
Inventory of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union San Francisco Joint Board Records, 1931-1947

Accession number: 1987/102

Collection number: 21

Labor Archives & Research Center

San Francisco State University
San Francisco, California

Contact Information:

- Labor Archives & Research Center
- San Francisco State University
- 480 Winston Drive
- San Francisco, California 94132
- Phone: (415) 564-4010
- Fax: (415) 564-3606
- Email: larc@sfsu.edu
- URL: <http://www.library.sfsu.edu/special/larc.html>

Processed by:

The Labor Archives & Research Center staff

Encoded by:

Xiuzhi Zhou

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Descriptive Summary

Title: International Ladies Garment Workers Union San Francisco Joint Board Records,

Date (inclusive): 1931-1947

Accession number: 1987/102

Creator: International Ladies Garment Workers Union

Extent: 1.5 cubic feet

Repository: San Francisco State University. Labor Archives & Research Center
San Francisco, California 94132

Shelf location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Center's online catalog.

Language: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], International Ladies Garment Workers Union San Francisco Joint Board Records, 1987/102, Labor Archives & Research Center, San Francisco State University.

Noteworthy Individuals Connected with this Collection

Sam Diner
David Dubinsky, President and General Secretary, ILGWU
Israel Feinberg, International VP, Pacific Coast Bureau, ILGWU
Morris Goldman
Louis Levy
Jennie Matyas, International field organizer
J. B. McNamara, Trade Union "martyr"
Sam White
Henry Zacharin

Organizations

Joint Council of Knit Goods Workers-Local 191
Cutters-Local 213
Local 8
Local 101
Cutters Union. Cloakmakers Local
Pacific Coast Labor Bureau

Related Topics

Arbitration
Garment Workers
ILGWU
Litigation in the ILGWU
Needle Trades
Sex Discrimination in the Garment Industry
Wages in the Garment Industry
Women Workers

Introduction

These records are from the San Francisco ILGWU collection transferred to the Labor Archives under the direction of Frank Monti. This is box 17 of a larger record group on deposit at Cornell University's, Martin P. Catherwood Library. The collection was processed by JoAnne Firestone in 1987.

History

The ILGWU was founded in 1900 under the affiliation of the American Federation of Labor. A San Francisco local was formed soon thereafter. Of the ten firms which in 1903 were using the label of the International, five were located in San Francisco.

The material in this collection dates back to 1931. At that time the president of the International was David Dubinsky and the vice president in charge of the Pacific Coast Bureau with offices in Los Angeles was Israel Feinberg.

In 1934 the dressmakers Local 8 joined with the knitgoods workers Local 191 to form Local 101. A Joint Board was set up to administer the new local composed of representatives from the Executive Boards of the two merging unions. It was headed by Sam White from the knitgoods workers. White, a member of the Young Socialist League, was soon removed from his position during a wave of anti-communist sentiment. Israel Feinberg then appointed Henry Zacharin to replace him. Jennie Matyas, organizer for the international, and according to her own accounts, the token woman representative, was another important figure in the union's activities. In 1937, the Cutters Union Local 213 merged with Local 101 thereby falling under the Joint Board's administration.

Scope and Content

This small collection contains correspondence, minutes, wage information and financial records of the union during the thirties and forties. Because of the abbreviated nature of the collection much of what is present in these categories is incomplete.

The bulk of the collection focuses on correspondence between union officials. Included with the correspondence are arbitration reports and investigations of suspected employer violations and union official fraud. One noteworthy item is a letter to the Joint Board written by J. B. McNamara and mailed from Folsom Prison where he was serving a sentence for charges stemming from the bombing of the Los Angeles Times Building. The letter conveys McNamara's position on the class struggle and the need for militant action.

Minutes constitute the second largest series in the collection. Joint Board and Executive Board minutes predominate with some papers from the three smaller locals (8, 191 and 213) which later merged to form the ILGWU local 101, the predominant chapter during the years of this collection.

A third series consists of wage and financial information. Lists of job titles and wage rates and a number of wage adjustment petitions of individual employees are included. Only a small sampling of financial material exists.

A final series groups together union bulletins published by the joint board.

Related Collections

International Ladies Garment Workers Union Pamphlets. Berkeley, Calif.: n.p., nd. Vol. I and II.

Levine, Louis. *The Women's Garment Workers*. New York: B.W. Huebsch, Inc., 1924.

Labor Archives and Research Center, SFSU. Print/Ephemera file.

Title: Oral history interview with Jennie Matyas, 1955.

Labor Union Collection, Business and Social Sciences Library, UC Berkeley.

Series I Minutes, 1934-1940

Physical Description: 12 folders

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of this series is largely correspondence, strike proposals and arbitration material. Also included are investigations of fraud on the part of employers and union members, union withdrawal certificates for 1942, correspondence to and from David Dubinsky, a letter from J. B. McNamara, and correspondence from Jennie Matyas to Israel Feinberg discussing the trials and tribulations of an organizer in the field.

Series II Office Files, 1933-1944

Physical Description: 42 folders

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of this series is largely correspondence, strike proposals and arbitration material. Also included are investigations of fraud on the part of employers and union members, union withdrawal certificates for 1942, correspondence to and from David Dubinsky, a letter from J. B. McNamara, and correspondence from Jennie Matyas to Israel Feinberg discussing the trials and tribulations of an organizer in the field.

Series III Financial Files, 1934-1947

Physical Description: 13 folders

Scope and Content Note

Wage survey reports (occupational titles and wage tables) are included in this series along with wage adjustment proposals from employees seeking pay raises. There are separate wage scales for males and females which may be of interest to researchers of sex discrimination. Also included are some audit reports, checks receipts, disbursements and miscellaneous financial correspondence.

Series VI Publications, 1936-1939

Physical Description: 1 folder

Scope and Content Note

This series contains six Union Bulletins published by the Educational Department of the Joint Board: Nov. 1936 (2 copies), Jan. 1937, Jan. 1938, May 1938, and Jan. 1939.