Collective bargaining and the Amalgamated clothing workers of America

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Thesis

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND THE AMALGAMATED
CLOTHING WORKERS OF AMERICA

by
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Professor of Economics
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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND THE
AMALGAMATED CLOTHING WORKERS OF AMERICA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

1. Location of the Industry
2. Number of Firms
3. Size of Firms
4. Capital Investment
5. Costs of Production
6. Nature of Product
7. Seasonal Fluctuations
8. Cyclical Fluctuations
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

STRUCTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

A. Location of the Industry.

The clothing industry is located in the major cities of the United States. New York City, the major clothing manufacturing city of the country, has approximately three-fourths of the ladies' garment industry and about one-third of the men's clothing industry.¹

In the men's branch of the industry, Philadelphia is second to New York City in importance and Chicago follows. With the exception of work clothes, more than fifty per cent of all men's clothing is manufactured in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago and Rochester. The ten leading cities in men's clothing manufacture employ around seventy per cent of the workers in this industry.² The leading cities in the manufacture of men's clothing are: New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Rochester, Baltimore, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Boston, Los Angeles, St. Louis and New Orleans.

In 1946, the production of men's clothing was carried on in at least thirty-six states and the District of Columbia.³

In 1942, inside manufacturing constituted approximately two-thirds of the men's clothing industry, while contracting made up the remainder. New York City has maintained the leading position among the men's clothing manufacturing centers for many years; its 28,700 workers, in 1942, comprised one-fifth of all the employees in the industry. New York City has the largest number of contract shops. The number of workers employed in the New York contract shops amounts to 65 per cent, as compared with 15 per cent in Chicago, and 2½ per cent in Rochester. Chicago and Rochester produce nationally advertised products which are sold with the firms' label, with the result that few contract shops exist in either of these cities. Baltimore is the only men's clothing center outside of New York City that has as many as 50 per cent of the employees in contract shops.

B. Number of Firms.

There are, on the average, between 3,000 and 4,000 firms engaged in the manufacture of men's apparel, although the number

4. "Inside Manufacturing" comprises all the operations in garment manufacturing taking place in one plant. The manufacturer supplies the materials and all of the employees work for the manufacturer.

In "contracting", cut material is supplied by the submanufacturer to the contractor who has his own shop and machines and who hires his employees. The contractor is paid by the submanufacturer on the basis of piece or garment.

6. ibid., Seidman, J., p. 18.
### TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Establishments</th>
<th>Wage Earners (Average for Year)</th>
<th>Value of Product</th>
<th>Value Added by Manufacture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>4,830</td>
<td>173,747</td>
<td>$458,210,000</td>
<td>$228,179,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>5,258</td>
<td>175,270</td>
<td>1,162,986,000</td>
<td>557,223,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>4,607</td>
<td>194,820</td>
<td>1,178,715,000</td>
<td>593,911,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>3,562</td>
<td>146,099</td>
<td>932,182,000</td>
<td>484,937,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2,945</td>
<td>121,964</td>
<td>551,416,000</td>
<td>287,741,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>2,981</td>
<td>154,583</td>
<td>544,534,000</td>
<td>257,746,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>4,925</td>
<td>318,214</td>
<td>1,150,898,000</td>
<td>493,398,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source-Census of Manufactures, U.S. Bureau of Census.)

1. The content of classification of this table has undergone a number of changes with the result that it cannot be interpreted too literally. While not exact, a satisfactory significance of the various factors is given.

2. Figures for 1914, 1919 and 1923 are from the Biennial Census of Manufactures, 1923, p. 282.

3. Figures for 1927 and 1931 are from the Biennial Census of Manufactures, 1933, p. 184.


7. Value of product less cost of materials, fuel and purchased electric energy.

8. Value of product plus receipts from contract work, less cost of materials, supplies, fuel and purchased electric energy, and cost of contract work.

9. Value of product less cost of materials, supplies, fuel, purchased electric energy and contract work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>Description 1</td>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Rate 1</td>
<td>Total 1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Description 3</td>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Rate 3</td>
<td>Total 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>Description 4</td>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Rate 4</td>
<td>Total 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Quantity and rate are placeholders. Actual values should be provided.
ber fluctuates with economic conditions as Table I shows.

C. Size of Firms.

The size of the firms in the men's clothing industry is indicated by the fact that the largest shop employs about 3,500 workers and does not produce more than 3 per cent of the output of the entire industry. 9

D. Capital Investment.

The amount of invested capital is not significant in determining the position occupied by the men's clothing industry in the economic life of the country. Employers may go into business with little difficulty. Capital is unnecessary—as a shop and sewing machines may be rented and unskilled help hired to do the work.

E. Cost of Production.

The biggest items of the cost of production in the manufacture of clothing are first, materials, and second, wages. Taking all manufacturers of men's outergarments as a group (including regular manufacturers, submanufacturers and contractors), materials and wages make up from 80 to 90 per cent of the total value of the product. Wages alone aggregate one-third of the total cost of production.

F. Nature of the Product.

10. "Regular manufacturer" is the inside manufacturer, (footnote 4 above). The "submanufacturer" is similar to the manufacturer; he designs, cuts and sells the finished product. The tailoring is done by the contractor.
The most important factor in the manufacture of clothing is style. Styles, as a rule, originate in the high-priced field, and are soon copied by lower price-line manufacturers. Style determines whether it is profitable to introduce new machinery and new methods of production. The unstable nature of the product limits the size of the shop and this in turn lowers the cost of entering the business, and further, leads to bitter competition and constant turnover of firms. In men's clothing, although style has assumed more importance with the passing of time, the changes are more moderate and infrequent than those found in women's clothing. It is this relative stability in men's fashions that has permitted the development of more stable production methods and hence moderately large enterprises, as compared with the small shops that prevail throughout the women's clothing industry. 

G. Seasonal Fluctuations.

Slight changes in style prevents manufacturing far in advance of sales. In men's clothing there are two distinct seasons, with employment reaching one peak in the spring and another in the fall, thereby causing the irregularity of employment that has been one of the greatest problems for the workers. The two peaks of demand bring about "busy seasons alternating with dull seasons, periods of overwork with periods of slackness or idleness." 

12. Material of this paragraph is based on op. cit., Seidman, J., p. 9-10.
13. Based on ibid., Seidman, J., p. 10.
The position of the observer and all necessary data under each condition would be the description of the scene of a particular personality, which cannot be determined without considering the context and the specific situation. The observer would then be able to identify the personality traits and potential outcomes based on the observed behavior and interactions. This approach would provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation and help in making informed decisions.
H. Cyclical Fluctuations.

The men's clothing industry is severely affected by business depressions. This can be seen from the payroll and value of product figures of 1929 and 1933. Wages, in 1929, were $179,769,000; in 1933, wages amounted to $92,266,000. Value of product, in 1929, was $901,104,000; in 1933, value of product amounted to $445,220,000.¹⁴

¹⁴ These figures are based on the Biennial Census of Manufactures, U.S. Bureau of Census, 1933, p. 184.
CHAPTER II

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMPLOYEE

1. Wages, Hours and Income
2. Nationality
3. Skill
4. Supply of Labor
CHAPTER II
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMPLOYEE

A. Wages, Hours and Income.

The men's clothing industry has been widely known for the long hours and low wages that have prevailed in it. The abuses of this industry--sweatshops, the homework custom and contract shop--produced the long hours of work and the low level of wages. Scattered attempts of early clothing workers' unions were unsuccessful in checking the effects of these practices.\(^1\)

An investigation of wages in the Chicago clothing industry in 1911, before the Amalgamated was organized, showed one out of every twenty workers in men's clothing was earning less than $5.00 per week, and average earnings were 20c an hour.\(^2\) A downward movement in hours and an upward trend in wages did not commence until the organization of the A.C.W.A. in 1914.\(^3\)

Since 1914 the hours of work throughout the men's clothing industry have decreased while the level of wages have increased. Table II shows the average full-time week, the average hourly wage, average full-time earnings per week and average real wages. The table is based upon data compiled and published by the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Although full-time hours in 1911 averaged fifty-four a

\(^1\) Zaretz, C. E., "The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America", 1934, p. 245.
\(^3\) ibid., "The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America", p. 245.
with inferences drawn from the data. The results indicate that the hypothesis is supported by the experimental evidence. In conclusion, the study confirms the proposed relationship between the variables and suggests potential applications in various fields.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Full-time Hours per week (Average)</th>
<th>Full-time Hourly Wages (Average)</th>
<th>Full-time Money Earnings per week (Average)</th>
<th>Cost of Living2 Index</th>
<th>Full-time Real Earnings per week (Average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914³</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>$13.06</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>$18.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924³</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>33.52</td>
<td>122.2</td>
<td>27.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932³</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>22.47</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>23.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945⁴</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>33.32</td>
<td>128.4</td>
<td>25.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946⁴</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>100.7</td>
<td>37.96</td>
<td>139.3</td>
<td>27.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics)

1. Full-time earnings are the hourly rates multiplied by the established number of hours per week.
2. Based on the period 1935-1939=100.
3. Figures for 1914, 1924 and 1932 are from the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin No. 594, "Wages and Hours of Labor in the Men's Clothing Industry: 1932", p. 2. (This does not include Cost of Living Index or Real Weekly Earnings.)
4. Figures for 1945 and 1946 are from the "Monthly Labor Review", 1947, p. 942. (This does not include Cost of Living Index or Real Weekly Earnings.)

Cost of Living Index Figures are Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistic Figures, as of March 1946.
Real Weekly Earnings have been computed from Money Weekly Earnings and Cost of Living Index.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
<th>Column 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column A</td>
<td>Column B</td>
<td>Column C</td>
<td>Column D</td>
<td>Column E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
week, actual hours were often as high as sixty and seventy a week because overtime at regular rates was very common.\textsuperscript{4} Table II indicates the steady decrease in hours and increases in money wages from 1914 to 1924, and what is more important an increase in real weekly earnings. Many influences affected wage rates after 1924. The strength of the union was increasing; this brought an extension of collective bargaining to the industry. Along with increasing productivity these factors tended to raise wages; however, competition from markets not as yet unionized, the condition of the industry, declining clothing prices in the 1920's and the necessity for fewer skill requirements, tended to lower wages.\textsuperscript{5}

During the early part of the depression of the 1930's, union agreements were ignored by employers in New York City and other clothing centers. As unemployment swept the country union work standards were disrupted, wages were cut throughout the clothing markets, and sweatshop conditions reappeared. Union shops moved to nonunion areas and work was given to nonunion contractors. Contractors migrated from the clothing centers of the cities to outlying districts, especially into New Jersey and Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{6}

The Amalgamated made rapid strides forward under the N.R.A. and the Code of Fair Competition of the clothing indus-

\textsuperscript{4} Lester, R. A., "Economics of Labor", 1941, p. 829.
\textsuperscript{5} "How Collective Bargaining Works", The Twentieth Century Fund, 1942, p. 428.
\textsuperscript{6} ibid., "Economics of Labor", p. 832.
try did much to eliminate wage cutting and sweatshop conditions. A thirty-six hour week was established under the men's clothing code and has been maintained by the union to the present time, although overtime hours were allowed by the union during the World War II period, and postwar period, to handle expanded production.

The union negotiated its first national wage increase in 1937. Currently (1947) it is attempting to equalize wage rates throughout the industry so that it can guarantee its members the same wages in all markets and also give greater assurance to the employers, in the various cities, that labor costs for a similar operation on a comparable garment will vary within narrow limits in all localities.

There are geographic wage differentials in the men's clothing field. In 1938, the average hourly earnings of all men's clothing workers in ten leading markets were: New York, 83¢; Chicago, 88¢; Philadelphia, 76¢; Rochester, 75¢; Baltimore, 70¢; Boston, 76¢; Milwaukee, 65¢; Newark, 78¢; Buffalo, 70¢; and N.E. New Jersey, 62¢.

The estimated annual earnings of cutters, before taxes, was $1200, in 1932; $1850, in 1940; and $3375, in 1946. On the other hand, the estimated annual earnings of the unskilled workers, before taxes, was $600, in 1932; $700, in 1940; and

$1890, in 1946.\textsuperscript{10}

B. Nationality.

An indication of the various nationalities which go to make up the workers in the men's clothing industry is given in a study of the 464 delegates with their alternates to the convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in 1938. This study revealed that forty-four per cent of the members of the convention were born in the United States, while the remaining fifty-six per cent were from eighteen different countries. Eighty-seven members were Italian born, seventy were Russian and thirty-two were Polish. The remaining numbers had come from Austria, Hungary, England, Lithuania, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, British West Indies, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Brazil. The Italians now form the largest group in the industry, outnumbering the Jews, who formerly predominated.\textsuperscript{11}

Some of the national groups of comparative unimportance in the industry today once occupied a much more prominent position. Native American, English and Scotch furnished most of the early custom tailors, with Irish and Germans following and becoming for a time the chief groups in the industry. In the 1870's Jews from Germany and Austro-Hungary entered the trade. Then in the early 1880's Russian Jews entered the industry in large numbers, mostly in New York City but later in Baltimore,

\textsuperscript{10} Figures supplied by the Research Department of the A.C.W.A.
\textsuperscript{11} Seidman, J., "The Needle Trades", 1942, p. 44.
Chicago, and Philadelphia as well. Bohemians, coming about the same time, entered tailoring in Chicago and Baltimore. In the late 1880's Poles entered the industry in Chicago and Lithuanians in Philadelphia and Baltimore. Germans were long the principle group in Rochester. Beginning in the late eighties and early nineties, Italians entered the trade in large numbers. Scandinavians, particularly Swedes, at one time occupied an important place in the industry, especially in Chicago.  

C. Skills.

There are many inexperienced workers used throughout the men's clothing industry because much of the work can be learned in a very short time. The skilled work is done by the designers, patternmakers, graders, markers and cutters. Designers originate new styles which will appeal to the buyers in the trade and make sketches or models of garments, from which patterns can be made. Patternmakers design, draw and cut out full-sized facsimilies (master patterns) of each part of a garment. Graders make patterns of different sizes from a master pattern. Markers outline the various garment parts on the top of a pile of material or on a piece of paper of the same dimensions as the top of a pile to guide the cutter in cutting the pile of cloth into garment parts. The job of the marker "requires a worker who has unusual judgment concerning areas and shapes, an accurate eye for weaves and cloth figures,

and a thorough familiarity with garment manufacturing processes, particularly those involved in cutting cloth. Cutters cut out parts of a garment from many layers of cloth at one time by guiding the rapidly moving blade of a small, portable, electric cutting machine along the outline marked on the top layer of cloth on a pile, or cut garment parts from one or a few layers of cloth with shears or a hand knife. These jobs make up the various stages in garment manufacture from the designing of a garment style to the converting of the style into the cut cloth. Little skill is required thereafter, unless a great deal of hand tailoring is necessary.

D. Labor Supply.

The manufacture of clothing was started in the larger cities of the country, and the change in the nationalities of the people who settled in these cities was reflected in the labor supply of the clothing industry. Clothing manufacturing in the United States is predominately an immigrant industry in that the immigrant has furnished the majority of the workers and in many cases the capital of the industry. Immigrant tailors from England and Germany started the industry; middle-class Jews from Austria, Poland and Russia developed it, and...
it has been carried on by immigrants from many countries on
the globe. 18

There was a continuous procession of workers; one race of
immigrants after another in cruel competition for work, each
group willing to work for lower wages and under less favorable
working conditions. The new immigrant was very useful to the
employer in the clothing industry; low as his wages might be
in the sweatshop, they were much better than the wages he had
received in the country of his birth. The clothing industry
brought a higher standard of living to the former European
tailors, small merchants from Poland, Galicia and Russia, and
to the unskilled laborers and peasants from Austria, Italy,
Lithuania and Poland. 19

In the decade of the 1880's over 5,000,000 immigrants
came to the U.S. Prior to this time, the immigrants had come
chiefly from England, Ireland, Germany and the Scandinavian
countries, and were more easily absorbed into the native popu-
lation whose ancestors had come from the same areas. In the
1880's and thereafter, the immigrants began to arrive from
southern and eastern Europe and settled in the industrial cit-
ies of the east. Organized labor opposed the great influx of
cheap labor, while employers welcomed these recruits who were
willing to work for low wages in the clothing industry and

18. Zaretz, G. E., "The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of
America", 1934, p. 47.
19. ibid., "The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Ameri-
ca", p. 48.
other industries. The great number of immigrants into the country in the early periods of the ready-made clothing industry gave a great supply of labor to the industry.

Until 1921 there was no great restriction placed upon immigration; but in this year the Emergency Quota Act was passed. In 1924 and 1929 more stringent limitations were established by the Lodge-Johnson Act, which greatly reduced the quotas for immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. Immigrants, who were likely to become public charges, were not allowed into the country during the depression of the early 1930's. The large drop in immigration due to government action, and favored by labor leaders, reduced the ready supply of labor which the men's clothing industry could formerly depend upon.

The Amalgamated set out from the beginning to stabilize the clothing industry and eliminate the competition among workers. Soon after the founding of the A.C.W.A., the demand for uniforms and other products of the clothing industry by the armed forces in World War I taxed the manpower of the clothing industry. A lack of immigration from warring Europe was felt immediately in the scarcity of replacements as well as in the demand for additional workers. Competition did not exist among the workers as the industry was not oversupplied.

In the transition from war to peace, the clothing industry suffered little due to the demand for civilian clothing and

the immediate postwar prosperity. "After 1920 the restrictions on immigration; the further employment of women as the work became less skilled; the displacement of labor by machinery; and the entrance into the industry of many native born,"\(^\text{21}\) attracted by good wages and improved working conditions created a labor surplus.\(^\text{22}\)

It was during the period of 1920 to 1930 that the Amalgamated made its first use of the dismissal wage, an indication of the oversupply of workers. The A.C.W.A. was aided, however, in stabilizing the industry by the immigration restrictions which cut the supply of cheap labor that had formerly existed.

The depression of the 1930's more greatly decreased the demand for men's clothing workers as the lower depression demand for consumer's goods set in. Following the depression, the demand for men's clothing increased and the majority of clothing workers again found work. In 1939, President Hillman, asked the clothing workers to work four hours overtime per week without overtime pay as the demand for workers rose.\(^\text{23}\)

During World War II, a situation similar to that of 1917-1918 developed from the demand of the armed forces on the men's clothing industry. The union permitted unlimited hours of work to enable the manufacturers to fill large orders.

\(^{22}\) ibid., "Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences", p. 579.
This situation remains due to postwar demand for civilian clothing, with new workers being trained to enter the industry.
CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE UNION

1. Labor Conditions Before the Union
2. First Attempts at Unionism
3. The Founding of the A.C.W.A.
4. Early Difficulties
5. Experience in World War I and Immediate Postwar Period
6. The Decade of the Twenties
7. The Depression and the New Deal
8. The A.C.W.A. and the A. F. of L.
9. The A.C.W.A. and the C.I.O.
10. Recent Expansion
CHAPTER III
HISTORY OF THE UNION

A. Labor Conditions Before the Union.

The making of clothing had its origin in the household. The housewife did the spinning, wove the cloth and fashioned the garments for the entire family. Clothes were ill-fitting and fashion was unimportant. The majority of the people in the urban sections, during the Colonial Period, either bought cloth at stores and made their clothing at home, or bought secondhand clothes from dealers. Only the well-to-do members of the population imported their clothing from England, or imported the cloth and had their clothing made by itinerant tailors or seamstresses who boarded with the families while making the clothes. These itinerant tailors were both colonists who took to this calling and indentured servants from England.

As the country villages gave way to small towns little shops were set up by some of these itinerant tailors; first in their homes but later near the market places in rented storerooms. Garments were tailored from goods furnished by the customer, the tailor being assisted by his wife, an apprentice and often a journeyman tailor. The garments made by these custom tailors were expensive and only the more wealthy could afford them.

The men's ready-made clothing industry started in these custom tailoring shops, because some garments were rejected by
The text on the page is not clearly visible due to the quality of the image. It appears to be a page from a document, possibly containing text about a scientific or technical topic, but the specific content cannot be accurately transcribed from the image provided.
persons for whom they were intended, and such garments had to be sold to persons who could not afford high-priced, made to order garments. Another reason for the appearance of ready-made clothing was the seasonal factor of the garment trade. Employees were put to work, during the slack seasons, by their employers making up ready-made clothing. These initial ready-made garments were rough outfits worn by sailors, and cheap suits for negro slaves on the plantations.

The importing of clothing from abroad was curtailed and the expansion of the home industry stimulated by the imposition of a 50 per cent import duty, in 1832. As a result, there appeared in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore establishments employing from 300 to 500 workers. In the majority of such establishments the material was cut and assembled along with the buttons and trimmings, and farmed out to women who finished the garments in their homes. It was these women, from the poor city districts and New England farm areas, who were the first to know the difficulties of the sweating system in the garment industry of the United States.

The manufacturing of ready-made garments for men became an important industry by the year 1850. There were no factories as we know them today, whereas most of the work was done in the homes of the workers. The materials from which the garments were made were given to the workers to be made up at home, after having been cut, assembled and made into bundles at the establishments of the employers. The tailors who did
this work were assisted by their families, in many cases, as the small pay they alone received would not support their families.

In 1851, the newly perfected sewing machine began a new era in the manufacture of men's clothing. Because of their nearness to the woolen markets and an abundant supply of labor, New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Cincinnati began to contribute a large bulk of the supply of ready-made garments. The employer continued to give out the work to his employees but the latter now worked in the factory or shop at a sewing machine. The sewing machine which could be operated by unskilled persons brought a large number of such employees into the men's clothing industry. The skilled tailor became the employer or supervisor of the unskilled workers. While the factory was developing at this time, much of the making up and finishing of garments was still done in the home. New York, Boston and Philadelphia became the factory centers of the ready-made men's clothing industry, and the sound of many sewing machines could be heard from early in the morning until well into the night in the large number of shops in the crowded sections of the cities. Tenement houses, old, run-down loft rooms, supply rooms and even unused stables were turned into clothing shops; and in the worst type of atmosphere men, women and children labored for many hours each day at a wage which could hardly sustain them.¹

¹. This early history is based upon Zaretz, C. E., "The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America", pp. 13-18.
The basis for mass production of clothing was laid during the Civil War. Southern markets were cut off by the war, but large orders for uniforms by the government supplied a new market. The results were larger manufacturing firms; size, style and process standardization; a greater division of labor; the employment of less skilled employees and more efficiency in production methods. The experience of producers of men's clothing, in turning out large orders of uniforms, furnished the manufacturers with information on sizes so necessary in producing for the ready-made market. The close of the war brought a demand for inexpensive, ready-made clothing from the former soldiers, and the manufacturers met this demand. Garments were still made up and finished by the contractor in the shop or in the worker's home and employees were required to buy working materials, such as irons and thread, with part of their wages.

The men's clothing industry flourished in the decade from 1870 to 1880. This was a pioneering period, and immigration both increased the demand for ready-made clothing and furnished a supply of labor for the industry. The demand was for the most inexpensive and medium-priced clothes, in stable styles and sizes. The contracting and home system for finishing garments continued on a wide scale. The first "inside-shop" was not established until the year 1895. This did not eliminate the contractor, as the manufacturer subcontracted his work and dealt only with the contractor, who in turn hired
the employees to work for him. The contractor acted as an employer while the employee worked in the plant of the manufacturer, the latter being concerned primarily with merchandizing.

All the worst evils of competition under private enterprise developed throughout the evolution of the men's clothing industry. Words such as submanufacturer, contractor, unemployment and sweatshop give to the reader nothing more than a general understanding of the problems of industry. They really meant the tenements of New York, and other cities at their squalid worst; they meant disease and body harm in the form of tuberculosis and curved spines, and a resulting short life.2

B. First Attempts at Unionism.

The first attempts at unionism in the men's clothing industry were journeymen's locals formed for temporary action. In the first decade of the nineteenth century there were a number of local strikes. Previous to the year 1824 there are no records of any permanent organization of tailors. In 1824, the employers of the Buffalo tailors charged the latter with forming a combination and conspiring to force all journeymen tailors into their organization. In 1827, in Philadelphia, a group of workers of the Robb and Winebrener Tailoring Co. were found guilty of conspiring to increase their wages.3

2. This later history is based upon Budish, J. M. and Soule, G., "The New Unionism in the Clothing Industry", 1920, pp. 19-22, 43.

Before the year 1900, the history of the clothing unions is one of scattered and unsuccessful, though persistent, efforts at organization. The existence of employer opposition along with the application of the common law doctrine of conspiracy, and the application of the Sherman Act, retarded organization and expansion. The rapid turnover of employees in the industry, as older immigrants left for better work and were replaced by new arrivals, made organization work difficult. Other factors that hindered the development of a strong union were: the diversified backgrounds of the workers, the many different languages and customs, the large number of small establishments and the homework custom.

In 1891, the first national union in the men's clothing industry was founded—the United Garment Workers—which held its first convention on April 18th of that year in New York City, with tailor delegates from New York, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia. This union made up of native skilled craftsmen, for the most part, immediately affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. The U.G.W. based its strength on the craft spirit and strove to improve the conditions of the workers. Nevertheless, the membership remained small as the unskilled worker was given little consideration.

During the first decade of this century the workers in the ladies' garment branch of the clothing industry met with great success in unionism. Unionism in the men's clothing field had not made parallel gains and, as a result, the work-
and that one should not be entirely with others or alone. To enjoy the
company of friends is pleasant, but to enjoy the company of oneself is wise. To love and be loved is what makes life worth living.

The most important thing is to be true to yourself and to have integrity. If you do that, you will never go wrong. Life is too short to be anything but yourself. And remember, the only way to get what you want is to work hard for it. No one will give it to you.
ers became exceedingly restless. The United Garment Workers Union was too inactive for them. A strike with the large and progressive house of Hart, Schaffner and Marx in Chicago in the fall of 1910, resulted in a satisfactory agreement to both parties, although the workers in the other Chicago shops, who had also gone on strike, made no gains whatsoever. In December 1912, a strike referendum was submitted to the union membership in New York City, and was overwhelmingly upheld. This referendum showed the membership of the union to be not over 5,000, yet swelled by the unskilled workers, the number of strikers was 50,000. The President of the U.G.W., on his own responsibility, declared the strike at an end after the strikers had repeatedly voted down settlements which did not meet with their full demands. This action alone was sufficient to bring to the fore the dissatisfaction with the incumbent union leadership in the larger clothing centers. 4

C. The Founding of the A.C.W.A.

At the convention of the U.G.W. which took place at Nashville, Tennessee, in 1914, the representatives of large numbers of unskilled workers voted to form a union along industrial organization lines. When these delegates were refused seats in the convention because of their opposition to the U.G.W. conservative policy, they left the hall and held a convention of their own in another part of the city. This ac-

tion produced the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America on December 26, 1914. This new clothing union included the majority of delegates from the large locals of New York, Chicago, Brooklyn, Boston, Rochester, Philadelphia and Baltimore, and a few from Cincinnati and Syracuse. The U.G.W. delegates were from smaller locals in more scattered towns, and for the most part represented the workers in overalls factories.  

D. Early Difficulties.

Before the Amalgamated could establish itself in the field, it had to face many difficult struggles in most of the clothing centers, and was beset by the existence of many non-union plants in various sections of the country. This called for strong organizing campaigns to draw the nonunion workers into the union. Its greatest rival was the United Garment Workers with whom the Amalgamated had split. Many employers, fearing the aggressive A.C.W.A., who had formerly opposed the U.G.W. Union, now used the latter as a weapon against the A.C.W.A. In some cases the employers in New York City locked out their employees and would not re-employ them unless they returned as members of the U.G.W.  

Not only was the Amalgamated opposed by employer-U.G.W. combinations, but also by the A. F. of L., with whom the U.G.W. was affiliated. In 1915, the Leopold Morse Company, a large Boston clothing firm, signed an agreement with the A.C.W.A.; but a few weeks later  

the same company signed with the U.G.W., ordering its employees to change their affiliation from the A.C.W.A. to the U.G.W. At Baltimore, in the same year, the Amalgamated again lost in a jurisdictional contest to the U.G.W. at the L. Greif & Brothers Company. This company similarly had signed an agreement with the A.C.W.A.; later they agreed with the A. F. of L. to employ U.G.W. members only. The A. F. of L. allied itself with the radical Industrial Workers of the World to combat the A.C.W.A. in this case. 

E. Experience in World War I and Immediate Postwar Period.

The first World War had its effects upon the A.C.W.A. as government action aided A.C.W.A. organizing activities and demand for war goods due to government contracts permitted manufacturers to grant concessions to the union. In 1918, a National War Labor Board was set up to help bring about industrial peace for the war effort. Governing principles were drawn up by this Board to handle relations between employers and employees in war industries. These principles called for no strikes or lockouts while the war was in progress. Employees were given government sanction and backing, through the National War Labor Board, to organize with their own representatives and bargain collectively. Workers were not to be discriminated against for holding membership in a union or for engaging in union activities. The members of the union could not force other workers to join or use coercion on em-

ployers to bargain with them. The open shop was not to be considered a grievance. The right to organize and bargain aided the A.C.W.A. and all unions to organize in areas where they had been unable to do so previously.

The first effect of the war was a drop in production and unemployment in the men's clothing industry as civilians entered the armed forces. This condition was soon followed by a rapid expansion in the industry due to a demand for uniforms. Increased production caused much subcontracting and sweatshop conditions throughout the country, especially in the Chicago garment district where many small shops developed. The A.C.W.A. protested such conditions and urged government action against poor working conditions with the result that the War Department set up a Board of Control to insure proper working conditions where uniforms were being produced. Furthermore, this Board of Control and the Administrator of Labor who replaced it, restated and emphasized the workers' right to organize and bargain collectively, with no discrimination because of membership in a union or for participation in union activities.

Reinstatement of workers discharged for union activity was required of firms who wished to hold government contracts. Employers of the nonunion center of Rochester, New York were required by the War Labor Board to arbitrate a wage dispute.

with the A.C.W.A. The A.C.W.A. won this dispute and gained a wage increase. This increase in wages made the Amalgamated popular among the workers and they joined the union in great numbers. This first collective bargaining broke the way for further collective bargaining, especially in the Rochester Clothing Center. Up to this time the most difficult area to organize had been Philadelphia, but here again with the aid of government machinery, the workers on uniforms were organized.

Throughout the war period, one important objective of the A.C.W.A. and all organized labor was to shorten the hours of labor for their members. Before the entry of the United States into the war, the A.C.W.A. had obtained the forty-eight hour week, in 1916. They immediately set about to work for a forty-four hour week. This goal was first achieved in Toronto, in 1917. With the end of the war, a strike was called in New York resulting in a forty-four hour week for the whole area. This same workweek was established at Hart, Schaffner and Marx in Chicago, in 1919. Within a relatively short time the forty-four hour week was adopted by nonunion plants in an effort to keep their workers satisfied and keep the A.C.W.A. out, and became nationwide. This led to the forty-four hour week in the allied clothing trades. In less than

five years, the A.C.W.A. had decreased the number of hours worked per week from sixty and seventy hours, to forty-four. The clothing industry quickly turned from being the leader in "excessive hours" to being the leader in decreasing hours in American Industry.

It was the prosperity in the war and the immediate post-war period that enabled the A.C.W.A. and unions, in general, to gain concessions easily. Manufacturers had large government orders to fill and were ready to prevent workstoppage.

F. The Decade of the Twenties.

The end of the postwar boom brought a turn in the trend. All unions were attacked by employers in an open-shop drive, commencing with the depression of 1920-1921. Employers wanted lower wages and the open shop. Even prior to the depression, the A.C.W.A. had lost a strike in Philadelphia, in 1919, to the A. B. Kitschbaum Company, but the company went out of business a few years later.

One of the largest disputes in which the A.C.W.A. was involved took place in New York City. This was a general lock-out (by all employers). The employers, seeking lower wages and other demands, set up conditions which would have wiped out most of the gains which the union had obtained since its organization. Fifty-thousand workers were locked out, and were to be re-employed only in accordance with the manufac-

...
turer's demands. The conflict started in December 1920, and extended over the first five months of the next year. It was a bitter dispute, with arrests and injunctions. Damage suits against the union totaled several millions of dollars. Boston and some of the Baltimore employers joined in the lockout. A two-million dollar strike fund was raised by the A.C.W.A. from which better than one-million dollars were spent on relief for the union members. The conflict finally ended in a compromise; the agreement called for a forty-four hour week, union shop, production standards, joint committee on wages, a commission to work out relations, 15% cut except cutters and a board of arbitration to administer the agreement.

While the Amalgamated was having its troubles in the twenties, it continued to organize. An unusual case was the unionization of the A. Nash Tailoring Company of Cincinnati, a leading nonunion stronghold. A. Nash a former minister and an able businessman had organized his company on a religious fervor basis. His antiunion tactics included the yellow-dog contract, speed-ups and profit sharing. Nash was a religious fanatic and believed in what he was doing. To combat the religious zeal of the community, the union set out on a campaign directed at the clergymen themselves. The A.C.W.A. convinced the clergy, the workers and the community, that the standards of this plant were not up to those in the union

plants. Nash, himself, finally became convinced of these facts and met with Sidney Hillman, in Washington, in December of 1925. Here an agreement for unionizing the plant was reached. Nash returned to Cincinnati and urged all his employees to join the union. When junior executives of the plant were openly objecting to unionization, Nash, himself, spoke against these executives. The union was accepted by almost all of the three-thousand workers in the plant. The contract negotiated called for a forty-four hour week with overtime, wage increases, equal division of work in place of speed-ups, restrictions on arbitrary discharge, unemployment insurance and arbitration machinery. The A.C.W.A. picked its organization weapons for each case. In this one, it turned the vigor of the employer from opposition to the union, to a major asset for the union. In 1928, a new drive on nonunion plants was initiated, bringing the Philadelphia shops into the union.

G. The Depression and the New Deal.

The collapse of business in 1929, brought depression and difficulty to all unions. Existing wages and working rules would not be maintained as markets disappeared. The sweatshop returned as in preunion days and work standards dropped to an extremely low level. Even in these difficult times, the A.C.W.A. conducted campaigns against these sweatshops. There

were many and bitter strikes in an attempt to stop wage cuts, all of which failed.

When the New Deal government came into office in 1933, the A.C.W.A. was in the midst of a campaign to unionize the shirt industry of the Eastern States. While this drive was meeting with only slight success in the spring of 1933, it was profitably stimulated by the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act.

H. The A.C.W.A. and the A. F. of L.

The A.C.W.A. President, Sidney Hillman, had been appointed as a member of the Labor Advisory Board of the N.R.A. and came into close relationship with the representative leaders of the American Federation of Labor. As a result of this, an agreement was reached between the Amalgamated and the Federation, and the former affiliated with the latter in 1933.

The Amalgamated was one of the few unions to take immediate advantage of section 7a of the N.R.A. Organizers, experienced and inexperienced, were sent into the field to organize before N.R.A. codes were adopted. In this way, the union leaders could represent the workers at meetings where the codes were drawn up. In some cases, the union called strikes, and demand-

ed that their terms be included in the code of the industry. The workweek was reduced to thirty-six hours and union representatives sat in on the formation and later the administration of the codes. William Green, President of the A. F. of L. and chairman of the Labor Advisory Board under the N.R.A., commended the code of the men's clothing industry in these words: "The Men's Clothing Code has been one of the best enforced codes, partly because of the long tradition of collective bargaining and constitutional arrangements, to which both employers and organized labor have contributed, but also because of the representation of labor representatives on the code authority. The adjustment of wages above the minimum in this industry has been most satisfactory". The N.I.R.A. was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on May 27, 1935, in the Schechter Poultry Case. Many new unions had sprung up under the N.I.R.A., and old unions had raised their standards considerably. The men's clothing industry was again free of sweatshop conditions. With the collapse of the N.R.A., the A.C.W.A. authorized all its members to strike against any attempt by an employer to decrease standards that had been set up by the codes. The General Executive Board of the A.C.W.A. met to raise a million-dollar fund for its own national defense.

I. The A.C.W.A. and the C.I.O.

A move for industrial organization was smoldering within the American Federation of Labor. This issue became definite at the 1935 convention of the Federation. The A.C.W.A. had not forgotten the long years of battle it had had with the A. F. of L. With the break between the craft and industrial unions, the A.C.W.A. went with the newly formed Committee for Industrial Organization. The Amalgamated immediately became very active in the C.I.O., being the main force in an effort to unionize the Textile Industry. From the beginning, the A.C.W.A. was in full sympathy with the C.I.O. The new federation of unions held its first convention in November of 1938. Sidney Hillman, President of the A.C.W.A., was elected as one of the two vice-presidents of the organization.

J. Recent Expansion.

The Amalgamated, until 1935, had been made up of workers in only the men's clothing industry. In this year, an expansion program was started to bring into the A.C.W.A. those plants making allied products. In 1935, the neckwear workers, upon their own request, left the A. F. of L. and joined the Amalgamated. In 1936, the Journeymen Tailors' Union made up of the same type of workers as those in the A.C.W.A., settled a jurisdictional quarrel by coming into the Amalgamated. The following year, 1937, the International Glove Workers Union voted to enter the A.C.W.A., and became the Glove Workers Department.

It was in 1937 also that the A.C.W.A. set out to organize white duck manufacturers, who made and supplied white uniforms to linen supply houses. Many of these firms also laundered these uniforms, and this attracted the interest of the Amalgamated to the laundry workers. A small C.I.O. Laundry Workers Union was having trouble with employers, at this time, and desired to affiliate with the A.C.W.A. With this new type of member within the fold, the Amalgamated proceeded to organize twenty-five thousand workers in New York City. Organization of the laundry workers has now extended to Detroit, and a few other sections of the country but has not developed into a nationwide organization. In 1937, the A.C.W.A. set out to organize still another field. The Journeymen Tailors Department was interested in tailors employed in cleaning and dyeing establishments. The organization of cleaning and dyeing workers resulted, and has extended through the same areas as the laundry workers, but is not yet national in scale.

The A.C.W.A. has also extended its organization into the work clothes industry. In this field they are organizing in plants where the U.G.W. had had contracts for many years. In 1945, the workers of the Hoosier Factories, Michigan City, Indiana, and W. Stanhouse Sons, Inc., Rockford, Illinois cast their ballots in a N.L.R.B. election for representation by the Amalgamated. In Columbus, Ohio workers in the Hercules Trou-

ser Company's plant voted for the A.C.W.A. in a N.L.R.B. election.

There are now 29 Joint Boards; 496 locals in 264 cities, 36 states and the District of Columbia, and 4 Provinces of Canada. In the period between May, 1944 and May, 1946, the location of new locals indicates the spread of organization throughout the United States and Canada. Twelve locals were set up in the Southern States, 4 in Texas, 2 in Tennessee and 2 in Alabama. Twenty-five were chartered in the Midwest, 9 in Missouri, 4 in Illinois, 4 in Michigan, 3 in Iowa, 2 in Indiana, 2 in Ohio and 1 in Kansas. Five newly established locals in Canada were granted charters. Other new locals were established in Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Kentucky. The first locals of the A.C.W.A. to appear in Kansas and Alabama were chartered in 1945.

CHAPTER IV

STRUCTURE OF THE UNION

1. National Office
2. Joint Board
3. The Local
4. The Shop Committee
5. Amalgamated's Constitution
CHAPTER IV

STRUCTURE OF THE UNION

A. National Office.

Because the garment trades are of a highly competitive nature and unusually mobile, the unions have had to centralize a great deal of power in the hands of the national office. Not the least interesting phase of the growth of the A.C.W.A. has been the development of its administrative structure and its central office, located in New York City. A modern labor union must have an efficient administrative machinery to carry out the affairs of a large and widespread membership.

At the top of the union structure is the Convention held every second year, which elects the general officers and a General Executive Board to administer the union organization until the next convention. The national office keeps a close check on the activities of the Joint Boards and in addition carries out general administrative duties. For many years the national office published numerous weekly papers as organs of the union, in other languages as well as English; now, however, because of the Americanizing of the members of the union an English language paper alone is published. The union has a skilled Research Department prepared to take part

The text on the page is not legible due to the quality of the image. It appears to be a page from a document, but the content cannot be accurately transcribed.
in collective bargaining and to work on other general union interests and problems. It keeps exhaustive records on matters pertaining to the A.C.W.A. and the labor movement in general. Skillful publicity personnel are at hand for special emergencies which may arise. The enormous mass of detail is dealt with by the Joint Board Offices, which in some instances are more spacious than the national office itself; the latter is the home of a flexible and capable general staff which can on short notice throw its entire energy into the most important tasks that hold a prominent place in union strategy at the moment. The general office keeps in close contact with all the important details existing in the various markets. It is aided in doing so by the fact that Joint Board members are usually members of the General Executive Board, and by the fact that it has its own representative in each of the important markets. It always participates, directly or indirectly, in negotiations for consideration of change in an agreement. If technical problems of production should arise the national center can be called upon for assistance. The stabilization of wage rates, along with the equalization of the competitive problem between markets, is a concern of the general headquarters at all times.

The close ties between the central office and the local Joint Boards make it possible to keep a constant vigil over the management of the union's administration to protect the interests and rights of the membership. Any local tendency
toward autocracy can be stopped quickly. The general office assumes the responsibility to see that matters are handled in a democratic, constitutional and honest manner.

B. Joint Board.

The next authority below the national office is the Joint Board being the main center of authority in each of the various clothing markets. A distinguishing feature of the Joint Board as developed by the A.C.W.A. is that here is centralized the business for all crafts and locals of a given city or region. This gives the employer only one agency with which to deal, the Joint Board, which accepts the responsibility. The Joint Board has an extensive organization; it handles complaints, the adjustment of wages under the impartial machinery, dues collection, the labor exchange, unemployment insurance, education and any other union business which requires administration close to the scene. The Joint Board is made up of representatives elected by the locals within its jurisdiction. The executive officers which make up the Joint Board are the Manager, Secretary-Treasurer and possibly others; these officers are elected by the popular vote of the membership of the locals in question. Persons running for these positions must have the qualifications, and sometimes before they can enter an election the candidates are given an examination. The Managers of the Joint Boards are in close contact with the national office and can, therefore, guarantee a more consistent policy and efficient performance.
The activities of the shop committees and the shop chair-
men in the various establishments are co-ordinated by a staff
of deputies or business agents and organizers maintained by
the Joint Board. Union policies are straightened out in shop
meetings and in weekly meetings of the deputies, whenever the
occasion arises.

However, the Joint Board is not always a business office
alone. In such cases it has much to do with social and intel-
lectual pursuits of the union members. Chicago has a dental
clinic operated with the co-operation of the dental profes-
sion; low fees are charged for this service. Union headquar-
ters often provide restaurants, recreation rooms and gymna-
siums. The Joint Boards often provide lectures, concerts
and classes of an educational nature. The important Joint
Boards conduct the activities of the union not only in their
own cities but also in surrounding areas where member locals
exist.

C. The Local.

In the A.C.W.A. the locals are of very little conse-
quence, virtually all authority and responsibility being in
the hands of the Joint Boards. The locals are mere adminis-
trative units, while control over strikes and collective bar-
gaining is vested in the Joint Boards to satisfy the need for
co-ordinated action in dealing with employers. The locals in
the Amalgamated are made up according to craft, nationality,
sex, or according to the branch of the industry in which the
employee works; they are numerous and small in size as compared to the locals in the other garment unions. The locals are centralized under the Joint Board, membership being compulsory.

D. The Shop Committee.

The smallest unit of the Amalgamated is the shop committee, consisting of workers in the shop who are chosen by their fellow employees. This committee is headed by the shop chairman or deputy who initiates complaints of the workers with the management, usually the shop foreman. This is the part of the union with which the worker comes into closest contact.

E. Amalgamated Constitution.

The following excerpts on the structure of the A.C.W.A. are taken from the Constitution of the A.C.W.A.

- Article V Conventions.
- Article VI General Officers and General Executive Board.
- Article VII Local Unions and Joint Boards.
- Article VIII Officers of Local Unions and Joint Boards.
- Article XV Amendments.
CHAPTER V

THE A.C.W.A. AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

1. The Program and Policy of the Union
2. Employers Associations
3. Origin of Collective Bargaining
4. Extension of and Experience with Collective Bargaining
5. The Contract
CHAPTER V  
THE A.C.W.A. AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

A. The Program and Policy of the Union.

The program of the A.C.W.A. has come in contact with all the phases of union activity, and the changing emphasis has shown the evolution of the Amalgamated's policy.

"In its early days, the Amalgamated emphasized adult education, co-operation with the general labor movement and support of the Socialist Party. In 1922, it launched the Russian-American Industrial Corporation 'to facilitate and encourage the investment of American Capital in Russia'. Since the early twenties, however, its program has been somewhat more practical. The workers education branch now emphasizes labor economics and the history of trade unionism in addition to music, literature and other cultural subjects, which have become less important. Support of the general labor movement has been along fairly conventional lines; in order to support organization activities in the steel, textile and automobile industries, the Amalgamated has contributed generously of its financial resources and the ability of its officers. The A.C.W.A.'s major political activity has been in behalf of candidates of the old-line parties. It has also strongly supported state

Provisions

...
and federal labor legislation."^2

"Much of the Amalgamated's energy since its first decade has gone to collective bargaining and to the support of other practical devices for stabilizing and increasing the worker's income."^3

From the beginning the A.C.W.A. was led by men who were inclined toward Socialism. This Socialistic tendency led to an interest in the co-operative movement in general and to various co-operative ventures within the union itself. The general executive board of the Amalgamated was interested in the co-operative movement before 1920; and the convention of the A.C.W.A., in 1920, passed a resolution supporting the board in its promotion of the co-operative movement.\(^4\) In the year 1919, the Joint Board of the Amalgamated, under an agreement with the Chicago employers, set up three unemployment offices in that city. The employers were to give the A.C.W.A. forty-eight hours to fill any vacancy which occurred in their shops. The unemployment offices were reorganized in 1922, and have served the workers and employees efficiently since that time.\(^5\)

The first co-operative bank of the Amalgamated was established in Chicago, July 1, 1922.\(^6\) There were two other labor

banks in existence at the time the Amalgamated Trust and Savings Bank of Chicago opened; the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers had a bank in Cleveland and the International Association of Machinists had a bank in Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{7} The first labor bank in New York State was opened by the A.C.W.A. in New York City, April 14, 1923.\textsuperscript{8}

At the 1920 convention, President Hillman, expressed a desire that the credit union would be spread throughout the membership of the union. He introduced Doctor W. F. McCaleb, an authority on credit unions, who spoke to the convention.\textsuperscript{9} As a result, in New York City, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Credit Union began functioning in September 1923. The purpose of this credit union was to lend money to its members who were stockholders in the union, membership being confined to workers in New York City.\textsuperscript{10} Another credit union was opened by the A.C.W.A. in Rochester, in March 1927.\textsuperscript{11} In 1930, the Cincinnati Credit Union was organized and put in operation by the Amalgamated.\textsuperscript{12} Los Angeles, St. Louis and Troy, N.Y. also have A.C.W.A. Credit Unions.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} "Documentary History of the A.C.W.A., 1920-1922", p. 238.
\item \textsuperscript{8} op. cit., "Documentary History of the A.C.W.A., 1922-1924", p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{9} op. cit., "Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America", p. 218.
\item \textsuperscript{10} "Documentary History of the A.C.W.A., 1924-1926", p. 153.
\item \textsuperscript{11} "Documentary History of the A.C.W.A., 1926-1928", p. 106.
\item \textsuperscript{12} "Documentary History of the A.C.W.A., 1930-1934", p. 133.
\item \textsuperscript{13} "Documentary History of the A.C.W.A., 1944-1946", pp. 71-72.
\end{itemize}
In 1936, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Credit Union was the fourth largest credit union in New York State. In the past twenty-five years, it has served an average of 2,000 members a year, granting loans amounting to from $50 to $2,000. An average 4.5 per cent dividend has been declared by the New York Credit Union each year since it was established.

Another result of the co-operative spirit within the A.C.W.A. was unemployment insurance which began in Chicago, in 1923. Commencing May 1, 1923, employers deducted 1.5 per cent from the weekly earnings of each worker and matched this deduction with a contribution from his own funds. The unemployment funds were placed under the supervision of trustees. Five boards of trustees were established, three for the three major clothing firms in the City of Chicago, and one each for the remaining large firms and for the contractors. In the first five years, there were $3,300,394.40 paid out of the Chicago funds in benefits. In 1928, unemployment insurance was established in New York City and Rochester; in 1930, in Toronto, Canada; and in 1935, in Hamilton, Ontario.

The "radical" spirit within the policy of the union has gradually diminished, as noted in the opening of this chapter, but the A.C.W.A. continues to strive to give the workers a high degree of security. In 1941, the A.C.W.A. proposed a life insurance and benefit fund which was accepted by the employers in February 1942. Commencing July 1, 1942, employers throughout the men's clothing industry began to contribute 2 per cent of their yearly payroll to provide a life and health insurance fund. This fund resulted in the formation of the Amalgamated Life Insurance Company which commenced operations February 1, 1944.20

As of December 10, 1945, the employer in the men's clothing industry has been contributing to a retirement fund an amount equal to 3 per cent of the wages of all the union members. Union workers may retire at the age of 65 and receive retirement benefits from this fund.21 Such activities have had a great publicity value and have done much to hold the enthusiasm and interest of the members of the union.

The A.C.W.A. has worked continuously for complete unionization of the men's clothing industry. Because of the strategy and zeal of its leaders and organizers, it has been very successful. Although it has had to overcome the blacklist, the yellow-dog contract, violence and labor spies, it has sel-

dom lost a campaign for recognition.\textsuperscript{22} The Amalgamated must be considered among the most liberal and farsighted of labor unions of the present day.

B. Employers Associations.

The small size of establishments in the men's clothing industry does not give the employer equality of bargaining power with the A.C.W.A. For this reason most of the leading centers of the industry have employer's associations representing employers. It is these manufacturer's associations which bargain with the A.C.W.A. Those manufacturers who do not belong to the association, follow the lead laid down by the latter and sign like agreements with the union. In order that they can have responsible people to deal with, the A.C.W.A. has encouraged the formation of employer's associations. Some in the ranks of the union have disagreed with this policy, on the grounds that it builds a strong opposition to the union. The union leaders, however, have seen the necessity of such bodies in contrast to dealing with a very large number of individual employers. In like manner, some of the employers have seen the advantage of a union in so highly competitive a market that they have encouraged and aided the A.C.W.A. in its organizing of the workers. These employers do not want competition from low standard shops and see in the union a protection against such competition.

\textsuperscript{22} Litigation in the history of the A.C.W.A. is discussed in, Strong, E. D., "Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America", 1940, pp. 142-166.
The men's clothing industry formed a National Association in 1919 and, with the union, attempted to frame controls for the principle markets. Negotiations broke down on the wage question on market differentials. The association functioned for a while in an advisory capacity, and finally was dropped.

No permanent employer's organization was formed until the year 1933. At this time, with the aid of the N.R.A., two associations were formed, one was prounion, the other antiunion. The primary aim of the prounion group was to administer the Code of Fair Competition, while the aim of the antiunion group was to oppose the Code. The Clothing Manufacturers' Association of the United States of America, which was the prounion group, voted to remain organized. Although there was no longer any legal obligation to do so, this employer group pledged itself to continue to observe the Code. This association still exists but is virtually inactive.

By 1937, the Amalgamated had almost eighty-five per cent of the men's clothing market unionized. In this year (1937), a national wage agreement was made between the union and employers represented by a temporary group. This was the first industry-wide wage agreement which the A.C.W.A. negotiated.


The men's clothing industry has become well known for its collective bargaining and grievance machinery which did not originate with the A.C.W.A. but with the ideas of Sidney Hillman, in Chicago, in 1910. Hillman was employed as a cutter in the
Hart, Schaffner and Marx Plant in Chicago where a "wildcat" strike took place, in 1910. The strike started when a small number of workers left their jobs without the consent of the United Garment Workers Union. As conditions throughout the industry were bad, with sweatshops, low wages and long working days, other workers throughout Chicago joined the strikers until there were about 35,000 employees on strike. It was a bitter strike in which the workers went to extremes in expressing their long frustrated resistance against the conditions under which they were obliged to work. While the strikers were officially represented by the U.G.W., separate negotiations, in which Sidney Hillman took an active part, were made at the Hart, Schaffner and Marx Plant. As a result, the strike was successful only at Hart, Schaffner and Marx and only with the co-operation of the secretary-treasurer of the company who was in sympathy with the workers. The workers in the other plants returned to work with nothing accomplished, while the Hart, Schaffner and Marx employees, in an agreement with their employers, were assured of no discrimination for striking, or for union membership. The agreement also called for a board of arbitration to handle future difficulties.

The arbitrator has been the core of Sidney Hillman's method for settling grievances and maintaining good relations between employers and employees. At Hart, Schaffner and Marx the original plan called for a three-man board of arbitration, one representing the company, one representing the workers,
with a third chosen by these two as an impartial chairman. The first board had only two members, however, as the impartial member could not be agreed upon. This two-member board went to work to clarify the provisions of the strike which had just been concluded; they decided on better wages, hours, sanitary and health conditions, equal division of work in off seasons, and a grievance machinery. In accordance with the last provision the company set up a Labor Complaint Dept., in 1911, to settle disputes. At this time, 1911, there existed the Labor Complaint Dept. and the Board of Arbitration. The Labor Complaint Department was not satisfactory as it could not handle the many difficulties which arose. There were no lower levels in the grievance machinery at this time (1911) and the Labor Complaint Department was flooded with grievance problems. In 1912, a new department was organized and named the trade board; this board immediately delegated the first handling of grievances to the deputies who represented the various branches of the trade and also represented the employer in each branch. Shop chairmen were originally used to represent workers who could not speak English. In 1913, the shop chairman was made a part of the growing grievance machinery and was permitted to take up grievances with the foreman of the shop; this arrangement further reduced the work of the trade board. In 1913, the following grievance machinery existed: The shop chairman and the foreman, the deputies of the employer and employees, the trade board and the Board of Arbitration.
The impartial chairman has been given credit for much of the early success of this system. The high quality and ability of such chairmen has been a great factor in successful relations between the A.C.W.A. and the employers. Agreements with Hart, Schaffner and Marx, laid down general principles which have been administered by the various committees and boards; this has made the system unusually flexible. This plan has been studied and set down as significant in the history of industrial relations.

The A.C.W.A. continued the grievance machinery as a basic plan when its members split from the U.G.W. Over the years a body of negotiation experience resulted from this system, which could be readily referred to. There have been no strikes or lockouts since the Amalgamated has been the union in the Hart, Schaffner and Marx Plant.

When the Amalgamated was formed in 1914, "there ensued much litigation, with the initiative coming from both sides. All suits and legal actions were finally settled by an exchange of releases which provided that the new organization should waive all claims upon the name of the United Garment Workers and all property in its possession, while the latter should waive all claims against the new union and its locals. Thus each side was to let the other go its way, but the struggle for the membership and control of the industry was free to continue with all vigor". 23

BASIC GRIEVANCE MACHINERY

(Originated at Hart, Schaffner and Marx)

Arbitration
Possesses final jurisdiction over all matters arising under joint Agreement.

Trade Board
Possesses original jurisdiction over all matters arising under joint Agreement.

Joint Board--presents matters to trade board involving all or large groups of members.

Management Representatives--presents matters to trade board involving all or a group of manufacturers.

Union Representative--presents difficulties arising in individual shops to trade board. (Deputies)

Labor Manager--presents individual firms difficulties to trade board. (Deputies)

Shop Chairman.

Shop Superintendent or Foreman.

Employees.
D. Extension of an Experience with Collective Bargaining.

It was the Amalgamated that took up the work of extending collective bargaining and the grievance machinery throughout the clothing industry. "Some progress was first made in Baltimore and Boston, where agreements with important firms were made in 1916."\(^{24}\) In 1919, the markets of Chicago and Rochester came entirely under collective bargaining agreement with the A.C.W.A. There was little success in New York City until 1924, when the A.C.W.A. and the clothing manufacturers reached a stable and lasting agreement. Philadelphia was organized and under agreement in 1929. Most of the collective bargaining systems closely followed the Hart, Schaffner and Marx plan, shown in diagram in this chapter, providing for the initiation of grievances with the shop representatives and further negotiations, if necessary, with the deputies, a trade board and then to arbitration.

Collective bargaining withstood initial difficulties and was firmly established throughout much of the industry in 1923. A number of changes came about which lessened the need of the impartial machinery and increased the importance of direct negotiation. "Arrangements for settlement of disputes by shop chairmen and foremen, and by deputies, was so successful that the number of cases calling for further action was already small. With clarification of rights and responsibilities,\(^{24}\)

The present grievance machinery is shown in the following diagram.

Arbitrator

Manager or Secretary of the Joint Board.

Representative of the Joint Board. (Business Agent)

Deputy.

Shop Chairman.

Employees.

Top Management or Top Employer's Association Official.

Officer of the Firm. (Labor Manager)

Deputy.

Shop Foreman.
moreover, even important cases ceased to be carried beyond the 
trade board, since the board of arbitration almost invariably 
upheld the lower board's decision. 25

The impartial arbitrator is still important in the collective bargaining of the A.C.W.A., but not as active as when the grievance machinery was first set up. There is a tendency to get away from precedent in all cases, as changes justify different decisions. The majority of difficulties are settled at lower levels in the machinery.

In the clothing industry, both sides now prefer direct negotiation to decisions made by an outside referee. Conditions of collective bargaining are such that difficulties are quickly and smoothly settled, by the shop chairman and foreman or the deputies, with no accumulation of grievances to be expressed in poor work, slowdowns, stoppages, or violent strikes. In the majority of the clothing markets the trade board has been done away with while the lower levels of the machinery remain, along with the arbitrator.

F. The Contract.

Principles embodied in arbitration decisions, made in oral agreements, and traditions in the industry, play the major role in collective bargaining with the contract being the least important. Contracts are usually very short and contain basic and flexible principles rather than long, minute details ap-

plicable in every case. In some areas the A.C.W.A. contract exists only for those interested in seeing a contract. The Philadelphia market had a written agreement for one year in 1929, but collective bargaining continued on oral agreements for ten years before another written agreement was signed.

A.C.W.A. contracts include the usual clauses on wages, hours, working conditions and pay for overtime. The closed shop and the checkoff are common in Amalgamated contracts. The employers make use of the Amalgamated's employment exchanges in conjunction with the union shop, where this type of shop exists. Such exchanges are usually found only in the larger centers of Chicago, Philadelphia and Rochester. A.C.W.A. contracts include clauses prohibiting strikes and lockouts, provisions for settling disputes, maximum hours per week, compulsory registration of contractors, responsibility for contractor's wages on the part of the manufacturer, equal division of work in slack seasons, overtime limitations, definite limitations on discipline and discharge of employees, the checkoff of union dues and provisions for renewing the agreement. Contracts with small employers, who are hard to check on, and with employers who have broken agreements, usually require the posting of a bond with the union or provide for inspection of the employer's books by the union. Wage rates are seldom put down in the agreement; restriction of output and clauses on new machinery are not mentioned in A.C.W.A. contracts.26

CONCLUSION

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America has built up a system of collective bargaining that has become noted for its success in American Industry. The strike has practically disappeared in the men's clothing field, because of the fine grievance machinery which the A.C.W.A. has developed. Grievances are settled quickly and efficiently before recourse to strikes become necessary. The fact that the majority of difficulties are settled on the lower levels in the grievance machinery, by the shop chairman and foreman or by the deputies of the workers and the company, indicates the efficiency that has developed in this machinery. The quality of union leaders and arbitrators has been an important asset to collective bargaining in the men's clothing industry. The union leaders have worked in the industry and possess a great deal of knowledge concerning the problems that may arise both for the employee and for the employer. The arbitrators used by the parties of the industry are well-educated men who study each problem as it arises, and make a decision that they feel to be the most beneficial to both the employer and the employee. The A.C.W.A. and the clothing manufacturers have shown a way toward industrial peace in their various experiments and successful development of tools for industrial relations. The union is a powerful organization in the men's clothing industry but the officials of the union have used their power wisely. The A.C.W.A. has accepted wage decreases when they knew such de-
[Text not visible in the image]
creases were necessary. The Amalgamated has saved submarginal firms from going out of business by reorganizing these firms or loaning money to some of them when such loans could not be obtained otherwise. The union has recommended executives and other persons to fill supervisory positions to employers in various plants. On the other hand, the employers have accepted the power which the union possesses, as they have not successfully developed a national association of their own, and realize the stabilizing effect which the Amalgamated has on the industry, together with the knowledge of the industry possessed by union officials.

Both the employer and the employee have gained from the success of collective bargaining and the resulting peace in this chaotic industry. The employer knows there is small chance of his production schedule being disrupted by strikes or other work stoppage; he can also plan his labor cost without fear of radical changes in wages. The employee has gained much better working conditions, hours and money wages, which he would not have had with the oversupply of labor in the industry, up to 1939, except for the strong union to which he belongs. The earnings of the employee in the men's clothing industry did not rise substantially until after 1939, when Sidney Hillman urged overtime work instead of taking in new workers while maintaining a thirty-six hour week. While the workers in the industry have not prospered through greatly increased real money earnings, they have gained much in what
might be considered "real earnings" of an intangible nature, i.e., fewer hours, better working conditions. The employer, the employee and the union have worked together that they might have an industry which will be beneficial to all parties.
ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The men's clothing industry is located in the major cities of the United States with New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago the leading producers in the men's clothing field. The industry is characterized by small shops; the largest firm employs 3,500 and produces only 3 per cent of the total value of goods produced by the entire industry. The existence of many small plants makes it possible to establish a shop on borrowed capital and rented equipment, which makes capital investment unimportant. Because the large manufacturing plant is not common in this industry, a great number of firms is found, usually between 3,000 and 4,000 in number, with fluctuations, as economic conditions change.

The major costs of production in the men's clothing industry are first, materials, and second, wages. While the most important factor in this industry is the nature of the product, and especially style, which determines whether it is profitable to introduce new machinery and new methods of production. The unstable nature of style limits the size of the shop and in turn lowers the cost of entering into the business, which leads to competition and a constant turnover of firms.

The men's clothing industry has two seasons, one in the spring and another in the fall of the year, with slack periods of production between.

The employee in the men's clothing industry worked long hours for low wages prior to the founding of the A.C.W.A., in
1914. Following the advent of the Amalgamated in the men's clothing field, the long hours of work were quickly reduced and wages were increased. The hours of labor were reduced from 50 to 60 or more per week prior to 1914, to 36 hours per week in 1933. In 1914, average hourly earnings were 26¢, while in 1946 average hourly earnings had risen to 100.7¢. Real weekly earnings increased from $18.19, in 1914, to $27.25, in 1946.

The men's clothing industry is an immigrant industry. Immigrants from all sections of Europe found their way into this industry, both during the period of its development and after it was established as a major industry in the country. Following immigration restrictions and improvements in the men's clothing field, more native-born workers came into the industry. Today, men's clothing workers are a heterogeneous group with Jewish and Italians predominating. The majority of these immigrants and native-born workers did not have to be skilled in the making of men's clothing and could be readily taken into the factory. Skill is required of designers, patternmakers, graders, markers and cutters, but such workers represent a minority group in this field. The immigrant gave a great supply of labor to the men's clothing industry until immigration was cut out by government action. Nevertheless, the industry was oversupplied with workers until the year 1939, as a result of the union policy of no overtime but new workers in peak seasons and prosperous years. Overtime restrictions are now greatly relaxed and the policy of the union does not call for new workers
The manufacture of men's ready-made clothing was becoming an important industry in 1850. Prior to this year, the majority of ready-made garments were roughly made to be worn by sailors and negro slaves on the plantation. Men's ready-made clothing developed slowly in the custom tailor shops when employees were put to work in slack periods making such garments. The invention of the sewing machine, in 1851; the demand for uniforms in the Civil War Period; and the great flow of immigration in the latter half of the 19th century greatly stimulated the manufacture of men's ready-made garments in stable styles and sizes. The industry flourished in the decade from 1870 to 1880, as immigration both increased the demand for men's ready-made clothing and furnished a supply of labor to the industry.

Before the year 1900, the history of the clothing unions is one of scattered and unsuccessful, though persistent, efforts at organization. The A.C.W.A. was first organized from members of the United Garment Workers who broke away from the U.G.W. in 1914 and formed their own A.C.W.A. The A.C.W.A. had difficulty establishing itself in the field, being opposed by the U.G.W., the employers and the American Federation of Labor; the latter even united with the Industrial Workers of the World in the fight against the Amalgamated. The organizing campaign of the Amalgamated was greatly aided in the World War I period, by the great demands for the products of the indus-
try and the protection given to unions by the government during this period. Depressions and the open-shop drive were important factors that retarded union expansion in the twenties, nevertheless, organization continued. The clothing industry was hard hit in the depression of the 1930's but recovered under the N.I.R.A. In 1933, the A.C.W.A. affiliated with the A. F. of L. but went over to the C.I.O. in the break of 1935. Expansion has continued and there are now 496 locals in 264 cities, 36 states and the District of Columbia, and 4 Provinces of Canada.

At the top of the union structure is found the Convention which is held every two years. At this convention the general officers and General Executive Board are elected. The national office holds the power in the union. Below the national office and next in authority is the Joint Board. The Joint Boards are situated in the various clothing markets and local unions are co-ordinated under these boards in each center. The locals have little power but are mere administrative units. The smallest unit in the A.C.W.A. is the shop committee, consisting of workers in the various shops elected by their fellow workers.

The policy and program of the Amalgamated has come in contact with all the phases of union activity. In its early days the union had Socialistic tendencies but since the early 1920's this tendency has decreased and the union has developed a more practical policy. The program of the A.C.W.A. includes the
following: unemployment offices, labor banks, credit unions, unemployment insurance, life and health insurance and a retirement fund.

There is no national employer's association in the men's clothing field although various attempts have been made to form such an organization. The union has encouraged employer organization that it might have fewer parties to deal with. Market organizations exist in the majority of the clothing centers and independent firms follow the lead of such organizations in making agreements with the Amalgamated.

The major result of collective bargaining in the men's clothing industry has been the grievance machinery found throughout the field. This machinery originated at the Hart, Schaffner and Marx plant in Chicago, where a strike was settled with an agreement between the employer and employees which called for a detailed plan for the settlement of disputes. Sidney Hillman took an active part in this strike of 1910 and when the A.C.W.A. was formed in 1914, with Hillman as President, the same grievance machinery was carried over and has become basic in the men's clothing industry. There have been some changes in this machinery over the years with greater emphasis being placed on negotiation between union and management representatives.

The Amalgamated does not use collective bargaining to any great extent, as principles embodied in arbitration decisions and made in oral agreements along with traditions in the indus-
try play the major role in employer-employee relations. As a result, the contract is the least important factor in collective bargaining as carried on by the A.C.W.A. Contracts are usually short, not lengthy, detailed documents.
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