

PHONE VICTOR 4000  
KANSAS CITY JOURNAL-POST.  
TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 1937.

**TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DONNELLY GARMENT MANUFACTURING  
COMPANY:**

On May 13, 1937, a full-page advertisement in this paper, sponsored by "The Kansas City Citizens' Protective Council, Inc." carried a number of vituperative statements interspersed with distortions.

That torrent of abuse was directed at the Kansas City Joint Board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and at Mr. David Dubinsky, national President of this Union. It was inspired, we are reliably informed, by the recently launched efforts of the Joint Board of this Union to organize the workers employed by your firm after we had unionized and secured standard union work conditions for nearly all the other dressmakers, cloakmakers and underwear workers in Greater Kansas City.

That effort, as you well know, received the support of the national convention of this Union, recently held in Atlantic City, N. J., at which 520 delegates, representing 250,000 workers in the women's garment industry, voted full cooperation in the move to organize the Donnelly Garment Company employees and allotted \$100,000 for the initial drive.

We are fully aware of your consistently anti-union stand for the past several years, from the day the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union entered the Kansas City market for the purpose of equalizing work conditions in the Kansas City garment factories and of assuring the Kansas City garment workers a fair return for their labor. It is likewise common knowledge that in order to block the formation of a bona-fide trade union within your plant, you have recently formed a company union, known as the "Donnelly Garment Workers' Union," for which you now claim the rights and prerogatives of a real labor union.

Nevertheless, we should like to hope that you were not involved directly in supporting the repulsive piece of calumny which appeared in the name of the "Protective Council." We can fully understand the motives of that "Council"; there is nothing mysterious or

baffling about its purposes, That outfit, as it frankly states in its advertisement, is seeking to bolster up its membership list. During the past year business obviously has not been so good with that "Protective Council." One garment firm after another in Kansas City has chosen to enter into collective agreements with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, regulating work hours, pay scales and setting up sound employer-employee relations. All that has been accomplished largely through peaceful negotiation. And peaceful negotiation is bad medicine for such groups as the "Protective Council." In typical vigilante fashion, it can hope to thrive only in an atmosphere of anti-labor rancor and antagonism.

But you, ladies and gentlemen of the Donnelly Garment Company management, we presume, are not in business to combat unionism and trade unions. You are a dress manufacturing concern, doing a national business in competition with scores of other dress firms in a dozen other markets, and therefore a part of the national competitive setup in the dress industry.

As business men and women, you probably realize that you cannot isolate yourselves in a vacuum from the other 4,000 employing firms in the dress industry and claim preferential immunity with regard to work hours, work pay and other work standards. As business people accustomed to facing practical business problems, you may realize that we, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the workers' organization in the dress industry, speaking and acting in behalf of the 150,000 workers in it, have a direct concern in the welfare, stability and fair competitive practices of the dress industry as well as in the major problem of economic justice for all the workers employed in it.

It is all right for a "Protective Council," anguished by a fast-declining membership, to howl "Communist Dubinsky," "Russian-born Dubinsky," or similar red-herring rubbish, in order to attract some attention in a market which is quickly becoming a typically American unionized trade union city. It is all right for an irresponsible outfit to wrap itself in a mantle of pseudo-patriotism and to cover up its union-busting physiognomy with irrelevant phrases culled from a speech by Lincoln, the Great Liberator. That's all excusable for a group of self-styled "saviors of business" whose mentality and viewpoint are as outmoded as the witch-burning and heresy-hunting of a long-for-gotten era.

We should not waste a penny's worth of space or a fraction of a minute to debate with this "Protective Council." *But you are an important unit in the great dress industry of this country.* Long after that "protective" bubble will have burst and disappeared in an unsavory memory, you, we presume, will stay in the dress business. And as practical business people, you, we take it for granted, realize that, whatever your feelings for the moment may be, you will eventually have to carry on collective dealings with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, which cannot, should not and will not permit one individual employer to segregate himself from the rest of the industry in matters of work conditions and other fundamentals of employment.

Let us make this clear to you: This statement of ours is neither bluster, nor warning, nor a threat. It is, we honestly believe, common sense dictated by generally acknowledged industrial facts. We may best illustrate it by quoting from a talk at a dinner in Kansas City, attended by a number of coat and dress employers and union representatives on March 6, 1937, delivered by Mr. Frank Prins, member of the prominent coat and suit firm of Stern-Slegman-Prins, of Kansas City.

Said Mr. Prins:

"If anyone had prophesied a year ago that I would be present at this meeting, I would have been intensely skeptical. Three years ago such a prophecy—I say it frankly—would have made me laugh. Yet I am here tonight, and just as frankly, I am glad to be here, for my partners and myself feel that we have subscribed to a new and happy trend in the field of industrial relations. Our recent apparent reversal of sentiment is not an isolated case; such a reversal has become a matter of every day fact in every industry, in all sections of the country, as is readily attested by our daily newspapers. There is coming into being before our own eyes an increasingly firmer understanding between employer and employee.

"It is my opinion that we are witnessing developments of the utmost importance not only to ourselves but to the entire American economic structure for I believe we are on the threshold of a new era in industrial relations.

"We can see clearly that the two parties to be involved in the settling of future industrial disputes will be the employer on the one hand and the labor union on the other. The day of unorganized labor is passing rapidly. Yet with it, contrary to past precedent, is

going the long bitter antagonism of the employer towards unionism; the feeling that capital is capital and labor is labor and never the twain can meet on common ground is also disappearing,

"Why? Because the basic mutual understanding I have spoken of is becoming a fact. The extension of the processes of collective bargaining is thoroughly understood and embraced by those involved. The keynote is a sense of fair play coupled with confidence in reciprocal play. When distrust of one side by the other has dissolved, then and only then can bargaining be approached with any hope of success.

"That is the principle whereby industrial concord may be reached. Without it, no agreement can ever be satisfactory, no matter whether the parties involved are the smallest manufacturers or the largest trust, the most powerful labor organization or the sketchiest of company unions. That is why, working on that principle of mutual confidence we have always enjoyed the closest cooperation with our employees. That is why we have the utmost hope and confidence in our new relations with the I. L. G. W. U.; for we feel that Mr. Dubinsky and Mr. Perlstein are exponents of the modern unionism which knows that harmony and fair dealing point the way to success, and which rightly demands of the employer the same consideration which it itself extends."

We conclude: It will serve no purpose to inject into this issue such alien and wholly irrelevant matters as who was born where, or to invoke Lincoln's memory in a vain and almost sacrilegious manner. We believe our position is industrially sound and is for the greater welfare of the dress industry in its entirety and for the benefit and genuine protection of all the workers employed in it. And we speak from a background of forty years of experience in collective contractual dealing with 60 employers' organizations and 7,000 individual garment manufacturers in every market in the country.

It was in this spirit that we recently approached you to consider collective bargaining with our Union. It was in this constructive spirit that our Convention voted authority to our General Executive Board to carry through this move for the attainment of a contractual concord with your firm. It still lies within your choice to avoid a conflict which may prove as costly, as it appears futile at this stage, to all sides involved in it. Your readiness to meet us in this endeavor in a spirit of industrial statesmanship, rather than in that of

guerrilla warfare, will be applauded by every constructive factor in the entire dress industry, and by industry in general, the country over.

**INTERNATIONAL LADIES' GARMENT WORKERS' UNION**

National Office: 3 West 16th Street, New York City. Kansas City Office; 1022 Baltimore Avenue.