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A STUDY OF THE LABOR PHILOSOPHY OF DAVID DUBINSKY, PRESIDENT
OF THE INTERNATIONAL LADIES GARMENT WORKERS
OF AMERICA

by

William J. Bergmann

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Institute of Social
and Industrial Relations of Loyola University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Social and Industrial Relations

June

1964

LIFE

William John Bergmann was born in Dubuque, Iowa, April 5, 1939.

He was graduated from Loras Academy in Dubuque, Iowa in June, 1957. The author spent the next two years in the U. S. Navy. In 1959 the author began his undergraduate studies at Loras College. He received the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1963.

He began his graduate studies at Loyola University in June, 1963, and will complete his requirements by June, 1964.

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CHAPTER I

The purpose of this thesis is to study the labor philosophy of David Dubinsky, President of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. It is the purpose of this author to study the views, beliefs and opinions which comprise the complete intellectual convictions of Mr. Dubinsky regarding the American labor movement.

This study of Mr. Dubinsky's labor philosophy will examine, in particular, his views on the objectives of the American labor movement, the means used to obtain these objectives, and his views on other important areas affecting the labor movement.

This thesis is part of a joint research project undertaken by the Graduate Institute of Social and Industrial Relations of Loyola University in Chicago. The goal of this research project is to ascertain the relatively unexplored beliefs and philosophies of many of our present day labor leaders.

The writer chose to investigate the labor philosophy of David Dubinsky for several reasons. He is the head of the International Ladies Garment Workers (hereafter referred to as ILGWU). He was "at home in labor's struggle to clean its own

house, Mr. Dubinsky was the first important labor leader to call for a purge, even if this involved bringing the government into labor's hitherto private affairs."¹ Furthermore as a president of a powerful national union, and a vice president and a member of the Ethical Practices Committee of the AFL-CIO, he has played and will continue to play an important part in determining the economic well being of millions of people.

In an article in Life International the following appeared: "to the 445,000 members of his International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, crop haired, pudgy David Dubinsky is more than boss; he is prophet, father and demigod. To the management of most of the 12,000 U. S. and Canadian firms who have contracts with the ILG., Dubinsky is a symbol of honest, imaginative unionism."² In a letter to Dubinsky, George Meany said "your whole record is a record of labor statesmanship. The outstanding economic progress for the workers achieved by the ILGWU under your leadership constitutes one of the brightest pages in labor's history."³

¹ "Unspotted Garment Workers," The Economist, CLXXXIII, No. 5939 (June 22, 1957), 1066.

² "Peacemaker for Labor," Life International, XXV, No. 4 (August 18, 1958), 57.

³ Justice, June 15, 1957, NP.

Biographer Max Danish said "this writer has attended many meetings of the ILG's General Board, some of them at critical moments of the union's history. In most cases where controversy was involved, Dubinsky's view point would prevail. He would have his way not by browbeating or by employing prima donna tactics, but by persuasion and by a deft marshaling of facts."⁴ Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt praised Dubinsky by saying he has had "a useful and creative citizenship as well as leadership in the ILGWU."⁵ The American Federationist said "Dave Dubinsky has fought vigorously and consistently over the years against Communists, Fascists, and all other kinds of totalitarians. He has been an outstanding advocate of clean unionism.... He was a key figure in bringing about the AFL-CIO merger."⁶

Personal Profile

David Dubinsky was born on February 22, 1892, at Brest-Litovsk which was then part of Russian Poland. At 14 he became a master baker and a year later was elected secretary of his

⁴Max D. Danish, The World of David Dubinsky (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1957, 313.

⁵New York Times, June 14, 1957, 18.

⁶"Dubinsky Saluted," American Federationist, LXIV, No. 7 (July, 1957), 11.

bakers local, and helped lead a successful strike against his father's shop.⁷ The following year he led another strike, was arrested and sentenced to an indefinite term of exile in Siberia. This situation came to an end when Hyman, David's brother, who a few years earlier migrated to America, sent David a ticket to the United States. On January 1, 1911, David Dubinsky arrived in the United States. Shortly after his arrival he became a member of Local Ten of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, which was established in 1900.

Within six months after his arrival Dubinsky had joined the Socialist party then led by Eugene Debs.⁸

A strike by the cloak makers in 1911 gave Dubinsky the chance to become a union organizer, and two years later he was elected to the executive board of Local Ten.

In 1926 the Communists under William Foster called for a strike of 35,000 garment workers.⁹ Although Dubinsky could not keep the union members on the job, he was successful in keeping the communists from controlling the union's executive

⁷Marjorie Dent Chandee (ed.), Current Biography (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1957), 158.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

board. This strike was crushed, and only Dubinsky's local remained solvent. He quickly used his local's resources to help the other locals get back on their feet. Dubinsky had supported this strike in the name of labor unity, but he also condemned it feeling that the ILGWU was being used to further the ends of Moscow.

In 1929 he became secretary-treasurer and in 1932 became President of the ILGWU. When he became president, the union was one million dollars in debt and only had 33,645 members.¹⁰ By 1934 the ILGWU had 200,000 members and was one of the most powerful unions in the country.

Dubinsky, in 1935, joined with other backers of industrial unionism in an effort to quicken the organization of the unorganized. He resigned from the Executive Council of the AFL when it voted to suspend the CIO unions. He had been the only member to vote against the expulsion. However, in the autumn of 1937 he opposed the formation of the CIO on a permanent basis. The ILGWU left the CIO and for a year and one-half the ILGWU was not associated with the CIO or the AFL. In 1940 the ILGWU returned to the AFL.

¹⁰ Charles A. Madison, American Labor Leader (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 222.

In 1946 he became the AFL consultant to the United Nations and in 1948 helped form the Americans for Democratic Action, which is a liberal organization attempting to obtain equal justice for all.

He favored the Marshall Plan, and during the four years after the Second World War the ILGWU spent \$3,000,000 abroad. Most of this money went to Italy and Israel. In 1948 Dubinsky was decorated by the Italian government for his aid in the rebuilding of Italy.

After the AFL-CIO had merged in 1955 Dubinsky was named to the AFL-CIO Ethical Practices Committee. In 1956 he accepted the treasurership of the AFL-CIO drive to get funds to fight discrimination against negroes and any other violations of civil rights.

Today Dubinsky and his wife live in a six room two hundred dollar a month apartment in New York. For years he would only accept a salary of \$15,000 a year. Today he receives a salary of \$26,000, still much less than is earned by many other union leaders.

Method

This thesis will follow the pattern set by the previous writers in the labor philosophy series. A ten year time limit

was set, covering January 1953 to December 1963. The writer has principally surveyed the statements and writings of Dubinsky during the above mentioned span. The primary sources used were Justice, the official publication of the ILGWU, and the American Federationist which is the monthly publication of the AFL-CIO. The convention proceedings of the ILGWU were also used in detail. The Congressional Record, and proceedings from various subcommittees were studied. The New York Times as well as articles written by or about Mr. Dubinsky were studied.

Various books were used as a background to understanding this time period including: The World of David Dubinsky by Max Danish, Unions and Union Leadership edited by Jack Barbash, American Labor Leaders by Charles A. Madison, The Practice of Unionism by Jack Barbash, Contemporary Unionism by Clyde Danhirt, American Labor by Herbert Harris, Labor on the March by Edward Levinson, and The House of Labor by Hardman and Neufielf.

Dubinsky's labor philosophy will be set forth in three main areas. First, his concepts of the objectives of the American labor movement. Secondly, the means he feels must be used to accomplish these objectives will be studied. Thirdly, his views of some important factors affecting labor will be studied.

CHAPTER II

This chapter will study Dubinsky's views concerning the objectives of the labor movement. These objectives can be subdivided into three distinct categories: the objectives of the labor movement with respect to the union members, the national objectives of the American labor movement, and the international objectives of the American labor movement.

A. Objectives of the ILGWU

In 1900 the United States was a land with only a very few extremely wealthy and powerful people. Contrasting this the great majority of people were living in conditions that we would today consider substandard. As the material well being of labor has improved, unions have changed their objectives.

This can be best illustrated by studying Dubinsky's own words:

In effect, it is the enrichment of life, in all respects, that is the true and continuing goal of trade unionism. That enrichment is a limitless as our own capacity to dream, to innovate, to pioneer. Sixty years ago our dreams were of the most primitive kind: to abolish hunger, to banish the sweatshop. Through the years the targets have changed, but the goal has remained constant.

In the first decade of our ILGWU our purpose was to survive; in the second it was to create the basic instruments of collective bargaining and industrial

responsibility; in the third decade it began to fight off the challenge of political totalitarianism infiltrating our ranks. Then, in the fourth decade of the life of our union, we undertook to rebuild it from the depth of defeat and to utilize the opportunity provided by a New Deal in our nation that recognized the legal right of workers to organize for social betterment; in the fifth decade we rallied our resources to help our nation in time of international conflict and in the sixth decade we sought to improve old and develop new securities and safeguards against illness and age and other uncertainties of our industry.¹

Thus Dubinsky feels that over the last sixty years the ILGWU has helped lessen the inequities in the distribution of wealth with little violence or injustice.

Let us consider why trade unionism came into existence.

Dubinsky said "our union like most unions in America, came into existence in response to a deep human emotion: the workers' passion to be respected as a human being and to participate in determining and improving his working conditions."² Thus trade unionism, according to Dubinsky, is a means towards an end, "the end being the full development-economic, political cultural-of free men in a free society."³ Dubinsky feels that

¹ Justice, June 19, 1960, 5.

² Justice, May 15, 1959, 3.

³ New York Times, May 17, 1959, Sec. 10, 18.

since a union is alive and growing it must be willing to change with the times.⁴

Since the disasterous Triangle fire over fifty years ago, the ILGWU has constantly strove to protect its members from unsafe factories. Dubinsky said "we in the ILGWU launched a drive in 1958 to put sprinklers in all buildings entered by its workers for the purpose of making a living. That's the least our members are entitled to have."⁵ Yet Dubinsky felt additional safeguards were necessary. He said "we must organize fire wardens and hold fire drills so that when an emergency arises there is some guidance, some experience, some protection."⁶

Dubinsky felt that if labor is to move ahead it must respect the laws of the community. In return, he felt, the community must respect the rights of the worker. A relationship of this type, he anticipated, would be beneficial to both the community and labor. Dubinsky said:

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Justice, April 1, 1961, 3.

⁶ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention International Ladies Garment Workers Union. (New York City: ABCO Press, Inc., 1962), 236

Our union has recently initiated a major move to establish such a relationship; an appeal to the conscience of the community to war against the unethical element in the garment industry. We are appealing to the American women to buy apparel bearing the ILGWU label, because by such a judicious use of their purchasing power as consumers, they can strike a blow at the chisellers..."⁷

In the above quotation Dubinsky uses the term chisellers to describe non union shop owners who pay below union scale. The union's latest effort began March 3, 1964 when their latest advertisement encouraging the purchase of goods bearing the union label appeared in 112 newspapers across the country. In addition retail apparel and women's specialty shops from coast to coast displayed posters of the advertisement in their store windows. Leaflets were also distributed in many communities encouraging women to look for the union label before they buy.

To give its members better medical care the ILGWU has established eighteen health centers, and a number of healthmobiles. The health centers are located in metropolitan areas containing many ILGWU workers. The healthmobiles are to serve those members in remote regions of the United States and Puerto

⁷U. S., Congressional Record-Appendix, 86th Cong., 1st Sess., 1959, A4715.

Rico.³ Today the ILGWU provides health protection for about eight out of every ten members. To improve the health services in Puerto Rico an additional healthmobile will be sent there in the near future. These healthmobiles have occasionally been used during periods of emergency to help the general public. In the early fall of 1955 during the floods which hit Pennsylvania Dubinsky placed all available healthmobiles at the service of the state of Pennsylvania. For this gesture of good will Dubinsky received a special citation from Pennsylvania's governor George Leader.

The ILGWU is also concerned with the housing of its members. In 1962 the construction of a co-operative village was completed in New York City. About thirty percent of the people that live in this low cost housing development are members of the ILGWU. Dubinsky has said: "we in the ILGWU are not in the real estate business. We are in business of improving the lives of workers, of lifting up not only their material standards but also the spiritual values of their lives. And better schools, better health care, better housing are basic

³ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention International Ladies Garment Workers. (New York City: ABCO Press, Inc., 1953), 296.

elements of a better life.⁹ In addition the ILGWU built and
operates Unity House,¹⁰ a resort for its vacationing members
Near Bushkill, Pennsylvania. This resort is located in the
Pocono Mountains. It is open to all members on an equal basis.

Dubinsky is not just interested in his union members,
but also in the unorganized workers. He said "our union has
always been interested in the welfare of the garment workers
everywhere... and that goes for the unorganized workers, too."¹¹

The ILGWU has accomplished a number of firsts under
Dubinsky's leadership.¹² They were the first union to obtain a
forty hour and later a thirty five hour work week in major
branches of their industry. In 1953 he said "it is with pride
and satisfaction that I can report that 97 percent of our
members in the United States today have agreements providing
for the 35-hour week."¹³ Dubinsky further stated "whenever we

9

U.S., Congressional Record, 87th Cong., 2d Sess., 1962, 8452.

10

"Union Service Keeps on Growing," June 9, 1956, 59

11

International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and
Record Twenty Eight Convention.... 540.

12

Danish, 174-75.

13

International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and
Record Twenty Eight Convention.... 263.

reduced hours, we increased wage rates to compensate for the
drop in earnings that would result.¹⁴ Dubinsky feels

the thirty five hour week should be nationwide. He said:
"it is an eminently practical device to provide additional
employment and, at the same time, to add to and enhance the
purchasing power of the nation's wage earners and their
families."¹⁵ He felt shorter hours would provide more jobs.

These new jobs would increase the purchasing power of the
workers and our economy would grow. They were the first union
to provide union health clinics. They were the first to provide
a resort for their members, and open a union research depart-
ment. They were the first union with an international labor
relations department, and a political department to promote
labors political goals. These are only some of the objectives
of labor that the ILGWU was first to accomplish. Dubinsky said
"dignity, not just dollars; freedom, not just working time,
self fulfillment, not just labor for hire - these are the real
goals towards which we in the I.L.G.W.U and our fellow workers

¹⁴

International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and
Record Twenty Ninth Convention International Ladies Garment
Workers Union, (New York City: ABCO Press, 1956), 263.

¹⁵

International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and
Record Thirty First Convention.... 211.

in sister unions of the American Federation of labor and Congress of Industrial Organization have been moving.¹⁶

Dubinsky has continually fought for the minimum wage. He was among the first to fight for the seventy five cent minimum wage. He then fought for the \$1.25 minimum wage, but was forced to settle for a \$1.00 minimum wage. In 1956 Dubinsky said:

Once again our members went beyond the picket line, beyond the election campaign and participated directly in shaping the laws that affect union and non-union workers alike. Our members went to Washington in groups, in committees. Finally by a narrow margin, we won from congress a \$1.00 minimum.¹⁷

In 1960 Dubinsky said "a federal minimum wage of \$1.25 an hour is long overdue."¹⁸ The increase of the minimum wage would help the U. S. because "it will force the less efficient firms, which will be required to raise its minimums, to make its operations more productive...the nation will benefit through the greater productivity thus fostered and through the increasing purchasing power generated among the lowest paid of our workers."¹⁹

¹⁶New York Times, May 10, 1959, 78.

¹⁷International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention.... 263.

¹⁸Justice, April 15, 1960, 2.

¹⁹Ibid.

Dubinsky felt it was wise to fight for higher minimum wages. He said: "as a result of our fight for a high minimum, many thousands of non-union workers have benefited and are now enjoying a better life. At the same time we have narrowed the competition between union and non-union workers and brought greater protection for union standards."²⁰

Today Dubinsky feels that a \$1.50 minimum wage is needed to help the lower paid workers. He said "higher minimum wages help to strengthen the economy and lay a basis for a healthier America."²¹

Dubinsky wanted any increase in the United States minimum wage to be also given to the workers in Puerto Rico. He felt this was necessary to give them the additional purchasing power, and also to prevent Puerto Rico from getting an unfair competitive advantage. Dubinsky said:

I am fully cognizant of course that Puerto Rico has developed its industry and that it must be in a competitive position with the mainland. It should not, however, be given an unfair competitive advantage, damaging to the mainland employers and workers, in fact, depriving insular workers of a fair minimum wage.²²

²⁰International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record of the Thirty First Convention.... 209.

²¹Ibid. 211.

²²Justice, May 15, 1955, 10.

Thus Dubinsky does favor fair competition from Puerto Rico, but does not want low wages in Puerto Rico depressing wages in the United States garment industry. Dubinsky said "when I first visited Puerto Rico in 1940 I was horrified by the vast slums of San Juan La Peria. I felt that our union had a responsibility, to do what it could to improve the indescribable living standard of these people, citizens of the United States."²³ Mr. Dubinsky further stated "we have won higher wages for the garment workers on this island, so that while you continue to have a competitive advantage over the mainland, it is not an unfair one."²⁴

Dubinsky's goals are for higher wages for his union members. Yet wages have not risen rapidly for ILGWU members. At the outbreak of the Korean War ILGWU members won a general wage increase between 7 and 10 cents. Between then and the ILGWU's 1953 convention the union had not asked for wage increases due to unfavorable economic conditions. During this period other workers had received wage increases, and the cost of living had increased. Dubinsky said:

²³ Justice, February 1, 1956, 3.

²⁴ Justice, May 15, 1957, 3.

Clearly, we have met our obligation and now the industry must meet its obligation. Inequities have been inflicted on our members by the rise in living costs. The period for waiting for such correction is over. We must press now, with utmost determination, for restoration of the losses caused by higher living costs.²⁵

Between 1953 and 1956 only limited wage increases were gained by the ILGWU. The only wage increase of any significance were gained immediately after the 1953 convention. The cloak and suit and dress industries obtained a \$5 wage increase. Due to the industry's economic conditions wage increases were sought only when they could be based on sound judgment. However, Dubinsky told the 1956 convention:

We have waited long enough; the industrial situation is improving. We will have to demand general wage increases in our major markets as well as in the miscellaneous trades, and that goes not only for New York but for the rest of the country as well as for Canada.²⁶

With this determination many members won a wage increase in 1958. This was only accomplished after the union struck in order to obtain its demands. During the early 1960s various segments of

²⁵International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention.... 297.

²⁶International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention.... 261.

the ILGWU also received wage increases. It is quite evident that Dubinsky favors more money for his workers. However he realizes the manufacturer must make profits before such demands can be successfully carried out. Over the years wages were only one of Dubinsky's secondary goals. He felt other goals were more important as is shown throughout this paper.

Dubinsky has long favored severance pay. He feels it is the duty of the employer. Yet he is wise enough to wait until the proper time to press his demands. In 1953 he told the ILGWU convention:

The last convention directed that proper provisions be included in agreements negotiated in our industries and markets to provide for severance pay. This new reform is applicable primarily to the major branches of our industry - the cloak and dress trades. However, in the past three years these two branches were not in a favorable enough position to take this added responsibility, and the union, therefore, could not press this demand.²⁷

At the 1956 convention Dubinsky said that New York Local 105 became the first important ILGWU local to win severance pay. He felt he had been mistaken in not pressing for severance pay

²⁷ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention.... 297-98.

11 or 12 years earlier. However at that time no one could have imagined the number of clothing companies that would close. Dubinsky said: "it is my opinion that the cardinal demand for our major industries must be inclusion of severance pay provisions in our forthcoming agreements."²⁸ Dubinsky defended severance pay by saying "the employer who accumulates wealth through faithful labor of his workers should not be allowed to leave the industry scot-free, deserting the very people who made it possible for him to amass his wealth."²⁹ By 1958 the ILGWU had finally succeeded in establishing a nation wide severance fund to protect the worker when a plant closed its doors.

Dubinsky has shown some interest in the problem of overtime. He has expressed a desire for all ILGWU agreements to provide for overtime after thirty five hours of work in any one work week. He feels this is one method of curbing inflation.

²⁸International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention.... 264.

²⁹International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention.... 100.

B. The National Objectives of the American Labor Movement.

Dubinsky feels that social security and medical care under social security would serve the nation. Concerning social security Dubinsky said:

Under social security, we contribute while we work so we may retire when we are too old to work. It is not charity; it is not a gift, it is a matter of right. It is a system of savings. We pay now so that we may live later.³⁰

In regard to extending social security to cover medical care Mr. Dubinsky said:

Right now there is a bill that would provide hospital and other care at a charge of one quarter of 1 percent of a worker's salary. If you make a hundred dollars, you pay 25 cents and when you retire, you get the care--not by begging but as a matter of right, like unemployment insurance or social security. This is a bill that provides an opportunity to be cured from illness and to be hospitalized in order to prolong life.³¹

Dubinsky feels that just as it is the government's duty to provide unemployment insurance to protect the many unemployed, it is the duty of the government to provide disability and health insurance to those Americans who need it.

³⁰ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention... 206.

³¹ Ibid.

Speaking of the AMAs opposition to medical care for the aged, Dubinsky said "you can generally count on the AMA to do the right thing-about 10 or 20 years late."³²

The AFL-CIO is also concerned with our national defense. In fact, Dubinsky was a member of an AFL-CIO group that issued a joint statement opposing a cut in the national armanent.³³ This indicates labor realizes they must play a part in preserving freedom throughout the world.

During the 1956 national convention³⁴ of the ILGWU Dubinsky set forth various proposals that would benefit the nation. He favored federal education and a housing program to give adequate housing to lower and middle income groups. He proposed a river development program to cut down floods, and to provide cheaper electricity. He also called for stabilization of farm income. He felt this would help the farmer and those selling to the farmer. Lastly he felt the small businessman should be protected against the unfair competition of monopolies.

³²Ibid.

³³Justice, March 15, 1955, 3.

³⁴International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention.... 265-66.

Dubinsky is also interested in the right of all Americans to vote regardless of race or creed or color. Dubinsky said "our hope rested on proposed legislation that would establish a uniform basis for literacy tests in our states so that no state would use the literacy test as an excuse to deprive any individual of the right to vote."³⁵ He felt those Americans with the right to vote will use it to obtain their economic and social rights. He felt "an equal right to vote is a basic right in a democracy."³⁶ The ILGWU does not discriminate in hiring or promotion, however there has been some complaints that negroes and Puerto Ricans are not found in high union offices.

Prosperity is another of Dubinsky's goals. He said "let us hope that the business planners of the present administration will not upset the present state of affairs and that when they leave office, the country will be in at least as good a state of prosperity as it was when they took office."³⁷

³⁵International Ladies Garment Workers Union. Report and Record of the Thirty First Convention... 207.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record of the Twenty Eight Convention.... 296.

This section will close with the following quotation which gives a good indication of Dubinsky's views in regard to the proceeding subject matter:

Labor today has passed beyond an exclusive concern with wages and hours. We have passed beyond the only question of what can we get. In this spirit, we have created health centers which are in aid to the communities. We have undertaken wide spread community service for our workers and only last month in recognition of how we are dependent as upon another, the I.L.G.W.U. made funds available to the U. S. Department of Agriculture to extend loans to farmers of this nation under a farm mortgage program. In this way a trade union extends a helping hand not only to American agriculture but to our entire national economy. Today American labor is concerned as much with what it can give as it is with what it can get.³⁸

C. International Objectives of the American Labor Movement.

Dubinsky and his union have often helped the needy abroad.

In 1953 Dubinsky said:

During the last three years your contributions, totaling more than \$5,000,000 have helped countless individuals, young and old alike, widows and orphans at home and abroad....You have made the name of the ILGWU a symbol of hope....³⁹

³⁸U. S., Congressional Record, 87th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1962, 8452.

³⁹International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention....., 303.

Between 1940 and 1956 the ILGWU under Dubinsky's leadership contributed 23 million dollars to worthy causes at home and abroad.⁴⁰

Dubinsky favors expanded world trade, but is troubled by the "unrestrained scramble for American markets by countries which utilize home workers and pay starvation wages."⁴¹ He feels if this continues it could hurt the American standard of living. For example, Japanese made clothing comes to the United States very cheaply because a Japanese girl only gets \$9.25 a month for a six day week of ten hours per day.⁴² The answer to this problem does not lie in putting such a high tariff on Japanese goods than they cannot export to the United States. Rather he said:

the solution must come, rather, in the form of trade is both free and regulated, that will preserve our domestic standards and safeguard the employment of our workers while, at the same time, clear the way for Japanese workers to improve their own wage and conditions,

⁴⁰International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention.... 264.

⁴¹Ibid, 14.

⁴²Danish, 238.

thus enabling them to increase consumption of their own products and Japanese industry to grow and compete on a fair basis.⁴³

Foreign aid is considered an important element of American foreign policy by Dubinsky. He is very happy about the Alliance for Progress begun by the Kennedy administration. In regard to the Alliance for Progress Dubinsky said "we support our President's launching of this program as an expression of our nation's humanitarianism. But it is also obviously an important means of bolstering the defense of freedom."⁴⁴ Dubinsky likes this program because it requires that the countries getting the aid must carry out certain overdue reforms. He said "this program will not make the rich richer and the poor poorer, it will improve the lot of the masses who yearn for a decent life with the blessings of freedom."⁴⁵

Dubinsky favors more aid to the Middle East. He said "greater efforts to help all the people of the Middle East to better their lives and the conditions of their labor would

⁴³ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention.... 14.

⁴⁴ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention.... 208.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

certainly help to remove the strains that exist between Israel and the Arab countries."⁴⁶

Although Dubinsky favors foreign aid he is opposed to aiding dictators. At the union's 1959 convention he said 'we could show the world we really mean it if we stopped helping dictators like Trujillo, and Franco and instead direct more of our moral and material resources to the support of countries like Brazil, India, Israel, Pakistan, Malaya and Burma."⁴⁷

Dubinsky feels that firm action is necessary when dealing with the Russians. He said:

Experience shows that firm and timely action checks aggression and strengthens the chances for peace whereas appeasement surely and inevitably leads to war. This is true with Hitler; it is just as true with Krushev.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention..., 262

⁴⁷ Ibid. 261

⁴⁸ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth convention..., 208

Dubinsky also favored Kennedy's offer to Khrushchev suggesting an atomic test ban with proper inspections. When this offer was not accepted he felt Kennedy was correct in resuming nuclear testing. Dubinsky justified Kennedy's action by saying "if the Kremlin knows we are strong and able to defend ourselves there is little danger of war."⁴⁹

Dubinsky hates the communist governments, but not the captive workers of Eastern Europe. In a radio message to them over Radio Free Europe he offered them "encouragement in your struggle against the social injustices of your communist regime."⁵⁰

Dubinsky feels that the Berlin Wall is just another step made by the Russians to control the world. He said:

The threat of war still hangs over Berlin because the Kremlin will not permit the reunification of Germany through free elections. The Wall of Shame separating East from West Berlin is another in the long list of Soviet Russian outrages against mankind. The free world knows that Moscow's aim is to take over Berlin, then Germany and, after that the world, if they can.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Justice, January 15, 1956, 3.

⁵¹ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention..., 207.

Dubinsky sets forth three ways to keep the world free. First to strengthen NATO. Secondly to defend our own national security with the most modern weapons possible. Thirdly to: increase our nation's economic and technical aid to newly established countries of Asia and Africa, to Latin America, and to the colonial countries still fighting to win their freedom.

In Dubinsky's objectives for the American Labor movement he does not set forth any suggestions that would be contrary to our present economic system. Rather he favors a better life for all the people of the world. He feels that workers in the name of social justice deserve a fair share of the national wealth.

CHAPTER III

In the last chapter we studied Dubinsky's views on the final objectives of the American labor movement. The means he suggested to achieve these ends fall under two main categories, economic and political.

As noted in the last chapter Dubinsky's objectives are very broad. It appears that he stresses the political means, because he feels that labor's goals can often be obtained more quickly through legislation.

A. Economic Means

1. Organizing

Naturally, Dubinsky is aware of the importance to organize the unorganized. He realizes that by organizing more workers the union will become stronger. But in addition, he knows that through wage increases won even indirectly by the union the economy will benefit from the increased purchasing power in the hands of the consumer. Therefore, to increase the purchasing power of southern garment workers he promised any manufacturer a three year immunity from organization if they promised to keep

their wages fifteen cents above the federal minimum wage.¹

Yet Dubinsky does not make such offers light heartedly. He said: "I consider it a mandate to organize the unorganized; to go after the runaway shops and remove them as a cancer on the body of the American trade unions, especially in our industry."² He further stated that "we must do organization work on a broader scale."³ This will mean discovering methods to organize despite the anti labor laws that have been passed during the last few years.

At the 1956 convention Dubinsky again came out in favor of organizing the unorganized. Giving a verbal history of his union's organizing campaigns he said "In 1932, we spent \$40,000 a year for organization work. In 1934, which, naturally took in a year and a half of the early period and only a half-period of the NRA era, we spent \$135,000. Today, the report shows we spend \$2 million annually for organization work."⁴ To illustrate the

¹New York Times, July 9, 1954, 6.

²International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record of the Twenty Eight Convention.... 539.

³International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention.... 253

⁴International Ladies Garment Workers, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention.... 260

success of the ILGWU's organization, it is interesting to note that between 1945 to 1953 the ILGWU's membership increased by seventeen thousand. Three thousand of the seventeen thousand new workers were organized in Puerto Rico.

Dubinsky pointed out one of the organizational problems affecting the ILGWU:

There is a large turnover among them. They get married. They leave the shops. They get divorced. They come back. They give birth. They leave. The child grows up. They come back. That is why they are in and out. As a result the report shows that during the last three years 70,000 members came in annually for a total of 200,000. We had to replace those that left. We had to organize hundreds of thousands of new members to maintain the high level of our membership. And what a tremendous task this has been.⁵

Between 1956 and 1959 the ILGWU lost 186,956 members and gained 184,773 members. Dubinsky said "since we last met in convention, we have been able to maintain the size of our membership. There has been only a slight decline - 2,192. But in a union affected by seasons, weather and women's tastes, this is not a significant change. What is important is the fact that it has taken a tremendous amount of organization activity just to keep the size of our membership unchanged."⁶ Between 1959-1962 the ILGWU

⁵Ibid, 260, 61.

⁶International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention.... 253.

organized 200,000 new members to replace those that left the union and the industry.

Organization has suffered in the ILGWU due to some garment firms moving south to avoid unionization. Dubinsky feels that by establishing severance pay part of this problem could be avoided. Severance pay would help protect the worker, and also make it more expensive for a firm to move south to avoid organization.

The importance Dubinsky attaches to firms moving south to avoid unionization can be seen by the action he took when the Freyberg Company, located in New York, refused to renew its contract with the ILGWU, saying they were going to move their plant to Greensboro, North Carolina for economic reasons. They also refused to renew union contracts for two plants in Virginia. Strikes were called in these two Virginia plants. At Appomattox 220 of the 300 workers walked off their job, while at Lynchburg 30 out of 100 workers struck the plant. The ILGWU found work for the men who lost their jobs in New York, and provided strike benefits for the strikers in Virginia. After the fourth month of the strike Dubinsky announced that the ILGWU would build a \$40,000 childrens' dress factory in Appomattox in which the strikers would be relocated. It later leased this firm to a unionized company from New York. The ILGWU also made a loan to a

unionized garment making firm in Lynchburg enabling them to expand and hire the striking workers there. The author feels this story illustrates Dubinsky's determination to keep trade unions strong and dynamic. It is not Dubinsky's objective to oppose those firms that go south for valid reasons; he said "some firms go south because they need more output, want to be closer to the expanding sale, market, or have other bona fide reasons. The union has no quarrel with those who go south with no purpose of breaking down established labor standards, but we do oppose those bargain basement hunters whose sole aim is to undermine and destroy"⁷ Dubinsky further stated "we cannot believe that there will long survive in any part of the country the illusory belief that the prosperity of a community and the well being of its citizens can be best served by low pay or long hours."⁸

2. Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining has been quite successful in the ILGWU. This is easily seen by the almost complete absence of strikes in this industry. Dubinsky realizes that he can only expect to receive what the company can afford to pay. Dubinsky has said regarding collective bargaining: "today with laws and labor boards

⁷Danish, 228.

⁸Danish, 230.

almost all our problems are settled at the conference table, through negotiations. This requires a new skill, a different kind of intelligence. Now it is diplomacy instead of the big stick."⁹

ILGWU bargaining is conducted on a market wide basis. For example, the union will bargain with representatives of the New York dress makers. The agreement that follows will be the agreement for all the members of that employer's association.

Dubinsky realizes that bargaining strength is effected by the health of the industry. He is hesitant to push for large wage increases during periods of low production and earnings among the unionized garment companies. This philosophy of bargaining could be seen when Dubinsky said "because of a temporary slowdown of business in the women's garment industry, we have refrained from pressing for additional improvements in the wage status of our own members, even though other industries did obtain substantial wage increases...."¹⁰

In 1961 Dubinsky was confronted with a serious problem. The staff members of the ILGWU, which included the organizers, business agents and education directors, wanted to form a union

⁹Justice, June 15, 1958, 1.

¹⁰International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention..., 297.

and bargain with the ILGWU. This group was called FOUR. It is obvious this presented a serious problem since unionism must always recognize the right of workers to bargain with their employers. Dubinsky opposed FOUR calling them a union within a union. The members of FOUR felt they had a right to organize, and bargain to receive higher wages. They felt their wages were too low, and it was necessary to form a union to remedy this situation.¹¹ Dubinsky struck back by saying "the basic premise of this new organization is that a union official is just another kind of employee and that a union is just another kind of employer. Hence, the idea of a 'union within a union' is narrow, commercial business unionism carried to the extreme."¹² Dubinsky further foresaw a conflict of interest present in FOUR. He said that the leaders of FOUR probably were the men that within a few years would be called upon to play a major role in the ILGWU. Yet, as Dubinsky pointed out this "would constitute a crude conflict of interest."¹³ Dubinsky felt that in the long run it would be the members of the ILGWU that would be hurt the most. He said "our members can only be hurt if the spirit of factionalism replaces

¹¹Paul Jacobs, "Why His Throne Is Wobbling," Harpers, December, 1962, 76.

¹²Justice, February 15, 1961, 12.

¹³Ibid, 11.

the spirit of the united effort."¹⁴ Dubinsky attempted to fight FOUR, but in 1962 FOUR won the representation election, and the ILGWU was ordered to bargain with them.¹⁵ The writer does not believe Dubinsky's denial of FOUR's collective bargaining rights is a contradiction of his basic belief in collective bargaining. Dubinsky belongs to the old school of labor leaders who believe in the ideal that labor leaders should give their lives for the cause. He cannot understand why FOUR should be organized to obtain higher wages. For him the cause, not higher wages for himself is the most important goal of a labor leader. In addition he feels that organizers and business agents help form ILGWU policy. Thus they are not employees that have the right to bargain collectively.

3. Labor Disputes

In Dubinsky's early years as a union president he carried out

¹⁴Ibid. 11.

¹⁵Jacobs, 76.

many strikes against the garment industry.¹⁶ Then for twenty five years the industry was without a strike. Dubinsky's pride in this accomplishment could be noted in 1957 when he said: "we are jealous of the record of 25 years of no strike in this industry. Our chief interest is to get an agreement through which the workers in this industry will receive what they are entitled to get."¹⁷ Yet Dubinsky feels that the union does have the right to strike if it becomes necessary to insure labor a decent standard of living. Dubinsky told the employers in his industry in 1957 that:

We have cooperated with you. But at the same time be mindful that we will fight, if it becomes necessary for decent standards, to protect all the opportunities for a better life to which our workers are entitled, which industry can and should give us.¹⁸

The union's ability and willingness to fight has been illustrated by the Judy Bond strike. The Judy Bond Company had a

¹⁶In 1932 the ILGWU lost a strike in Philadelphia, but won another strike in 1933. After a short strike in 1933 in the New York dress industry Dubinsky won a 35 hour work week, the closed shop, job security, elimination of homework and overtime, and a revision of wage scales. In September of 1933 in the underwear shops in New York and nearby areas a short, but successful strike was called. In 1933 after a brief strike Dubinsky won a favorable agreement with an association covering some 3000 workers in the knitwear industry. In 1936 Dubinsky led a successful prolonged strike in this industry.

¹⁷Justice, March 1, 1958, 3.

¹⁸Justice, July 1, 1957, 4. 39

union contract for twenty nine years. Then they moved south and opened a non-union shop. Dubinsky speaking about the Judy Bond Company said: "we are determined to continue the strike against Judy Bond as long as it is necessary, and spend all the money required to stop bosses from running away and leaving the workers stranded.¹⁹ Since then the ILGWU has tried to encourage the public not to buy Judy Bond Blueses.

On November 20, 1963 the NLRB found Judy Bond guilty of unfair labor practices at its Brenton and Birmingham, Alabama plants. It demanded that ten workers fired in May and June of 1962 for being pro ILGWU be rehired and be given full back pay. The NLRB also ordered Judy Bond to stop their interference with ILGWU organizers and to stop threatening their workers.²⁰ Judy Bond has been ordered by an arbitrator to pay \$38,560 in damages for funds not paid to the union's welfare funds after they became a runaway shop. On December 16, 1963 the Supreme Court refused to review this decision. It is estimated Judy Bond will pay \$160,000 before this disagreement is closed. Regarding the Judy

¹⁹International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention..., 253.

²⁰Justice, January 1, 1964, 1.

Bond decision Dubinsky said:

Millions of fine blouses are being produced in the United States by firms which grew and prospered with the union. We are pleased by the Supreme Court action which upholds our position that a firm cannot wrap itself into the anti-trust laws in an effort to evade its obligation to workers' health funds and undermine the hard won standards of these workers.²¹

The fight against Judy Bond continues. During the last week of March, 1964, ILGWU members in New York and other cities distributed "Don't Buy Judy Bond" leaflets at major department stores. The Judy Bond showroom and sample rooms were also picketed in New York.

Dubinsky is a firm believer in waiting until the right moment to strike. In January of 1964 Mayor Wagner asked for a ten day extension of bargaining between the ILGWU and the employer association representing New York City garment firms. Dubinsky agreed because he felt the shops were not busy enough at the present time to make a strike effective. Dubinsky said "there is no sense in striking unless we can be sure of hurting the employers and that means waiting until they're busy and have to make shipments."²² However Dubinsky said there would be a strike

²¹Ibid, 3.

²²Ibid, 3.

unless management agreed to substantial changes.

Dubinsky realizes strikes effect both the public and the union members. Thus a strike should be undertaken only as a last resort. Dubinsky said: "the right to strike is inalienable, but any strike in a sensitive industry hurts the public, and union people are part of the public. Strikes are uneconomical. It can take the worker many months to make up wages and an employer just as long to recoup losses suffered in a walkout.²³

4. Arbitration

Dubinsky says very little about arbitration. But from what he has said it is obvious that he favors arbitration as a last resort in preventing a strike. Dubinsky said:

Labor peace is not a one way street. Employer co-operation and good sense is needed to avoid conflict. Whenever there is a deadlock, we propose arbitration. It is more economical, and gets you results.²⁴

B. Political Means

Dubinsky says that labor is in politics because "we know that politics cannot be left to the employer, to the manufacturers, to the Chamber of Commerce, to the bankers, to Wall Street. It is not only up to them to decide who should be in Congress and

²³Danish, 340.

²⁴ibid.

who should be in the white house."²⁵ Throughout the years labor has continued to increase its participation in political affairs. Dubinsky has suggested that, due to the United States increased dealings with the nations that are favorable towards labor, there should be created an assistant Secretary of State to deal with labor affairs on a world scale. He also suggested that a member of labor be named as a full delegate to the United Nations.

1. Labor Party

Dubinsky has what possibly could be called his own political party. He possesses a great deal of control over the Liberal Party of New York. The Liberal Party is the political action arm of the ILGWU. The Liberal Party was formed after the American Labor party split over the issue of communism. The new Liberal Party was anti communist, while the American Labor Party was communist dominated. Paul Jacobs said, "the Liberal Party has become, not the independent party it was originally conceived to be, but instead the political organ of Dubinsky and of Alex Ross of the Hatters's Union used by them for the support of the candidates they choose."²⁶ An example of Dubinsky's influence in the

²⁵International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Proceedings of the Thirtieth Convention...., 252.

²⁶Jacobs, 84.

Liberal Party can be seen when he asked the party to help reelect Mayor Wagner in 1957. Mayor Wagner won.

The writer was unable to find any instance when Dubinsky favored a national labor party during the ten years under study.²⁷ He appears well satisfied with the platform of the Democratic party.

2. Partisan Political Support.

Dubinsky illustrated his views on labor's participation in politics when he stated:

Each of the three years that has passed since our last convention has brought its own political problems. In 1950, we campaigned for congress, for Senators, for Governors; in 1951, we participated in mayoralty and municipal campaigns; in 1952 we took an active part in Presidential, Senatorial and Congressional contests. The report of the General Executive Board speaks at length of the part played by our members in election campaigns, of their energetic support of pro-labor candidates and of their generous, voluntarily made individual contributions to the ILGWU campaign committee. In each campaign results for the labor movement varied from place to place. But for us, no central fact emerges that is all important.

²⁷On April 22, 1936 a statement made by Dubinsky reflects a different attitude: "I feel that pending the establishment in this country of an effective and constructive labor party it is imperative...to defeat the reactionary forces, now trying to regain supremacy in this country by supporting President Roosevelt's reelection." Thus in 1936 Dubinsky favored a labor party for the United States. Harry Haskel, "A Leader of the Garment Workers," (New York: Shulsinger Bros. 1950). 246.

Through these years, in spite of temporary reverses, the determination of the labor movement to increase its participation in politics has grown. And with this determination, the actual strength of labor in politics has grown.²⁸

If Dubinsky did not wish to see a National Labor Party established, which party does he favor? He certainly does not favor the Republicans. In 1956 he said: "for twenty five years during the New and Fair Deal period, the Republican party in the Congress of the United States fought against the welfare of the people. The leadership of the Republican party in congress fought unemployment insurance, they fought social security, minimum wage and maximum hours."²⁹ He felt the only reason the Republicans did not destroy the humane institutions begun by Truman and Roosevelt was that they dare not due to public opinion.³⁰

Dubinsky likes the Democrats even more than he dislikes the Republicans. During every presidential election since 1952 Dubinsky has forcefully came out in favor of the Democratic candidate.

²⁸International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention..., 293.

²⁹Justice, September 15, 1956, 2.

³⁰International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention..., 256.

In 1952 Dubinsky favored Adlai Stevenson. Even with Stevenson's defeat Dubinsky saw one bright spot: "in spite of our setback last year, the campaign of 1952 marked a new high in American labor politics. For the first time in our history, the American labor movement - AFL, CIO, Railroad Brotherhoods, and independent unions - gave unified support to a major party candidate for President of the United States."³¹

Again in 1956 Dubinsky favored Stevenson. Speaking before the United Hatters he called for "the unification of all liberal forces in the Democratic party in order to assure victory for liberalism in this country."³²

During the 1960 campaign Dubinsky opposed Nixon and favored Kennedy. Dubinsky said regarding Kennedy's election: "A great change has taken place in the American atmosphere. It was a change that we helped bring about. It was a change that has given a new energy, a new drive, a new hope to the American people. I refer to the election of John F. Kennedy...."³³

³¹International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention...., 298.

³²Justice, June 15, 1956, 3.

³³International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention...., 205.

3. Political Education

For political education to be successful it is necessary to inform the union members of the issues, and then get them out to vote. All the political knowledge in the world is worthless unless the membership votes. To help carry out these goals Dubinsky formed a Political Department. Dubinsky said:

When a union enters politics, however, much more than a resolution is required. It is necessary to teach the worker his responsibility and rights as a citizen. To discharge this duty in a constructive way is another of the problems of maturity, involving lectures, literature, trips to state capitals and Washington, canvassing, registration drives, publications, rallies, committees and conferences. This is part of a vast movement to raise the American democracy to a high new level by encouraging men and women, many whom were habitually non-voters, to participate actively in the electoral process. To conduct this full time cause in civics' we have a political Department-another mark of this 'age'.³⁴

Dubinsky feels that political education must be carried on, year in and year out. He feels that every local should have an educational committee.

Dubinsky favors political education being carried out by the political education committee of the AFL-CIO or in the past by respective committees of the AFL and CIO. In 1953 Dubinsky said "particularly are we appreciative of the work of Labor's League

³⁴New York Times, May 17, 1959, Sess. 10, 17.

for Political Education of the AFL which has rendered invaluable services during the campaign. It receives our wholehearted support. We have pledged it our continued support."³⁵

In summary, it is clear Dubinsky feels labor unions must endorse the platform of certain parties or candidates. To make this effective an educational program is necessary.

4. Labor Legislation

Dubinsky was pleased when the Robinson-Patman law was passed. He believed that only with the help of the government can small business survive. In addition to protecting small business, Dubinsky said "it is the obligation of government to create an economic climate in which small business not only can survive but which will encourage it to flourish and to prosper."³⁶

Dubinsky feels that legislation is needed to give the small business special tax considerations. He said "there should be no further delay in enacting additional legislation for special tax considerations for smaller enterprises to encourage their stability and expansion. Provisions should be made to give smaller

³⁵International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention... 298, 99.

³⁶U.S., Congressional Record-Appendix, 86th Cong., 1st. Sess., 1959, A2339.

units greater access to ample credit at normal and reasonable interest rates."³⁷

Dubinsky feels that the federal government is spending too much time looking for cases of restraint of trade among the small manufacturer. He feels this time would be better spent if it were used to check on the industrial giants. He stated:

It is high time that governmental agencies cease their search for the ghost of restraint of trade in of all places the coat and suit industry, with its thousands of small firms and its sharp competition. Surely this is a case of misdirection, they are after the wrong target. Apparently, however they prefer to squander their energies by going after the little fellow rather than challenging the giants. The government, instead of harassing small business should instead give it all possible assistance.³⁸

Dubinsky both favors and dislikes labor legislation, depending on its effect on organized labor.

Dubinsky is an arch-enemy of the Taft-Hartley Act. He feels that negotiations are being replaced by the injunction. It has made the union's job more difficult, and given the lawyers more business. Dubinsky said "the remedy is clear-repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act."³⁹

³⁷Justice, February 15, 1959, 4.

³⁸U.S., Congressional Record-Appendix, 86th Cong., 1st Sess., 1959, A2339.

³⁹Ibid, 300.

When asked to comment about legislation to outlaw the union shop he said "I don't have to comment because it is very obvious I am against legislation that will prohibit the 'union shop'".⁴⁰ He feels that the union shop has been beneficial to both unions and management in promoting industrial peace. He feels this promotion of industrial peace comes through the mutual trust and cooperation involved under union shop agreements. It naturally follows that Dubinsky has opposed state right-to-work laws. He feels right-to-work laws mark a return to 'reactionary methods'.⁴¹

Dubinsky had much to say about legislation to help keep union welfare funds honest. He felt there was little corruption in these funds, but the little that did exist would be used by the employer as a weapon against all labor. Thus these few cases of dishonesty couldn't be ignored. He felt that the unwillingness of a few unions to deal with this problem has left labor in a weak position to argue against governmental intervention. He felt "if some unions continue to abuse their trust because they lack moral forces to block abuses, it becomes the job of the government to

⁴⁰Justice, January 15, 1958, 2.

⁴¹Ibid.

regulate, to safeguard."⁴² If legislation must come it should not be punitive legislation, directed against labor as a whole.⁴³ Thus to counteract this he believed labor should take a constructive approach towards legislation respecting labor's rights, and ending abuses in union welfare funds. He said:

American labor traditionally and properly has resisted all efforts on the part of governmental agencies to interfere with the conduct of international union affairs.... But in the face of the evil that does exist, we must begin to think about lending our support to legislation that may call for publication of the financial facts about welfare funds, including administration costs and commissions or that may set a minimum code of propriety and responsibility in handling of these funds...⁴⁴

Dubinsky favored both the Kennedy-Ives Bill in 1958 and the Kennedy-Ervin Bill in 1959. He felt these two bills would enable unions to clean up their own houses. However Dubinsky opposes the Landrum Griffin Law; he has said:

The chiseler hides behind the Taft-Hartley Act. He hides behind the Landrum-Griffin Act. He uses state anti-labor laws as a shield in his fight to keep earnings low, hours long and profits high.

⁴²David Dubinsky, "What They Say," American Federationist, LXIV (May, 1957), 32.

⁴³David Dubinsky, "Safeguarding Union Welfare Funds," American Federationist, LXI (July, 1954), 15.

⁴⁴Justice, May 1, 1959, 3.

In chiselers' hands, these laws are used not to clean unions but to kill them.

We call for abolition of state open shop laws and for the substantial amendment of the Taft-Hartley and the Landrum-Griffin Acts.⁴⁵

Dubinsky also favored governmental action to maintain full employment. He said "we believe it is the responsibility of the federal government to plan for employment. There is a law that says so. And we think that the administration should obey that law."⁴⁶

In summary, I feel Dubinsky's own words best illustrate his feelings:

I think the philosophy of the labor movement is changing at an enormous speed. In the last two and a half decades organized labor has accepted the concept of social legislation;... and has supported corrective legislation governing the conduct of union affairs...⁴⁷

⁴⁵International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention..., 210.

⁴⁶International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 260.

⁴⁷David Dubinsky, "As We Grow Our Problems Grow," The Catholic World, LXXXIX (August, 1959), 354.

CHAPTER IV

DAVID DUBINSKY VIEWS ON SIGNIFICANT AREAS AFFECTING THE LABOR MOVEMENT

To make the study of Dubinsky's labor philosophy complete it is necessary to analyze his views on significant areas affecting the labor movement. This includes Dubinsky's views towards economic systems, technological change, labor-management relations, communism and labor, discrimination, corruption-welfare fund problems, and training future union officers.

A. Economic Systems

As mentioned earlier in this study Dubinsky was a socialist until 1926. A brief history of the early ILGWU will help explain why Dubinsky was a socialist. From 1912 to 1924 the preamble of the ILGWU was very socialistic. In 1918 the ILGWU called for the "abolition of the capitalist system."¹ The Socialist party opposed the entry of the United States into World War I, however Dubinsky asked all union members to support the war effort. In 1926 Dubinsky explained his leaving the Socialist party when he said:

¹Danish, 85.

It was not an easy matter for me to resign from the Socialist Party... I was prompted to do this by two chief situations in the country, and the present situation in the Socialist Party. Franklin Delano Roosevelt is the first truly progressive president we have had in this generation. The NRA, though vilified by the Communists and partly nullified by the courts has, nonetheless, given positive and concrete relief to the labor movement... We must bear in mind that all enemies of labor are now combining against the New Deal, against FDR, and that means against labor... An FDR defeat, therefore, must be voided at all costs.... As to my resignation from the Socialist Party at this hour, I would like to state that by tying up this year with the Communists for a joint May Day parade it was divorcing itself from the labor movement... I hold that there is no 'united front' possible with those eternal enemies of the American labor movement... Experience has shown that co-operation with the Communists spells disaster for unions everywhere, and how well do our members know this! I can no longer be identified with a party that is making alliances with the Communists... If I have to choose between a united front with the Communists and a united front with the united trade union movement, I will choose the trade union movement.²

Dubinsky realizes that unions need a successful economy if they want to get their demands for their workers. Dubinsky feels most unions have long recognized that industry must be prosperous if they hope to obtain a good standard of living for their members.

What economic system does Dubinsky favor to obtain these goals for his union? He favors capitalism and knows communism

²Danish, 95.

would destroy free trade unionism in the United States; "we know that our freedom, our democratic way of life, our right to have free trade unions and to live and work as free men and women, with dignity and self respect, would be 'wiped off the face of the earth', as Khrushchev boasted."³ He realizes that free trade unionism needs capitalism like a fish needs water.

B. Technological Change

Dubinsky views automation with some concern. This could be seen when he said "ours is a dynamic economy. Our production rises continuously. New automatic techniques of production are being perfected. The uneasiness that underlines our so-called prosperity reflects the growing fear that our very resourcefulness may become a danger."⁴

Dubinsky feels that much courage will be needed by our lawmakers to deal with automation. He said "whatever administration is in Washington, it will have to deal daringly, courageously and wisely with automation and rising productivity. It will have to match the New Deal 40-hour limit on the work week with its own

³International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 261.

⁴International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention..., 212.

universal establishment of at least a 35-hour work week, if Americans are to be able to consume what they produce."⁵

Dubinsky further states "maybe it is time to consider shorter hours for the benefit of the entire nation. And when wage increases are obtained, part of the increase should be used to offset the reduction in hours, thereby not creating inflation. And I think with good judgment and leadership, this could be accomplished."⁶

Dubinsky further stated "automation should not throw men out of work. With a shorter work week automation can mean full employment and more leisure to enjoy a fuller life."⁷

Dubinsky recognizes that automation is one of the key factors causing unemployment. He said "the lack of sufficient economic growth coupled with the displacement of workers caused by automation and other technological improvements account for the fact that after every postwar recession, the number of unemployed steadily rose."⁸

⁵Ibid.

⁶International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention..., 266.

⁷International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 260.

⁸International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirty First Convention..., 211.

C. Labor-Management Relations

During the past twenty five years the ILGWU has had excellent relations with the unionized manufacturers in the industry. A basic attitude of cooperation has helped preserve the feeling of good will between union and management. This type of thinking is exemplified by the following statement made by Dubinsky:

The union has long recognized that the industry must be prosperous to provide a good living for its workers. Let us continue, therefore, to work together for a healthy and prosperous industry which will be able to improve the conditions of the workers, provide management with a fair return and enable the coat and suit industry-the oldest trade, the pioneer and trailblazer in industrial relations-to keep pace with changing conditions.⁹

One of the areas of cooperation between management and the ILGWU has been in the field of advertising. Dubinsky noted:

Long-term forces favor the growth of the industry's volume but its full sales potential cannot be realized without action on the part of all who are concerned with the welfare of the industry. The union will give its full cooperation to the industry in obtaining necessary governmental action and in development of a industry promotion program designed to expand markets for its product.¹⁰

⁹U.S., Congressional Record-Appendix, 86th Cong., 1st. Sess., 1959, A 2340.

¹⁰Ibid., A2339.

Dubinsky believes that cooperative action is necessary due to the high cost of large scale promotion. He realizes that in an industry of small company's no one of them alone could do an effective job. As an example of Dubinsky's sincerity it must be noted that the union promised to pay 10% of the promotion costs in the coat and suit industry when they began a large scale promotional drive. This proved that the ILGWU was ready to stand behind its pledge to share the costs of developing and financing a sales promotion program.

Between 1959-1961 a total of fifteen advertisements appeared in 154 newspapers. The total circulation of these ads was 213,000,000. A few ads have been placed in leading magazines including Good Housekeeping, McCall's, Women's Day and Ebony. These magazines have combined circulation of 16,000,000. Advertisements also appeared in foreign language papers, trade union publications and special appeal publications.

The ILGWU's close cooperation with management has caused some to say that union and management were guilty of restricting competition. Dubinsky answered by saying:

Now there is a curious paradox in the way certain people look with suspicion on the generally harmonious relations which have developed between labor and

management in the cloak and other branches of the garment industry. You would think that labor-management relations are sound only if there is continuous strife, a wave of disputes, an avalanche of strikes.¹¹

D. Communism and Labor

Before we can discuss Dubinsky's views regarding communism we must understand his distinction between the various type of communism. There are those communists that are sincere and have a real zeal for the cause. These are the ones that Dubinsky would like to convert. He does not want to destroy their idealism. He only wants to guide it along the right paths. In addition there are those communists that are at various stages of moral corruption. Lastly there is the fellow traveler. They are especially dangerous because they supply a respectable front for an evil cause.

It is Dubinsky's belief that our society prevent the honest communist from reforming and leaving the party. This is unfortunate since their idealism and zeal could be a great asset in fighting communism and social injustice.

Communism was not a problem in our country until the great depression of the 1930's. The communists became especially

¹¹Ibid. A2339.

powerful during the New Deal. Dubinsky noted:

With the rise of the New Deal as a powerful social reform movement and the birth of the CIO, the communists found a new opportunity for infiltration and influence for penetration and power. The technique of the united front and of boring from within established organizations vastly extending the communist range of authority.¹²

It was not until after the Second World War that the American public began to see communism's true objectives.

After the American public became aware of the communist threat Dubinsky felt the issue soon became a political football used by some to gain power.

Dubinsky was opposed to the McCarthy method of fighting communism for several reasons.¹³ First, the McCarthy method's only weapon was terror. It lacked any attempt to convert the communist to our way of life. Secondly, it did not cut the influence of communists because of its tactics of calling almost everyone who disagreed a communist. Thirdly, McCarthy damaged the efforts of our security agencies by trying to do in the newspapers what should have been done in the courts. Fourth, he hurt honest attempts to destroy communism by causing apathy. Finally,

¹²U.S., Congressional Record-Appendix, 83rd Cong., 1st. Sess., 1953, A4798.

¹³Ibid., 4799.

by using undemocratic methods in hunting communists Senator McCarthy was hurting our status abroad.

To Dubinsky our country was badly in need of an effective policy to meet the communist threat. Dubinsky had proposed a program to take the issue of communism out of the hands of the politicians. He suggested the creation of two new groups to aid the country in its war against communism. Dubinsky said:

One of the new agencies would be a non-partisan advisory commission appointed by the President of the United States, to guide the nation on every aspect of the communist problem. The second would be a privately sponsored non-profit clearing house for information that would help unions, employers, churches, organizations and individuals to keep from being sucked into unsuspecting involvement in the communist web.¹⁴

He felt that the House and Senate have a right to investigate the communist problem or any other problem they feel may aid them to legislate more wisely. But he felt "investigating committees ought, like the courts and regulatory bodies, to operate under a set of rules that would enable them to gather facts without snuffing out the elementary rights of those under investigation."¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

Dubinsky has said his union never worked with the communists:

We never co-operated with them, and we never will. Instead, we have fought them since they first appeared on the American scene and we shall continue to fight them. No free trade union can work with a party or its individual members who have no faith in democracy, no loyalty to genuine trade unionism, who lack any share of elementary human conscience and who bear no allegiance to this country in which they live, but only to the communist rulers in the Kremlin.¹⁶

Dubinsky feels that we must judge the communists by their deeds, not by their words. He maintains the burden of proof lies with them.

Dubinsky criticizes those who are opposed to American labor's support of democratic labor abroad. Dubinsky said reactionaries have been denouncing us "for helping democratic labor resist and defeat communist reaction and aggression abroad. The gangster of the pen can throw all the mud they want. They are experts in this dirty business. The Kremlin welcomes their slander against us."¹⁷ Dubinsky realizes that the struggle against communism is not just military, but also an ideological struggle for the minds of man.

For many years the ILGWU followed the policy of not participating in any cultural exchanges between the Russians and the

¹⁶Danish, 249.

¹⁷David Dubinsky, "What They Say, "American Federationist, LX (June, 1953), 32.

United States. They felt any dealings with Russia was a one way street, and that such activities are exploited for the benefit of the communist party. Neither the Russian nor the American people would benefit from such exchanges. Dubinsky felt that what is good about the United States will never get to the people due to communist censorship. This was the policy of the ILGWU until 1959.

In 1959 the ILGWU was asked to participate in an exhibition to be held in Moscow. Regarding this exhibition Dubinsky noted "we were advised this exhibition would be different. The Russian government has promised freedom of exhibition-with certain limitations. They have promised there will be no censorship of literature which is given out at the exhibition."¹⁸ Dubinsky discussing the exhibition with George Meany decided the ILGWU would unofficially participate in the exhibition. He said "as a member of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO, I felt obligated to act in accord with the general policy and not on my own in such an important matter."¹⁹ Dubinsky hoped the exhibit would give the union a chance to inform the Russian

¹⁸International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 418.

¹⁹Ibid.

people about working conditions in the United States, about the union label on a garment which is a sign of fair employee-management relations, and how American workers are free to work, strike and have their own unions.

The result of this decision was the sending of a family that included an ILGWU member. Their objective was to show the garment union member's produce and portray conditions under which they were made.

Dubinsky realizes we must not judge the communists by what they say, rather judge them by their action. He noted:

We in our union and in our attitude to world affairs have always judged communists by what they do-not by what they say-and we shall continue to judge them this way and I am confident the American labor movement and free labor throughout the world will do so also.²⁰

Dubinsky's strong feelings towards the danger of communism to the free labor movement was evident when he said:

We never went to school for diplomats. But as democratic trade unionists, who deal with the everyday problems of making ends meet, of making life more worthwhile, we sense more quickly the danger of the totalitarian enemy. It is because we of the ILGWU

²⁰International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Ninth Convention. . . , 268.

Had sort of instinctively, and yet clearly, sensed the dangers of totalitarianism to free labor, that we and our parent body, the AFL, became the vanguard of world labor's fight against communist subversion and aggression.²¹

Dubinsky continued:

This is why we and the AFL fought the so-called World Federation of Trade Unions, a Moscow front. That is why we of the ILGWU made the fight we did in what was once the American Labor Party in New York. That is why we never could or would provide a cover of respectability for communist disrupters masquerading as social reformers.²²

E. Discrimination

During the years the ILGWU has fought for the civil rights of the negro. During the 1940's the ILGWU joined with other labor and negro organizations to demand an end to discrimination in employment. Their efforts resulted in a Fair Employment proclamation by President Roosevelt. The ILGWU also contributed large sums of money to the National Urban League, to the United Negro College Fund, to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to the Committee on Racial Equality, and to the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing.

²¹International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Twenty Eight Convention..., 301.

²²Ibid, 302.

Over the years the ILGWU has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to these groups. In addition, Dubinsky was named secretary treasurer of a trade union committee on civil rights in 1956.

Dubinsky feels that the discrimination charges often arise from the failure of a negro to gain admittance to a union during periods of slack production. Yet during these periods of slack production both negroes and whites are refused membership. He maintains the charges arise because if a white is denied membership he cannot claim discrimination, but if a negro is denied membership there is always someone ready to call it discrimination. Dubinsky noted "we do not discriminate in initiation fees, no discrimination in dues, no discrimination in rates of pay."²³ In 1959 he further expressed this belief:

We may be accused of many things by newspapers, by politicians, by reactionaries, but when we are accused of race discrimination they have picked the wrong target. Our union has a long and enviable record of equality within our organization. This union was built originally by immigrants. Many were Italians and Jewish immigrants. We could not have built the union if it were not built on the principle of equality and against discrimination.²⁴

²³U. S. House Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, Hearing, Investigation of the Garment Industry, 2nd Sess., 1962, 249.

²⁴International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 302.

In 1962 Dubinsky appeared before the House Subcommittee on Education and Labor investigating bias in the garment industry. These charges stem from the growing numbers of negro and Puerto Rican members in the union not represented in any high offices of the ILGWU. Dubinsky answered this charge by saying: "I'll be damned if I will support the idea of the professional negro, the professional Jew, the professional Italian, that a man should be a union officer because of his race, color or creed. He should be an officer on his merit, ability and character."²⁵ He also pointed out that 28% of the students accepted in the Training Institute were negroes and Puerto Ricans, and that upon graduation they became organizers and business agents.²⁶

Dubinsky feels that today there is less discrimination within organized labor. He noted "the situation is not perfect, but there has been much advancement. Many, many unions have changed their constitutions, have lifted their color bars."²⁷

²⁵David Dubinsky, "Creed for Promotion," Time, LXXX (September 7, 1962), 19.

²⁶U. S., House Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, Hearing. Investigation of the Garment Industry, 2nd Sess., 1962, 249.

²⁷International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 302.

Regarding his own union Dubinsky said "our attitude will continue to be to fight for civil rights, to fight against segregation, and to fight for integration, because together we must live in our union, in the country, and in the world. This is the only way we can survive."²⁸

F Corruption -- Safeguarding Union Welfare Funds

During the last ten or fifteen years union welfare funds have grown rapidly. The report of the 1939 AFL convention showed the total benefits paid to AFL members as being \$25,000,000. This total included money paid for death, sickness, old age, disability and miscellaneous benefits. During the years 1950 to 1952 a total of \$124,000,000 was collected from the employers by the ILGWU for its welfare fund. In 1953 the ILGWU paid out more than all the combined members of the AFL in 1938.²⁹

The big push by labor for larger welfare funds appeared during World War II. Dubinsky explained this when he stated "the wage freeze made it difficult to get wage increases, then interpreted to be inflationary. Millions and millions of dollars, instead of adding to employers' profits, went into special funds,

²⁸Ibid, 302,03.

²⁹David Dubinsky, "Safeguarding Union Welfare Funds," American Federationist, LX (July, 1954), 10. 68

set aside to help working people in the hours of death, sickness, retirement, maternity, accident."³⁰ Due to this rapid growth the working man now has more security than ever before. Unfortunately many unions were not prepared to handle these vast sums of money.

Dubinsky realizes that part of the problem of keeping welfare funds clean is at the local level. He said: "all attempts to intervene are immediately resisted as interference with the local autonomy of the local union."³¹ Dubinsky holds this position because when locals or joint councils negotiate welfare funds they were then charged with the duty of administering these funds.

Dubinsky will be the first to admit that many unions have been lax in handling union welfare funds. He felt it was the duty of labor to act and remedy this situation, if it did not want the courts or the government to do it for them.

Dubinsky believed that "the key to proper policing of these funds lie in the international union's practice of auditing the local's books."³² He noted that the ILGWU maintains a

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 11.

³² Ibid., 12.

staff of well trained auditors. In addition, they published the full financial facts about the administration of these funds by the locals and the joint boards. The ILGWU constitution allow a maximum of five percent of the total collected to be used for administrative costs. Out of the administrative costs come the money needed to safeguard the welfare funds.

Dubinsky knows that if there is an unwillingness within some unions to clean their own house, then it would become necessary for trade unions to support some measure of legislative action to protect the union members and their families against abuses of welfare funds. If there was legislation he knew it must be corrective, not a punishment. Any legislation passed must aid unions in helping them keep their welfare funds clean.

In other areas of public life a little corruption is almost considered legitimate. Yet the same people who condone corruption in business will condemn it in a union. The writer feels Dubinsky has given us the answer to these dual standards when he said "unions are not operated for individual profiteering. They are a cause, a mission. More than almost any other aspect of society, they just cannot tolerate any corrupt influence."³³

³³International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 262. 70

Dubinsky wants this money invested wisely. He said "there are two ways of investing. You can invest for speculation or you can invest for social welfare. We chose the latter, and we are getting more than a monetary yield."³⁴ There are numerous examples of the ILGWU investing their funds for the social welfare. In 1957 twenty million dollars was invested in building houses for United States Air force personnel. The union also used some of its money for farm loans to help preserve the family farms. These loans were insured by the Agriculture Department's Farmers Home Association. Funds have also been made available to help build numerous cooperative housing projects. Referring to the above social investments Dubinsky said: "it is gratifying to know that our investments help to promote a cleaner and happier community."³⁵ However it is important to note that the ILGWU is not only interested in investments of a social nature. Dubinsky has said: "to get a good return, under conditions of safety, our union employs a full-time investment counselors."³⁶

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵New York Times, May 17, 1959, Sect. 10, 17.

³⁶U. S., Congressional Record-Appendix, 86th Cong., 1st. Sess., 1959, A4715.

G. Training Future Union Officers

During the early years of the labor movement many of the leaders of the ILGWU came from radical and socialistic movements. As the years passed Dubinsky became more and more concerned with the lack of young capable leaders in the ILGWU:

The problem of developing modern union leadership for a new age is one of the most important facing the American labor movement. The modern union officer must be much different. He must have more than a smile, and a line of talk, paid up card. He must have devotion and dedication, intelligence and inventiveness, social vision and public concern.³⁷

For a number of years the ILGWU has employed various people, who are not union members, to fill many key positions. These non-union officials work in areas such as publicity, research, education, engineering, and law.

Traditionally, most unions felt that an elected union official must come from the trade. It was felt that he would better represent the policies and needs of the worker. Dubinsky partially disagrees with this feeling when he said "being a craftsman in his trade does not make a man competent in the craftsmanship of running a union."³⁸ He felt that union officials

³⁷U.S., Congressional Record-Appendix, 86th Cong., 1st. Sess., 1959, A4715.

³⁸Ibid, A4715.

should be dedicated and trained. To fulfill this need the ILGWU established a training institute to train future ILGWU officials. The Training Institute was formed by Dubinsky to obtain leaders capable of dealing with legislative developments, as well as the far-reaching changes effecting production and distribution.³⁹ The graduates filled those positions other than the ones filled by elections. The students accepted into this school may come from the rank and file or come from outside the union.

The ILGWU Training Institute has been a day school lasting one year. The students were taught by specialists in economics, representatives of governmental agencies, members of management, and heads of various departments in the ILGWU. The students were exposed to courses such as "Economics for Workers", "Problems in Organization", writing radio broadcasts, other related areas of study. The students were also sent to garment centers to observe the work of various union officials.

In 1962 it was decided to suspend the training institute until there would again be a demand for additional trained staff members. The ILGWU intends to resume the training institute in

³⁹David Dubinsky, "Training Future Officers,"..., 8.

local areas when the need arises. The training institute over its eleven years of operation filled a major gap then existing in the union's need for union officers. Due to the unique nature of this project begun by Dubinsky additional study is appropriate.

All students were admitted to the Institute with the understanding they would accept employment with the ILGWU upon graduation. The graduates were then assigned according to their preferences, and the needs of the union.

There was no tuition charge, but the students were expected to provide their own subsistence. Since they did not wish to discourage members from applying due to financial difficulties the International and several locals offered financial assistance to needy prospective students. Financial assistance was also given to needy non union members, enabling them to participate in the program. It is expected that the Training Institute shall resume as soon as the union feels the need for skilled union officials.

Before the ILGWU's Training Institute was temporarily suspended Dubinsky noted:

It is the hope of the leaders of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, that, at a time not too far away the labor movement will develop a leadership training school which will function for the

entire labor movement, as our own Training Institute is now doing for our union.⁴⁰

Today Dubinsky would maintain the above position because the ILGWU's Training Institute was only temporarily suspended due to an over abundance of qualified union officials, supplied through the Institute, not because the school was a failure.

In summary, Dubinsky feels that if the labor movement is to be blessed with continued growth all unions must begin to develop qualified leadership.

⁴⁰Ibid. 30.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the preceeding chapter the author has analyzed David Dubinsky's views regarding the objectives of the labor movements, the means to be used to obtain these objectives, and some of the critical problems affecting labor. In this final chapter, first the author will try to set forth his conclusions on the labor philosophy of David Dubinsky; secondly, an attempt will be made to point out areas of gradual change in the thinking of Dubinsky.

Dubinsky's main conviction underlying his basic philosophy is cooperation. He has cooperated with management in many areas of Industrial Relations. He has cooperated with advertising programs, and has been a leader in maintaining industrial peace. He realizes the industry must be successful before the workers can expect to prosper. He has cooperated with the government in trying to keep unionism clean. He has always felt cooperation among unions as necessary for a successful labor movement. He was one of the predominant instruments in reuniting the AFL and the CIO.

Dubinsky is opposed to business unionism. To Dubinsky

the main purpose of unionism is to improve the social and economic status of the American people. He is not just interested in helping the members of his union, but feels a responsibility towards the whole American public. Dubinsky said "a union is not an end in itself. A union comes into being as a means towards an end; the end being the full development-economic, political, cultural- of free men in a free society."¹ He believes that higher wages are beneficial to all due to the stimulation of our economy by the increased purchasing power in the hands of the consumer. However as indicated throughout this paper, wages is only one aspect in Dubinsky's overall program to help his union members and all mankind. For Dubinsky, unionism should be an uplift movement that will help everyone in our country, and throughout the world. Although no longer a socialist some of these basic tendencies still influence his thinking.

Dubinsky feels union leaders must be concerned with advancing the union movement in order to help raise the standard of living for the workers. He believes there is no excuse for

¹ International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Report and Record Thirtieth Convention..., 252-53.

any union official to be concerned with the financial rewards they can get from unionism. He has no respect for the Hoffas, the Becks or those in his own union who are interested only in their salary as union officials.

Dubinsky has always been interested in any legislation which may directly or indirectly effect labor. He opposed the Taft Hartley Act with vigor. Regarding governmental legislation in other areas he has been less critical. Although not favoring the Landrin Griffin Act he did admit the law had some good points. Unlike some labor leaders he has seen the need for legislation when certain unions fail to live up to their trust. The legislation must be designed to correct the abuse, not to punish unionism.

The writer does not feel Dubinsky is guilty of discrimination against negroes and Puerto Ricans in admitting them into his union. It is true that no negro or Puerto Rican holds a high office in the union, but it must be remembered that these minority groups are new additions to the garment industry. Today the union is still controlled by the nationalities that founded the union. In time, these new groups will take their place among the ILGWU leadership.

It is traditional for labor leaders to call for organizing the unorganized. Dubinsky is no exception. However, to Dubinsky this would mean organizing all those in the ladies garment industry. He is not interested in organizing everyone as is Hoffa.

The writer believes that Dubinsky would disagree with Harrison on the issue of free trade. Harrison favors free trade among the established countries. Dubinsky although favoring trade may tend to be more conservative due to the fierce competition foreign producers are giving the garment industry.

Dubinsky's political philosophy differs mostly from that of Gray. Gray is a Republican and is against participating in political action. Dubinsky is a member of the Liberal Party (New York) and is interested in participating in political action. On the national level Dubinsky would generally favor the Democratic party.

Dubinsky and Mc Donald seem to agree on the automation problem. They both feel automation is good until it begins hurting society. Thus if automation will cause mass unemployment it is bad. If employment remains constant, and if the worker's real wage increases automation is a blessing. Both would agree automation will necessitate the reduction of

the work week.

The writer believes no one can deny Dubinsky's honesty or dedication to the cause. He has been praised for the above virtues by many men ranging from newspaper writers and business men to presidents of the United States.

Dubinsky has always been interested in the welfare of people in foreign countries. This could stem from his early years as a fugitive in Russia. He has never hesitated to extend a helping hand to any country that needed help. His union has given millions of dollars away abroad. Israel has received a significant share of this assistance. This stems from the fact that many of the ILGWU's top officials including Dubinsky are Jewish.²

Dubinsky is interested in the international labor movement. He feels that a strong free trade union is one of a country's key deterrents to communism. His union has extended aid to free labor throughout the world.

Over the years Dubinsky's thinking has been flexible and subject to change with the changing conditions of the world.

²Today the majority of ILGWU members are negroes and Puerto Ricans. However when the ILGWU was founded, and built into a powerful labor organization most of the members were Jewish. Many of these men are still in the union and have retained the high offices they won during earlier years.

Dubinsky's thinking on economic systems has changed since his arrival in the United States. For five years, after his arrival, Dubinsky felt socialism was the answer to the needs of man. Today, Dubinsky is an avid capitalist. He feels that unions need capitalism as a fish needs water. Dubinsky will never question the right of private ownership. His only concern is to get labor its fair share.

Like most labor leaders Dubinsky has become more conservative in the use of strikes to gain union demands. In the early years of his union he led many strikes. Today strikes in the garment industry are virtually unheard of.

Dubinsky's attitude toward communists may have mellowed slightly. Today, as before he fights communism. Yet he has been encouraging a policy that will allow honest party members to leave the party and join the fight against communism. He believes that through Communist party methods, and through the attitudes of the American public, it is virtually impossible for a communist to leave the party. He feels there is a need to foster a climate of public opinion favorable to accepting the fall away communist.

There has been a significant change in Dubinsky's political thinking. He has shifted from the Socialist party to a

policy of backing liberal candidates. These liberal candidates are usually found in the Democratic or New York Liberal parties.

Dubinsky has gradually come to the realization that trade union leaders cannot be pure idealists. They must be trained to meet the complicated problems of today. To meet this need Dubinsky established a school to train union leaders. He has also begun to go outside the ranks of labor to recruit men with needed skills, bringing them into the labor movement.

Dubinsky's goals have changed as a labor leader. At first he was only interested in wages and hours. Today he is interested in the whole man. This is illustrated in the union's construction of health centers and a resort for union members.

It is impossible to equate Dubinsky with any other union leader. He is an individual. In general he is closest to Reuther in his approach to society. He wants to help mankind. In his approach to union structure and organization he is closest to Meany's more conservative tactics.

Dubinsky is a labor leader, a politician, and a statesman. A man who is concerned with the betterment of conditions for men throughout the world. He is truly concerned with all phases of man's well being.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by William John Bergmann has been read by three members of the Faculty of the Institute of Social and Industrial Relations.

The final copies have been examined by the Director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social and Industrial Relations.

May 27, 1964
Date

Julius Berber
Signature of Advisor