal votes, with the exception of 4 minor industries where, because of the change of attitude on the part of the Administration, our representatives have no vote.

"We are in contractual relations with 37 employers' associations in New York and 31 employers' associations in various other markets throughout the United States and Canada, in addition to several markets where we have individual agreements and where associations are not in existence,—a total of 68 associations."

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Because of the fact that the International Ladies Garment Workers Union was one of the first to get a code and also because the industry is concentrated largely in New York, it benefited from the New Deal more than possibly any other union, with the exception of the miners.

Mr. Abraham Miller, Manager of the New York Joint Board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, summarized the effect of the New Deal on his organization as follows:

"To a considerable extent, the NRA has made organization work much easier than it had been before. The publicity that went with the famous Section 7-A,

the declaration by the President and other high government officials that workers had a legal right to organize, destroyed in many workers' minds their fear and doubts.

"On the other hand there were certain disadvantages. Certain, notoriously anti-union employers, are willing to and do pay more than the code requires in order to prevent the union from getting a foothold.

"Also in the minds of some workers the NRA takes the place of a union.

"Another decided advantage which the NRA gave the union, was in establishing uniform hours for all parts of the industry. While the union enforces shorter hours in its unionized industries, this frequently gives the non-union employer the advantage in the selling market. Consequently the union employer is unable to compete and loses business, which in turn means loss of work for our members. Now that the entire industry must obey the same regulation in regard to hours, the union market has a better chance to survive.

"In regard to wages, while in New York the union was successful in obtaining increases in wages before the NRA went into effect, the NRA made these increases doubly secure by lifting the wages in the out-of-town shops, union and non-union. Again it is a question of putting the union markets in a good competitive position in relation to the non-union markets."

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Very little was gained by the workers in the Building Trades and again I quote Mr. Philip Zausner, Manager of the Painters District Council No. 9 of New York:

"So far as the NRA as an instrument to regulate industry and improve the welfare of the workers engaged in it is concerned, the Building Trades have not alone failed to attain any advantages therefrom, but it may be said with a great deal of justification that the Organized Building Trades Workers have to a large extent suffered a definite set-back since the inauguration of the NRA.

"The Building Industry, one of the important key industries of the land and one of the strongest trenchments of organized labor has been treated as a step-child in the entire set-up of the NRA. It is one of the last to be placed under a Code and the large army of the workers depending upon that industry for their existence are no better off today than they were a year or two ago.

"The failure on the part of the Code makers to protect higher standards of wages which are imperative in a highly seasonal industry has caused great dissatisfaction among the workers.

"Whereas, in other industries NRA is said to have elevated wage levels and reduced hours of labor which was in keeping with its pronounced policy, it can hardly make any such claim so far as the Building Industry is concerned.

"The Code of Fair Competition of the Construction Industry entirely ignores wage standards for skilled craftsmen who comprise 90% of the workers of the Building Industry and by limiting its wage provisions to minimums affecting unskilled workers NRA offers an invitation to open shops to take advantage of these minimums in their continued exploitation of the skilled craftsman in the industry."

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Mr. Maurice Feinstone, Secretary of the United Hebrew Trades which comprises over 50 small labor unions in miscellaneous trades, states as follows:

"On the credit side of labor, the NRA has been a force. Workers are more responsive to organization efforts, since they feel more secure with a union that is lawful and sanctioned by popular sentiment. They are not afraid to picket and they will act more aggressively.

"The NRA has also been very useful in bringing about some satisfactory conclusion of strikes. It has always been difficult to get the employer into conference with the union representatives. Under the new system, the employers, especially the small fry, with whom we deal extensively, do not refuse flatly to meet the union committee—respect for the NRA is more compelling than consideration for toiling humanity.

"The small employer, cap in hand, comes frightened before the Regional Board. He is reluctant to oppose it, so he does the next best thing: he bargains. But whatever the situation, his response to the NRA call means a quicker solution of the workers' strife.

"During the organization work that precedes the formation of a new union, the employer will discriminate boldly against the men in his shop suspected of "agitation." In this case, there is an appeal to the NRA, and the employer is shown to be discriminating against the men and violating the spirit of the New Deal, etc. He finds it much simpler to take the men back into his shop, for he has not money to hire lawyers, nor power to resist the pressure of the union. In such cases, and there is a great number, the NRA is of unquestionable benefit to the worker, individually and collectively.

"There is a debit side to the ledger.

"The big employer is bolder. He hires a lawyer, two, three, a dozen if necessary, and proceeds to defy the Regional Board with complicated legal rationalizations. The regional board gets in touch with Washington. The union fights hard, the employer spends money,—meanwhile the worker or workers over whom the battle is fought is unemployed. Months pass. Sheer economic pressure nullifies the theoretical benefits of the NRA for the union and the worker. It is a law with teeth, but not very strong teeth. While it works for the small employers, it cannot enforce its common-sense dictates with the big fellows. The clumsiness of its machinery and the highly organized resistance of the big capitalists renders it almost impotent in such cases.

"However, for the United Hebrew Trades and its small locals, I can say that the NRA has been a splendid encouragement. We deal chiefly with small employers, and to date our success has been marked in improving not only the material condition of the workers, but in raising their dignity and prestige among men."

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These statements give, to my opinion, a fair idea of the effect of the NRA on the different trades. However, we must not lose sight of the following:

1. The National Recovery Administration is becoming more and more unfriendly to labor organization and labor union. It is becoming increasingly difficult for a labor union to receive substantial benefits under the codes and in many cases benefits already derived are being nullified by changes and amendments. Unless the unions prove themselves to be very strong or unless the administration changes its policy, many of the gains in the needle trades will be lost.

2. Even under a status quo it will be difficult for the needle trades to maintain their favorable standing, if Labor in other industries will not be in a position to raise its standard.

3. The influx of new members into the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union constantly reduce the percentage of Jews, as most of the new comers are non-Jews. Eventually, it must lead to a condition where even the needle trades will no longer be considered as Jewish trades.