

Paternalism, Industrial Democracy, and Unionization in the Cleveland Garment Industry: 1900-1935: The Case of the Printz-Biederman and Joseph and Feiss Companies

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Two models used to avoid unionization efforts associated with the bilateral monopoly collective bargaining model in the Cleveland garment industry during the latter Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century were Frederick Taylor's "Scientific management," employed by the Joseph and Feiss Company and John Leitch's "Industrial Democracy," utilized by the Printz-Biederman Company. At the Printz-Biederman Company, a maker of upscale women's garments, Industrial Democracy provided a collaborative decision-making body for the workers and featured a Cabinet of officers of the company, a Senate of managerial level employees, and a House of Representatives elected directly by fellow workers. At the Joseph and Feiss Company, a manufacturer of men's wear, Scientific management, with its focus on time and motion studies and paternalism, became the model for establishment of wages, shorter work weeks, increased production, provision of health care, and the granting of equal opportunity for advancement to women. Ultimately, however, neither Scientific management nor Industrial Democracy were sufficiently robust to resist the pressures of aggressive labor unions during the Depression of the early 1930's.

Key words: Industrial Democracy; Taylorism; Scientific Management; Cleveland Garment Industry; Printz-Biederman Company; Joseph and Feiss Company; International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU); Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA).

INTRODUCTION

During the latter part of the Nineteenth Century and early part of the Twentieth Century, four movements converged in Cleveland, Ohio that had a significant impact on the city's development as one of the principal garment manufacturing centers of the United States. Those movements were: (1) evolution of the United States garment industry into a significant industrial force; (2) the popularity of "Taylorism" or "Scientific management" after the ideas of Frederick Winslow Taylor; (3) the development of an "Industrial Democracy" movement in the relationship of labor and management; and (4) growth of the unionization movement in the United States.

How the convergence of the four movements affected labor-management relations in the Cleveland garment industry in the early part of the Twentieth Century is examined here. Specific focus is placed on the evolution of labor-management relations at two companies which used significantly different

approaches to their relationships with employees. The use of scientific management and a relatively paternalistic model of labor-management relations was followed by Joseph and Feiss and the Industrial Democracy model was adopted at the Printz-Biederman Company.

The study presented here examines these experiments in labor-management relations as alternatives to the more traditional collective bargaining approach. Collective bargaining typically involves some degree of adversarial relations and countervailing power in a bilateral monopoly environment where the outcome of, for example, wage negotiations initially is indeterminate and dependent on the negotiating skills of the two bargaining parties of labor and management (McConnell, Brue, & McPherson, 2006). The evolution of the Printz-Biederman and Joseph and Feiss labor relations regimes into a standard union-management adversarial model in the 1930s provides insights into both the challenges firms that desire to remain nonunion confront and into the

attractiveness to workers of the traditional collective bargaining model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The garment industry in Cleveland developed in the last half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to become one of the city's leading industries. For nearly a half century over 10,000 Cleveland workers, accounting for 7% of the city's work force, were employed in the garment industry. By the 1920s, Cleveland was a close second to New York as a leading center for garment production in the United States (Garfinkel).

National labor unions, including the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), founded in 1900, and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA), founded in 1914, both of which were originally part of the American Federation of Labor, were aggressive in the first quarter of the twentieth century in trying to organize workers in the Cleveland garment industry. The ACWA tried organizing the Joseph and Feiss Company in the World War I era and the ILGWU was aggressive in trying to organize the Printz-Biederman Company resulting in a bitter strike in 1904. Later, in 1911, five thousand workers at 33 Cleveland firms, under ILGWU leadership, went on strike over union recognition issues (ILGWU).

The theories of Frederick W. Taylor (1911), often referred to as "Taylorism" or "Scientific management," held that increased production efficiency could be obtained by replacing the judgment of individual workers with rules, laws, and mathematical formulas developed by managers. One of the main tools Taylor advocated was that management employ time-and-motion studies which involved the careful timing and recording of the actions taken to perform a particular task. As noted by Jones, George, & Hill (2000) the fundamental objective of Taylorism was to improve efficiency by finding ways to improve each worker's ability to perform a particular task.

According to Garfinkel, the threat of unionization and the influence of "Scientific Management" caused the Joseph and Feiss Company to integrate "Scientific Management" with a form of paternalism. In order to have a form of control over the workers, keep turnover rates low, and allow them to work at high levels of efficiency, Joseph and Feiss managers closely supervised the actions of their

employees. In return, the company provided benefits including recreational activities for its employees by having hour long "recesses" where males and females were split up into different sports and having employees share in a bonuses program and opportunities for advancement (Haake, 1921).

Another way firms dealt with the threat of unionization was to embrace the concept of Industrial Democracy which was described and advocated by the labor theorist John Leitch (1919) and adopted by the Printz-Biederman Company. Industrial Democracy was the organizing of a factory into a little democratic state with representative government having both legislative and executive components. A "Cabinet" would consist of the executive officers of the company. A "Senate" would be a non-elected body of the lower-level executives, department heads, and foremen; i.e., all those who have authority over the workers. The "House of Representatives" would be the popular body of the government elected by all the workers. Wage adjustments, for example, would first be considered by the House of Representatives, then the Senate, and then passed to the Cabinet for final approval. The objective was to achieve justice in the work place which, according to Leitch, encompassed cooperation, economy, energy, and service or, what he called the "Square Deal."

The question raised here is, why did the bilateral monopoly bargaining model prove to be more robust and more consistent with worker interests than the Scientific Management/Paternalistic model, referred to as the Industrial Psychology model by Alfred Haake (1921), and the Industrial Democracy model? For nearly two decades these labor relations models appeared to address the needs of their constituencies. However, the pressures of the Great Depression and labor unions led to abandonment of these two experiments and ushered in a new era of traditional bilateral bargaining at both companies. The pedagogical approach we follow to examine this question is a descriptive analysis of the labor relations in the Cleveland garment industry in the early 20th Century, particularly at the Printz-Biederman and Joseph and Feiss firms.

GARMENT INDUSTRY LABOR ORGANIZING PRE WORLD WAR I

The approaches to labor relations that evolved in the Cleveland garment industry through both Industrial Democracy and paternalism occurred in the aftermath of significant labor strife in the needle trades in 1909, 1910 and 1911. Strikes by garment workers in New York, Chicago, and Cleveland established an environment that emboldened workers but at the same time caused employers in the garment industry to seek alternative labor relations models to what was experienced in the 1909 to 1911 period.

Shirtwaist makers were involved in a New York City strike often referred to as the "Uprising of the 20,000" in November 1909 ("Facing Starvation," 1909; "Girl Strikers," 1909). Most of the strikers (actually closer to 30,000) were women garment workers who ultimately did win some concessions from garment industry firms including a reduction in the work week to 53 hours ("Shirtwaist Girls," 1910). However, Schofield (1984) notes that in large part the strike was not successful because the ILGWU called off the strike on February 13, 1910, when most of the New York Industry was operating at full capacity in spite of the strike.

In the summer of 1910, nearly 60,000 members of the ILGWU, and Shirtwaist Makers Union struck the firms belonging to the New York Cloak, Suit, and Shirt Manufacturers' Protective Association (Levey, 1960). This strike resulted in the Protocol of Peace which was the first collective agreement in the garment industry. The Protocol called for a wage settlement and assurance that hiring would be on a preferential basis for union members (Scharf, 1984).

Following the strikes in New York, 40,000 garment workers struck Chicago men's garment firms for four and a half months beginning September 22, 1910 (Weiler, 1984).

The Chicago strike, which was over wages related to piece rates, marked the start for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA) and also showcased the organizational talents of its leader, Sidney Hillman, the first president of the ACWA.

The Hart, Schaffner, and Marx Company became one of the first firms to settle with workers when they signed what was, one of the most comprehensive bargaining agreements in the clothing industry at the time ("Chicago Garment Workers' Strike"). Further, by 1915,

the majority of Hart, Schaffner, and Marx employees became members of the ACWA, the union whose founding was an outgrowth of the Chicago strike.

THE CLEVELAND 1911 GARMENT WORKERS STRIKE

On June 6, 1911, 4,000 garment workers struck Cleveland garment manufacturers to improve working conditions. Worker demands included: a 50 hour work week with Saturday afternoons and Sundays off; that no more than two hours of overtime per day be allowed; double pay for overtime; there be no charges for use of machines, silk or cotton; and a closed shop ("Strike to Go On," 1911). The employers rejected all of the workers' requests ("The Garment Workers Strike of 1911").

The Cleveland Cloak Manufacturers Association, including The John Anisfield Company, The H. Black Company, The Cohen Goodman Company, The Greenhut Cloak Company, The Printz-Biederman Company, Schwarz, Huebschman & Forney, M.T. Silver & Company, and The Sunshine Cloak and Shirt Company, ran an advertisement in the June 10, 1911, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* refuting charges that sweatshop conditions existed in the Cleveland garment shops. The Cleveland manufacturers claimed they had led the movement for better conditions in the industry including 54 hours per week working hours and Saturdays as half-holidays. The manufacturers also noted that Cleveland wages on a yearly basis were better than any other city, including New York. They stated Cleveland workers were kept busy nine to eleven months per year whereas New York workers had employment for only six months per year.

The 1911 strike in Cleveland was characterized by considerable violence. *Cleveland Plain Dealer* articles on June 10, June 11, June 13, June 28, July 20, July 25, and August 17, 1911, described riots and other acts of violence associated with the strike including the death of a worker and the shooting of an 11 year old girl whose father was a garment company guard. As the strike entered a fourth month in September, the workers were asked by secret ballot whether they wanted to continue the strike. On September 11, 1911, by a ratio of 27 to 1, workers voted to continue the strike. However, the manufacturers claimed they had beaten the strike by using strikebreakers, some of whom came in from New York, and that

output for the season was running at 60 to 90 percent of prior years ("Strike to Go On," 1911).

The Cleveland Garment Workers strike of 1911 ended, at best, in disappointment for the workers. The ILGWU convention on October 15th noted that union rules placed a limit on how long a strike could be funded and that after nineteen weeks the Cleveland workers had exceeded the limit. On October 21st, 1911, without taking a vote, for all practical purposes the Cleveland garment workers strike came to an end. Although the ILGWU never officially called the strike off, officers of the union advised strikers to use their discretion about returning to work ("No Decision," 1911; "Strike Ended," 1911). Other than a few workers who worked for small independent shops that had settled early in the strike, the garment workers went back to the factories without any of their demands being fulfilled (Christman, 1992).

One of the interesting dimensions of the Cleveland Garment Workers Strike of 1911 was the role of women—a topic explored in some depth by Scharf (1984) and Christman (1992). About a third of the striking garment workers in Cleveland were women who were employed in 33 shops of varying size. During the strike, women were highly visible and took their place alongside the men on picket lines and in demonstrations (Scharf, 1984).

The 1911 strike in Cleveland was considered a failure by many historians. Christman (1992), however, concludes its lasting legacy is evident in the role that women played in the strike. Specifically, Christman concludes that the strikers, male and female, achieved victories that are perhaps less tangible than union recognition and pay increases. Those victories included the development of a fighting spirit among the workers. That fighting spirit could be evidenced in both the men and women and especially in the commitment made by women to the ideals of the strike.

The Cleveland Garment Workers Strike of 1911, in spite of its apparent failure, apparently alerted at least some Cleveland garment firms to the pressures developing within the labor movement. Here we examine how two Cleveland firms, one in the women's cloak and suit business, The Printz-Biederman Company, and one in the men's suit business, The Joseph and Feiss Company, responded in unique but quite different ways to the evolving labor environment.

COMPANY PROFILES:

THE PRINTZ-BIEDERMAN COMPANY

The Printz-Biederman Company was founded in 1893 by Moritz Printz, a native of Austria who had been head designer of the women's cloak manufacturer D. Black & Company, his sons Michael and Alexander, and his son-in-law Joseph Biederman. The original location of the firm was in a loft at 102 St. Clair Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio. Originally called Printz-Biederman & Company, the firm later changed its name to The Printz-Biederman Company (Printz-Biederman Co., 1933).

As it expanded, the company moved to larger facilities on St. Clair Avenue and then in 1904 to the corner of Lakeside Avenue and West 6th Street. In 1934, Printz-Biederman took a long-term lease on and renovated a building owned by what was then known as the Case School of Applied Science at 1800-1900 East 61st Street in Cleveland. At the time, the firm employed over 1,000 men and women ("Observes 41st Birthday," 1934). In addition to the Cleveland plant, a branch factory was operated in Lorain, Ohio (Printz-Biederman Co., 1933).

In 1954 control passed from the Printz family when Max Reiter took over the company. Reiter had been co-founder of Ritmore Sportswear Company until 1953 when his partner, Maurice Saltzman, bought him out and the firm became Bobbie Brooks, Inc. At the time of Reiter's purchase of Printz-Biederman, the company had 1000 employees and annual sales of \$8 million. Business declined during the 1960s and 1970s and when Printz-Biederman closed in 1978 it employed only 40 Cleveland workers (Printz-Biederman Co., *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*).

THE JOSEPH AND FEISS COMPANY

The Joseph and Feiss Company began as a small general store, Koch and Loeb, in Meadville, Pennsylvania. In 1845 founder Kaufman Koch moved the store to 82 Superior Street in Cleveland, Ohio, and sold a general line of men's and boys' clothing (Berman & Harrison, 1977). Over the course of the next six decades, the company changed names and partners a number of times, yet continued to produce men's garments. After numerous name changes, the company stabilized as Joseph and Feiss in 1907, under the leadership of Isaac and Moritz Joseph and Julius Feiss (Berman & Harrison, 1977).

The business was moved to a new location in Cleveland at 2149 West 53rd Street in 1920, the year when the company formally adopted the "Clothcraft" brand name. Under the Clothcraft name, the Joseph and Feiss Company generated a steady base of sales by introducing a low priced attractive men's product, the \$15 blue serge suit ("Joseph and Feiss").

In 1966, the Joseph and Feiss Company merged with the Phillips-Van Heusen Corp. at which time it employed close to 1,200 workers (Hoven, 2007). Because of this merger, the Joseph and Feiss Company produced under the Cricketeer and Country Britches label and expanded its line by producing women's clothing in the 1980's. ("Joseph and Feiss").

In 1989, the Joseph and Feiss Company was acquired by the West German company, Hugo Boss AG, in a deal worth close to \$150 million ("Company News," 1989). In 1997, the Joseph and Feiss Company, along with nearly 450 employees, moved from their West 53rd Street location to their distribution center on Tiedeman Road in Brooklyn, Ohio ("Joseph and Feiss"). At present, the company still produces suits, sports coats, and slacks under the Hugo Boss brand.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY AND PATERNALISM: STRUCTURE AND GOALS

Printz-Biederman and Joseph and Feiss, although in different segments of the garment industry, were similar in that they were both closely held and managed family owned, entrepreneurial firms. While the two garment firms sought to avoid union organization of their

work force, they took quite different approaches to deal with that challenge.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY AND THE PRINTZ-BIEDERMAN COMPANY

In 1914, John Leitch sold his ideas on Industrial Democracy to the Printz-Biederman Company (Carpenter, 1921). Either the Senate or the House could initiate any measure it wished. When a measure was passed by one house, it went to the other for approval, rejection, or amendment. If there were amendments, a conference committee considered the issue and made a recommendation to both houses. The Cabinet retained the right to veto the measure, but five years after adoption of the Industrial Democracy model of labor-management relations, Alexander Printz was able to boast that the veto had never been exercised (Printz, 1919).

SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT, PATERNALISM, AND THE JOSEPH AND FEISS COMPANY

When Richard A. Feiss became Vice President in 1905, the Joseph and Feiss Company changed its organizational structure and manufacturing operations. Richard Feiss, a devotee of the theories of scientific management and a president of the Taylor Society, set out to demonstrate how to apply Taylor's theories to the seasonal and changeable clothing industry (Goldberg, 1992).

Although the implementation of scientific management was later, the company's initial efforts to use the system brought about numerous problems. In 1909, Joseph and Feiss suffered one of the earliest walkouts involving scientific management; workers protested wage cuts and work rules (Goldberg, 1992). Although this walkout was quickly resolved, it was understood that the firm would have to change their system of scientific management.

Feiss understood that along with scientific management, welfare practices (paternalism) must be adopted to make the workforce more productive. To ensure that welfare practices were an integral part of the new management philosophy, Feiss created the Employment and Service Department in 1913 and hired Mary Barnett Gilson, a graduate from Wellesley College, and a fellow pioneer of the

scientific management field, to head the department (Goldberg, 1992).

The Industrial Democracy and Scientific Management/Industrial Psychology models, therefore, represented distinctly different methods of handling labor-management relations. The Printz-Biederman Industrial Democracy structure dealt primarily with the day-to-day issues workers and management confronted in the plant. The Joseph and Feiss Scientific Management/Industrial Psychology structure was designed to manage not only the work place environment but the general life-styles of the workers as well.

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY AND PATERNALISM: IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

Although the Industrial Democracy and Scientific Management/Industrial Psychology experiments lasted about 20 years, there were problems implementing and administering the two programs. Likewise, the issue of union organizing attempts never completely disappeared as the Cleveland garment industry confronted periodic episodes of labor strife.

At Printz-Biederman Senate operations became problematic relatively early in the company's experience with Industrial Democracy. In a May 11, 1915 message to the Senate, its Chairman, I. K. Heller, reported Senate work had been carried on with difficulty. Heller stated that lack of attendance and interest in Senate meetings by department heads shirking their Senate responsibilities was impeding the work of the Senate and company. In November 1918, the Senate was replaced by a Planning Board consisting of six members (Carpenter, 1921). The Planning Board consisted of six management personnel from several departments (Printz, 1919).

John Leitch, the originator of the Industrial Democracy idea, was made an honorary member of the Printz-Biederman House of Representatives. At the October 22, 1914 meeting of The House, Leitch made a plea to the members to be leaders of the workers but to be prepared to take criticism for their actions as well. Building on the four cornerstones of Justice, Energy, Economy, and Service, Leitch told the House that they will build steadier work, better wages, and better business for the whole institution.

The issue of unionization of the workers became obvious in remarks by both Leitch and company president, Alexander Printz, at November 1914 meetings of the House. Leitch believed strikes could be avoided if conditions were made so good that the workers would not want to go on strike (House Minutes, November 31, 1914).

In addressing the House on November 22, 1914, Alexander Printz claimed ILGWU representatives were saying the company's Industrial Democracy plan was an attempt of the management to deceive the workers. Printz stressed the importance of the House gaining the confidence of the workers to make their plan work. Specifically, he stated that the Industrial Democracy organization was a method by which representatives of the workers could reach company officials and that anything of a square deal nature will get square deal consideration. His views on the union were clear in the following statement:

Just bear in mind that we want to run our affairs and shall run this organization without any outside influence whatever (House Minutes, November 25, 1914).

Printz also recommended the creation of a Betterment Committee of members of the House and Senate to handle suggestions and complaints of the workers. The Betterment Committee could then take those issues up with the Cabinet. At Printz's suggestion, a Betterment Committee was formed consisting of three Senators and three Representatives (House Minutes, November 25, 1914). The Betterment Committee became an institution that remained in existence for about twenty years when it was replaced by a union collective bargaining agreement.

Another committee created by the House was the Wage-Rate Committee consisting of one member from each of the large factory departments and one member representing the company. Its functions were to recommend and pass upon general changes in wages, set standards for wage ranges in the various operations based on skill, length of service, and attendance, sit with the Planning Board to pass on individual increases, hear complaints of workers, review cases referred by superintendents, and recommend changes in operations and positions (Printz, 1919).

A major issue that arose in 1915 was a recommendation initiated by the cutters that the work week be reduced from 49 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 48 hours. The request, which resulted in the formation of a 48 Hour Week Committee, received considerable attention by the House, according to its May 20, 1915 and June 10, 1915 minutes, and was adopted that summer. On June 1, 1915, the 48 Hour Week Committee laid out a set of rules that would eliminate shirking and make the 48 hour week a workable concept (Leitch, 1919).

In promoting the virtues of his Industrial Democracy concept, Leitch illustrated an incident that occurred in 1915 that demonstrated the commitment of the company and its employees to the Industrial Democracy experiment. In September 1915, the ILGWU decided to unionize Cleveland and to start with Printz-Biederman. The employees heard of the ILGWU's plan through the newspapers. The Senate and House then passed a resolution that was ratified by a mass meeting of the employees (Leitch, 1919). The resolution included the following:

Resolved that we, the employees of The Printz Biederman Company, hereby express our strong disapproval of the action taken by an outside organization as shown in the proposed demand referred to in [a] newspaper article, and be it further received that we tender to our Company our most earnest and sincere support for the present most fair methods of conducting the business. If we knew any stronger language of expressing our full satisfaction we would use it.

According to Leitch, the ILGWU organizers left town that night. They did not present any demands to the management (Leitch, 1919). However, the ILGWU had not given up on Cleveland and the next several years proved to be a major challenge for Leitch's concept of Industrial Democracy.

The ILGWU called a general strike against the Cleveland garment manufacturers on July 23, 1918 ("Two Strikes," 1918). The union demanded union recognition and a wage increase.

In response to inflationary pressures during World War I, the management of Printz-Biederman introduced a complex high-cost-of-living bonus system. The amount of this bonus

was to vary from month to month based on a price index published by the Bradstreet organization. The bonus was put into a separate envelope so that employees would not confuse it with their regular pay. This was separate from a production bonus system, which paid a bonus for production in excess of a bonus. However, the cost-of-living bonus complicated workers' understanding of the pay system and caused them to request the bonus be converted into a wage increase (Carpenter, 1921). Subsequently, on July 30, 1918, the company's Wage Rate Committee offered a plan for revision of the bonus system ("The Wage Rate Committee," 1919). The proposal to the House was that a 12 percent wage increase be instituted instead of the high-cost-of-living bonus. The House agreed and accompanied this bill with a statement of intent to ask for wage increases from time to time to correspond to the rate of inflation (Carpenter, 1921).

During this period, though, the ILGWU was active in Cleveland and exploited the confusion of Printz-Biederman employees over the bonus system by criticizing the Industrial Democracy system. The House held a discussion on the situation and reminded management of the problem the rising cost of living posed for workers and their families. It also was pointed out to management that wages in the garment industry in New York were higher than in Cleveland. The management counter argument was that the industry in New York was seasonal and that with the cooperation of the employees in the Industrial Democracy system and careful planning, seasonal unemployment had been avoided. Over the year, management argued that the employees made more money than their New York counterparts because unemployment was avoided (Carpenter, 1921).

The result of these deliberations in the House was the issuing of a statement listing the achievements of the Industrial Democracy system including the reducing of working hours to 48 hours per week and achieving four wage increases in two years. The House statement then included the following:

By threatening to call a strike without our approval you are trying to change our conditions which we repeat are entirely satisfactory. Certainly, if your union is sincere in the claim that it is trying to assist the workers, it can prove it by leaving us alone (Printz, 1919).

The workers backed up their statement by staying on the job while most of the 39 garment factories in Cleveland had to curtail operations because of the strike. At Printz-Biederman, all but seven of 950 employees remained at work (Printz, 1919).

The Cleveland garment workers strike was settled on August 12, 1918, through the arbitration efforts of Newton D. Baker, a former Cleveland mayor who was then United States Secretary of War ("Arbitration of Strike," 1918). Baker requested both sides to submit reports to a board of three referees because the large Cleveland firms were involved in making garments for the war effort and he did not want a prolonged work stoppage. The referees met with union and management including a representative from Printz-Biederman at Hanover, New Hampshire. The decision of the referees was to be known as the Hanover Decision and involved a wage increase, established the principle of collective bargaining in the Cleveland garment industry, applied the general principles of the War Labor Board which recognized the workers' right to organize and announced that piece rates were to be settled by the employers ("The International Ladies' Garment Workers Union," 2008).

The Printz-Biederman representative at the meeting was given instructions to request that its plant be excluded from the arbitration. Although the Printz-Biederman Company was not originally awarded exclusion, the House appealed and obtained a written statement that the plant was not included (Printz, 1919).

The issue of the 1918 strike became a problem for Printz-Biederman even though only a very small number of workers walked off the job. Following the strike, the House expelled the union sympathizers and the company discharged them. As a result, the company was brought before the War Labor Board on charges of discriminating against trade unionists. The company had a narrow escape when its defense was accepted that the workers were dismissed for disloyalty to the existing organization of the shop and not for their trade union activities.

Another issue with which the company had to contend was renewed attacks by the union on the concept of Industrial Democracy and the bonus system. The union claimed the company used the bonus system as a speed up tool that would lead to premature old age and shortened lives for the workers. To investigate this accusation, the House and management engaged a physiologist from Johns Hopkins

University who determined that the accusations were without merit (Carpenter, 1921).

During this period the bonus system continued to be a source of tension and the Wage Rate Committee decided to work with the Planning Board to devise a more satisfactory bonus system. After some deliberation, the Wage Rate Committee and management agreed on a bonus system that had two levels—a production bonus and a year of continuous service bonus. That system was effective July 23, 1919 (Carpenter, 1921).

The union persisted in pressuring Printz-Biederman in 1920. In a March 29, 1920 letter to the House by M. Perlstein, Manager of the Cleveland Ladies Garment Workers' Union, the union pointed out it had reached a treaty of peace with the Cleveland Garment Manufacturers' Association and that Printz-Biederman was the only company not part of the agreement. Perlstein suggested that the House meet with representatives of the union to have a discussion to "work out relations based on sound principles whereby capital and labor should really begin to understand each other [and] work together for the mutual benefit." Perlstein went on to accuse the House and the company of being selfish and trying to profit from being isolated. The House responded with a letter to Perlstein stating the Printz-Biederman collective bargaining arrangement was satisfactory, that working conditions and earnings at the company had constantly improved and asked that the ILGWU not try again to organize the company's workers (Perlstein, 1920).

Although there is an absence of detailed information on labor relations at the company during the 1920s, wording in the employment contracts that its employees had to sign during the 1920s suggests the company was striving to preclude any union activity. The company's "Contract of Employment" read in part:

Since both parties to this Contract believe that the Constitution of the House of Representatives, its By-Laws and Working Rules provide ample means for adjusting any differences that may arise between them, they agree that neither has nor will make any contract that will interfere with the operation of the Constitution, said By-Laws or working Rules or any

employment contract... (*Contract of Employment*).

Traditional collective bargaining between unions and management typically results in a contract. Therefore, the wording in this Printz-Biederman "Contract of Employment" could be interpreted as putting an employee who attempts to institute a union contract in violation of his or her employment agreement with the company.

Printz-Biederman appears to have faced continual pressure from the ILGWU as it experimented with Industrial Democracy. By contrast, for a period of time, the implementation of the Scientific Management/Industrial Psychology model at Joseph and Feiss during the second decade of the twentieth century appears to have been pressured by fewer outside forces.

In 1916, a study was conducted to examine the role scientific management had on Joseph and Feiss between 1910 and 1915. The study concluded the overall cost of production had decreased, as had the turnover rates in the company's labor force. Between 1910 and 1914, the percentage of labor turnovers at Joseph and Feiss had dramatically decreased from 150.3% to 33.5% ("Anti-Time Study Legislation," 1916). Lay-off rates became progressively lower by using scientific management, and by standardizing the style of men's suits so that there was a constant demand. Correspondingly, standardizing the style of the suit cut down on the costs of production, allowed for direct sales (instead of taking orders), and also allowed for a year-round market (Commons, 1920).

Once the ideas of scientific management were known to the employees and implemented, the management applied a piece-rate work system with bonuses to further encourage efficiency in the workplace. According to the article, "Scientific management in Action" (1921), during an employee's first week, wages started at \$.35 an hour. The lower wage, known as a "retainer," was applied to cover the production that would be lost due to job training. The second week's wages would increase to \$.45 an hour and the maximum standard rate during the early 1920's was \$.55.

In addition, the \$.55 per hour wage could increase through bonuses by completing quality work and reaching the production goals. Both bonuses were an additional 15 percent of the hourly wage (a total of a 30 percent bonus in

addition to the \$.55 wage). Another \$.50 could be added daily for regular attendance. In total, an employee could earn up to \$.715 an hour, or \$6.72 per day, including the attendance bonus (*Scientific Management in Action*, 1921).

The company continually updated its employees on the goals of scientific management in order to keep the company one of the most efficient clothing shops in the region. In a memo to all foremen and apprentices, a tentative outline of "What a Clothcraft Guide Ought to Know" (1921), was issued, and included sections on the general policies of scientific management, labor policies, and manufacturing organizations. These policies included Joseph and Feiss becoming one of the firms to establish the five-day work week in 1917. In an article in *The New York Times*, Richard Feiss described four of the advantages of running a five-day work week. These advantages included: saving power; reducing absenteeism and labor turnover; gaining new sources of labor (due to the 5 day week), and having a more balanced production with definite quotas ("Ford's 5-Day Week," 1922).

Alongside scientific management, Joseph and Feiss also understood that welfare practices, or paternalism, must be utilized to make the workplace more efficient. Under the practices of paternalism, employees worked under conditions that encouraged greater collaboration and a higher morale.

All matters of employee welfare were handled by Mary Gilson, head of the Employment and Service Department (known in short as the Service Department). The Service Department was in charge of all hiring and firing matters which differed from prevailing practice at other companies which often left such matters in the hands of foremen or supervisors. Absentee or tardy employees were personally investigated by the Service Department and the investigations would sometimes be carried on in the home. All other matters including recreation, libraries, and sanitary conditions were also taken care of by the Service Department (*The Clothcraft Shops*).

In its report for 1914, the Service Department stated its personal standards for workers. Those standards noted that truly efficient persons would prefer a "clean, healthy body and plain, businesslike clothes to untidiness, powder, jewelry...and other evidence of false ideals." However, in time the cleanliness standards for workers became the

basis for authoritarian work practices and intrusion into personal matters.

Aside from the sanitation and appearance of workers, the Service Department's 1914 Report also included items beneficial to the workers such as \$.10 boxed lunches for the workers to maintain an affordable and healthy diet. Clean and attractive lunchrooms, large enough to fit the entire workforce at one time, were also available separately for men and women (*The Clothcraft Shops*).

Exercise and games, as pointed out in the report in 1914, were a pivotal part of the work day for the employees. Noon games were conducted such as baseball, tag, crack the whip, cards, and many others. This "play hour" was kept separate for the males and females, and sports teams (such as women's baseball) were often held in high regard.

On Wednesdays at noon, an orchestra would play and a dance was held for the employees. Management believed that an hour a day of exercise and games would only continue to increase the cooperation and team spirit among employees. On Wednesday evenings, all employees were invited to a "party," along with their friends and family. There also was a company choir which would sing at these parties (*Service Department of the Joseph and Feiss Company's Report, 1914*).

Medical services were another priority because the executives believed attendance was vital; therefore, spending more money in this area paid off in having fewer sick days taken by the employees. For example, there was an operating room used jointly by the oculist, physician, and dentist. The oculist and surgeon would spend one day a week at the office and the physician would be at the office two days a week (*The Clothcraft Shops*).

Vacations were also important. For the first week in September, factory work would be suspended, allowing workers to enjoy themselves and become refreshed and ready to work hard again. Corresponding with the paid week of vacation, the Service Department would investigate vacation spots and would then post bulletins advertising and picturing the pleasures of various places (*Clothcraft Shop*).

Among the company's paternalistic activities was the promotion of the use of a company bank, the Penny Savings Bank, which served as an encouragement to thrift (*The Clothcraft Shops*). Along with the Penny Savings Bank, workers enjoyed a pension plan. The pension plan was implemented after an

individual's first year at the company.

Employees were given \$.05 per day that was applied to a pension fund and this amount increased every year up to \$1.50 per day. In total, the maximum amount of money attained at the end of thirty years service with the company was approximately \$8,000 ("Clothing Company Uses," 1928).

In order to encourage education, the company hired five public school teachers to come on Thursdays after work to teach English to foreign employees. The Cleveland Board of Education paid these costs, making sure there would be no additional monetary burdens for the workers (*The Clothcraft Shops*).

Although the control exercised by the executives became "authoritative" in their attempts to improve the workplace, the overall ideas of Paternalism were revolutionary at the time (Goldberg, 1992). Implementing Paternalism in the workplace improved cooperation, morale, and gave the employees a sense of "team spirit," which all helped to improve the quality of product from the Joseph and Feiss Company.

The paternalistic approach to employee relations extended to the treatment of female employees. From its early years, Joseph and Feiss held women employees in relatively high regard. The management found that inequalities in pay led women to become disinterested and dissatisfied with their jobs; as a result, production and the overall morale of the shop would decrease. Instead, "it was recognized that work must be paid for in accordance with the difficulty involved, the skill required, the degree of agreeableness or disagreeableness and the importance" (Commons, 1920).

According to an article by John R. Commons, "Lizzie Likes her Job" (1920), research was conducted to determine fair and proper wages for different types of work. Although the study showed there was still a wage disparity, these salaries were thought to be fair and in accordance with the difficulty of the work. Women found such wages high enough to keep them at the firm, and to maintain a high morale.

Women, like men, were able to attain executive positions as well. The company did not take gender or experience into consideration as much as a college degree. Women with college degrees, consequently, were able to move up the ranks as quickly as men. By 1920, twenty-one of the firm's forty-six supervisors

were women; a remarkable feat for any American industry in that era (Goldberg, 1992).

Although the Industrial Democracy and Scientific Management/Paternalism models differed in their structure and implementation, they both appear to have met with significant employee approval through the early 1920s. Printz-Biederman employees resisted aggressively ILGWU attempts to organize them. The Joseph and Feiss paternalism provided a relatively protected and comfortable work environment for its workers. However, a combination of national economic trends and changing conditions created an environment in the late 1920s and early 1930s that made both firms vulnerable to union organization.

UNION RECOGNITION

Unions representing the needle trades became particularly aggressive in Cleveland in the early 1930s as general economic conditions deteriorated. For example, in early 1933, relations between the ILGWU and Cleveland garment manufacturers were particularly tense. The employers association, which had up until then dealt collectively with the union, disbanded and the employers were not inclined to sign new union agreements ("Garment Union Head," 1933).

David Dubinsky, president of the ILGWU, visited Cleveland on several occasions and alleged sweat-shop conditions existed in the Cleveland plants ("Postpones Strike," 1933). The ILGWU threatened to strike the non-union Cleveland garment firms in 1933 over working conditions, wages, adherence to the closed shop, and the farming-out of work to other shops ("Two Strikes In Cleveland," 1933). After some postponements, the ILGWU voted to have a general strike in January 1934 on the grounds that efforts to secure an agreement with the manufacturers had failed (Lavelle, 1934a). In the end, the strike was called off because an agreement was reached through the arbitration efforts of Newton D. Baker. In the settlement, the manufacturers agreed to a wage increase, absorption of unemployed members of the union, and the closed shop ("Garment Workers Sign," 1934).

It was in this environment of increased tension between the ILGWU and the Cleveland garment manufacturers that Printz-Biederman found itself the target of aggressive organizing attempts by the ILGWU after nearly twenty years

of operations under the Leitch Industrial Democracy model. In July 1934, the cutters at Printz-Biederman joined the ILGWU ("Cutters Join Union," 1934). Then, on August 25, 1934, Abraham Katovsky, Vice President of the ILGWU for the Cleveland area wrote a letter to Alexander Printz requesting that the cutters be paid union wage scales and be given back pay to January 17, 1934 when the scales went into effect. Katovsky also accused the company of deliberately tightening work standards in order to reduce wages and on infringing upon the rights of workers under Section 7A of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) which gave employees the right to organize and bargain collectively.

On September 7, 1934, Printz responded to Katovsky stating the company was living up to its requirements under the NIRA and the Code of the Cloak and Suit Industry which had been enacted under the law. On the matter of a tightening of standards, Printz stated the piece-rates being paid were based on time studies ratified by collective agreement under the Industrial Democracy framework. In a September 28, 1934, letter to the union, Printz pointed out that the company's employees had entered into a collective agreement through the Betterment Committee on July 10, 1934, and were bound by that agreement.

Several months later, on January 25, 1935, a meeting was held between Alexander Printz and Abraham Katovsky to discuss the issues of mutual concern. The minutes of that January 25, 1935, meeting reveal that for the first time Printz began to realize that the fundamental relationships between labor and management were in the process of changing. At one point in the meeting he stated; "The only agreement I will make with you is that when my agreement expires in July [1935], the employees will be free to vote for yours."

Katovsky held that giving the workers the right to vote on joining the union after July 10, 1935, would not work because their minds had been poisoned against the union by the company. What Katovsky wanted from Printz was an agreement that as of July 10, 1935, the union would be the bargaining agent for all workers—whether union or non-union and that the issue of a closed shop be part of a board of arbitration. The first steps toward such an agreement began with a series of meetings between Alexander Printz and David Dubinsky, President of the ILGWU.

Before the meetings with Dubinsky, Printz contacted Frances Perkins, the Roosevelt Administration's Secretary of Labor, to request assistance in resolving major issues between the company and the ILGWU. Perkins assigned A.L. Faulkner, a Department of Labor conciliator, to the case. A strike at Printz-Biederman was averted when Printz and Dubinsky agreed to meet in Washington, D.C., accompanied by Katovsky and Faulkner ("Threatened Strike," 1935).

Following the meeting with Dubinsky, Printz addressed his employees in the morning of February 4, 1935. Printz expressed confidence in the loyalty and sense of justice of the employees. He reviewed for the employees the meetings he had with Katovsky, Dubinsky, and Faulkner in Washington on February 2 and 3, 1935. He then proposed a possible union organization scheme. Printz offered to present a proposition to Dubinsky that the Printz-Biederman Company be given a charter by the AF of L and: "That the president and officers be elected by your votes...and that it have no connection with Mr. Katovsky and his local union." (All of the other ladies garment firms in Cleveland at that time were organized under a single local of the ILGWU.) Printz noted he had no idea whether this plan would be acceptable to Dubinsky. However, he also proposed that the drafting of the plan be put in the hands of Dr. Arthur Rubin of the University of Chicago's Economics Department. He (Printz) was willing to trust Rubin if Dubinsky would do so as well.

Printz recognized that action to avoid a strike was necessary and that he had to give the proposed plan to Dubinsky that day (February 4, 1935). Therefore, he asked the workers to vote on it. In a secret ballot vote, 206 people favored the plan suggested by Printz and only eight were against it.

The meeting with employees adjourned at 12:30 pm on February 4, 1935, and at 1:45 pm that day, Printz telegraphed Dubinsky with the proposal. After a series of telegram exchanges, Dubinsky and Printz agreed to meet in New York on February 6, 1935, along with Dr. Rubin, A.L. Faulkner, and Hugh L. Kerwin, Director of the U.S. Conciliation Service. The result of this meeting included an ILGWU agreement:

to establish in the City of Cleveland a separate local Union to be under the sole supervision of the General Executive Board of the said International Union for the workers employed in the

shops of Printz, Biederman Co. (*Agreement*, 1935).

After nearly a third of a century of trying, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union had organized the workers at the Printz-Biederman Company. In so doing, the Industrial Democracy experiment of 1914 had given way to another, unique at the time, experiment of a separate local of the ILGWU for the Printz-Biederman shops.

Whereas Printz-Biederman had felt pressure from the ILGWU from the early 1900s, under the "open shop" of Joseph and Feiss, pressure from organized labor had been minimal for many years. However, during the 1920s, problems arose within the company and in the management. By 1925, net earnings had plummeted by nearly half. In turn, the Joseph and Feiss Company was unable to pay its preferred dividends for the first time. For these reasons, dissension among the executives regarding the high costs of the Employment and Service department began. Gilson, head of the department, resigned in 1924 after facing severe cuts in the welfare programs and a reduction in her influence. Additionally, Richard Feiss was under attack by the other executives of the company, specifically his father Julius and brother Paul, who argued that scientific management had run its course in the company. He resigned in 1925. Although the Joseph and Feiss Company recovered quickly from these mid-1920s problems, and enjoyed renewed growth with most of its managerial infrastructure and many of its welfare programs intact, the executive reorganization was a blow to the application of scientific management (Goldberg, 1992).

The atmosphere between employee and employer became progressively more hostile and in August of 1933, more than 1,000 Joseph and Feiss and Richmond Brothers (another Cleveland firm) employees were urged to join clothing workers unions ("Urge 1,000," 1933). The union movement at Joseph and Feiss began in earnest in March 1934 when an employee, John Melda, claimed at an Amalgamated Clothing Workers meeting that he was discharged for his union activities. The meeting unanimously voted for a committee to call on the management of Joseph and Feiss to demand the reinstatement of Melda. Further, the ACWA agreed decisive action would be taken if any other workers were fired for union activities ("Says He Was Fired," 1934).

On March 14, the ACWA led the Joseph and Feiss employees on a walkout ("Peaceful Plan," 1934). Among the demands of the 1,800 Joseph and Feiss strikers were a 25 per cent wage increase, recognition of the union, and the reinstatement of Melda (Lavelle, 1934b). Although only lasting a few days, the workers maintained a sturdy picket line while a payroll loss at the rate of \$35,000 weekly was endured ("Garment Strike Near Settlement," 1934).

In its attempts to settle the strike, Joseph and Feiss became one of the first firms to ask the Cleveland Regional Labor Board to step in and help settle the dispute and reach an agreement. With the help of the Labor Board, the drafted proposals included several key provisions that would need to be implemented for the strike to end. As noted in *The Plain Dealer*, the major points of the proposal were that strikers return to work immediately and an election be held to decide who would represent the employees (Lavelle, 1934b).

By March 19, 1934, an agreement had been struck and promptly ended the strike ("Reason Wins," 1934). The strike came to a relatively quick end due to negotiations involving Paul Feiss, Sidney Hillman President of the ACWA, and Ralph Lind, executive secretary of the Cleveland Regional Labor Board. A pivotal part to the agreement was the provision to allow the employees to vote for either a company union or the ACWA to represent them. The vote was taken following the end of the strike on March 19; the results were 1,216 to 402 in favor of ACWA representation ("Union Wins," 1934).

The most significant change at Joseph and Feiss that resulted from the strike and the vote in favor of the ACWA representation was the transition from an open shop to a "preferential" shop. This "preferential" shop required the company to hire and fire workers according to union membership (union members having preferential treatment) ("Union Wins," 1934). To further solidify the agreement, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* noted a ten percent wage increase to the employees was granted, thus assisting in the maintenance of a harmonious relationship (Lavelle, 1934c).

CONCLUSION

Examined here has been the question of whether the experiments in Industrial Psychology/Paternalism and Industrial Democracy in the Cleveland garment industry in the first third of the 20th century improved

working conditions and the effectiveness of labor-management relations. The cases of two firms were examined. The Printz-Biederman Company adopted the Industrial Democracy model and the Joseph and Feiss Company adopted the Industrial Psychology model. However, both firms had their labor forces organized by unions by 1935. The question can be raised, then, of whether these experiments in Industrial Democracy and Industrial Psychology were a failure or were evolutionary developments that made union organization more acceptable to the workers and management of these firms.

The evidence suggests that the adoption of the Industrial Democracy model was undertaken at the initiative of the Printz-Biederman management. As such, it must be viewed as an attempt by the management to avoid the adversarial labor-management relations usually associated with the bilateral monopoly labor relations model.

In the ordinary adversarial union-management model, labor and management individually and separately prepare their positions prior to negotiations over wages, hours, and working conditions. In the Printz-Biederman case, though, there was what might be called a collaborative decision-making structure in the guise of Industrial Democracy.

Detailed data on wages are not available for the twenty year period that Industrial Democracy was operative at Printz-Biederman. However, the resistance of the work force to attempts by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) to organize employees of the company suggests that there was active support for the institutions of Industrial Democracy at Printz-Biederman for nearly two decades. Therefore, it can be concluded that the fundamental needs and expectations of the workers were being addressed successfully during that time by the implementation of Industrial Democracy.

During the 1930s, in an environment of economic and employment uncertainty, the ILGWU intensified its attempt to organize the Printz-Biederman workers. Those efforts ultimately were successful, but in that success the ILGWU had to accept what was at the time unique for it in bilateral bargaining arrangements; i.e., a separate local for the union at the company. In turn, by acquiescing to this demand, the ILGWU demonstrated flexibility as it recognized worker loyalty to Printz-Biederman

that twenty years of Industrial Democracy had brought to the firm.

The adoption of Paternalism at the Joseph and Feiss Company represented still a third model of labor-management relations compared to the usual union-management adversarial model and the Industrial Democracy model. Joseph and Feiss integrated a form of paternalism, or social welfare, into the company. The adaptations of Taylorism and paternalism were successful in that the company remained free of labor unrest from 1909 until 1934.

During the 1909-1934 period, Joseph and Feiss made advances in areas such as higher wages, shorter work weeks, increasing production, allowing women to advance in the company, and providing health care. However, the company's control over the lives of its employees became somewhat authoritarian; loyalty was demanded, lockers were checked, and visits could be made to the homes of absent workers. These concerns led to the organization of the workforce by the ACWA in 1934. The "authoritative" leadership structure of scientific management and paternalism was changed. The workers had decided that the once revolutionary ideas of Joseph and Feiss would

be replaced by the traditional bilateral monopoly adversarial labor relations model.

Our conclusions, then, are that both the Printz-Biederman Industrial Democracy and the Joseph and Feiss Industrial Psychology/paternalism models served their constituencies adequately for a period of nearly two decades. In time, though, those institutions were not sufficiently robust to resist the allure to workers of the organizing attempts of labor unions. Those pressures were magnified by the exigencies of an economy and industry struggling through the Great Depression of the 1930s. By the mid 1930's, both firms surrendered their experiments in labor-management relations to the prevailing bilateral monopoly adversarial model that had become dominant in the garment industry.

Future research on the topic of labor relations in the Cleveland garment industry might well consider the post 1935 and post World War II role of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union within the Cleveland firms as those firms declined and, in some cases, exited the industry.

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