

American Federation  
of Labor Series

General  
Correspondence

1906



# AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

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*Washington, D. C. August 3, 1908*

Mr. Cornelius P. Shea, President,  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters,  
#147 East Market Street, Indianapolis, Ind.,

Dear Sir and Brother:

Your favor of July 30th, enclosing a copy of a letter signed by Frank Desmond and Secretary Duff, addressed to Philadelphia, July 27th, came duly to hand.

I beg to say that the statements contained therein are certainly erroneous. As a matter of fact, at the close of the meeting at Atlantic City, where I delivered an address on July 25th, there were in my company, Mr. Frank Peery of the International Elevator Constructors, Mr. John K. Love, Vice-President of the United Association of Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters, etc., and organizer for Atlantic City, John Rothwell. We walked from Odd Fellow's Hall up New York Avenue to the board walk and went direct to the New England Hotel where I was stopping. This is absolutely the fact, without any deviation.

I shall send a copy of this letter to the gentlemen named above, and ask them whether the statements contained therein are true or otherwise, and to write you their version of the matter.

I beg to thank you for the copy of the letter you

Cornelius P. Shea

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR  
sent to Secretary Huff.

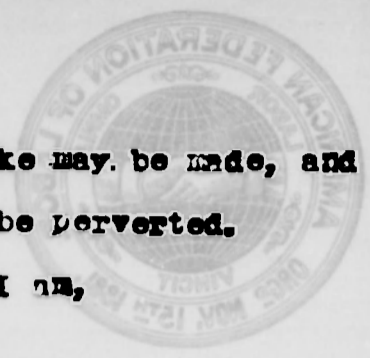
This incident goes to show how a mistake may be made, and how easily a man's convictions and conduct may be perverted.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am,

Fraternally yours,

*Cornelius P. Shea*  
*Saml. Gompers*

President  
American Federation of Labor.



To Labor Editors—Can be released immediately upon receipt.

Dear Sir and Brother—The following is an official statement of an illegal garment workers strike, called by our New York local unions, who were as a result suspended.

B. A. LARGER,  
General Secretary,  
United Garment Workers of America.

### GARMENT WORKERS SUSPEND NINE LOCALS

#### New York Unions Go Out On Strike and Break Agreements Contrary to Orders

The illegal strike of New York garment workers, which resulted in the suspension of nine local unions, including one in Newark, is breaking up, and the United Garment Workers who sought to maintain discipline by a refusal to permit signed agreements to be violated will be victorious.

The unions engaged in the strike, which began on Sunday, July 14, were locals of the United Garment Workers of America. These locals are affiliated with the United Hebrew Trades, the East Side Central organization, the United Garment Workers of America and affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, which recognizes the Central Federated Union as the only central labor organization of New York.

The United Garment Workers executive board advised against the strike on union label shops, because such a strike would be a violation of agreements made with employers. It is said that the United Hebrew Trades urged the union unions to strike, despite the wishes of the executive board. At any rate Local Unions Nos. 2, 3, 154 and 157 ordered strikes in all shops, whether open or union shops.

On July 16 the General Executive Board of the United Garment Workers issued the following to the officers of Locals Nos. 2, 3, 154 and 157:

Dear Sir and Brother:  
As your local union is aware that the General Executive Board has advised against the calling out on strike of shops working on label work, owing to the following clause in the Label Agreement with the Clothing Manufacturers:

Should any differences arise between the firm and the employees, and which can not be settled between them, the said differences shall be submitted to the general officers of the U. G. W. of A. for adjustment. Should this be your satisfaction, the subject in dispute shall be submitted to an umpire to be mutually selected for final decision.

And since your local union has disobeyed the order the General Executive Board is constrained to issue to local unions affected the following notification:

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Having gone out on strike in direct opposition to the wish of the G. E. B., your union is hereby ordered to have its members return to work who are out on strike in label shops by Thursday morning, July 18. Should this order not be complied with your local union shall stand suspended from the U. G. W. of A.

If your union decides to obey the order of the G. E. B., it is prepared to take any or all grievances your members may have against label shops and according to the agreement use its best endeavor to adjust them to your satisfaction.

In addition the G. E. B. is not alone willing to take up the question of the label shops, but should the order be complied with is willing to consider the whole strike situation and do what it can to take hold and organize, etc., to better the conditions of the tailoring industry as a whole in New York.

Yours fraternally,

S. L. LANDERS

on behalf of General Executive Board  
The order contained in the above not being obeyed, the Unions to whom it was issued were suspended by the board.

At the beginning of the trouble the Brooklyn unions, Nos. 55, 57 and 140, refused to take part in the strike. Later these unions reconsidered their former decision and joined the strike, and on July 20 the General Executive Board issued an order similar to the one previously served upon the four New York unions, but which gave the Brooklyn unions until July 22 to return to work, upon penalty of suspension. As in the New York cases the Brooklyn unions failed to comply with the orders of the General Executive Board, and were by that body suspended from membership in the United Garment Workers of America.

Then Local Union 15, of Brownsville, and 28 of Newark, went out in sympathy and violated their agreements, and were in turn also suspended.

The United Hebrew Trades central body is backing up the strikers and there is some talk of organizing a new garment makers' general union to be composed of the suspended locals. Such a move will result in bringing the American Federation of Labor into the fight, with the probable result that all local unions holding charters under American Federation of Labor unions will be ordered to withdraw from the United Hebrew Trades.

After the locals were suspended and went out on strike for two weeks hundreds of members, in fact whole shops, obeyed the order and returned to work and applied for reinstatement and now the United Garment Workers will reorganize all the suspended locals and it will be a blow to them dearly earned.

