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## SAMUEL GOMPERS AND MORRIS HILLQUIT TAKE PROMINENT PART IN MAMMOTH PROTEST MEETING

The greatest labor demonstration ever held in New York as unanimously conceded by the entire press of the city, took place Saturday, June 12th, 1915, when 50,000 members of the Cloakmakers union gathered in front of the Madison Square Garden to express by their presence at the mass meeting their confidence in the indicted leaders and their contempt of the manufacturers who seek to destroy their organization. When 17,000 struggled into the hall the others attended overflow meetings in the vicinity of the Garden where an indefatigable corps of speakers addressed them.

It was a notable array of speakers who held the great crowd with their eloquent defense of their indicted comrades and their calls for the workers to remember that only through their solidarity will they be able to withstand the onslaughts of capital. Among the speakers were Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, Benjamin Schlesinger, President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union, Morris Hillquit, counsel for this International union, Congressman Meyer London and many others.

President Gompers was greeted with a great outburst of cheering, supplemented by clapping from those too hoarse to cheer from all parts of the great hall. Gompers declared the meeting of the thousands of ladies' garments workers indicated to the manufacturers that they were prepared to fight if a fight is forced on them.

#### President Gompers said in Part:

"It is regrettable that causes exist which make it necessary to have a meeting like this. It is gratifying beyond measure that inasmuch as the causes exist, you have turned out in such numbers. It is just about five years ago that you and others of your trade were assembled in this great hall in numbers no less than here today. On that occasion, when the organized cloak makers and ladies' garment workers were few in number you met to demand from your employers better wages, limited hours of labor and improved standards of life. At that time I believed an industrial revolt was necessary, and I advised and you took the advice in the general strike. It was a wonderful fight. It taught you the lesson that only by standing by your union in war as well as in peace will you be able to drive home to the employers the demands labor makes in return for what labor gives. Weeks passed in the general strike until the protocol was reached. This was recognized as a means by which industrial strife might be put in the background and that industrial peace might reign. Only a few weeks ago the manufacturers abrogated the protocol.

"The manufacturers said the union could not control its membership, complaining that there had been shop strikes in violation of the protocol. The union did everything in its power to prevent the shop strikes. The few shop strikes were the outward protest against conditions in half a dozen factories.

"Last winter, due to unemployment, there was a great suffering and hunger, with here and there a small bread riot—a demand for bread. The United States is not a perfect country, but I believe it the best on the face of the globe. If the manufacturers are just in their claims, then a riot for bread is ground for disbandment of the government of the United States.

#### Was Conscience Guilty.

"It seems strange to me that the manufacturers' association abrogated the protocol three days before the Board of Arbitrators were to meet to consider questions in dispute. Was it a guilty conscience that induced the employers to abrogate the protocol?"

"The American labor movement wants to extend its power for good. It wants to have agreements with employers. But the labor movement does not have to depend on agreements and protocols. It will live and prosper and grow in spite of the breaking of protocols.

Do the manufacturers think they can crush you?" asked Gompers. "Is it that they believe that organized labor can be smashed. In ghastly ghoulish glee, do they want to take the lives of the leading men of your Union? If this be their purpose, then this is the time to tell them it can't be done.

#### Asks no Immunity for Crime.

"The murder of working men and women in Ludlow, Col., gives me a suspicion of what capitalists would like to do in New York City. We ask no immunity for any member of organized labor who is guilty of crime, but, by the gods, we will insist that every degree of fairness and justice be given our people.

"Is it not strange that the manufacturers abrogated the agreement with the garment workers and the District Attorney had these labor officials indicted at approximately the same time? Is it not strange that the protocol was abrogated just three days before the meeting of the Arbitration Board to deal with the alleged grievance of the manufacturers? Did they have a guilty conscience and conviction that the board would vote against them?"

"I proclaim to the world that American labor wants agreements with capital. The highest type of the world's citizenship, we believe in an appeal to reason. But I also proclaim to the world that we don't have to have agreements; we don't need them to live; we can grow and prosper in spite of the breaking of the protocols.

"The reason advanced by the manufacturers for breaking the agreement under five years is that the membership of the union couldn't control its membership and that in defiance of the membership there had been shop strikes. There have been one or two shop strikes. But the union has been quick to discipline the guilty ones. But, stop! I recall that before the protocol there were general strikes every year costing misery and hunger and suffering of all kinds. I ask the manufacturers which is worse, a shop strike once in a while in a period of five years, or general strikes every one or two years? I leave the answer to any sane human being.

Says Labor Cannot be Crushed "No, the manufacturers are not sincere. They want to see the unions—this union and all other unions—swamped. But on the face of the earth there exists no power that can crush organized labor.

"This mighty gathering shows there is a crisis. I hope the breach may not be broadened. I hope the manufacturers will learn from this meeting the solidarity of your union, which cannot be broken by severed protocols. I hope there may be a new agreement with better terms for you. I hope for this, there is a disposition on the part of the employers to right the wrongs they have done, the federation will meet them half way. But not one inch shall we yield.

"I hope the employers, if they had

#### In mind the crushing of the Ladies' Garment Workers' union, will learn

that this solidarity of the mass of the workers can't be broken by abrogating protocols.

"I hope there will be a new agreement granting better rights. I don't know the reasons behind the breaking of the protocol. Is it that the manufacturers believed that the union could be crushed? Did they join in the movement to take the lives and liberties of men of the cloak makers' union? If it be their purpose to help take the lives and liberties of the men we believe to be innocent they will be defeated.

"We do not ask for favoritism for union men, but by the gods, we will insist that every degree of fairness and justice be given men in the organized labor movement in this country. In the fight for freedom we are going to stand shoulder to shoulder, not for war but for peace. Any assault on our ranks or on the means to fight to maintain the lives of the toilers of our country."

#### As Mr. Gompers concluded, the enthusiasm of his hearers was so great

that they swept up the aisles and over the barriers in the front of the house, despite the ushers and the police. The Iceland scenery of the Garden suffered severely.

#### Hillquit Speaks.

Mr. Morris Hillquit, spoke in part as follows:

"As one of the lawyers intrusted with the defense of your indicted members I want to say that I have carefully investigated every phase of the case, and that I know positively and beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are innocent like new-born babes of the crimes charges against them," he said, "If there is any fairness and justice in this city, the accused union men will be triumphantly acquitted at the trial and their persecutors will be pilloried as reckless and criminal perjurers, the scum of the darkest stratum of the underworld.

"Sigman, Wolf, Metz and the other indicted union men are not in jail because they are murderers or criminals, but because they have concentrated and devoted their whole lives to the uplift of their oppressed, maltreated and suffering fellow workers.

"It is for you and your children that they are in prison; it is for their loyalty to your union that they are to be tried for their lives.

"Since the arrest of your leaders, I have had the privilege of seeing them almost daily. They are courageous and cheerful. They do not complain. The only message they convey to you from behind their prison bars is this: Stand by us as we have stood for you, and above all, stand by our union, the only hope and salvation of our class!

"These are very critical times for your union. Through five years of incessant struggle and sacrifice you have succeeded in lifting the 50,000 cloak workers of this city from the mire of sweatshop, starvation wages and abject exploitation to the plane of more or less humane standards of life and work. Your employers could never forgive you that mortal sin. They waited for an opportunity to destroy your union and to nullify your achievements, and they believe the opportunity has now come. Like vultures they have thrown themselves upon you. Most unscrupulous employers, in league with notorious gangs, have made the first assault on you, and the 'respectable' manufacturers of the Protective association have followed in their lead by terminating the protocol.

"This is a vain effort. Your enemies do not know the temper of the labor movement. Organized workers are stronger under attack and they thrive in fight. In this crisis the 50,000 members of the Cloakmakers' union will stand like one man for their liberty and their rights, for their dignity and for justice. No Employers' association, no District Attorney can crush you. The union will rise more powerful and efficient than ever. The just cause of militant labor will triumph over the combined forces of slavery and oppression. Long live the struggles of the organized worker the world over."

#### Rosenberg Reads Message.

An ominous silence filled the immense hall when Elmer Rosenberg, President of the Joint Board of the Cloak & Skirt Makers union, read a message from the eight comrades in the Tombs, where they have been held for a month on a charge of murder without knowing their accusers.

"Greetings and cheer to the brothers and comrades assembled at Madison Square Garden," read the message. "Your confidence in our innocence and your loyalty to us is ample reward for all our hardships and persecutions. From behind the prison walls we join you in your determination to fight for justice to the working class and pledge ourselves to support our Union and our great cause stronger than ever when we regain our liberty."

The message is signed by Morris Sigman, Solomon Metz, Julius Wolf, Abraham Weidinger, Morris Stupnick, Max D. Singer, Louis Holzer, and I. Ashpis.

The sentiment of the meeting was expressed in a resolution, adopted by a unanimous 'roar' of assent after it had been read by Ben Schlesinger, President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union. The resolution follows:

#### Square Garden on this 12th day of June, 1915, hereby affirm our unswerving loyalty to our Organization

and our absolute confidence in our officers and leaders.

"We denounce the wholesale arrest and imprisonment of our trusted officers and fellow members as a deliberate assault upon our union in general—and an assault engineered by some of our most oppressive and unscrupulous employers in league with a band of professional strike breakers and a gang of notorious and self-confessed criminals. We proclaim our unshakable conviction in the innocence of our fellow members, and we pledge ourselves individually and collectively to support them morally and financially in their defense, and not to rest until they shall have been triumphantly acquitted and the foul conspiracy against them and against the labor movement shall have been exposed to the contempt and condemnation of all right-thinking men.

"We denounce the act of the Cloak Manufacturers' Protective association in terminating the Protocol at this critical time, when the organization of the workers was being attacked by the basest element and most sordid interests, when the general situation of the industry was most delicate and critical, and when the few questions in dispute between the union and the association of the employers were pending before the Board of Arbitration and were about to be determined by the board within a few days, as a deliberate provocation, an abandonment of all pretense of fair play and civilized dealings, and a willful challenge to the union.

"We realize more than ever that our protection against all assaults on the part of our employers and our other enemies lies in our organization; that our union alone will shield us from the inhuman exploitation, maltreatment and persecution to which we have been subjected before the general strike of 1910, and we pledge ourselves with renewed determination and enthusiasm to stand loyally and unflinchingly by our union, by our international and by our faithful officers through all the struggles that may come.

"We hereby call upon the General Executive Board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union and upon the Joint Board of the Cloakmakers' union to exert every effort of the organization to maintain the standards of life and work which we have encouraged through years of struggle and sacrifice and we hereby solemnly bind ourselves to support them in such efforts to a man and with all the means and resources at our command.

### COLORADO MILITIA OFFICIALS ACCUSED

Legislature Suppressed Report Charging Cowardice, and Drunkenness.

DENVER, June 26.—It has just been learned that a report of a legislative committee scoring the Colorado National guard was submitted to a special session of the legislature last winter and was suppressed.

This report charged officers of the guard, which was active in the miners' strike, with incompetency, cowardice, drunkenness and even burglary. Lieut. K. E. Linderfelt, who is characterized as "the big black spot on the guard," is accused by this committee of entering certain houses in and about Delagua and Bewind canyon and taking certain articles. Linderfelt was the officer tried and acquitted by court-martial of the charge of breaking a gunstock over the head of Louis Elias, strike leader, who was killed after the Ludlow affray.

#### Identified by Workers.

Pat Burns, Joe Quire and Joe Peghetti, employees of the Victor Fuel company, are said to have identified Linderfelt before Gen. Chase shortly after the alleged offense and in the presence of Major Danks.

"Battery B at its inspection under orders from adjutant general put more than 50 per cent fraudulent men on the floor, paid them \$1 each to attend, and certified them to the United States as bona fide members of the guard, May 27, 1914.

"Battery A had large number of guardsmen, members of other organizations, certified as regular members thereof, with sanction of adjutant general."

This statement by the officers covered the entire guard situation at the time. It enumerates the eight organizations then recently formed in the companies are absolutely partisan and a disgrace to the guard.

Armories are Defective. Nearly all the armories are declared defective. The reports recite: "Serious charges are made by Capt. Hildreth Frost, Colorado Springs, as to an alleged ruse-off by high officers in the guard (subordinate to Gen. Chase) on the site purchased in Colorado Springs for an armory. The state paid \$3,500 for these lots.

"Captain Frost had them appraised and the estimated value ran from \$1,200 to \$1,500. And before these lots can be of any value a retaining wall will be built at a cost of \$1,800. The state will have the lots which have never been used."

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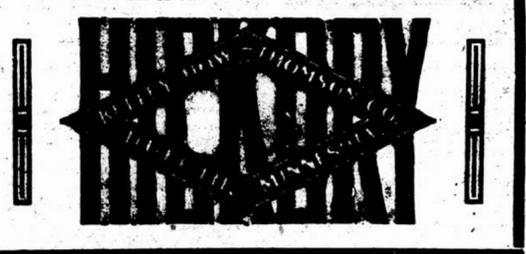
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