

CHAPTER VII

PHILOSOPHY, STRUCTURE, AND STRATEGY

THE rapid rise of the unions in the needle trades, contending, as they have, against enormous disadvantages, accounts for the keen interest, both friendly and hostile, which they have aroused in the public and the labor movement. On the one hand they are put forward as shining examples for the rest of organized labor, and on the other they are denounced and persecuted as "Bolsheviki" to be shunned by the "bona-fide" unions. Large employers who for some years have dealt with these organizations praise them in the highest terms and are satisfied with existing relations, notwithstanding the fact that they know many of the members of the unions concerned are in opposition to the whole wage system.¹ Yet there are still leaders of organized labor who believe it their duty to cleanse the movement of the influence of these radical bodies. To the observer both these attitudes, strange as they may seem, must give evidence of the power which the needle-trades unions have developed; to

¹ Ray Stannard Baker in the *Evening Post*, N. Y., of February 18, 1920, gives opinions of employers concerning the labor situation in the clothing industry.

him the primary question would be, not whether they are "good" or "bad," but what sort of thing are they, and wherein lies the source of their success? How were the workers employed in industries with such a chaotic economic structure able to build such strong organizations?

The strength of these unions lies primarily in the type of unionism they have developed—a type which binds their members in a fraternity of ideals, and is based on a sense of solidarity in a tireless struggle towards a new system of society. It is a common consciousness that makes it possible to knit together workers of the most divergent trades and varied standards into a united army, always responsive and ready for concerted action. This spiritual brotherhood, based upon a common aspiration—a thing which the old unionism so badly lacks—made it possible for the needle workers to create more powerful and cohesive organizations than could their employers. The supremacy of organization gives the workers their firm hold in the industry and explains in large measure their achievements. History here has repeated one of its frequent paradoxes. The very weakness and backwardness of the industrial structure in the manufacture of clothing, the very difficulties which the labor organizations had to face, forced them early in their struggle to embrace principles which gave them their ultimate power.

The fundamental differences between the old and the new unionism lie not so much in the form of

organization as in the attitude toward the methods and purposes of the labor struggle. The gulf is to be found in ideology rather than in structure. The fact that the old unionism so obstinately clings to the remnants of craft or trade organization, while the new unionism strives towards complete industrialism, is merely the sequence of that difference in attitude which makes the former seek its power in a kind of bargaining partnership with capital, while the latter looks for its strength primarily to the solidarity of the working class, with a resulting disbelief in the ultimate necessity of profit-making capital. The old unionism has no quarrel with the fundamentals of capitalist society. It does not question the right of private property to control production. In any case, it acquiesces in this right; it recognizes the "reasonable" profit and dividends on honest investment. The very conception of the class struggle is barred from its dictionary. Its hostilities are directed merely against "those employers who refuse to understand modern industrial conditions and constant needs for advancement of the working people."² It fully and unreservedly endorses the primitive theory of competition as the only reliable incentive of human endeavor and progress.

The old unionism therefore struggles only for the immediate betterment of the condition of the working people, while the new unionism thinks of imme-

² This and succeeding quotations on the old unionism are from the testimony of Samuel Gompers, President of the A. F. of L., before the Industrial Relations Commission, May, 1914.

mediate improvements merely as a means toward a larger end. The old unionism concentrates all its efforts on here and now, on the problems of today, on those proximate difficulties which vary from trade to trade and from industry to industry. "It works along the line of least resistance," and this line is different according to circumstances. Not merely has it no vision, no announced program, no dream of its own, but it wishes none; more than that, it believes every vision or dream or comprehensive program a serious danger, which may divert the attention of the workers from the struggle for immediate betterment. Though zealously protecting its right to strike as a safeguard against "bad" employers who refuse their workers a voice "in determining the questions affecting the relations between themselves and their employers," the old unionism looks to collective bargaining to bring the sentiments and views of the employers "in entire accord with the organization of the working people." The old unionism appeals to the business or trading consciousness, while the new unionism makes its chief appeal to the desire for ultimate economic emancipation.

The old unionism was not so much the result of plans of leadership as it was the result of adaptation to conditions. Taking the line of least resistance may be repugnant as a social philosophy; it is likely to be, however, the course pursued in the early stages of any human institution. Well considered programs, aims, and methods based on a broad social

view, are always of later origin. They come, for the masses, only when the initial progress along the line of least resistance has led to a point where greater freedom of action and choice are possible, or when all lines of resistance reveal so many obstacles that to hew out the highway of a great ideal becomes indispensable for making one's way at all. It would take us too far if we were here to make a complete historical analysis of the old unionism in this country, but a few suggestions might not be amiss.

With inexhaustible resources of free land, with many opportunities to acquire property, with an apparently unlimited political equality, the American working people did not for a long time develop much class-consciousness. The whole attitude of the nation was one of individual "getting on," and this conception of affairs was always sustained by literature, the press, and public education. Early unionism was frequently of a welfare nature. Mutual assistance in need, cultural self-perfection, vague "uplift" common to the whole people without distinction of class or position, were its main characteristics. Political movements of the workers were usually directed toward increasing the opportunities for individual advancement rather than toward improving the status of wage-earners as a whole. The free-soil parties, for instance, were of this nature. When small groups of workers began to combine for strictly economic betterment, their field of activity was naturally confined to the exclu-

sive possessors of skill in a given handicraft. Machinery had not become a widespread substitute for the skilled craftsman, and, in the industries which machinery had conquered, organization was slow. The line of least resistance led to manipulation of demand and supply in the labor markets. The opportunity of improving the conditions of the skilled worker by limiting the supply of labor and eliminating competition within the group was considerable.

The labor market of each trade at this stage was still little influenced by the labor market in other trades. The more skill a trade demands, the less it can depend on a surplus of labor elsewhere. Every effort to minimize competition and so improve bargaining conditions could naturally count on far greater success when limited to a trade than when extended to an entire industry. For practical achievement, for immediate betterment, the craft union was the best form of organization. The methods it worked out were those calculated to create the most favorable conditions in bargaining with employers. Long and strictly regulated apprenticeship, limitations on the admission of new members, undisputed jurisdiction over the workers concerned, detailed regulations for accepting or leaving a job, rules limiting the productivity of the worker, the so-called "permit system," and the union label, were all intended to put craft groups on a better footing when it came to bargaining with their several employers. This was the goal of the

craft union; if it attained recognition and the closed shop, it could rest at its ease.

The results accomplished by these methods were in the early stages obvious. The difference between the high status of the skilled and organized workers and the misery of the unskilled and unorganized was so striking that there was no doubt that the craft union "delivered the goods" to those whom it was formed to serve. This led to the further strengthening of the craft union, and to a large measure of complacency. The result of early necessity was, in the minds of leaders and of many working people themselves, converted into a principle. The program of no program, the policy of no policy, and the philosophy of no philosophy, were themselves transmuted into a set of eternal and ideal doctrines. Even long after industrial conditions had radically changed, after craftsmen had been almost all replaced by machinery, after competition itself ceased to be such an important factor and the lines of demarcation between trades had become most vague, after, in the natural course of development, the trades union had supplanted the craft union, and even the industrial union—such as the United Mine Workers—had come into existence within the fold of the American Federation of Labor, this ideology still retained its firm hold upon the official labor movement. The old unionism is distinguished now not by its structure, but rather by a lingering craft interpretation of life, and by a narrow attitude toward the aims and tasks of the labor movement.

Entirely different conditions surrounded the growth of the labor movement in the needle trades. The distribution of free land had ceased to be such a strong influence by the 'eighties, when these industries absorbed the immigrant hordes—and the Jews were not accustomed to living on the land in any case. The immigrant was handicapped in experimenting, in pioneering, and in advancing his commercial fortunes, by his lack of knowledge of the language and customs of the country. Even the apparent political equality did not embrace him for several years after his arrival, and then only as the result of exceptional effort on his part. Our system of public education and press had little or no influence on him. While the intolerable conditions of work in the clothing shops and the low wages barred the great masses from the wider aspects of life, there was from the beginning a considerable nucleus of cultivated socialist intellectuals who had through force of circumstances become manual workers, and who naturally took the lead in every effort towards organization.

A far more important factor, however, was the utter impossibility of accomplishing results by following the policies established by the American labor movement. Competition in the labor markets of the needle trades, at least in the formative period of the unions, could not be limited. The flood of immigration increased every year, and most of the operations did not demand much skill. With the single exception of the cutters, the period of ap-

prenticeship necessary for acquiring average ability in the needle trades is too short to create much of a barrier around the crafts. It is easy to pass from any one of the trades to another. The conditions in any one of the trades affect too directly those of all others to permit separatism.

The cutters, who were the first to organize, did pass through a development similar in some respects to that of the general labor movement. At an early period, when the passage from the cutting craft to the employing class was somewhat easier, they practiced the welfare type of unionism, with benefits, vague idealism, ceremonials, etc. Later they had craft locals, businesslike, conservative, and aloof. Even after the internationals' were formed they retained a certain separatism within the organization, considering themselves a sort of aristocracy. As the large unions grew, however, they became more and more dependent on the majority of their fellows. Recent innovations in cutting machinery, which eliminate some of the skill of the old handicraftsman, hastened the process. But perhaps what had more effect than anything else was that in some cases they were actually outdistanced in wages and conditions by other crafts who whole-heartedly accepted the new unionism from the beginning. The cutters now have little particularism.

The large number of small and transitory firms, the keen competition among them on the one hand, and among the workers on the other, and the highly seasonal character of the industry, made all con-

ditions so unstable and fluctuating that it seemed impossible for most of the workers to hope for material improvement without abolishing the capitalist régime. The evils of competition were so apparent and abhorrent that the workers could not think of it as a valuable incentive to human endeavor and progress. The business-like method of the old unionism,—entrenching in the separate crafts, making a gain here and there, and extending the organization bit by bit,—was evidently inapplicable under these conditions. A strike in a single prosperous shop or group of shops could bring only ephemeral gains. The proprietor of the struck shop would transfer his work to outside sub-manufacturers or contractors, or would entirely reorganize his establishment a few blocks away, with a new staff. Concessions granted at the height of the season would be taken away, often with interest, as soon as the slack season set in. While in the general labor movement partial gains occurred before large organization, the process in the needle trades was the reverse. Almost a complete organization had to be accomplished before any lasting improvement could be brought about. Organizers who held out promises of immediate betterments through partial action could not arouse the interest of the workers after many years of hopeless struggle. The labor movement in these industries had to build its organized strength upon a class consciousness looking towards complete economic emancipation.

The creation of this consciousness and hope was,

however, a Herculean task. It took decades of incessant agitation and education to coalesce the human atoms scattered over such an endless number and variety of shops into a solid, living organism. During these decades the union were growing in potentiality, in the common consciousness of the workers, rather than in tangible form and achievement. To the outsider the needle workers seemed unorganizable; even the insiders, the group of devoted leaders, were ready to despair of their own ability to accomplish results. The leadership of the old unionism seemed to be infinitely more successful. It was this appearance which, at the first convention of the United Garment Workers in 1891, led the radical delegates, imbued though they were with the principles of the new unionism, to elect as officers a group of conservative unionists, and to affiliate immediately with the American Federation of Labor, which was in bitter opposition to socialism.

But this attempt to take a leaf out of the book of old unionism has now shown conclusively how ill adapted its methods are to the clothing industry. The failure of the United Garment Workers is not chiefly a failure of persons, it is a failure of method. As soon as this method changed, as soon as the majority of the members came over to the new Amalgamated Clothing Workers, it became possible to create an almost one-hundred per cent organization in the same men's clothing industry in which the United Garment Workers never succeeded in gaining a firm foothold.

When the preliminary process of agitation and propaganda was at last completed, when a common consciousness had become rooted in the minds of the working people, a single stroke was enough to give the potential organizations tangible shape, and to endow them with a deeper solidarity and a firmer control over their members and industries than the old unionism could ever attain. This explains their dramatic appearance on our social surface and their sudden success. The appeal to organize for immediate betterment failed not merely to bring any organization but also to achieve any betterment. The appeal to organize for the ultimate emancipation of the working class, disregarding immediate advantages, brought about not merely an almost complete organization, but also very substantial betterments.

The philosophy of the new unionism, like every vital philosophy, was not born complete, and is being enriched continually. It does not exist in a formal way even in the minds of the working people adhering to the organizations that exemplify it. It will be found rather as a mental attitude, an imperfectly expressed interpretation of events. Yet a movement based primarily on the conscious views of its adherents, as the new unionism is, was bound to attempt at an early period to formulate its philosophy as concisely as possible. As previously stated, the first convention of the United Garment Workers adopted a radical constitution, declaring for the recognition of the socialist newspapers, the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, the *People*, and the *Volks Zeitung*, as the official

organs of the union, and for agitation among its membership in favor of participating in the political activities of the socialists. Of course the action of the officers quickly made these provisions dead letters. The next oldest international in the needle trades, the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, formulated its social creed in the following preamble to its constitution:

“Recognizing the fact that the world is divided into two classes, the class that produces all wealth—the working class—and the class that owns and controls the means of production—the capitalist class;

“Recognizing the fact that the concentration of wealth and power in the hand of the capitalist class is the cause of the workmen’s economic oppression; and

“Recognizing the fact that only through organization and by united effort can the workers secure their right to enjoy the wealth created by their labor;

“Therefore, we, the workers of the Hat and Cap Trade, have formed this organization under the name of the UNITED CLOTH HAT AND CAP MAKERS OF NORTH AMERICA, in order to improve our conditions and secure by united action our due share of the products of our labor; to establish a shorter work day; to elevate our moral and intellectual standard and develop our class consciousness by means of propaganda and the press; to cooperate with the national and universal labor movement for the final emancipation of the wage earner and for the establishment of the Cooperative Commonwealth.”

The preamble to the constitution of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers Union, while of the same nature, defines more clearly the method of

attaining the final emancipation of the wage-earner. It announces as its aim, “to organize industrially into a class-conscious trade union” in order “to bring about a system of society wherein the workers shall receive the full value of their product.” In the above preambles all the elements of the new unionism were already contained. Further development, however, was necessary to expand these elements into a complete system. These preambles are vague with regard to the method in which the “Cooperative Commonwealth” or the “system of society wherein the workers shall receive the full value of their product” is to be brought about. The Cap Makers see this method as cooperation with the national and universal labor movement; the Ladies’ Garment Workers refer to “cooperation with workers in other industries,” but from the context it appears that they put much more weight upon political representation of the workers “on the various legislative bodies by representatives of the political party whose aim is the abolition of the capitalist system.”

The constitution of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, as the latest in the series and also as one created in direct opposition to the old unionism, gives a fuller and more definite expression of faith. Says the preamble:

“The economic organization of Labor has been called into existence by the capitalist system of production, under which the division between the ruling class and the ruled class is based upon the ownership of the means of production. The class owning those means is the one that is

ruling, the class that possesses nothing but its labor power, which is always on the market as a commodity, is the one that is being ruled.

"A constant and unceasing struggle is being waged between these two classes.

"In this struggle the economic organization of Labor, the union, is a natural weapon of offense and defense in the hands of the working class.

"But in order to be efficient, and effectively serve its purpose, the union must in its structure correspond to the prevailing system of the organization of industry.

"Modern industrial methods are very rapidly wiping out the old craft demarcations, and the resultant conditions dictate the organization of Labor along industrial lines.

"The history of the Class Struggle in this country for the past two decades amply testifies to the ineffectiveness of the form, methods and spirit of craft unionism. It also shows how dearly the working class has paid for its failure to keep apace with industrial development.

"The working class must accept the principles of Industrial Unionism or it is doomed to impotence.

"The same forces that have been making for Industrial Unionism are likewise making for a closer inter-industrial alliance of the working class.

"The industrial and inter-industrial organization, built upon the solid rock of clear knowledge and class consciousness, will put the organized working class in actual control of the system of production, and the working class will then be ready to take possession of it."

The philosophy of the new unionism has molded the structure, and still more, the strategy of these organizations. Deriving their strength from the class consciousness of their membership, they must

depend upon intelligent appreciation by the rank and file of their problems and policies. It is necessary that every member shall identify himself with the organization, shall think of it as an embodiment of his own aspirations and will. The leadership in these organizations, regardless of the manner of election, must therefore be of a somewhat different nature from the leadership in the old unionism. This difference cannot be adequately expressed in any constitutional provisions with regard either to the selection or the authority of the officers. The methods of election in the unions of clothing workers are not uniform and do not differ materially from those practiced by the organizations of the business type. The general officers of the Ladies' Garment Workers and the Hat and Cap Makers are elected by their biennial conventions; the general officers of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers are nominated by their biennial conventions and elected by a referendum vote of the membership. The same methods are employed by the old unionism. The fundamental difference lies rather in the attitude of the leadership toward the rank and file and of the rank and file toward the leadership.

The old unionist is inclined to think of the union as a business concern. His attitude toward it is similar to the attitude of a stockholder toward a corporation. As long as the directors of a corporation keep it solvent, as long as dividends are paid regularly, the stockholders have no further interest in the affairs of the concern and are ready

to leave it entirely in the hands of the management. They do not want to be bothered by detailed consideration of methods or policies. Results are all they ask; the rest they are ready and anxious to forget. On the other hand, the directors hold themselves accountable to the stockholders only for immediate results; they are likely to consider it an intrusion if any but the large stockholders attempt to interfere in the policies of the business.

The business consideration is to the new unionist only secondary; he is mainly interested in the organization itself as the expression of his aspiration to control the industrial system. The immediate gains are, both to the members and the leaders, a by-product derived in the process of work on the main task, the preparation of the workers for actual control of production. This attitude makes methods and policies far more important than immediate results accomplished. Consciously and unconsciously, the rank and file imbued with the spirit of the new unionism will always look behind immediate advantage to that higher goal to which they have dedicated their efforts. Their revolt against being arbitrarily ruled was their original motive for organization, and they cannot be expected to submit long to boss-rule in their own communities. Neither will they be over-anxious to give undue authority to their representatives.

The leadership in these unions therefore has more the character of spiritual guidance in a voluntary fraternity somewhat like the church communities at

the beginnings of Christianity, than of authoritative control even by democratic rulers. The rank and file look to their leadership for enlightenment, advice, and counsel, but they consider the will of the people as the superior wisdom and expect their leaders to abide by it. The leaders see the mainspring of power of the organization in the mass volition of the membership. They are therefore extremely reluctant to use arbitrarily their authority or discretion. To undertake any important step, however advisable, before the rank and file has come to will that step would be to undermine the only power that could make it successful. It cannot be said that the legal safeguards against abuse of authority are much stricter than in the more advanced organizations of the old type. But there is the safeguard of an always alert public opinion, of mutual confidence and respect, of a common ideal to serve as a criterion in the shaping of policies.

The structure of these organizations cannot be fully outlined on the basis of written constitutions or by-laws; it contains numerous extra-legal institutions which play a decisive part in their life. Furthermore, the practices are not rigidly fixed. Regarding the processes of society themselves as constantly in flux, the unions readily change their practices to meet changed conditions. But in all changes the supreme consideration is to make it possible for the organization to have behind its every action the comprehension and resolution of the membership.

The supreme authority in each of the clothing unions is concentrated in the industrial unit, representing the entire membership in the United States and Canada. The will of the membership as a whole constitutionally finds its expression in the periodic convention, in the General Executive Board and General Officers who administer the affairs of the union between conventions, and in the Referendum, which may be invoked at any time. As a matter of established practice, the general will also finds expression in the General Membership Mass Meeting, and in the Joint Meeting of all Local Union Executive Boards of any given locality.

Next in authority to the industrial unit are the trade units of the various localities, which constitutionally are governed by the several Joint Boards or Councils—for instance, the Amalgamated New York Joint Board of Men's Clothing. Extra-legally, the trade unit is much influenced by meetings of the Shop Chairmen of the locality and trade. The Joint Boards are made up of delegates from Local Unions, whereas the Shop Chairmen represent the workers by shops, and are in constant touch with the rank and file at their places of work.

The smallest constitutional unit is the Local Union; this subdivision is merely for administrative purposes and as a rule wields virtually no authority in control of industrial action. Strikes, for instance, are usually called by Joint Boards rather than by Locals. Because of its purely administrative functions the composition of the local varies widely.

Extra-legally, the smallest unit is the shop, with its shop committee or price committee and shop chairman, elected by the members employed in a given manufacturing plant or subdivision of such plant. This is a most important functional division in the industrial activities of the union.

In order to give a clear idea of this administrative machinery, it is necessary to describe it in more detail, beginning with the smaller units and working up to the main one.

The local union consists as a rule of the workers at a single craft or operation, such as cutters, operators, pressers, basters, tailors, blockers, sizers, trimmers, finishers, muff-bed makers, hat frame makers, etc. Sometimes it consists of workers of different crafts but of the same nationality. Such, for instance, is Local 280 of the Amalgamated, consisting of Italian workers of all crafts in the pants trade, or Local 43, consisting of Jewish operators, finishers, and pressers living in Brooklyn. There is now a tendency, in distinct sections of a large city or in smaller towns where the membership is not too large, to make the local union coterminous with the locality irrespective of craft. A similar principle is applied to minority nationality groups such as Lithuanians, Italians, Slovenians, Russians, and Poles.

The nature of administrative functions differs among locals, even within the same organization. The special history of the craft, its position in the trade or industry, the extent of its organization, are

responsible for these differences. There are, however, some functions that are common to all locals. The local is the unit of representation in the general convention, the number of delegates to which it is entitled depending on its size. Another common function is the election of delegates to the Joint Board. Practically all locals in the International Ladies' Garment Workers, and some in the other unions, collect the per capita tax from the members, see that they remain in good standing, serve as employment agencies for manufacturers and members, and give consideration to grievances of members which are later submitted to the Joint Board for action. The locals give preliminary consideration to trade problems with the purpose of bringing in recommendations to the Joint Board, and serve as voting units for all decisions of the Joint Board submitted to the membership for ratification. They discuss and decide any disputes among their members. Finally, perhaps the main function of the local is the cultivation of good will and good fellowship among the members. It is the social force of cohesion and propaganda in the union. This accounts in large measure for the varied forms which the locals take.

The government of the local is in the hands of the meeting, the local executive board, and the local officials. The meeting is the supreme authority, subject only to referendum of the membership. There are no fixed rules as to the use of the referendum, but it is usually ordered only by a vote of the

meeting. Many locals elect their executive boards and officials by this means; no local will decide a question effecting vitally its whole membership—such as the raising of dues—without a referendum.

The local executive board, consisting of no less than five members, is the governing body of the local between meetings. It is usually elected for a term of from six to twelve months. The officials are subject to the supervision of the executive board. The number and kind of officials depends upon the size and nature of the local. The chairman of the executive board, sometimes called also the president of the local, is an unpaid officer but an influential one. The recording secretary is usually paid a nominal sum and his duty is to keep the minutes of local and board meetings; but he is also an influential officer. In the larger locals there is a paid secretary, devoting all his time to the work. The one paid officer in all locals is the financial secretary. He is charged with the collection of dues, initiation fees, and assessments, whenever this duty is left to the local, and with the paying of bills and guarding the funds unless, as in the case of some large locals, responsibility for the account is placed with a special unpaid treasurer. Some of the larger locals, including virtually all those in the Ladies' Garment Workers, also have paid managers. The duties of the manager are not clearly defined. He has a general supervision over the office staff, and serves as a link between the general office or the Joint Board and the

membership of his local. He also exercises a sort of moral leadership and guidance. This office is now becoming obsolete.

The next larger unit, the local trade or sub-industry, is governed by the Joint Board, also known as the Joint Council or District Council. There are, however, cases where the functions of the trade unit are exercised by a local union. Such a case is Local 25 of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, which represents the whole New York dress and waist making trade, including all the crafts with the single exception of the cutters. Other cases are the industrial locals previously mentioned, such as Local 7 of the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, a Boston unit which embraces all the crafts, including the cutters. There are many such cases in the Ladies' Garment Workers, because this industry is divided into so many distinct trades, each with a comparatively small number of employees.

In New York City, the largest center of the women's clothing industry, the International Ladies' Garment Workers has nine trade units. The Cloak-makers Joint Board, which embraces ten locals, is the largest and oldest, having a total membership of over 40,000. The second is Local 25, with a membership of well over 25,000. The cause for the growth of such a large local without subdivisions lies in its dramatic history. The local began with a small nucleus, and when it called its first big strike in 1909, it did not expect that nearly the entire trade would join it. Since then its activity and prestige have

tended to keep it together. Now, however, it has become so large as to be a little unwieldy, and subdivision by race and craft is beginning, though control of industrial action is left as usual in the hands of the trade unit. At the end of 1919 an Italian branch known as Local 89 of Ladies Waist and Dress Makers was created. There is also a movement to make subdivisions for drapers, finishers, tuckers, hemstitchers, and pressers. The introduction of new machinery bringing with it increased specialization strengthens this tendency. The other trade units are, respectively, Local 62, White Goods Workers, Local 6, Embroidery Workers on machine embroidery, Local 66, Bonnaz Embroidery Workers on fancy embroidery, Local 41, House Dress, Kimono and Bath Robe Workers, Local 45, Petticoat Workers, a newly organized trade, Local 50, Children's Dress Makers, and finally, Local 44, a nucleus for Corset Workers.³

The United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers have in New York two trade units, the Joint Council of the Cap Makers, with a membership of over 5,000, and the Joint Board of the Ladies' Straw Hat and Millinery Workers, with a membership of about 7,000.

The International Fur Workers Union has three trade units, the New York Fur Workers Joint Board, with 4 locals aggregating 8,000 members, the Fur Cap and Trimming Workers Board with 4 locals

³The corset workers have only recently been organized. The strongest locals are in Bridgeport, Conn., Local 33, consisting of all crafts except cutters, and 34, the cutters.

and 800 members, and the Dressed Fur Workers Board, with 6 locals and 2,200 members.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America have in New York four trade units: the New York Joint Board of Men's Clothing, with 26 locals, the Children's Clothing Workers' Joint Board, with 11 locals, the Shirtmakers' Joint Board, with 3 locals, and the Overall Makers Board. The men's and children's boards are now to be combined. The Cutters' Local 4 consists of the cutters of all these units, and is a quasi-unit by itself. It is represented on the Joint Board of Men's Clothing with a voice and vote on all questions except finance.

The Joint Board, Joint Council, or District Council is the real power in the trade for the respective locality. All negotiations with the manufacturers about existing collective agreements, all dealings with boards of adjustment, grievance committees, or offices of the impartial chairmen, are under the authority and supervision of the Joint Boards. They also work out and present demands at the time of expiration of agreements, though in such cases the General Office is usually called in for advice and counsel. All decisions concerning strikes are made by the Joint Board, though in case of a general strike of the trade, the sanction of the General Executive Board is necessary. The Joint Board apportions the amount of dues and assessments that each affiliated local shall pay. In short, the Joint Board acts as the executive of a single industrial group. The local unions are merely administrative branches, with

somewhat more extended authority than a branch usually has.

The Joint Board is composed of delegates from every local union within its territorial and industrial jurisdiction. The number of delegates to which the local is entitled varies with the organization. In the International Ladies' Garment Workers, every local, regardless of its size, sends five delegates; the Hat and Cap Makers also give locals an equal number of delegates; in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the number of delegates to which a local is entitled depends upon its size. Each local may have at least one delegate and no local more than four; locals of about 300 members have 2 delegates and those above 1,000 have three. The Amalgamated Joint Board is the only body which has two kinds of delegates: "full-fledged" with voice and vote, from locals *directly* represented on the Board, and delegates with voice but no vote from locals indirectly represented. The indirect representation comes from crafts only remotely connected with the men's clothing industry, such as Lapel Makers, Button-Hole Makers, Wholesale Clothing Clerks, Bushelmen, and Clothing Drivers and Helpers. Each has two delegates, and they join in the formulation of larger policies and general enterprises. In all the rest, however, they maintain their autonomy, as semi-independent trade unions.

The Joint Boards have a number of paid and unpaid officers to transact their business. The unpaid officers are usually limited to a chairman and record-

ing secretary. In the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Joint Board elects from its own number a Board of Directors consisting of fourteen members, as an executive committee with authority to act between meetings and with the duty of giving preliminary consideration to every important question and bringing in a report with recommendations to the Joint Board. The number and kind of paid officers vary with the size of the respective Boards and the business they have to attend to. In most cases the Joint Board has a General Manager, a Secretary-Treasurer, District Managers or Trade Managers, Assistant Managers, and as many Business Agents as may be necessary. The International Ladies' Garment Workers Joint Board also has a Recording Secretary.

The General Manager is elected either by the Joint Board (Ladies' Garment Workers, Furriers) or by a referendum vote of the membership (Amalgamated). Nominations in the latter case are made by the local unions, every local being entitled to nominate one candidate by majority vote. The District Managers of the Ladies' Garment Workers are appointed by the Joint Board from among the Business Agents. The Trade Managers exist only in the Amalgamated, on account of the special structure of the men's clothing industry. It is subdivided into three sections: the making of coats, pants, and vests, which are produced as a rule in separate shops. These divisions are highly specialized, and an operator or presser in one cannot easily be replaced

by a worker of the same craft in another. Each of these three subtrades therefore has an advisory joint board, which has no authority, but gives special consideration to the needs of the trade and brings in reports and recommendations to the Joint Board of Men's Clothing. Each advisory board has its Trade Manager, elected by a referendum vote of the members concerned. The Trade Managers follow closely the development of their trades, and serve as links between the General Manager of the Joint Board and the respective subdivisions. The Italian locals also have an advisory joint board of their own, which has an Assistant Manager, but no Manager. The Assistant Managers in the other boards are appointed by the Manager with the approval of the Board of Directors.

The Business Agents perform many duties, but are chiefly used as emissaries of the Joint Board in dealing with individual manufacturers, in settling minor disputes, and in seeing that agreements are carried out. If trouble arises in any shop which cannot be settled without reference to the Joint Board, the Business Agent is at once called in. The system of selecting the Business Agents varies. In the Ladies' Garment Workers they used to be nominated by locals and elected by general ballot, each local being entitled to a quota of Business Agents depending on its size. This process depended too much on electioneering and resulted frequently in the choice of unqualified candidates, since the members as a whole had little knowledge of the long list

of names submitted. Now, after the quotas of Business Agents for the several locals have been apportioned, an announcement is issued by the Joint Board that all who feel themselves qualified for the office shall make applications. A sort of civil service examination is then held, the examining board consisting of a committee from the Joint Board, with members invited from among prominent persons in the labor movement. Those receiving the highest marks are appointed, provided, however, that the quotas from the several locals are properly filled. The practice in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers is similar, but in this case all candidates who receive a passing mark are submitted to referendum vote of the locals in the respective trades, the trades voting separately. In the other unions, one or the other of these two systems, with slight modifications, is used.

The taxation systems of the unions are carefully planned. In the Amalgamated Clothing Workers the Joint Board collects all the dues through the central office. Out of the 35c. weekly per capita, the Board retains 17½c. pays 12½c. to the General Office, and 5c. to the local union. A similar procedure obtains in the Furriers Union. In the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, the local unions collect the dues—30c. per week—and pass on to the Joint Board 5c., to the Joint Council 8c., and to the General Office 12c. There is a movement here to substitute the method of the Amalgamated. The International Ladies' Garment Workers have an entirely different system. At

the beginning of each six-months' period, the Joint Board makes up a budget of expenditures. A revolving fund is then created to cover the expenses of one month. Each local contributes its share to this fund in proportion to its membership. At the end of the month a statement of actual expenditures is made up and the total sum divided proportionally among the locals. Bills are sent to the locals for their respective shares. This revolving fund at present is \$25,000; the per capita which the Joint Board thus receives amounts to about 11c. per week; besides this, the locals pay 6c. a week to the General Office, and retain the remainder of the dues themselves. The local unions, of course, do not need for current expenses all the money in their treasuries; the greater part of it goes toward building up reserve and defense funds to be used in case of a strike. In an emergency the locals supply the Joint Board with proportional contributions.

The extra-legal shop committees and shop chairmen are highly important factors in the trade units. The shop chairman is an unpaid official elected by all the workers of a shop out of their own number, irrespective of their crafts. In the very big shops, separate crafts may have chairmen of their own, but there is always a general chairman for the entire shop. The shop committee consists of several workers elected to act with the chairman. Where the crafts have chairmen of their own, these act as members of the committee. Whenever a dispute arises in a shop, it must be handled first by the shop

chairman and committee. The collective agreements usually provide for this preliminary negotiation. If a settlement is arrived at with the employer on the spot, it is virtually final, though the members have the right of appeal to the executive board of their local and through it to the Joint Board, which may reopen the issue in the way prescribed in the agreement. In the few shops still under a piece-work system, the shop chairman and shop committee also negotiate about prices.

But the shop chairmen perform a far more important function as the direct channel between the organization and the rank and file. They are the immediate guardians of the spiritual and material assets of the organization. According to established practice, there are a thousand and one duties which they must perform. The shop chairman must see to it that every union member in the shop remains in good standing, and that the general provisions of the collective agreement are observed. He must see that the members pay their assessments. Whenever an appeal is made to the membership for contributions, either to assist another division of the same organization or another union during a strike, or to support some enterprise of the labor movement, such as the battle for civil liberties or the defense of the ousted Socialist Assemblymen at Albany, the shop chairman impresses on the workers the importance of the cause and makes the collection. He reports on all important developments in the trade. He secures the correct names and addresses for the

mailing list of the official journal. Whenever an important movement is inaugurated by the union, the shop chairmen explain it, help create a sentiment for it, and smooth over the difficulties that may be in the way. Joint Boards seldom undertake a large project without launching it first at a meeting of shop chairmen, and securing their adherence to it. Whether it be a plan for change from piece to week work, a proposed increase in the per capita tax, preparations for a general strike, or an educational campaign, the shop chairmen will be consulted before a decision is arrived at.

The advantages of this extensive use of the shop unit in place of the local union are obvious, especially for a democratic and active organization. The shop chairmen are in contact with the members at their places of work; they see all the members every day. They do not have to rely on the minority who attend meetings. Their point of view is that of the worker at his job, the worker in production. They furnish a continuous means of communication which can be instantly invoked. The fact that their growing function has not entirely eliminated the necessity of the local is due partly to tradition, partly to the social and racial elements involved, and partly, in the strictly clothing trades, to the extreme impermanence of the small establishments and the fluidity of labor. The local union must be retained as a permanent nucleus. It is interesting to note, by the way, that the use of shop chairmen had already become established in the American clothing unions

long before the shop steward movement arose in England during the war.

The General Officers of the unions are a General President and a General Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer, both full-time, salaried officials. Sometimes there is also a General Treasurer, but he is unpaid, his duties are small, and his position is not far different from that of any General Executive Board Member. The main duties of the General President are assisting in the adjustment of important disputes between workers and employers, adjusting differences between local unions, presiding over meetings of the General Executive Board, and directing all organizing work. The General Secretary conducts the correspondence of the organization, is the guardian of the seal, documents, papers, labels; he keeps account of all financial transactions and pays bills as authorized either by the constitution or the General Executive Board. Both officers are in practice entrusted with the main responsibility for guidance of the organization. They submit their reports to the Convention, and in the interim to the General Executive Board.

Between Conventions, the General Executive Board is the supreme authority. It consists of the General Officers and a number of other members elected by the same process.⁴ It decides all points

⁴The General Executive Board members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, besides the President and Secretary, are called Vice Presidents: there are thirteen of these, of whom seven must be resident in New York City. The Hat and Cap Makers have fifteen members on the Board, of whom no less than eleven must be residents of New York. The Amalgamated Executive Board has eleven members, with no restrictions on residence.

of law or interpretation of the constitution, all claims, grievances and appeals. It has the power to authorize a general strike, to issue charters to newly organized local unions; it publishes the official journals; it elects trustees for any of the special funds, such as sick benefit and defense funds; and it has general supervision over the affairs of the organization. If a vacancy occurs between conventions, the board nominates candidates for it, who are then submitted to a referendum vote—in the Amalgamated, of the entire membership, and in the Cap and Hat Makers, of the membership of the local unions in the city which is entitled to the seat. No referendum is required in the Ladies' Garment Workers.

The Convention is the highest legislative authority. It consists of delegates elected by the local unions in proportion to the size of average membership for which a per capita tax was paid for a period ranging from six months to two years preceding the Convention. Each local is entitled to at least one delegate, and in the Ladies' Garment Workers, to two delegates; the number of members entitled to additional delegates progressively increases with the increase of the membership of the local. The Amalgamated is an exception to this rule, as it grants the local union an additional delegate for every 300 members above the first hundred. The constitution of the Amalgamated provides that a local of 1,000 members must send to the convention no less than three delegates. In all the other unions each delegate

has a single vote regardless of the number of members he represents. In the Amalgamated each delegate is entitled to one vote for every 100 members. The regular conventions of these unions meet biennially in the month of May. At the request of five locals, no two of which shall be in the same state or province, the General Executive Board is obliged to take a referendum on the subject of calling a special convention. A favorable two-thirds or three-fourths vote is necessary for adoption of the proposition. The General Executive Board also has the right on its own initiative to submit such a referendum.

The referendum is required by all these organizations for the passage of any amendment to the constitution which may be adopted by the convention and, in the previously specified cases, for the election of General Officers. It has become the custom for conventions to submit vital questions to a referendum vote.

The joint meetings of all local executive boards is an extra-legal institution invoked in cases where a whole industry is involved, just as shop-chairmen meetings are used when a single trade is involved. On important occasions General Membership Mass Meetings are arranged simultaneously in as many halls as are necessary. They include all members of a certain locality independent of craft or trade, and are called usually at the initiative of a joint executive board meeting. A proposal to declare a general strike, or to impose a general assessment on the

membership or to launch a campaign for a 44-hour week or for a week-work system, is the typical subject for such a meeting. Sometimes the entire industry of a certain city is stopped during the working hours and the union members, headed by their shop chairmen, march *en masse* to the previously assigned halls. In such cases, virtually the entire membership is reached. This method is employed in preference to a referendum, or parallel to a referendum, because it has the advantage of giving the worker a chance to deliberate on the question, and to exchange opinions before making up his mind to vote one way or the other.

The strategy employed by these organizations must be interpreted in the light of their philosophy and structure. Both old and new unions, to be sure, employ similar weapons, such as the strike and the collective bargain. Behind this superficial uniformity of method, however, there is a vast difference of emphasis and attitude. The question is not so much what weapons a union uses, as how it uses them, what relative importance it attaches to them, and what strategic positions it regards as secondary and what as primary.

An analysis of the strategy of the new unionism will discover in it two fundamental objectives to which all other policies are subordinated. The first is to organize *all* the workers in the industry; the second is to develop them, through their daily struggles, into a class-conscious labor army, able and ready to assume control of industry. These fun-

damentals may not always be clear even in the minds of the leaders, but a study of policies will reveal them.

The supreme importance attached to the organization of all the workers in the industry is revealed by the attitude of the new unionism to such questions of policy as the admission of new members, apprenticeship, immigration, the union label, jurisdiction, and formation of employers' associations.

As soon as a union gains control over a trade or any part of it, the selfish instinct of its members under present conditions is naturally to keep the gain to themselves, and to restrict as far as possible, the invasion of their sphere of influence by new workers. Most business unions have high initiation fees, complicated examinations, and other means of making admission difficult. There are cases of successful unions who close their membership books for ten years or more. The clothing unions, however, raise no obstacles against the entry of new members. The constitution of the Hat and Cap Makers definitely provides that no local union shall charge more than \$25 for initiation, which shall include all payments to the various funds. The Ladies' Garment Workers cannot charge more than \$15 for admission of men and \$10 for women. The Amalgamated has had no constitutional limitations, except that the local must receive the approval of the General Executive Board for its initiation fee. A movement lately arose in the Amalgamated in New York to inaugurate high initiation fees, but it was

checked at the very start, and the 1920 convention established a legal limit of \$10.00. The practice of these unions is even more liberal than their constitution limitations. During general organization campaigns, which occur frequently, members are admitted at a nominal fee, in some cases as low as 50c.

The same difference in policy applies to apprenticeship. The restrictions and regulations which the new unionists enforce with regard to apprentices aim not to bar apprentices from the trade but to prevent their being used by the employer to weaken the organization through exploitation and underpayment. The clothing unions merely insist that no more apprentices shall be admitted than are actually needed by the industry, that they shall receive the same treatment as the organized workers of the trade, and that their work shall be paid for at the full amount of its value under established union standards. The period of apprenticeship must be no longer than necessary, and as soon as it is over, the apprentice must join the union. This agreement is not merely a business arrangement, but is a means of enlisting every new recruit as soon as possible into the real labor army.

The old unionism always combats immigration. The new unionism, however, thinks of capitalist industry as not limited by the boundaries of a nation, and believes that the prospective immigrant remaining in his own country affects the labor market as much in the long run as if he is admitted to our

shores. The new unionism never opposes immigration; at several hearings before congressional committees its representatives have demanded that no new restrictions on immigration be imposed.

All the clothing unions have an official union label. In none of them except the United Garment Workers, which typifies the old unionism, is much significance attached to it. The label, distinguishing union-made from non-union goods, is meant as a premium for the unionized shop and a deterrent for the others, by regulating the patronage of union sympathisers. This device stresses indirect protection of the union shops rather than organization of the non-union. The benefits which the members receive from the use of the label sometimes lead to a tendency on the part of the business union actually to refrain from organizing the whole industry.

In disputes about jurisdiction the motives of the two types differ. The old type will look for extension of jurisdiction as a method of increasing the number of jobs for its members, or of adding to the "per-capita" in the treasury. The new unionism, on the other hand, will seek extended jurisdiction primarily as an opportunity of organizing all the workers in an industry, and so extending the economic power of the whole group. The controversy between the United Hatters and the Hat and Cap Makers is an example (see Chapter III). The International Ladies' Garment Workers has made repeated attempts to induce the American Federation of Labor to organize a department to serve all the

needle-trades unions, while the United Garment Workers has always stubbornly fought this proposition.

The attitude towards the formation of an employers' association will, with the old unionism, depend primarily upon whether the association is for or against collective bargaining. The attitude of the new unionism in this matter will be determined largely by the question whether the existence of the association will create more or less favorable conditions for the organization of more workers in the industry. In the needle trades, as we have seen, the progress of the unions was hampered by the extreme divergence of conditions in the many shops. Employers' associations furnished a means of exerting a standardizing influence on the trade. In the early stages of the struggle, the unions concerned not merely looked with favor on the formation of such associations, but in some cases actively encouraged it. The association of hat and cap manufacturers was, for instance, brought into being partly through the influence of the young union.

The second of the fundamental strategic policies of the new unionism—the importance it attaches to cultivating the solidarity of the workers and making them ready to assume control of industry—is revealed by its attitude toward mutual insurance, strikes, collective bargaining and agreements, system of payment for work, productivity and sabotage, the general labor movement and independent political action.

Mutual insurance is relegated to the background. In the old unionism large insurance funds are likely to stand in the way of aggressive action, to prevent the enrollment of many new members, and to be a barrier against amalgamation. Only such benefits as are directly related to militant action have a prominent place in the new unionism. The clothing unions pay liberal strike benefits, more liberal than do many organizations of the old type. But the strike benefit is not rigidly fixed in their constitutions, and is not an insurance payment in the ordinary sense, since the entire resources of the union and often of its individual members as well are mobilized in support of strikers once a battle is on. Only one of the unions under consideration has provisions for the payment of sick benefit—the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers. But here the payment is not made from an isolated fund, though of course a separate book account is maintained. Even with the Cap Makers, participation in this benefit is voluntary, and side by side with many beneficiary members there are many non-beneficiary, who prefer to pay a smaller per capita tax. Now that the bulk of the needle trades have been organized, and the vested interest tends to weaken the organizing zeal, there is a more favorable attitude toward mutual insurance.

There is more in common between the two types of unionism in their attitude toward the strike as a weapon of last resort than to any other practice of unions. Both consider the right to strike vital to

their continued existence, and will zealously guard this right. The old unionism, however, regards the strike as a weapon of sections of the workers against unreasonable employers, and believes that strikes may be altogether avoided against those employers whose views "come in entire accord with the organization of the working people." The new unionism, on the other hand, thinks of the strike not as a weapon of particular employees against particular employers, but as an irrepressible manifestation of the class struggle, and it denies that durable harmonious relations between the employing class and the workers may be expected.

In the actual employment of the strike the old unionism is more ready than the new. The business union will use the strike wherever it may have a chance of bringing immediately desired results. It will permit strikes of one craft in an establishment without the others, thus tying up work for the benefit of a few. It will strike against one or more employers rather than against a whole trade. It will single out the unreasonable from the reasonable. The new unionism as far as possible reserves the strike for a last weapon in clashes over the degree of control of industry. It anxiously avoids guerilla warfare. It seeks decisive issues and movement in masses. It does not permit strikes of single crafts. Not ascribing too much value to immediate betterment, it will strike against the whole body of employers in a trade or industry rather than against individuals or sections. It almost never strikes for

wages alone, but places the emphasis on the introduction of better systems of work, shorter hours or greater control. The tendency now is to conserve the strike almost entirely for this latter aim, letting other gains follow incidentally.

Collective bargaining and the collective agreement is to the old unionism an aim in itself—in many cases the highest aim. The new unionism, on the contrary, regards the entire necessity of bargaining as a result of economic oppression. Improved bargaining conditions therefore have the same significance to it as modified autocracy to the real democrat. It uses collective bargaining as a means of eliminating minor disputes so that its strength may be reserved for the main issues, as a means of defining those issues, and as a means of extending and strengthening the organization. The exercise of collective bargaining makes concerted action on the part of employees a habit, and serves to give expression to class solidarity within the frame of the existing order.

The collective agreement is merely the record of the balance of power between employers and employees at a given time. In the old unionism the agreement is often thought of as the end of the struggle, with the new it is an incident in it. The agreement is a sort of political constitution enforced upon autocratic rulers by the people; the real significance of such a constitution depends upon the independent spirit of the people and their readiness to defend their rights. The provisions of a collective

agreement have an entirely different meaning in practice according to whether the strength of the union as compared with that of the employers increases or decreases during the life of the agreement.

The collective agreement—strange as it may seem—is more seldom broken by unions adhering to the new philosophy than by those who adopt the old. While the sanctity of contract as such between labor and capital means little to the new unionist, there is no inducement for him to break a contract for trivial reasons. It would be absurd, in his form of strategy, to incur for scattering advantages the danger and expense of the battle which breaking an agreement would involve. Expecting beforehand that changes in the balance of power and in the desires of the workers will take place, he either concludes peace for so short a term that no great development can occur before the contract terminates, or gives it a flexible nature, with machinery for making minor adjustments. The tendency now is to avoid written constitutions altogether. The employers in the clothing industries have themselves become infected with this conception of life as a fluid process which cannot be confined by rigid stipulations.

The old unionist thinks of the agreement as a fixed law whose observance becomes a matter of good faith only. The result is that, influenced as he is bound to be, more by the conditions of his existence than by abstract sanctity of contract, he is led to break it whenever conditions have materially

changed or there is a tempting possibility of immediate betterment. The danger of breach of contract by the business union is still further increased because the agreement is more the result of bargaining shrewdness on the part of officials than the real expression of the existing balance of power. Negotiations are frequently carried on and concluded by national officers without the participation of the masses, who therefore do not feel that the contract expresses their own will, and are more inclined to discard it. An inquiry the results of which were published by the New York *World* October 19, 1919, although it revealed many breaches of contract in nearly all other industries, did not show a single agreement broken by the unions in the clothing industries. In justice to the old unionism, it should be stated that this inquiry shows an abnormal state of affairs. Rigid agreements concluded during the recent era of rising prices had far less chance of survival than usual.

The attitude of the business union toward method of payment revolves chiefly about the relation between compensation and effort. That system is favored which gives the greater compensation for the smaller effort. With the new unionism the question is what system will better preserve the vitality of the working class, and will promote common will and action. If payment by the week is preferred to payment by the piece, it is primarily because the former helps to develop solidarity among the workers and makes it necessary for those whose demands on life

are highest to seek improvement for their entire group or class.⁵

Opposition to the practice of ca' canny or slackening on the job, as well as toward sabotage in all its forms, is in the old unionism due to the principle of "a fair day's work for a fair day's wage," while the new unionism regards it as an enemy of the class consciousness of the workers and of their readiness to assume control of industry. Inefficient work is an instinctive expression of dissatisfaction and lack of interest, and is in some measure unavoidable under the capitalist system; it can be mitigated only in so far as the worker feels a pride in his job. The new unionism, by laying emphasis on increasing control of the process, strikes at the roots of sabotage, whereas the old unionism, by emphasizing the bargaining process, creates a favorable atmosphere for it even while formally opposing it. Moreover, the new unionism has much stronger reasons to discourage it. Sabotage is a method that must be employed individually rather than by concerted action. It cannot be practised openly and therefore has a harmful influence on the dignity and personality of the worker—a factor of prime concern to the new unionism. It directs the struggle against the individual rather than against the employers as a whole, while the new unionism professes no enmity against the individual and battles merely with the system. Finally, sabotage may undermine the industry itself, and, what is more important, the psychological readiness of the workers to control it.

⁵ See Appendix.

Similar motives prompt the new unionism to be far more receptive to improved machinery and management than the old. To the exclusive business union, a device for increasing productivity is merely a threat to replace skill with a mechanical process, and so to rob the craftsman of his monopoly. To the socialist, it may be a valuable contribution to industrial technique, which if put to the right uses will lighten the burden on all the workers. The concern of the new unionist is not so much to prevent the introduction of machinery or better management as to see that they do not become instruments of oppressing the worker, or of diverting to the employer an abnormally increased share in the rewards of his toil. The Amalgamated set a new precedent when at its 1920 convention it voted to establish standards of production.

The new unionism naturally takes a wider interest and a more active part in the life of the labor movement as a whole than does the old. Every battle of a union anywhere it regards as its own battle. During the street-car strike in New York City a few years ago the workers of the needle trades for long weeks faithfully walked to their jobs or used all kinds of unfamiliar conveyances, but until the last refused to have anything to do with cars run by strike-breakers. Hardly a struggle conducted by a union in the country which has needed financial assistance has failed to receive it in generous measure from the clothing workers. The recent strikes of textile workers and steel workers are noteworthy examples

—to the steel strike the needle trades pledged half a million dollars, and before its close had actually contributed as much as any other group of unions in the country, including those who officially called the strike. The same attitude is demonstrated in another way. Thinking of themselves as part of the general labor movement, the clothing unions have remained, as far as they could, within the existing Federation, regardless of their objections to policies of its leaders. This policy is not due chiefly to selfish motives, since the unions of the needle trades have received negligible support from the Federation. The contributions of all the A. F. of L. unions toward the great Cloakmakers' strike in 1910 was not above a few hundred dollars. The desire to remain affiliated with the Federation is purely a sign of loyalty to the working class, and of a belief in the ultimate justice of the cause of labor, no matter what fallacies its officials may temporarily profess.

The old unionism, having no quarrel with the present social order, has no compelling reason to undertake independent political action. In politics as in industry it seeks merely to trade for immediate concessions, which may be wrested by promises and threats from either of the two old parties. The new unionism, opposed as it is not merely to the minor evils of the social order but also to its fundamentals, naturally cannot rely on parties which are themselves expressions of that order and organs of the powers that support it. The new unionism

may desire the same minor improvements which the old unionism seeks, but they are not intimately enough related with its cause to determine its politics. The preamble to the constitution of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union provides for the support of a party whose aim is the abolition of the capitalist system. While the other constitutions do not all have definite provisions to that effect, the practice of the clothing unions is the same. They are always in favor of vigorous independent political action, and they cooperate with the Socialist Party.⁶

It would be impossible to enter into the minor details of strategy, since the interests and activities of the new unions extend to so many fields of human endeavor. It may be said that nothing humane is foreign to them.

⁶ The founding of a national Labor Party is striking evidence of the drift of the old unionism toward the new. The natural tendency of the clothing unions, with their feeling for labor solidarity, would be to work for amalgamation between the two working class parties, but before doing so they must give the new movement time to establish itself and prove whether it can be permanent and sincere.