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# The Charlotte Labor Journal

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YOUR ADVERTISEMENT IN THE JOURNAL IS A GOOD INVESTMENT

CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1937

JOURNAL ADVERTISERS DESERVE CONSIDERATION OF THE READER

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## DRAFT OF HISTORY OF HOSIERY WORKERS UNION IS INTERESTINGLY WRITTEN, COVERING A QUARTER OF A CENTURY

(Taken in Part from Fortune Magazine)  
(Continued from Last Week)

The story of a hard-boiled union which does its own wage-cutting, which has entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with its manufacturers, and which is the white hope of stabilization in a chaotic industry.

Let us glance a moment at the geography of the industry. This organized around two opposite centers: Philadelphia, stronghold of Union, and Reading, sixty miles away, citadel of the anti-Union forces. Led by Berkshire, world's biggest full-fashioned mill, the Reading mills, all of them non-union, control about 23 per cent of capacity, is the other distinctively non-union region. Against Reading and the South stands Philadelphia, oldest hosiery district and still the biggest—with 35 per cent. Of the 52 mills signing agreements with the Union, all but sixteen are in Philadelphia. From the first, the Union has been identified with the city. Under the guidance of big Frank McKoskey, Local 706, which then as today took Philadelphia for the considerable province, gathered lesser locals in other centers into the present national Full-Fashioned Hosiery Union. The boom increased as the stature of Local 706 that it used to boast it was the biggest and richest local in the whole American Federation of Labor. Today Local 706 contains about half the entire Hosiery Union's membership, and its present president is actually not officially about as powerful as the president of the Union. And its headquarters are located in the same great brick hall in North Philadelphia that houses the headquarters of the Union it founded.

But along about 1926 a great change began to come over Local 706 and the entire Hosiery Union—a change which as it developed was to make this Union almost unique in the annals of American labor. Until then the object of the Union was, like that of most Unions, simply to get more money for less work. The money was to come, of course, from the employers, the manufacturers. Where the manufacturers, in turn, were to get the money was not the Union's affair. The change was due largely to the quality of leadership in control of the Union during the boom period. There was massive Emil Rieve (now president of the Union) deliberate of manner and analytical of brain, who knows the practical side of the Union down to the ground, who has held about every job in the Union and almost every job in the mills. There was that shrewd little Baptist already referred to: Gus Geiges, now personnel manager of Gotham's Philadelphia mill. There was tall, spare, white-haired Alexander McKoskey, now president of powerful Local 706, who is a logical Scotsman and who ran (unsuccessfully) for mayor of Philadelphia on the Socialist ticket last fall. There was William Smith, then and now secretary-treasurer of the Union, who capably handled the organization's finances while he played a big part in forming its progressive policies. These men were not old-style political campaigners like John L. Lewis, who leads the United Mine Workers. Nor were they crusading Don Quixotes like the late Eugene Debs. Nor, above all, were they of the breed of big Frank McKoskey, under whom most of them served their apprenticeship in the Union. The point is that these men had the scientific approach to the problems of labor. Which is to say, they had a healthy respect for cold facts than for any amount of eternal principles and unassailable theories, including even the Socialist beliefs which most of them professed, then as now.

Now what these extraordinary labor leaders began to understand in 1926 was that their problem was not merely the problem of labor, but was also the problem of industry. Their object was to keep wages up, but they saw clearly that this could be done only if the unionized mills could, in competition with the non-union mills, pay said wages. Therefore, they made use of the golden boom years in a prayerful study of the industry. They hired (1928) a smart, well-informed young newspaperman, John W. Edelman, as research director, publicity man, and editor of the HOSIERY WORKER. His main job was digging out the facts about the industry. Before long he had dug out so many that he was making radio speeches. Rinting was less obvious than that now; that unless some degree of sta-

bilization were brought into the industry, the gold rush would end in a disastrous collapse of prices. They studied the working efficiency of their members in collaboration with Dr. Morris L. Cooke, the then president of the Taylor ("Scientific Management") Society. They hired engineers to make time studies in unionized mills. They pioneered in gathering statistics on the industry's capacity and on hosiery consumption. In a word, their attitude toward capital changed from one of irresponsible hostility to one of understanding; almost one might say, of sympathy.

Meanwhile, the manufacturers, Union and non-Union alike, sent the rocket of unrestrained production zooming even higher into the empyrean. Early in 1929 the rocket began to wobble. The unionized portion of the industry, then less than 30 per cent, was handicapped in competition with the non-Union mills by two things: (1) its machines were older, hence less able to make the high-gauge hosiery increasingly in demand; and (2) the high Union wage scale. Therefore, as stocks on hand mounted up and competition grew fiercer, the Union mills were the chief ones to feel the pinch. It was a sharp, but by no means fatal, pinch. The crash was still many months away. But the Union leaders had learned enough in their study of the industry to grasp what many a manufacturer and many a banker did not: the hosiery business was getting into a most perilous position. And so, in the spring of 1929, Gus Geiges invited the unionized manufacturers to a conference "to discuss the adoption of a constructive program for the industry." Out of that conference came in August, 1929, an agreement signed by both parties. It was remarkable because, although the Union had called the conference, it was the Union which made the important concessions. These were: (1) a 15 per cent cut in knitters' piece rates (knitters are paid on a piece and not on a time basis) and (2) the introduction of a limited scale of two-machine operation (i.e., a knitter and an apprentice run two machines together as against the one-knitter-to-one-machine system preferred by the Union, chiefly on social grounds).

Two months later came the general business crash. With it came competitive chaos for the overbuilt hosiery industry. Within a year the Union manufacturers were as badly off as ever. In August, 1930, in the face of pronouncements from bankers, business leaders, and the president of the American Federation of Labor himself that prosperity could be recaptured only by keeping up wages to 1928 levels, the Union cut its members' wage rates 12 to 40 per cent more. It had taken most of America a year to realize that the Union was right. In addition to the cut, the Union extended two-machine operation to all but a few machines. Grimly the thousands of footers and boarders and seamers and loopers in the Union trudged back to the mills the morning after the sweeping cut; grimly they set to work longer and harder than ever for considerably thinner pay envelopes than those they had been getting a year before. Heroic as the sacrifice was, before the year was out the Union leaders saw that the non-Union mills were cutting under Union wages again, and consequently underselling Union mills. Therefore, in August, 1931, this remarkable Union for the third time in two years cut its members' wages. This time the cut is to the bone, bringing the earnings of Union members down to about 50 per cent of the 1928 level. They would be even less, for the piece work rates are cut to less than 40 per cent of 1928 rates. But for the fact that everyone worked harder, turned out more than he did in 1928. To be specific, leggers averaged under \$30 a week, footers, \$40, as against the \$75 and up several years ago. "Just strike pay," the Union leaders called it. In return for these sacrifices, the Union manufacturers have agreed to the unionization of all workers in their mills, to a return to one-machine operation again, and to the "check-off", whereby each manufacturer deducts the local Union dues from the workers' pay envelopes and hands it over to the Union.

Let us catch our breath a moment and see just where the Union has been swept by the swift current of events we have been following. When Gus Geiges called his meeting in Philadelphia early in 1929, he and his fellow leaders, with all their keenness, could not have foreseen what was going to happen in the next two years. They saw concessions were necessary and they made them—but they made them purely as a yielding of their interests before quite different interests. But as time went on and the competitive chaos grew, the Union was forced by the logic of events from the position of sympathetic onlooker of the unionized manufacturers' competitive battle into that of aggressive ally. The agreement signed is not a truce between two war-

## CHATTING

Easter, that date in the spring of the year which is mostly noted at the present time as the date on which the new clothes shall be given an airing and close inspection by the general public, is once more here. Our winter has been extremely mild in Charlotte, but it is hoped that for the Easter season we may be favored with pleasant weather, as storms at this season are most unwelcome. For who wants to wear a new dress or a new suit of clothes and be caught in the rain?

However, there is nothing we can do about it but just wait and accept with thanks to the Lord whatever may come.

On the subject of Easter I wish to present here a legend which was handed to me some time ago entitled "Legend of the Dogwood," Kentucky Version; letter by R. C. Ramsey, Danville, Ky., in Atlanta Journal:

"Up here in Kentucky there has been a movement launched to save the dogwood from destruction. The following legend may be of interest:

"At the time of the Crucifixion the dogwood had the size of the oak and other forest trees. So firm and strong was the tree that it was chosen as a timber for the cross. To be used thus for such a cruel purpose greatly distressed the tree, and Jesus, nailed upon it, sensed this and in His gentle pity for all sorrowing and suffering, said to it: 'Because of your regret and pity for my suffering, never again shall a dogwood tree grow large enough to be used as a cross. Henceforth it shall be slender and bent and twisted. And its blossoms shall be in the form of a cross—two long and two short petals. And in the center of the outer edge of each petal there shall be nail prints, brown with rust, and stained with red, and in the center of the flower will be a crown of thorns. And—all who see it shall remember.'"

Do not know how much of truth is contained in the above, but a close inspection of the bloom will reveal just what is stated herein. Pretty and interesting to say the least.

### A LITTLE RHYME AND A LITTLE REASON

By REV. HENRY ANSTADT, D.D.

If a man would be a soldier he'd expect, of course, to fight; And he couldn't be an author if he didn't try to write; So it isn't common logic, doesn't have a real true ring That a man, to be a Christian, doesn't have to do a thing.

If a man would be a hunter he must go among the trees, And he couldn't be a sailor if he wouldn't sail the seas. How strange that any member of the church should think that he Can stay away from worship and a worthy member be.

When you join associations you must pay up all your dues; And you pay for all your purchases, from your hat down to your shoes. There are social clubs for women, and the same for men and boys, But members all expect to pay for what each one enjoys.

Then, how is it that members of a church can sit in pews And expect some few to run it without others paying dues? The cost of operation must be met in Church the same As in home or corporation, or in work of any name.

Let us honestly consider why this difference we find Between our church relations and any other kind. Our business obligations must be met, the laws provide, But the church is not insistent, so we let the matter slide.

May we undertake our duties for our church and for our Lord, With some measure of devotion as accords with His Own Word. If our human obligations thus are recognized, why then, Surely God should have our service now and evermore.—Amen.

While the following poem by Rev. C. L. Miller, D.D., was written in the interest of churches, every word of it may be made to apply equally well to your labor organizations or any other organization of people, and it may be well for my readers to take it to heart.

If you want to work in the kind of a church Like the kind of a church you like, You needn't slip your clothes in a grip And start on a long, long hike.

You'll only find what you left behind, For there's nothing that's really new; It's a knock at yourself when you knock your church; It isn't your church—it's you.

Real churches aren't made by men afraid Lest somebody else go ahead; When everyone works and nobody shirks, You can raise a church from the dead.

And if while you make a personal stake Your neighbor can make one, too, Your church will be what you want to see. It isn't your church—it's you.

ring factions, as were the previous agreements—as are most agreements between capital and labor. It is a treaty of alliance to make war on a common enemy: the non-Union manufacturers. As in every alliance, the aims of the parties are not identical: the Union is out primarily to organize the non-Union mills, while the manufacturers are out primarily to get the business of the non-Union mills. But, as in every effective alliance, both objectives can be attained in the same campaign. Indeed, one objective depends on the other, for the Union believes that once the non-Union mills have been beaten commercially, it will be possible to unionize them. And so both labor and capital are here making aggressive common cause.

The manufacturers have entered into the alliance wholeheartedly. They have made one of the most remarkable concessions which capital has ever made to labor. One of the articles of the agreement provides for a joint committee to which every manufacturer must reveal his semi-annual profits. Such profits as may be discovered will go into higher wages. According to the agreement, at least.

(Continued Next Week)

## THREAT HURLED AT HENRY FORD BY AUTOMOBILE WORKERS IN BIG MASS MEETING AT DETROIT, MICH.

DETROIT, March 24.—Addressing a huge gathering of union workers who packed the concourse of Cadillac Square here Tuesday evening, Homer Martin, president of the United Automobile Workers of America said that Henry Ford "might as well get ready to do business with his organized workers."

More than 100,000 persons filled the square for two blocks to within a few rods of the city hall. It was the largest gathering since that which greeted President Roosevelt on a campaign appearance last fall. Addressing himself to Ford, Martin said: "You can't stop the union. You can't keep your workers from joining the union. The automobile workers of this city and nation are going to organize, and we are telling you that is going to happen. You might as well get ready to do business with your organized workers."

Richard T. Frankenstein, organizational director of the U. A. W. called the meeting the largest labor gathering ever held in the United States, and asserted that the union had won wage increases totaling more than \$150,000,000 in recent weeks.

Martin's remarks were interrupted with frequent cheers as he mentioned union advances. Booming greeted mention of Mayor Frank Couzens and Police Commissioner Heinrich Picwert, who had conducted recent raids on sit-down strikers in non-automotive plants.

The union head called upon the mayor and police commissioner to "get off the bandwagon of the industrialists and get on the bandwagon of the workers—if we decide to let them on." Mentioning President Roosevelt and his court reorganization plan, Martin said:

"We know that nine old men have been on a sit-down strike for six years. I don't know how you stand, but I stand squarely behind the President in his program." This brought a wave of cheers.

"The Supreme Court of the United States," Martin went on, "is the greatest threat to democracy in the United States, outside of police fascism." He asserted that a year from today "instead of just 300,000 members we will have 900,000 in our union."

## 'Three Musketeers' In Hosiery Field Named For C. I. O.

News arriving here and given much publicity states that early entry of C. I. O. organizers into the hosiery field in this section is planned, organizers arriving at Asheville being G. W. Smith, of Greenville, S. C., and Floyd J. Stanton, of Milwaukee, Wis., who joined Paul Christopher, well-known labor leader and organizer for the C. I. O., who has been at Asheville awaiting instructions from union leaders in the northeast. Mr. Christopher, speaking by telephone from Asheville with The News Saturday night, said that the organizers will be assigned to organize hosiery workers in this state and were now awaiting instructions.

Mr. Christopher, identified with the cotton textile labor union field for several years, says that the CIO plans an intensive campaign to organize cotton textile, rayon and hosiery workers and that the movement is expected to be launched with the big mass meeting planned for this city some time in April. It is planned, he said, to ask John L. Lewis, head of the CIO, or Sidney Hillman, who is in charge of textile union organization, to come here for the mass meeting, which Mr. Christopher expects thousands of textile workers to attend.

The world's highest suspension bridge is over the Arkansas River in Colorado. It is 1,053 feet over the floor of the Royal Gorge. Only one automobile in four is bought for cash.

## Wis. Federation Labor Expels C. I. O. Member

MILWAUKEE, Wis.—Grappling in earnest with the destructive policy of John L. Lewis' Committee for Industrial Organization, the General Executive Board of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, after an all-day session devoted to "considering statements from various sources charging certain persons active in the Wisconsin provisional committee of the C. I. O. with disruptive tactics," asked Emil Costello, of Kenosha, who is a member of the General Executive Board and also State chairman of the C. I. O., "to resign from the board or stand trial for having violated the principles and constitution of the Federation."

The resolution demanding Costello's resignation was passed by a vote of nine for it, one opposed and one not voting. Costello cast the negative vote. After the motion was adopted Costello told the board he would not resign. The board thereupon declared that a trial on the formal charges will be held in the near future.

The board said its action "was not of a general nature against the C. I. O. organization, but was based on the individual actions of Costello, C. I. O. organizer, in connection with communist groups."

American Industry maintains 35,000 research workers in 1,000 industrial laboratories, spending \$17,875,000 per month, all seeking to raise the American standard of living.

## PHOTO ENGRAVERS UNION OF N. Y. DISTRIBUTES \$4,000,000 IN SIX YEARS

A striking instance of the assistance which unions in the American Federation of Labor give to their unemployed members and their families is revealed in the fact that during the last six years New York Photo Engravers Union No. 1, an affiliate of the International Photo Engravers' Union of North America, has distributed \$4,000,000 among three thousand members in unemployment benefits. The average number idle in that period was 600 at a time. The amount paid by the New York Photo Engravers' Union multiplied by many other locals affiliated with the standard national and international unions making up the American labor movement raises this \$4,000,000 many times and brings a certain amount of security to thousands of trade union members and their dependents.

## STEEL WORKERS BEGIN PAYING DUES TO PUT CAMPAIGN ON PAYING BASIS

PITTSBURGH, March 22.—The Steel Workers' Organizing Committee completed plans yesterday to put its \$100,000-a-month campaign on a self-sustaining basis. The committee, launched last June by John L. Lewis and supporters of his plan to organize mass production industries into single unions, decided to collect \$1.00 monthly dues, starting April 1. After May 1, a \$3.00 initiation fee will be placed into effect, David McDonald, secretary-treasurer, added.

## Wm. S. Greene Says Radical Fears As To President Roosevelt Should Be Set At Rest

In the Observer's Open Forum of Sunday appeared the following: All your fears about radical Mr. Roosevelt and his so-called pro-union activities should be set at rest if you would read your own market gossip column.

For instance, take your Tuesday, March 16, 1937. Corporation earnings \$50,583,356. Last period \$1,146,708. Corporation earnings \$11.23 a share, last period \$1.66. Corporation earnings \$4.42 a share, last period \$1.66. Corporation earnings \$7.48 a share, last period \$5.56. And so forth down a long 18-inch column in length. Sounds like a prospectus to sell stock by an Insull, doesn't it? But all it is yearly reports by industrial concerns showing improvements almost unbelievable in such a short period as one year. And Mr. Roosevelt's policies are the same as they were last year. W. M. S. GREENE, Secretary Local 342, American Federation of Musicians, Charlotte.

## AND THIS NOT A PUZZLE

Between 1929 and 1936 this is what happened to A. T. and T., world's largest corporation:

Number of employees: Fell from 456,682 to 294,362.

Wages paid: Fell from \$676,543, 312 to 475 million dollars.

Dividends: Rose from \$116,378,371 to \$1,668,081, 179.

This is not a puzzle contest, but if you study this picture carefully you'll see where our next depression is coming from.—From The New York Post.

## NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS AND BUSINESS MEN

A resolution adopted last year as to The Labor Journal and solicitation of funds in the name of Central Labor Union was brought out of the minutes and republished as information. The resolution reads as follows:

"Resolved, That we publish in The Charlotte Labor Journal, that we do not condone any solicitation of advertising except for The Charlotte Labor Journal, purporting to represent labor, unless over the signature of the secretary of the Charlotte Central Labor Union.

## LABOR JOURNAL ON SALE AT ALL DIXIE NEWS STANDS

The Charlotte Labor Journal beginning this week will be found on sale each Friday at the following places controlled by the Dixie News Company: Buster Brown News stand at the Square; Subway News stand, 315 E. Trade St. Service News stand, 410 S. Tryon St.; Rex news stand, 313 W. Trade St.; Tryon News stand, 305 N. Tryon St.

If you want real labor news read the Labor Journal