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Rebellion and Restoration

Welfare capitalism, Endicott Johnson style, had once again proven itself, surviving depression, prolabor government policies, and a major union threat. The "Square Deal" had always been most vulnerable where it was weakest, on the shop floor, and that is where its challengers struck most effectively. Yet the concrete walls of corporate paternalism held, demonstrating a versatility that its critics learned to take seriously, if not respect. It would be wrong, nonetheless, to ignore that Endicott Johnson's paternalistic order had also suffered erosion. An ailing and bitter patriarch less willing to defend welfarism against profit-hungry stockholders, a labor force more prone to work stoppages and strikes, a management less inhibited in its use of coercion and intimidation, as well as a new and important government role in labor-management relations were signs that the "Square Deal" was and would be transformed and diluted—from within and from without.

In the 1940s, a decade of war, escalating worker expectations, and militant unionism, outside forces would continue to undermine the strength of paternalism. The Depression, even though it had imposed strong pressure on labor-management relations at Endicott Johnson, had also reinforced the inward-turning, psychologically enveloping tendencies of the "Square Deal," characteristics that helped to define and deflect the assaults of "outsiders." But the social and economic realities of the 1940s operated in just the opposite direction and tended to open wider those fissures that emerged in paternalism in the previous decade. Only the coming of the cold war and the branding of paternalism's enemies as subversive and management's willingness to restore and expand retracted elements of the "Square Deal" were able to preserve welfare capitalism and Endicott Johnson's open shop.

I

Yes, as the January 1940 election demonstrated, the "Square Deal" had once again proven itself. But loyalty always expected a return; and this management

was lax in delivering. Feeling somewhat overconfident in "their" margin of victory over the unions, Endicott Johnson managers were slow to raise wages, redress shop floor grievances, or restore the benefits that they had promised would be forthcoming if the workers only demonstrated their loyalty. In the months following the election, wages continued to stay low, and many of the factory conditions that aroused workers' ire persisted. Workers who had voted against the unions in the hope that the Johnsons would reward their loyalty were sorely disappointed. One employee, in a letter that appeared in the local USWA paper, expressed a sentiment that seemed to be spreading among fellow laborers:

> In the last campaign I was non-union, believing that the unfavorable situation that prevailed in E-J was temporary. I must admit that I was mistaken. Conditions get from bad to worse. . . . Many of my fellow workers who were promised that we would be taken care of if there was no union were insulted with a measly five cents an hour raise. It was just like throwing a dog a bone. The only reason that they gave us that was because they know there was a lot of union activity in the mechanical departments and they were afraid that we non-union workers would join the union. But they can't buy me for a lousy five cents, and I know that there are others who feel the same way.[1]

When it became clear to workers that wage and shop improvements were not forthcoming from management, many turned on the firm. In the summer of 1940 several groups went out on strike. The lasters of the West End Victory Factory initiated a work stoppage in late July 1940. At first management faced the lasters' exhibition of rebelliousness with confident inflexibility. But repeated work stoppages in August 1940 led to a compromise.[2] More surprising than this act of rebellion on the part of Victory Factory lasters (who had long held a reputation for their independence and solidarity) and a more significant barometer of growing dissatisfaction with management was the show of force by the stitchers of the Victory Factory in late August 1940. On August 22 the local USWA paper, the *Labor News*, reported that the "entire stitching room in the West End Victory Factory quit work. This action," the paper went on to note, "was the workers' protest against the firing of Forelady Pearl Riley, who, temporarily, has not been working because of illness." The workers, angry at their superintendent for Riley's firing, were conveying a message to management: it was their right to be consulted on such matters.[3]

Elsewhere, similar protests over shop conditions were taking place. Comfort Factory lasters protested the firing of fellow workers. In the Boys and Youths Factory, cutters "went to town against their foreman in a creditable show of unity." Workers in the Sunrise Factory abandoned their machines in protest over the transfer of work to another factory. One former USWA activist who had almost been attacked by a mob of fellow women workers after the January election, recalled this very different scene at the Sunrise Factory in

the summer of 1940: "Then one day . . . I saw another mob comin' down. Well! I'll tell you I picked up an iron bar and thought the first one that comes near me I'm gonna kill. Because I had nobody there. My back was to the wall—I just turned my back to the wall and stood there. [Pause] They were dissatisfied with working conditions and they were walking out!! And this was just a few months later. . . . There was a walkout!"[4] Paracord workers struck in the fall of 1940, apparently over wages.[5] The Paracord strike may well have recalled to management that it had made promises to workers that it was not fulfilling, for on November 12, 1940, the company partially restored the 5 percent wage deduction it instituted in 1938 to cover the cost of the Medical Department.[6]

The partial restoration of the medical deduction was not enough to put a halt to workers' discontent. In January 1941 an "epidemic of strikes" hit Endicott Johnson, affecting the Upper Leather Tannery, the Fine Welt Factory, the Scout Factory, and the Misses' and Children's Factory.[7] Yet such displays of militancy were not being channeled into prounion sentiment, even though union challengers had finally established a united front.

In the weeks and months following the defeat of the BSWU and the USWA, a consolidation of forces was effected in the Triple Cities. The BSWU withdrew from the area, leaving only the CIO's USWA to continue organizing work. The USWA recognized that the feuding of the two unions had hardly helped matters and began to mend fences. Officers of the CIO Endicott Johnson Organizing Committee met with the former president of the BSWU local, Emlyn C. Hughes, and worked out an alliance, forming a new CIO local, Local 177. Abandoned by the national leadership of the BSWU, many of the more active members of the AFL local joined the new CIO organization.[8]

With the withdrawal of the BSWU, a spirit of unity was born. The new CIO local's paper, the *Labor News*, noted: "There is an air of quiet optimism in CIO headquarters these days when former AFL men mingle in a friendly fashion with their CIO brothers."[9] One worker wrote into the union paper: "Is it really true the two locals of the AFL and the CIO are together? It's hard to believe but it certainly warmed my heart."[10] While some AFL holdouts continued to petition the BSWU leadership to return and make a second attempt at organizing, it was all in vain. The national leadership showed little interest in expending any more of its resources on what it believed to be a losing cause.[11]

Although union organizers made slow progress in recruiting new members, continuing signs of worker dissatisfaction with management sustained their hopes that the shoeworkers would ultimately see the light and join the CIO. The *Labor News* took every opportunity to point out to employees their need for a strong, united labor organization through which they could bargain with management on a firmer foundation than the "Square Deal" permitted. But

for the most part, Endicott Johnson workers seemed content to deal with managers without the unions, although they recognized that the presence of the USWA "encouraged" company officers to be attentive to worker demands. Indeed, feeling the pressure of continuing union attacks and the persistence of shop floor reaction, the corporation finally restored wage cuts in April and June 1941.[12] In late 1941 management went even further to appease the workers. It reinstituted five paid holidays and distributed lump-sum payments for the previous year's holidays.[13] The USWA, naturally enough, claimed that the firm's concessions were responses to union pressure: "The Five Paid Holidays which E-J has granted to you were given only because E-J feared the union and because E-J realizes that many workers are now joining the CIO."[14] There was a great deal of truth in their boast. But it was equally true that the coming of World War II and improved economic conditions had also made it easier for management to make such concessions.

II

Growing military expenditures and a flood of foreign orders for scarce consumer goods stimulated American industry and pulled it out of depression. Between June 1940 and the end of 1941, the number of unemployed nationwide had fallen from eight and a half million to under four million. At Endicott Johnson sales increased by 22 percent between 1940 and 1941 and continued to remain strong throughout the war years. Reflecting the national trend, employment opportunities in the shoe firm also increased. Between 1940 and 1941 the labor force grew from an average of 17,041 to an average of 18,339. But the company was careful not to take on the additional obligations associated with hiring new workers. As it had before, the corporation hired employees on a "temporary basis" with the "understanding that when there was no longer work for them to do, they would be released." Furthermore, the firm made it clear to new workers that they were not entitled to medical services or permitted to join the Sick Relief Association.[15]

With the entry of the United States into war in December 1941, the firm found it increasingly difficult both to hold on to old workers and to recruit new workers to meet its production needs. By the end of 1941 labor turnover at Endicott Johnson was rapidly increasing. It would continue to do so well into 1943. Separation rates rose from an average of less than 1 percent a month in 1940 to between 4 and 5 percent a month in 1942 and 1943. During the same period the shoe industry in general experienced comparable increases (as did numerous other industries). Yet while separation rates doubled in the 1942–46 period for the industry as a whole, at Endicott Johnson they rose more than fourfold. In the early years of the war, the upturn was even more dramatic, approximating an eight- or ninefold rise.[16] Not only did the firm face competition from higher-paying industries involved in war production that lured

shoeworkers away, but with the declaration of war, military induction further depleted the company's labor force. Charles F. Johnson, Jr., noted in November 1942:

> Everything is going along as well as could be expected here, except things are tightening up a little more all the time and it is getting more difficult to take care of our customers' requirements. About 2,000 E.J. boys are already in the service and more are leaving all the time. We have also lost quite a few workers who have quit their jobs to go elsewhere to work where, at least temporarily, they can earn more money. In the total we have about 1,500 less people on the payroll now than at the beginning of the year and our production is down about 15%.[17]

Labor-shortage problems continued to plague management throughout 1942 and 1943. In a letter sent out to factory superintendents in the spring of 1943, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., reemphasized that "manpower is our major problem and will continue to get more serious as the war continues."[18] In an attempt to alleviate labor shortages, the corporation tapped kinship networks, much as it had during World War I. Managers made it known to employees that relatives of theirs could easily obtain jobs in the firm, and hoped they would pass the message along.[19]

In the Depression the workers had been dependent on the firm for relief, for work, for survival. Now, it was becoming clear that the relationship of dependency was reversed. This situation was not lost on the workers. The recollections of one cutting room foreman suggest the psychological changes that the war ushered in. He recalled an episode involving eight men in his room who were "drunks." In the prewar years he was able to scare the men effectively into abstinence on the job. But the war changed all that: "I didn't have one trouble with them until the war started. And that blew the hat off. Every damn one of the eight went all to hell cause they thought the war was on and I wouldn't fire them cause I wouldn't be able to get help."[20] The men were wrong in this case: all were replaced by cutters recruited from outside the firm. But their changed behavior, attributed by the foreman to the war's impact, probably represented a more general change in attitude taking place among the workers.

An increasing sense of power and rebelliousness was also reflected in a growing tendency of workers to join together to restrict output. Responding to speedups initiated by company managers during the labor-starved years of World War II, workers banded together and agreed among themselves to limit production in order to protect their rates and prevent overwork. So widespread had this practice become that management felt compelled to warn the workers against "stinting":

> Limiting work to a maximum amount, (commonly called "stinting"), is fundamentally wrong and could prove extremely harmful to the workers

> and to the business. Straight piecework gives every man and woman not only a right,—but we think it entirely best that they do all they are willing and able to do, when there is plenty of work. This note is intended to encourage you and urge you to do exactly that.[21]

Throughout the firm, workers grew ever more stubborn and unwilling to accept the fiats of management. The same foreman who had to contend with rebellious "drunkards" soon faced obstinate cutters unwilling to cut leather on which they could not "make their rates." He was forced to accept their refusal and looked elsewhere for cutters willing to cut the leather.[22]

The war not only affected the attitudes of the workers, it also introduced institutional structures that provided workers with opportunities to bypass the firm's traditional and informal arbitration procedures that lay at the core of the "Square Deal." While it is true that, since the creation of the NLRB and the encouragement of collective bargaining by the federal government, Endicott Johnson employees had been provided with such opportunities, the war gave them greater access to machinery with which their grievances could be aired and acted upon. The National War Labor Board (NWLB), created in 1942 by executive order and designed to minimize strikes and work stoppages by providing an arbitration mechanism for both formally and informally organized workers, threatened to replace the individual and committee appeals to company supervisors. Shop floor committees had been utilized by the firm's employees in former decades and had preserved personal links between managers and workers. The NWLB, however, through related and subordinate Labor Department agencies such as the United States Conciliation Service, provided Endicott Johnson workers alternatives to direct bargaining with managers. Various groups of workers, both with and without union encouragement, took advantage of these alternatives to resolve disputes over wages in the 1940s. If management felt secure in the knowledge that the shoeworkers had rejected unionization, the willingness of various groups of workers to call upon government agencies to intercede in labor disputes must have given company officers reason to doubt their security.

Since the "Little Steel Formula" of September 1942, when wage increases were limited by the NWLB and exceptions could only be granted by appeal to the board, the volume of requests for wage increases grew tremendously. Appeals from Endicott Johnson employees who had been unable to obtain satisfactory wage adjustments from management made their way through the bureaucracy of the federal government, generally being resolved by the United States Conciliation Service under instruction by the NWLB.[23] In January 1943 a dozen "Tongue on Vamp" operators in the West End Victory Factory quit work and demanded an increase in their base pay. The workers, dissatisfied with offers made by management, sought out a lawyer and took their case to the United States Conciliation Service. The government arbitrator

finally reached a compromise settlement in September of that year.[24] Similar appeals to the Conciliation Service were made by Security and Fair Play Factory lasters, by Scout Factory heel scourers, by Boys and Youths and Pioneer Factory stitchers, by Fine Welt Factory edge stitchers, by West End Victory "stitched edge" operators and vampers, by Challenge Factory Goodyear stitchers, and by Victory Factory cutters.[25] In some cases, as with the lasters of the Security and Fair Play factories, appeals to the Conciliation Service were made with union encouragement and legal support.[26]

Thus, new government bureaucracies undermined the "Square Deal" by offering alternatives to workers. Lawyers and federal investigators constituted threatening intermediaries in what had previously been "family" affairs. And yet the most serious threat to corporate paternalism remained the unions, as subsequent events would demonstrate.

III

Some time in 1941 a strategic decision was made by the USWA and its trade union ally, the International Fur and Leather Workers Union (IFLWU), of the CIO, that unionization attempts should be concentrated on certain divisions of the corporation and not on the firm as a whole, in particular on divisions that had formerly proven themselves to be somewhat sympathetic to the idea of unionization. The IFLWU, one of the more radical of the CIO unions and headed by strong and popular communist leadership, soon stepped in and began organizing in the Endicott tanneries and adjacent maintenance departments, while the USWA continued its work among the rubber- and shoeworkers in Binghamton and Johnson City.[27]

The IFLWU initiated its drive by contacting Endicott Johnson workers who were formerly employed in various Pennsylvania tanneries and who had been active in union campaigns in the past, men whom it believed would form an effective nucleus of organizers. Those in whom the IFLWU placed its hopes, men like John O'Green, Elmer Backes, and Leo Gleason, all skilled rollers and loyal unionists, would indeed prove to be successful organizers.[28]

The initial organizing work at Endicott Johnson was under the direction of Myer Klig, a Russian-born Canadian organizer who had a good track record in unionizing open shops.[29] Klig ran a careful and methodical campaign, taking on the tanneries one by one, department by department. Additional organizers were brought in from Pennsylvania to help with the work and to insure that every tannery worker was approached.[30]

As had been the case in former unionizing attempts, the corporation's management conducted a vigorous campaign against the union. Threats were exchanged on both sides, and occasional fist fights broke out in the shops. According to Klig, "Many workers were intimidated and openly threatened by foremen and company stooges. The Company violated every provision of

the National Labor Relations Act."[31] But unionists were quite willing and able to fight intimidation with intimidation, as the superintendent of the Sole Leather Tannery recalled:

> There was a lot of meetings of the workers along with some of the so-called union people. . . . And then we would hold meetings after hours with some of the workers. I recall this one. . . . It was about seven-thirty in the evening. It was dark. I came back from the Upper Leather beam-house, back to my dressing room in the Sole Leather, changed my clothes and started out. This guy hollered at me, but he was in the dark. So I went back, and he said, "I consider you a friend of mine, and I want to tell you this. They're gonna get you." 'Cause I was against the unions. And I said, "That doesn't scare me. I don't know why, but it doesn't." And I was threatened.[32]

Despite the threats, violence, and intimidation that marked the organizing campaign of the union—on both sides—workers flocked into the newly formed Endicott Leather Workers Union, Local 285 of the IFLWU. After approximately a year of organizing tannery and maintenance workers in Endicott, the union had managed to obtain signed pledge cards from 1,600 of the approximately 2,200 workers employed in its targeted departments, although only 330 of these represented initiated, paying members.[33]

Facing the prospect of a union victory, management appealed to the NLRB to dismiss the proposed bargaining unit as inappropriate since the corporation was operating an integrated manufacturing enterprise of which the tanneries and maintenance departments were an important part, inseparable from the other divisions. The board, however, accepted the IFLWU's arguments that the units involved comprised a "homogeneous group" and called for a union election.[34]

The union won the December 1942 election, but just barely. Of the 1,988 votes cast, the IFLWU received 1,037, while 951 workers voted against union representation. Military induction had been partially responsible for eroding the union's support. Many of the workers who had signed pledge cards had been drafted. Others had left for more lucrative jobs in war industry plants.[35] Furthermore, some workers decided, at the last minute, that they would rather stick with the company, particularly since 1942 had been a year filled with wage increases and benefit restorations. The company seemed, to them, to be living up to the "Square Deal." Yet a majority still voted for the union, in spite of company concessions and, significantly, despite the communist affiliations of the union's leadership. As one local union officer, a practicing and devout Catholic, recalled, "They were wise enough and shy enough to keep Communism in the background."[36]

In 1942, of course, communists were not viewed with the same contempt as they had been in former years. When the Non-Aggression Pact between the Soviet Union and Germany was abruptly terminated by Barbarossa in June

1941 and the Russians joined the allies, it suddenly became less problematic to be affiliated with the Communist party (although party members continued not to publicize their party affiliation). It also became less difficult to ward off the attempts of red-baiters seeking to discredit a union by pointing to the presence of communists in its leadership or among organizers. More important, the political agenda of the union's leadership only tangentially touched local events. IFLWU organizers, like their counterparts among the United Electrical Workers (UE), another left-wing union, were first and foremost involved in the daily routine of creating a union local; they were not primarily concerned with bringing the Bolshevik revolution to Endicott.[37]

By focusing on relatively homogeneous segments of the work force, almost totally male, that were concentrated in a small area in Endicott and that had developed relatively strong and independent work cultures, the IFLWU had been able to break through the walls of paternalism. The vote, however, was not overwhelmingly prounion. The election had been a close one and indicated that the union would need to work hard to maintain and enlarge its support if it expected to survive. The election victory was only the beginning of a struggle, not the end.

Nonetheless, the IFLWU had managed to win—no small achievement. It became the first labor organization to unionize Endicott Johnson workers successfully. And while a large minority of the tannery workers remained skeptical of this "outside" intruder, it was slowly establishing its credibility among many of them. By May 1943, as Myer Klig noted in a report to the General Executive Board of the IFLWU, Local 285 had received initiation fees from 1,700 workers, "with the overwhelming majority of them paying dues regularly."[38]

The progress made by Local 285 in its early years of existence seemed to promise a bright and expansive future. The growth in membership came hand in hand with successes in collective bargaining. In agreements negotiated with the firm in 1943 and 1944, some of which were appealed and finally decided by the NWLB, the union won for its members wage increases, job security, seniority rights, a formal job bidding procedure, an enlargement of paid vacation benefits, and a guarantee that management would consult with the union before it made drastic changes in the firm's medical service—a potentially major point since it gave the union some say in the administration of corporate welfare programs. It further obtained a maintenance-of-membership clause in its contract, a standard union security provision that the NWLB offered to unions agreeing to abide by a no-strike pledge during the war.[39] To the nearly 400 members of the local who had entered employment with the firm after September 1940 and who were denied access to the firm's relief and medical services because of their status as "temporary workers," the union promised to continue pressuring the company to grant equal benefit rights. With the union publicizing this inequity, company officers soon realized that

the ill will produced by continuing to define new workers as "temporary" employees and to deny them benefits would only add to the union's strength and perhaps even convince the unorganized shoeworkers that they needed union protection. In June 1943, therefore, the company announced that new workers who had been with the firm for at least six months could now join the Sick Relief Association. A year later, having lost as many as 5,000 workers to the military and to other firms, the corporation further announced that access to the Medical Department would no longer be denied to new employees as it had been since September 1940.[40] While the firm never acknowledged union pressure as a factor motivating these reversals in policy, the union took credit for the corporation's restoration of benefits. Indeed, in the minds of many workers it was clear that the presence of the union was behind these and other concessions.[41]

The growing prestige of the local through 1943 and 1944 represented the union's success in fulfilling worker expectations. Where, in the past, informal committees of workers had to confront managers directly in order to obtain concessions, a process that was limited by the small size of the groups involved, employees now challenged corporate officers with the secure knowledge that 1,600 fellow union members stood behind them. Indeed, the union's successes in 1943 and 1944 taught many workers that there were more effective ways of negotiating with management than under the aegis of the "Square Deal."

It was also true, however, that, notwithstanding the union's growing credibility, the workers' allegiance to it varied considerably. For the vast majority the union represented merely another vehicle for the airing of complaints and for extracting higher wages and benefits from management. They were not transformed into staunch unionists. Workers like Sam Salvatore, for example, joined the union with a casual attitude that hardly reflected strong prounion convictions. He recalled his reply to a union organizer who approached him after his return from service: "They came to me and said, 'Sam, you've got to join the union.' I said, 'I don't need no union. . . . What the heck a union's gonna do for me?' 'Oh, we're gonna get you pay, you know, we're gonna get you' this and that. . . . 'And besides,' he says, 'you don't have to pay nothing to get in.' 'Why not?' 'Oh, we do that for the veterans.' 'Well,' I said, 'if it don't cost me nothing, put me in then.'"[42]

For other workers, however, the union was a focus of commitment and loyalty. Some of the most active members of the local had a history of union involvement. Lee F. Springer, a mechanical department employee, for example, had been active as an organizer in Pennsylvania in the United Mine Workers. He had participated in the 1938–40 organizing drive at Endicott Johnson and served as the financial secretary of Local 42 of the BSWU. His involvement with the IFLWU, as a vice president and an executive board member of Local 285, was both predictable and natural. Similarly, Elmer

Backes, who had been fired from a tannery in Elkland, Pennsylvania, for his CIO union work in 1937, found himself once again involved in union activity and was elected chief steward of the Sole Leather Tannery. Like many of the local's officers, who had been formerly involved in unions, he brought with him from Pennsylvania a distrust of management and an equal affinity for labor organizing.[43]

Union activists were also drawn from second-generation Endicott Johnson workers and from long-time employees of the firm who felt betrayed by corporate officers and who believed that the "Square Deal" was no longer being adhered to. For them it seemed all too clear that the Johnsons who now controlled the firm, George W. Johnson and Charles F. Johnson, Jr., were cut from a different cloth than was the firm's now retired and ailing patriarch, George F. Johnson. The elder Johnson, they believed, had been a sincere benefactor, one who could balance his drive for profits with a genuine willingness to share some of those profits with his workers. But to the "younger" generation of Johnsons who now occupied the helm of the corporation (George W. Johnson was sixty-two and Charles F. Johnson, Jr., was fifty-five in 1942), generosity did not come naturally. It required the pressure of the union to prod them to live up to their obligations to the workers. As one second-generation Italian worker, who became quite active in the union, recalled:

> He [George F. Johnson] knew what your family was doing, what your family wasn't doing. But he was more lenient than George W. or Charlie or some of the other Johnsons. . . . He was the kind of guy that if you went to him and told him, "I can't live this way . . . I'll have to get out . . . ," he found a way. He'd find a different job for you, or he'd give you a raise in pay. He was that kind of a guy. He was that more generous than his son or his nephew. They were bullies, and they took a bully attitude toward you.[44]

Beyond the Johnsons' failure to respond effectively to such discontent with their regime, shop floor issues and dissatisfaction with immediate supervisors encouraged workers to join the union. One tanner, who became a union steward, felt that the greatest service the union provided him was allowing him to bid on a job he had been unfairly denied several times. "The bosses put a lot of fellows in ahead of people who was there longer," he recalled.[45] Although the corporation prided itself on its policy of internal promotions, the policy was not being applied honestly or fairly.[46] Resentment over unfair promotion decisions and job bidding procedures often precipitated shop floor reactions both before and after the union's involvement. But under a union contract, workers were afforded a clear and concise mechanism for resolving such disputes.[47]

For all of Local 285's success in enlarging its membership, however, the union remained vulnerable. During the war it had to negotiate a fine line

between trade union militancy and a war-imposed conservatism. Communist IFLWU organizers like John H. Russell and Oscar Oberther, along with the national leadership of the union, often found themselves inhibiting the militancy of some of the workers. Throughout the war years the IFLWU, in following both CIO and Communist party policies, adhered to a no-strike pledge.[48] When the oil hangers in the Sole Leather Tannery quit work and forced a shutdown on August 12, 1943, for example, the union acted quickly to get the workers back on the job. The corporation's legal counsel, Howard A. Swartwood, sent a telegram to IFLWU headquarters in New York City. Two and a half hours later, Myer Klig replied stating that the workers had been ordered to return to work and that they had complied.[49] When the jack rollers of the Upper Leather Tannery struck on October 27, 1944, in violation of the no-strike provisions of the contract, the union again acted swiftly. Led by a renegade steward, ten rollers walked off the job, ignoring the collective bargaining provisions of the union contract. The union responded by ordering the men to go back to work, but they refused. When the company demanded further action on the part of the union, Rush Dunn, the local's president, pointed out that only three of the eleven men involved were union members and that the union steward who led the walkout had already been replaced. Dunn agreed to further disciplinary measures, as long as they were taken "without discrimination because of union membership."[50] Consistently during the war years, IFLWU organizers and national officers attempted to hold the line on wildcat strikes.[51] Union discipline, however, did serve to frustrate and alienate some workers.

But this was not the main source of the union's vulnerability. If the union was not militant enough for some workers, it was also true that there was no other organization to which they could turn. For better or worse they were forced to stick with the union. More problematic and a far greater threat to the continuing progress of the local was the destabilization of its leadership and membership by the high rate of labor turnover during the war. While the war brought in many prounion workers who had not developed an attachment to the firm and to the firm's managers and who had not been influenced favorably by the corporation's paternalism, it also siphoned out many activists. Some, who viewed the union mainly as a vehicle for economic self-betterment, might be lured away by more attractive jobs; if better opportunities became available in other firms, they left the corporation and the union. And, of course, the draft took its toll. It was difficult to maintain strong leadership where workers came and went. Furthermore, periodic hide shortages during the war decreased the need for tannery workers in many departments, leading to cuts in the tannery labor force. When this occurred, workers were transferred to the factories or to the Rubber Mill. Since lack of seniority was the basis of transfer decisions, and since many of the union members were recent

employees of the firm, the reduction of the tannery work force eroded union strength.

Perhaps the greatest threat to the local, however, came from the IFLWU's identification with communism and the Communist party. Even formerly strong unionists, like the first president of the local, John P. Farrell, were capable of turning on the union if they felt that its commitment to communism superseded its commitment to unionism. Indeed, in the spring of 1944 Local 285 faced its first major anticommunist challenge, and even though it managed to survive, the events of that spring and the following summer foreboded an ill fate for the local.

IV

In April 1944 the *Binghamton Press* publicized that the Dies Committee had cited Ben Gold, the president of the IFLWU, and Frank R. McGrath, president of the USWA, as having close affiliations with communism and the American Communist party. The paper further charged that the unions they headed were "dominated" by communists.[52] Six weeks later the *Press* began a series entitled "Turning Red in the Triple Cities," an exposé of communist influence on local CIO unions and political organizations. The five-part series disclosed connections between USWA and IFLWU organizers and various "communist front" social and political groups.[53] In response to the articles the local CIO Executive Committee issued a statement calling the series a "smear" campaign and defended the CIO's involvement in political activities.[54] Yet the charges of communist domination of local labor unions had an impact on some of Local 285's members, for on the evening of June 4, 1944, at a meeting held at the Endicott American Legion post, twenty-two IFLWU members broke away from Local 285 and formed their own union, the Tanners Industrial Union, Independent (TIUI).

Led by John P. Farrell, Local 285's first president, the movement to form an independent union apparently was undertaken by the workers themselves, without company involvement. Certainly, however, management was served by this defection from the ranks. The new union's attorney, Paul T. Gorman of Binghamton, warned the fledgling group that it faced the "danger of becoming company dominated despite the intention of its members" and that it would have to develop solid and active rank-and-file support to avoid such domination.[55]

At its first meeting the TIUI adopted a formal resolution stating the aims of its members:

> First, to save unionism for the workers; Second, to help in making unions safe for democracy; Third, to help keep democracy safe for unions.
>
> We shall adhere to the American principle of justice to all; we reject

> the alien cry of "Death to the Capitalists"; we believe that slavery to a state capitalism is as unbearable as any other form of bondage. We did not know, when we worked to organize under the International Fur and Leather banner, that its chief object was the spreading of an alien political belief. Our desire then, and our desire now, is to improve our wages and working conditions through a union controlled by ourselves.[56]

Officers of Local 285 immediately issued a response to this "treason." They claimed that the timing of the new union, coming during the course of delicate negotiations for a new contract, was deliberately intended to "create division in the ranks of the tannery workers." Essentially, the IFLWU viewed the new union as a company union—its officers motivated not by ideology but by power politics. It accused Farrell and other officers of the new union, who had been quite active in Local 285, of turning against the local because their attempts to control important union positions had been stifled in the past.[57] Farrell denied these charges, claiming that it was the IFLWU's ideological politics that led to his apostasy:

> My loyalty is, and always has been, to the principle of collective bargaining. To that principle, I am still absolutely loyal. When I found that the Fur and Leather Workers had different aims and objectives, I could not sit silently by and see the union which I had helped to found perverted from its original purpose and devoted to the spreading of Communism, and I could not lend my name to what I knew was a Communist Front organization.[58]

Farrell had known that there were some communists among the leaders of the local and the international but felt that the workers could limit their influence. With time, however, his anticommunism became more virulent. He described his change of attitude to a reporter:

> Within a very short time after winning the NLRB election and the installation of officers, the avalanche of Communist literature deposited on desks, chairs and window sills in the union office made one wonder if he wasn't in the headquarters of the Broome County Communist Party. . . . I am sore, after discovering the Communist control of the International, because I am gullible and egotistical enough to think I could in some way keep communism in the background, for I did not know as yet of the complete domination of the local unions by the International. But I found out to my sorrow that Communism was the main thought, word and action of the International Fur and Leather Workers Union. After being taken out to lunch by Organizer Victor Hirshfield and told by him that President Ben Gold of the International was a Communist, and that he, Victor Hirshfield, drove an ambulance on the Communist side in Spain (some call it the Loyalist side but they don't mention loyalty to what country), and that the International board was all inclined that way, I was sore.[59]

Farrell told the reporter that he had purposefully delayed expressing his real reasons for resigning from the presidency of Local 285 back in August 18, 1943, because he did not want to hurt the union case pending before the NWLB at the time.[60]

Farrell's attempts to discredit the IFLWU and Local 285 were unsuccessful. Endicott Johnson workers had witnessed red-baiting before, in the 1938–40 union campaigns and in the years that had followed. They knew its disruptive potential. Furthermore, in 1944 Russia and the United States were still allies fighting a common foe. But perhaps most important, Local 285's success in achieving substantial improvements in wages and working conditions maintained most workers' faith in the union, at least in the pre–cold war years. Like other left-wing unions, such as the UE, the IFLWU retained the loyalty of the rank and file as long as it succeeded in satisfying bread-and-butter demands.[61] And this it did. Even the vice president of the Tanners Industrial Union, Roger T. O'Connor, a former steward in Local 285, admitted that the workers were quite happy with the IFLWU at the time: "Everything worked fine when they had the union in there. Everybody was happy." He noted that there "was nobody against the union at that time. It was against the leader—Gold." When Farrell began to try to wean the workers away from the IFLWU by convincing them of its communist domination, he was met with incredulity. "They wouldn't, none of them, believe it." Local 285's leadership as well as numerous loyal union members taunted Farrell and the officers of the TIUI. They charged them with "tryin' to break the union and to get rid of it," recalled O'Connor. "They wouldn't listen to us. We'd tell them that they was dominated by the communists. They would say, 'Well, that's a good way of puttin' it so you could get rid of the union, you know.'"[62] Clearly, the majority of the union members did not believe that they were being "dominated" by communists.

The Tanners Industrial Union persisted as a minor but short-lived irritant to Local 285. It lasted for six or seven months and then "just faded away."[63] Nonetheless, the TIUI and the revelations that precipitated its rise left their legacy. Conservative community leaders, corporate officers, and noncommunist union members continued to keep a vigilant eye on the IFLWU local's leadership and direction. When Local 285 joined with the local chapter of the American Youth for Democracy (AYD), the reconstituted Young Communist League, to sponsor a "teen age canteen," local civic officials and some union members maintained a secret surveillance of the youth club's activities.[64] Sylvan P. Battista, a steward and member of the executive board of the local, recalled union members' concerns over the social organization:

> They [the CIO] were recruiting young people. . . . What they were trying to do was get a little bit more support. . . . I remember they were trying to get them interested in what the union is for—more of an educational program. . . . They had a committee set up. At first there

> was a few, not a lot, maybe fifty–sixty people. It went along for awhile. We *did* decide amongst the few [of us] in secrecy that we were gonna watch very close that they didn't bring in any of their political ideas or anything like that. We had a couple of people there that kept an eye on it pretty well—went to the meetings and stuff like that. But it never got to be a big thing.[65]

But a watchful eye was all that union members felt the new club deserved. The communists, they believed, could be controlled.

As a further sign of the relative weakness of the communist issue as a disruptive force in 1944, one need only look at the progress of the USWA in Johnson City. There, the USWA-CIO began a concerted drive to organize the rubber divisions of the corporation. Through the summer of 1944, while the communist associations of the IFLWU and the USWA were being publicized by the local press, USWA petitions for an election worked their way through the NLRB bureaucracy. Hearings were held in June in Binghamton and in August in Washington, D.C. On August 21, 1944, the NLRB issued its final ruling, declaring the firm's rubber divisions appropriate units for representation by the union and calling for a speedy election. On September 12, 1944, an election was held, and by a vote of 300 to 248, the USWA won the right to represent Rubber Reclaim and Rubber Mill (Paracord) workers in Johnson City.[66] The victory that the USWA won in these plants, although not an overwhelming one, nevertheless demonstrates that the communist issue was not yet a major obstacle for the unions. Since the leadership of the USWA included numerous Communist party members and sympathizers, and since local newspapers had publicized this, the election results were a rebuff of local civic, press, and company efforts to discredit the IFLWU and the USWA.

V

With the communist issue put to rest for the time being, both the IFLWU and the USWA settled down to their normal union functions of adjusting shop floor grievances and pressuring management for further wage and benefit concessions. After the victory in Europe and Japan in the spring and summer of 1945, and the subsequent relief from the constraints of war discipline, the USWA and the IFLWU initiated new offensives. Between 1945 and 1947 the two CIO unions grew more militant. If union leadership had kept a tight rein on the workers during the war years, attempting to live up to the no-strike clause, they now let loose the reins. In October 1945 a local IFLWU organizer wrote the president of the international, Ben Gold: "Had a nice meeting—things are going well here—we got 89 new members during the month of October—and more to come—also had a couple of small work stoppages—

may be more—the fellows have decided they no longer care to work with non-union workers. I'll let you know if things get too hot to handle."[67]

In the fall of 1945 the USWA, following the completion of contract negotiations in the previous summer, began a campaign to organize the shoe factories. It set up two new locals, Local 71 and Local 72, to represent the workers in the Ideal Factory in Endicott and the Security and Security Annex factories in West Endicott. Another local was soon founded to represent Johnson City die, machine, and foundry workers; and petitions were filed with the NLRB for an election. Endicott Johnson management once again raised the issue of appropriate units but lost its appeals to the NLRB in two decisions.[68]

On May 10, 1946, the NLRB issued an order calling for an election at the Security and Security Annex factories. The election was held on June 30, 1946, and the union lost by a vote of 216 to 183. The USWA made numerous excuses for its loss, in particular, that management had bribed the workers with free beer and a day off and that "active canvassers" were sent in by company officers.[69] One USWA Local 83 officer recalled the Security Factory election and explained the union's defeat in these terms: "They had an election in Endicott in the Security Factory and they held it on company property and they lost because the bosses lined up right on the side of the paths and the sidewalks and they watched them [the workers] and they scared the shit out of the workers and they voted it down and that was the beginning of the end."[70] Most probably, the election was lost for reasons suggested by this officer's antiunion wife: "I didn't think it [the union] was any good. . . . You lost as much as you gained."[71] The union had failed to convince enough of the shoeworkers that it could offer them very much. This was not surprising. Whatever wage and benefit gains the IFLWU and the USWA had made in previous years had been passed along to the shoeworkers.

The defeat of the USWA in the Security election was not quite the "beginning of the end" for the unions. In previous elections neither the USWA nor the IFLWU had won by overwhelming majorities. Here, the USWA had not lost by much. What is noteworthy is not the union's failure in this election but the signs that the union had made important inroads among the firm's shoeworkers and that worker allegiance to the "Square Deal" had waned considerably since the early 1940s. A more concerted effort might well have turned around the thirty-three votes that had cost the union its victory. In fact, in an election held at the firm's Johnson City Foundry and Die Shop in early 1947, the USWA won.[72] Although the Foundry and Die Shop constituted a small unit of less than 100 workers, the USWA victory demonstrated that union sentiments among the workers were very much alive in early 1947. The victory in January 1947, however, marked the last one for either the USWA or the IFLWU, for in 1947 the cold war came to the Triple Cities, and it came with a vengeance.

VI

The years immediately following World War II were years of intense labor activism throughout the country. Beginning before the termination of hostilities abroad, the number of strikes and the numbers of workers involved in strikes had risen dramatically. In 1945, 4,750 strikes involving 1.34 million workers shook the nation. In 1946 the number of strikes had increased to 4,985, the largest yearly total in American history, involving close to 4 million workers. The duration of work stoppages more than tripled during the same period, as the number of "man days" idle due to strikes jumped from 38 million in 1945 to 116 million in 1946.[73] Confronted by such an overt show of force on the part of labor, both the government and the public began to demonstrate a growing mood of conservatism. For some the rise in union militancy demonstrated left-wing influence over the labor movement, a governing force that demanded ferreting out. Furthermore, the termination of hostilities in Europe and the Pacific ushered in a new war, one that would directly cripple American trade unions for years to come. The political and military exigencies that had sustained an alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States had been eliminated in 1945. The links between trade unionism and American communism, ties that had been forged back in the Depression and even earlier, now came under severe strain. This was particularly true in Endicott and Johnson City.[74]

John P. Farrell and the local press had planted the seeds of suspicion in 1944. Now the seeds grew. The communist issue had apparently not gone away; it had merely hibernated. When the president of the USWA, Frank R. McGrath, resigned in the autumn of 1946 and charged that communist executive board members were attempting to take over the union, local Binghamton papers publicized his resignation with bold headlines.[75] Through the following winter, spring, and summer of 1947, a concerted anticommunist movement gained momentum in the community.

In March 1947 John P. Farrell again surfaced and renewed his attacks on the IFLWU, issuing a sensationally worded, self-published tabloid specifically linking the IFLWU with communism and the Soviet Union.[76] This time his charges apparently reached a responsive audience. Union members who had tolerated the communist presence in previous years had grown more suspicious. Even the most loyal and active unionists, including some officers of the USWA and IFLWU locals, began to have their doubts about their unions' leadership and direction. Tensions between communists and noncommunists now emerged. In one instance Local 285 members clashed over IFLWU representatives' objections to the posting of a government-issued anticommunist notice on company bulletin boards. Sylvan P. Battista, a noncommunist union steward, recalled the event and his feelings about it:

> We went over to the office, and Frank Buckingham and some of the other guys who were opposed to their politics said they had absolutely no right to do that because if the company wanted to pull something—what the company! The federal government sent them out [the posters]! And what was wrong with that? Show me what's wrong with it? If you worked in there and I know you're a communist and you're trying to do something against our company, I'll be the first one to turn you in. . . . Of course, "Red" [Oscar Oberther] didn't like it too well and Pershing [George O. Pershing, head of IFLWU, third district] didn't like it. I didn't give a damn. I had my own mind, and they weren't gonna change it for me.[77]

The revival of the communist issue swayed previously suspicious workers into taking an antiunion position. Against a communist threat generated by the local press, the government, and most of the national media, not to mention company officers, many workers came to identify the union with outside subversive elements. Anxieties over "foreign" or "outside" domination reinforced the hermetic forces that paternalism had formerly fostered and turned partially committed union members against their union.

Even strongly committed unionists split on the issue. While some stuck to the last, others abandoned what they perceived to be a sinking ship. Many union activists who had been friendly with the local's communist members and organizers grew less tolerant of their politics.[78] A few, recognizing the quickly eroding prestige of the union, tried to salvage what they could out of the situation, as Lee F. Springer did:

> Four or five people in the tanneries pulled an outlaw strike, and the heads of the union were communist. . . . When they started to pull this strike, there was a group of us who didn't want to strike, and we seen that the union was gonna blow up . . . so we got in touch with the manager of the company, Charlie Johnson, and a few of us worked out . . . a deal. We worked out that they would work out some sort of a pension plan and not hold this against any of them [union members], and we would go along with the company and help get rid of the union. 'Cause we could see which way it was going—communist dominated, or one thing or another. . . . After you're in something so long and you can't see no point in continuing, you take the best way out. You gotta preserve yourself.[79]

For Springer it was not so much a personal antipathy for communism that led to his reaction but a pragmatic evaluation of its impact on the union. For other activists the risk of continued support of the union was too high, especially considering their (at best) ambivalent feelings about communism. Arthur G. Jones, a Sole Leather Tannery steward, when requested by management to sign an anticommunist/antiunion petition that was circulated in early April 1947, agreed to the request: "They called us in one at a time into the

office to get us to sign against it [the union] because it was Communist. . . . I did. I guess because it was a dead issue. Everybody else had signed when they called me. . . . All I remember was that we come back from the war and they threw it at us that we had been fighting against this stuff and there was communists right in [here]."[80]

The petition came in the wake of a community-wide campaign, led by various civic organizations and business groups, to drive the "commies" out of the community. The IFLWU had been contemplating moving District 3 headquarters of the union to Endicott from Williamsport, Pennsylvania.[81] The Greater Endicott Chamber of Commerce, responding to the "threat" of "communist infiltration," initiated a local anticommunist "war."[82] The Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, the Elks, the American Legion, the Binghamton Lions Club, and numerous other local organizations soon joined with the Endicott Chamber of Commerce in its campaign to purge the community of the "red" unions.[83] Newspaper articles accused George O. Pershing, District 3 head, of being a "Blood-Red Commie, Moving in on Endicott."[84] The Binghamton Central Labor Union, wishing to assuage any doubts about *its* loyalties, quickly joined in the community condemnation of the IFLWU and in April endorsed a resolution to back an AFL attempt to organize Endicott Johnson workers.[85] The IFLWU, increasingly isolated in the community, and finding it difficult even to secure leases for offices, soon faced a major exodus of union members. When the anticommunist drive began, the IFLWU had a membership of about 1,700. In a matter of weeks the union's membership dwindled.[86]

Rather than maintain a defensive posture, both the USWA and the IFLWU went on the offensive. One worker explained a Sole Leather Tannery strike in early April as a manifestation of this, although also an act of desperation. "They saw how things were going, and they went to pull this tannery strike as a last resort. They staked everything on it."[87] The strike, however, was a dismal failure; its organizers were fired. A more significant offensive began when the USWA and the IFLWU joined in April 1947 in a concerted drive to organize the entire Endicott Johnson work force.[88] But even this proved futile, as the unions confronted numerous obstacles.

In late April the *Binghamton Press* reported that the AFL United Leather Workers Union would formally request an election in the firm's tanneries, as a challenge to the IFLWU.[89] The AFL raiding attempt distracted and partially undermined USWA and IFLWU efforts in the factories, yet it was ultimately a failure. No NLRB election was held, and the AFL Leather Workers Union soon left the area. While workers were turning their backs on the IFLWU, they were not grasping for a union alternative. In part this was due to Endicott Johnson's management.

A more formidable obstacle to the unions' offensive came from the firm itself. Within the context of community and press attempts to discredit both

the IFLWU and the USWA, the corporation's own efforts proved to be quite effective in destroying the two locals. The company fought a three-front battle. First, it continued to emphasize the communist issue to undermine the unions' shop floor strength. Secondly, it fought a secret war with the aid of the National Association of Manufacturers, loyal company employees, and hired antiunion agents to purge the work force of communists and union "agitators." Finally, it tried to win over the workers with a reassertion of benevolence in the form of wage and benefit increases—in short, corporate welfarism.

The first element of the firm's strategy was carried out through anticommunist petitions and through informal conversations with workers by foremen and superintendents.[90] At the same time, the company maintained close ties with the anticommunist/antiunion campaign being waged throughout the community. The formation of the Broome County Committee for Americanism, headed by William C. Fischer, Jr., a Johnson City lawyer and ex-FBI agent with close ties to the Johnsons, marked an important link between the corporation and community efforts.[91]

While the Broome County Committee for Americanism was by no means the only organization fighting communism in the community, it was an extremely active one. The committee began its work by reasserting claims of close connections between local IFLWU and USWA officers and the American Communist party.[92] Fischer spoke before local organizations on the "menace" of communism throughout the summer of 1947 and into 1948.[93] On May 21, 1947, he went before the Binghamton Central Labor Union, which had already declared its disaffiliation with communism and communist organizations. The Central Labor Union's minutes recall his appearance in this way:

> President Smith introduced Mr. William Fischer who spoke on Communism. He outlined the purposes, aims and objectives of the Communist Party, and read excerpts from an article by J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI and delivered before the Un-American Committee in Washington, D.C.
>
> Delegates were asked to submit questions. After some discussion, President Smith stated that the Central Labor Union is in accord with the idea of being alert to prevent the infiltration of Communists into the organization.[94]

Fischer did more than merely spread his anticommunist message in the community; he was also involved in surveillance of suspected communists and collected information on individuals—in particular, union members and officials—that might be useful in discrediting them. Fischer's connections to the FBI and to the National Association of Manufacturers, through one Richard St. John, provided the corporation with additional resources with which to conduct its union-busting campaign.[95]

The contours of that campaign are only partially clear, hidden behind rumor and the half-remembered recollections of interviewees. Company records, however, do prove a definite connection between the firm and Fischer's efforts. Information received by the corporation from Fischer was relayed to the firm's labor relations lawyers in New York, Benjamin and Edward Seligman of the firm Seligman and Seligman. A typical sample of the type of material transmitted reads as follows:

> Attached please note further information received from Bill Fischer in regard to a conversation he and Dick St. John had with C—— G——.
>
> G—— worked for the company a good many years but about three years ago he started to work with the C.I.O. organizers and a few months later lost his job with the company. He is not a Communist. He has always been active in his Church at West Endicott. He was a Deacon and a Sunday School teacher. Due to his activities with the C.I.O. organizers and the fact that Endicott business men and clergymen realize that these organizers are Communistic controlled and many of them are also Communists, he was demoted in the Church and this has weighed heavily on his mind. He believes in unionization but does not favor Communism and has now decided to give the Committee for Americanism all of the inside information he can with respect to what is going on as to their activities and future plans.[96]

With Fischer's gathered information, the firm began to purge its labor force of all suspected communist activists. Charles F. Johnson, Jr., inquired of Seligman about the ramifications of firing one such worker: "H—— G—— is a Communist and has been out of step with E.J. policies for many years. The reason for sending you this affidavit is to get your opinion as to whether we would be justified in letting him out. . . ."[97]

While the firm exploited material supplied to it by Fischer and his committee to rid itself of communists and union activists, it had long ago begun to make use of loyal employees in its fight against the USWA and the IFLWU. Totally ignoring previous NLRB pronouncements and anticipating the final passage of the Taft-Hartley Labor Relations Act in the summer of 1947, corporate officers actively asserted their antiunionism through shop floor surrogates. In the Rubber Mill workers attempting to establish a future claim on company favors expressed their loyalty to the firm by relaying information to management about the union.[98] Other employees circulated petitions on the company's behalf:

> Down in the Rubber Mill, I helped out for two years, and, uh, there was a fellow by the name of Steve O——. He and I, we went around with papers [petitions] . . . and we worked to get it out. We went to everybody down the line, and we had them sign to throw the union out. And we finally got it [out]. . . . We done it through the company. . . . There was word come through, I think it probably came from Charlie—come on down through the line, but where it got to us.[99]

Support for IFLWU and the USWA was quickly eroding in April and May 1947. On May 15 the company announced the following to its workers:

> We have heretofore served notice upon the Unions representing employees in the tannery and rubber mill bargaining units that we desire to terminate the current working agreement with such Unions, as of June 1, 1947, in accordance with the provision of the contract.
>
> Since serving notice of termination on the two Unions, we have come into possession of evidence that indicated neither of said Unions represent a majority of the employees in either unit, and we have notified the Unions it would be illegal for our company to recognize them as bargaining units.[100]

The unions responded promptly. District 3 headquarters issued appeals to all locals for financial and moral support. IFLWU locals throughout the country received the following description of events in Endicott:

> Our Union is under a vicious attack in Endicott, New York. The situation is extremely serious. The Endicott Johnson Corporation has refused to bargain claiming that Local 285 does not represent a majority. We have requested the NLRB to hold a new election to prove that our local does represent the majority. The Chamber of Commerce, Police Court Justices, American Legion and many fraternal organizations have joined the Endicott Johnson Corporation to attack our union. Meeting halls have denied us use. Office space and living quarters have been denied us. The CIO Shoeworkers Local is being evicted from its office. District Director, George O. Pershing, Organizer Oscar Oberther and Business Agent John Mushock with eight others have been arrested for distributing leaflets and are out on bail. Three officers of the local have been fired. Members were tricked into signing blank postcards ostensibly against communism but now revealed to be withdrawals from the Union.[101]

The USWA and the IFLWU beseeched their members to remain loyal and to continue to pay their dues, reminding them of the many achievements that their unions had brought about during their tenure.[102]

In the weeks and months that followed the company's retraction of recognition of the two unions, petitions for certification were filed by the USWA and the IFLWU and were making their way through legal channels. Company officers, under advisement of legal counsel, stalled. They sought federal court injunctions delaying scheduled NLRB hearings and won them. During one such appeal for an injunction, the company "contended that it and 20,000 of its employees would be irreparably damaged if the hearing was conducted before August 23 when most of the provisions of the new Taft-Hartley Labor Law become effective."[103] Indeed, through most of that spring the two unions were trying to arrange for a hasty NLRB election before Taft-Hartley went into effect. But the Taft-Hartley Labor Relations Act was quickly winding its way through Congress. Management knew that it could only gain by stalling

the election. Not only could it hope to win over more workers, but once section 9h of the act was implemented, union leaders would have to file noncommunist affidavits before their organizations would be offered the "protection" of the NLRB. Since many USWA and IFLWU officers were communists, the corporation recognized that both unions would lose government protection. In fact, in August 1947 the IFLWU withdrew its petition for an NLRB election because it recognized that "it could not qualify by filing the non-communist affidavits which were required by the Taft-Hartley Law."[104] The USWA soon followed suit.

The firm had apparently won the legal battle against the unions. But it also continued to wage its private war against them, utilizing Fischer, as well as several hired men from the community and outside, to do both spiritual and physical battle against the CIO unions.[105] In December 1948 John H. Russell, an IFLWU representative and union organizer, was beaten outside of an Endicott tavern and very soon afterward was arrested on a public intoxication charge. Although local police later apologized for Russell's arrest, it was clear to union leaders that the beating was a setup.[106] Indeed, even here there may have been a connection to William C. Fischer. Fischer's son recalled that his father had acted as a middleman and had made payoffs on behalf of the corporation to certain local individuals to "bust union heads."[107]

Through the next few years, the IFLWU and the USWA continued to maintain a presence in Johnson City and Endicott, forming a joint CIO Organizing Committee. Now without government "protection," both unions nonetheless decided to continue their protracted campaign to win the hearts and minds of the shoeworkers. Through the fall of 1947 and into the following year, local union members began organizing workers in numerous factories. They helped the heel scourers of the Scout Factory to obtain a settlement of a wage dispute in September 1947. They were active among the Fine Welt lasters, assisting them in their fight for a wage adjustment.[108] With the aid and encouragement of the Joint Organizing Committee, an independent Laster's Union was formed in October 1947. The IFLWU viewed the formation of this union as "conclusive proof that where workers really want to build a union they can do so without complying with the Taft-Hartley law and without using the employer-controlled N.L.R.B."[109] Yet such successes were sporadic and hardly indicative of the real plight of the locals. Two months after the firm ceased to recognize the IFLWU, the membership of Local 285 had declined to about 900. By October 1947 it stood at 390. From there it continued to drop steadily. By the end of 1948 it stood at approximately 100, and in the fall of 1949 only two or three dozen workers were paying dues.[110] The plight of Local 83 of the USWA appears to have been equally dim. Membership plummeted, and only a few brave souls remained to carry on organizing work with IFLWU activists in Endicott.[111]

By late 1948 the organizing drive in the factories was pretty much spent.

Although Local 285 hung on for another year, mainly through the financial support of the international and other locals, it was hurting badly. Minutes of executive board meetings disclose sinking morale. In a February 17, 1949, meeting, members expressed pessimism over the local's ability to organize the plants even with the much hoped for repeal of Taft-Hartley. George Pershing's and Ben Gold's association to the American Communist party (Gold had finally publicly admitted to being a member of the party in 1948) was acknowledged as being particularly harmful to the local. Although much of the talk revolved around the Taft-Hartley Labor Relations Act, the president of the local emphasized that the problem was that the majority "think they are on top of earth—no short time—not panicked."[112] The last report on the union was depressing indeed. On November 15, 1949, Raymond Davis, the secretary of the Endicott local, wrote to George O. Pershing: "In your letter you asked what the attitude of the workers was in regard to organization. From what we see and hear in the plants there is not much change in the workers. They wish they had a union when they get hurt but are not willing to do any work to get one. The workers are being chiseled on the speed up but it isn't too apparent to them that if they work and talk for a union that they can change things for themselves."[113]

VII

Thus ended the union drives of the 1940s; Endicott Johnson's open shop was restored. But the anticommunist hysteria of the early cold war years or the strong-armed tactics employed by corporate managers are not entirely sufficient to explain the defection of rank and file from the unions or the growing resistance of shoeworkers and tanners to union appeals. Although company officers continued to remind workers that both the IFLWU and the USWA were "communist organizations," and corporation agents, both hired and volunteer, continued to disrupt organizing efforts in the factories, the "stick" was ultimately not the most effective weapon in the firm's war against the unions.

Force and intimidation, as a new generation of Johnsons were coming to realize, were hardly in keeping with the corporation's long tradition of the "Square Deal." Nor would such responses to unionization help perpetuate labor's loyalty over the long term. It was thus not surprising that company officers, even as they continued their more aggressive campaign against the unions, would also attempt to woo workers away from the unions. This, of course, management had begun to do from the moment the IFLWU won its recognition election in December 1942. When the firm passed along to the shoeworkers many of the wage increases and shop floor rights that the IFLWU and the USWA had won for their members, the corporation was cultivating worker goodwill. When, just before the Johnsons declared their intention to

cease negotiating with both unions, they announced a 15 percent wage increase, they were also clearly courting their workers. The wage increase, lest employees miss the point, went into effect the day after all union contracts were terminated, on June 2, 1947.[114]

Endicott Johnson managers, however, recognized that they would have to pay a higher price for loyalty than mere pay increases. And this they proceeded to do. In the summer of 1948, profit sharing, in the form of bonus payments, was revived. Although the company had legally terminated its profit-sharing plan in March 1944, to avoid possible union "vested interest" claims, it now reinstituted bonus payments on a purely discretionary basis.[115] Altogether, the firm distributed four million dollars in 1948, one million in 1949, and three million in 1950. It continued such disbursements well into the 1950s.[116] The corporation also announced to the workers its intention of adopting a formal pension plan. This had first been promised to members of Local 285 to encourage them to split with the union. After holding a referendum and receiving overwhelming worker approval, the firm put the plan into effect on January 1, 1948.[117] Also in 1948, feeling that they had lost personal touch with their workers, managers initiated the practice of holding retirement dinners, gala affairs to celebrate the loyal services of long-term employees.[118] And to further demonstrate goodwill to its workers, a year later the firm constructed two recreation centers at a cost of almost two million dollars. As a final signal to employees that management had not lost sight of its obligations under the "Square Deal," home construction for employees was also revived, after a lapse of almost a decade. In these and many other ways, corporate officers tried to persuade the workers that loyalty to the corporation was in their own best interest. The failure of the unions to recover their losses in the late 1940s and 1950s attests to their success.

Management's ultimate response to the union threat, a reassertion of welfare capitalism, was in keeping with company tradition. Whenever the "Square Deal" was seriously disrupted, and sustaining employee loyalty became problematic, the firm's managers were under strong pressure to restore it. The ideal of a "corporate family" was a central and powerful ideal that operated on several generations of Endicott Johnson workers and managers. Although war, volatile labor markets, federal agencies, and unions undermined it considerably in the 1940s, these very agents also imposed a disciplining influence on the corporation's management and, in the final analysis, forced the firm to reembrace corporate paternalism.

NOTES

1. *Labor News*, July 1, 1940.
2. Ibid., Aug. 12, 1940.
3. Ibid., Aug. 26, 1940.

4. Ibid.; Margaret Azarin [pseud.], interview by Gerald Zahavi, Nov. 15, 1983, tape recording (personal possession).
5. *Labor News*, Nov. 4, 1940.
6. "Wage Increases and Decreases, March 16, 1931, to December 1, 1952," typescript, "No dates" folder, box 6, ser. 1, George W. Johnson Papers, George Arents Research Library for Special Collections, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. For the union's damning response to how the firm calculated its "5%," see *Labor News*, Nov. 18, 1940. In reality the restoration amounted to a little more than 3 percent.
7. *Labor News*, Jan. 28, 1941.
8. Horace B. Davis, *Shoes: The Workers and the Industry* (New York, 1940), 152; *Labor News*, Apr. 8, 1940.
9. *Labor News*, Apr. 8, 1940.
10. Ibid., Apr. 22, 1940.
11. Appeals by AFL activists to reorganize the BSWU local were ignored by John J. Mara, president of the BSWU. National organizers from the BSWU—Frank Anderson, Tom Cory, and Ben Berk—gave the workers little support. A request by the president of the Binghamton Central Labor Union, addressed to Mara, asking him to return to undertake another organizing campaign, met with a negative reply. Former members of Local 42 to John J. Mara, June 8, 1940; A. B. Cleveland to John J. Mara, July 17, 1940; John J. Mara to A. B. Cleveland, July 30, 1940, Local 42 files, BSWU Records, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. On the abandonment of the workers by the BSWU, see *CIO News* (Shoe Workers' Edition), May 13, 1940. An editorial against the BSWU entitled "Black Treason" appeared in the Mar. 15, 1940, edition of the *Triple Cities Labor Herald*, the official paper of the Binghamton Central Labor Union. A reprinted copy appears in the above *CIO News* (Shoe Workers' Edition). Further information on the regrouping of union forces appears in *Labor News*. See, in particular, the Apr. 8 and July 29, 1940, issues.
12. "Wage Increases and Decreases, March 16, 1931, to December 1, 1952."
13. "To the Workers" notice, Nov. 12, 1941, box 33, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers, George Arents Research Library for Special Collections, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.
14. USWA flyer, "To the Workers of Fine Welt," [Nov. 1941,] box 4, ser. 2, George W. Johnson Papers.
15. "To the Workers" notice, June 15, 1943, box 10, ser. 3, Frank A. Johnson Papers, George Arents Research Library for Special Collections, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.; "To the Workers" notice, Jan. 13, 1944, box 34, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers.
16. William Patrick Burns, "A Study of Personnel Policies, Employee Opinion and Labor Turnover (1930–1946) at the Endicott Johnson Corporation" (Master's thesis, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, 1947), 86–89. Nonetheless, turnover rates in the firm still remained below the industry average.
17. Charles F. Johnson, Jr., to Pvt. Thomas P. Guy, Nov. 4, 1942, box 33, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers.
18. Charles F. Johnson, Jr., to Paul McIntosh et al., May 10, 1943, box 33, ser. 1,

Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers. Johnson noted that the firm had lost 385 workers in Apr. of that year.

19. Theresa Schuttak and Fran Eckert, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, Apr. 30, 1982, tape recording (personal possession).
20. Thomas K. Chubbuck, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, session 2, July 2, 1981, tape recording (personal possession).
21. "Incentive Pay vs. Piecework," notice to the workers, Mar. 20, 1944, box 5, ser. 1, George W. Johnson Papers.
22. Chubbuck, interview, session 2.
23. The NWLB generally ruled on disputes not resolvable by the Conciliation Service.
24. See "Submission to Arbitration" and "Award of Arbitrator" in "Labor Arbitration-Copeloff, Maxwell, 1942–1945" file, in box 8, ser. 3, Frank A. Johnson Papers.
25. Endicott Johnson Corporation to Maxwell Copeloff, Mar. 7, 1945; Endicott Johnson Corporation to Maxwell Copeloff, Jan. 15, 1945, box 8, ser. 3, Frank A. Johnson Papers.
26. Victor Hirshfield, a CIO International Fur and Leather Workers Union lawyer and an early organizer in the area, was selected by the lasters as their lawyer. See Ralph Albert [arbitrator, U.S. Conciliation Service] to Leo Mills and Victor Hirshfield, Sept. 17, 1943, box 4, ser. 2, George W. Johnson Papers.
27. The USWA did not pursue a vigorous campaign until 1944. It withdrew organizers soon after the IFLWU had begun its organizing work and channeled its own efforts into union drives elsewhere in the country. See USWA, *Proceedings of the Third Convention of the United Shoe Workers of America* (Worcester, 1942), 48.
28. Paul R. Knickerbocker, interviews by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, sessions 1 and 3, June 10, 1982, July 22, 1982, tape recordings (personal possession); James L. Backes, interview by Gerald Zahavi, May 12, 1984, tape recording (personal possession); George O. Pershing to Victor Hirshfield, Dec. 16, 1941, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers, Labor-Management Documentation Center, M. P. Catherwood Library, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. On the Pennsylvania campaigns of the National Leather Workers Association, which merged with the International Fur Workers Union in 1939 to form the IFLWU, see Philip S. Foner, *The Fur and Leather Workers Union: A Story of Dramatic Struggles and Achievements* (Newark, 1950), chap. 46. An intimate portrait of union organizing in one Pennsylvania tannery town, identifying an organizer who played an active role in organizing Endicott Johnson's tanneries (Elmer Backes), can be found in John Bodnar, *Workers' World: Kinship, Community, and Protest in an Industrial Society, 1900–1940* (Baltimore, 1982), 160–64. Many of the workers who were "union pioneers" in Endicott were quite similar in sociological profile to male pioneers described in Ronald Schatz's "Union Pioneers: The Founders of Local Unions in General Electric and West-

inghouse, 1933–1937," *Journal of American History* 66 (Dec. 1979): 586–602. They tended to be relatively skilled workers, of Anglo-Saxon ancestry, in their late thirties or early forties, and from a union background. Unfortunately, few of them were still around for me to interview, and so this observation must remain an impressionistic one based on other workers' recollections.

29. Foner, *The Fur and Leather Workers Union*, 514–15, 598, and passim.
30. Ibid., 598–99.
31. "Report by Myer Klig" to the International Executive Board, Mar. 17 and 18, 1943, General Executive Board (GEB) Minutes, box 35, International Fur and Leather Workers Union Records (hereafter IFLWU Records), Labor-Management Documentation Center, M. P. Catherwood Library, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
32. Knickerbocker, interview, session 1.
33. "Report by Myer Klig."
34. U.S. National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions and Orders of the National Labor Relations Board*, vol. 45 (Washington, D.C., 1942), 1092–95.
35. "Report by Myer Klig."
36. *Binghamton Press*, June 9, 1944; See also Sylvan P. Battista, interviews by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, sessions 1 and 2, July 13, 1981, and Nov. 12, 1981, tape recordings (personal possession).
37. On the "economism" of communist organizers, see, especially, essays by Martin Glaberman and Ronald L. Filippelli in *Political Power and Social Theory: A Research Annual*, ed. Maurice Zeitlin, vol. 4 (Greenwich, Conn., 1984). See also Ronald Schatz, *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse, 1923–60* (Urbana, Ill., 1983).
38. "Report by Myer Klig."
39. These were only some of its achievements. See *Endicott Leather Worker* 1 (Apr. 1943): 1, 2; ibid. (Aug. 1943): 1, 2; *Fur and Leather Worker* 5 (Mar. 1943): 1, 5; ibid. (Sept. 1943): 3; Local 285 Collective Bargaining Contracts, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers; U.S. National War Labor Board, *War Labor Reports*, vol. 16 (Washington, D.C., 1944), 17–22. On the NWLB and the issue of union security during World War II, see Joel Isaac Seidman, *American Labor from Defense to Reconversion* (Chicago, 1953), chap. 6; and Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (New York, 1982), chap. 5. The maintenance-of-membership provision did not create a closed shop since it provided new workers with a fifteen-day "escape" period in which they could select not to affiliate with the union. Once enrolled in the union, however, they had to maintain their good standing until the next contract period.
40. "To the Workers" notice, June 15, 1943, box 10, ser. 3, Frank A. Johnson Papers; "To the Workers" notice, May 17, 1944, box 34, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers; *Endicott Leather Worker* 1 (Aug. 1944): 3.
41. Sam Salvatore, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, July 7, 1981, tape recording (personal possession); James W. Lupole, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, July 15, 1981, tape recording (personal possession); Battista, interviews, sessions 1 and 2; Bernice O'Connor and Roger T. O'Connor, interview by Gerald

Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, Nov. 7, 1981, tape recording (personal possession); Raymond Davis, interview by Gerald Zahavi, Aug. 27, 1982, notes (untaped).

42. Salvatore, interview.
43. Lee F. Springer, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, July 15, 1981, tape recording (personal possession); Backes, interview; *Endicott Leather Worker* 2 (Feb. 1945): 3; Davis, interview; Salvatore, interview; Knickerbocker, interviews, sessions 1 and 2; O'Connor, interview; Battista, interviews, sessions 1 and 2.
44. Battista, interview, session 1.
45. William Haight, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, May 27, 1982, tape recording (personal possession). Anger over this injustice was an important factor in convincing Haight to become a union steward.
46. A 1947 survey of Endicott Johnson workers' attitudes toward various company policies disclosed considerable displeasure with the firm's promotion practices. Burns, "A Study of Personnel Policies," 57–58, 113.
47. Wildcat strikes still occurred when workers felt management was violating the union contract. See "Russell Henneman Case," [1943,] Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers; Knickerbocker, interview, session 1.
48. On the no-strike pledge, see Nelson Lichtenstein, "Defending the No-Strike Pledge: CIO Politics during World War II," *Radical America* 9 (July-Aug. 1975): 49–75; Joshua Freeman, "Delivering the Goods: Industrial Unionism during World War II," *Labor History* 19 (Fall 1978): 570–93. See also Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home,* chap. 7 and passim.
49. H. A. Swartwood to Ben Gold, Aug. 12, 1943; Myer Klig to Howard Swartwood, Aug. 12, 1943 (telegrams), box 4, ser. 2, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers.
50. Rush Dunn to Howard Swartwood, Nov. 14, 1944, box 4, ser. 1, George W. Johnson Papers. See other material in this box on the work stoppage.
51. Wildcat strikes in the tanneries were of very brief duration during the war years, as were strikes in USWA controlled departments in Johnson City. See "Brief for Endicott Johnson," box 14, National War Labor Board, Region 2 Case Files, Labor-Management Documentation Center, M. P. Catherwood Library, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. See also "Work Stoppage" reports, box 3, ser. 2, George W. Johnson Papers.
52. *Binghamton Press,* Apr. 15, 1944.
53. Ibid., May 31, June 1, June 2, June 4, June 5, 1944.
54. Ibid., June 5, 1944.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid. The resolution also appeared in the *Binghamton Sun* and the *Endicott Bulletin* of June 6, 1944.
57. *Binghamton Press,* June 7, 1944. See also *Endicott Bulletin,* June 7, 1944. Local 285 established a special committee to investigate the new union and its leaders. The committee questioned the integrity of the independent's officers and recommended that the TIUI's officers be "brought before the Executive Board, to

answer the charges." On July 27, 1944, the board heard the charges and recommended expulsion. Not all of the officers were expelled, however. At least one was permitted to remain a member in Local 285 but was barred from holding office in the union. *Endicott Leather Worker* 1 (Aug. 1944): 2–3. Battista, interview, session 2. "Special Committee Report," [1944,] Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.

58. *Binghamton Press*, June 9, 1944.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid. For another version of Farrell's transformation, see Maurice J. Quain, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, June 29, 1981, tape recording (personal possession).
61. Ronald L. Filippelli, "UE: An Uncertain Legacy," in *Political Power and Social Theory*, ed. Zeitlin, 4:217–52.
62. O'Connor, interview.
63. Ibid.
64. "Memorandum of Conversations regarding a CIO Sponsored Young People's Club . . . ," box 4, ser. 2, George W. Johnson Papers. Other material on the club and the AYD can be found in this box. On the AYD and its origins, see Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party during the Second World War* (Middletown, Conn., 1982): 178–79. On the local AYD, see *Binghamton Press*, June 1, 1944.
65. Battista, interview, session 2.
66. U.S. National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions and Orders of the National Labor Relations Board*, vol. 57 (Washington, D.C., 1944), 1473–77; *CIO News* (Shoe Workers' Edition), Sept. 11, 1944; *Endicott Leather Worker* 1 (Sept. 1944): 3. See also Albert J. Millus, Jr., "The Shoe Company of La Mancha: Endicott Johnson Corporation" (Research paper, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, 1977), 34–35; G. Ralph Smith, *The Endicott Johnson Corporation* (New Orleans, 1959), 53–54.
67. Oscar Oberther to Ben Gold, Oct. 31, 1945, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.
68. *CIO News* (Shoe Workers' Edition), Oct. 22, 1945; U.S. National Labor Relations Board, *Decisions and Orders of the National Labor Relations Board*, vol. 67 (Washington, D.C., 1946), 1342–50; ibid., vol. 71 (Washington, D.C., 1946), 1100–105. See also *CIO News* (Shoe Workers' Edition), Feb. 18, Mar. 11, 1946. The NLRB ruling recognized only the Foundry and Die Shop as an appropriate unit and excluded the fifteen Johnson City Machine Shop workers. It was nonetheless a repudiation of the company's position that called for a company-wide unit.
69. *CIO News* (Shoe Workers' Edition), July 1, 1946, 12.
70. Henry Banner and Emma Banner [pseud.], interview by Gerald Zahavi, June 2, 1982, tape recording (personal possession).
71. Ibid. Mrs. Banner [pseud.] recalled her resentment of the union because of a two-week, union-initiated strike during which her husband lost substantial income. In addition, she hated having to pay union dues.
72. This was in spite of management appeals directly to the workers not to "split up"

the company into separate bargaining units. See "A Statement of Policy," Jan. 20, 1947, box 34, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers. The workers voted fifty-eight to seven for USWA representation. *Endicott Bulletin*, Jan. 21, 1947.

73. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, D.C., 1960), 99; James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth-Century America* (New York, 1980), 193–94; Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, chap. 11.
74. Four essential books that trace the rise and fall of these links (from various ideological positions) are Max M. Kampelman, *The Communist Party vs. the C.I.O.: A Study in Power Politics* (New York, 1957); David J. Saposs, *Communism in American Unions* (New York, 1959); Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism: The Conflict That Shaped American Unions* (Princeton, 1977); and Harvey A. Levenstein, *Communism, Anticommunism, and the CIO* (Westport, Conn., 1981). The article literature on the subject is immense.
75. *Binghamton Press*, Oct. 3, 1946. On McGrath's break with the union, see Kampelman, *The Communist Party*, 95–96.
76. *Endicott Bulletin*, Mar. 17, 1948. A copy of Farrell's "Low-Down on Operation Moscow!" can be found in Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.
77. Battista, interview, session 2. "Red" was Oscar Oberther's nickname. Oberther was the head IFLWU representative in Endicott at the time. His nickname referred to the color of his hair and not to his politics, although the latter was also consistent with his nickname.
78. See Springer, interview; and Banner [pseud.], interview.
79. Springer, interview.
80. Arthur G. Jones, interview by Gerald Zahavi, June 2, 1982, tape recording (personal possession). Actually, few workers seemed to sign the petition with much conviction. Many were misled by supervisors' claims that "everyone had already signed," a ploy to get them to join the fictitious majority. See Salvatore, interview; S——, interview by Nancy Grey Osterud and Laura Kirkland, May 15, 1982, summary and partial transcription (Broome County Immigration History Project). The petition read: "We, the undersigned, do not want to be represented by a Communist-dominated union." *Binghamton Press*, Apr. 2, 1947.
81. *Binghamton Press*, Mar. 10, 1947.
82. Ibid., Mar. 29, 1947.
83. Ibid., Apr. 1, 1947. See also ibid., Apr. 3, Apr. 5, Apr. 8, Apr. 9, Apr. 11, Apr. 12, 1947. Just about every day articles chronicling the progress of the "Anti-red Campaign" appeared in local papers.
84. *Endicott Bulletin*, Mar. 28, 1947. The paper quoted from congressional hearings and distorted Pershing's past activities. Pershing circulated a reply to the *Bulletin*'s charges among union members. His reply, addressed to members of the union and dated Apr. 26, 1947, is in Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.
85. *Endicott Bulletin*, Mar. 29, 1947; Binghamton Central Labor Union Minutes (hereafter BCLU Minutes), Apr. 16, 1947, microfilm copy, Labor-Management Documentation Center, M. P. Catherwood Library, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
86. *Binghamton Press*, Mar. 31, Apr. 14, 1947; *Endicott Bulletin*, Mar. 31, 1947. The

number of workers in the units covered by the IFLWU contract amounted to approximately 1,900.

87. Springer, interview.
88. Knickerbocker, interview, session 1; *Endicott Leather Worker* 5 (Apr. 1947): 1, 4.
89. *Binghamton Press*, Apr. 23, 1947.
90. Memo [signed Leonard Steed], May 28, 1947, box 12, ser. 3, Frank A. Johnson Papers. The memo noted the progress of the petition drive and the number of workers who had not signed.
91. "Background of William C. Fischer," n.d., Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers. Fischer's father, a major league baseball player recruited by George F. Johnson in the 1920s to head the corporation's Athletic Association in Johnson City and Binghamton, was a close personal friend of George F. Johnson and the Johnson family. He had joined the corporation's sales department when the company found it necessary to limit its athletic programs in the late 1920s. Fischer's brother, also a lawyer, owed a great deal to the company. In the winter of 1934–35, the corporation's doctors had been instrumental in saving his life. George F. Johnson to William Fischer, Feb. 1, 1935, box 14, George F. Johnson Papers, George Arents Research Library for Special Collections, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.
92. *Endicott Bulletin*, May 17, 1947.
93. Ibid., Oct. 22, 1947.
94. BCLU Minutes, May 21, 1947. Fischer also spoke at Endicott Johnson employee gatherings. See "Endicott Johnson Workers Daily Page," *Binghamton Sun*, May 19, 1947.
95. Conversation with William C. Fischer III, June 10, 1982, notes (not taped); John O'Green to George Pershing, Dec. 1, 1948, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers. The younger Fischer recalled the hundreds of files that his father had accumulated on local individuals. The files were ultimately destroyed. Apparently, in later life, the elder Fischer had a change of heart and regretted his earlier involvement in these matters. For more on Fischer's activities in 1947 and 1948, see *Binghamton Press*, July 30, 1948; *Fur and Leather Worker*, Sept. 1, 1948; and *Endicott Leather Worker* 5 (Aug. 1948): 1, 4.
96. Charles F. Johnson, Jr., to Benjamin Seligman, Dec. 29, 1947, box 34, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers. I have deleted the full name of the individual involved to protect his privacy.
97. Charles F. Johnson, Jr., to Benjamin Seligman, Dec. 23, 1947, box 34, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers. More letters on the communist issue can be found in this box and in box 35.
98. M. to Mr. Johnson, Aug. 4, 1947; M. and A. to Leonard Steed, Jan. 21, 1949, box 13, ser. 3, Frank A. Johnson Papers.
99. Owen J. Ryall, interview by Gerald Zahavi, with the assistance of Deborah D. Maxwell, Apr. 30, 1982, tape recording (personal possession).
100. "To the Workers" notice, May 15, 1947, box 34, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers.
101. George O. Pershing, "To All Staff Members," May 19, 1947, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.

102. See, for example, the numerous leaflets in the Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers. See also "United Shoe Workers of America" file in box 331, Union Files Collection, Labor-Management Documentation Center, M. P. Catherwood Library, New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
103. *Binghamton Press*, Aug. 11, 1947.
104. Edward F. Seligman to Charles F. Johnson, Jr., May 27, 1948, box 19, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers [enclosure of company reply brief to NLRB petition]. See also Foner, *The Fur and Leather Workers Union*, 646–48.
105. John O'Green to George O. Pershing, Dec. 1, 1948, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.
106. *Binghamton Press*, Dec. 29, 1948, Jan. 7, 1949. See also Local 285 files on the Russell beating.
107. Conversation with William C. Fischer III.
108. John Russell to Abe Feinglass, Sept. 27, 1947, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers. See also leaflets circulated by the unions in Local 285 files.
109. *Endicott Leather Worker* 5 (Nov. 1947): 1.
110. The membership figures are based on financial statements of the local, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.
111. Kenneth Cowan and Inez Cowan, interview by Gerald Zahavi, June 2, 1982, tape recording (personal possession); Banner [pseud.], interview.
112. Minutes of Local 285, Feb. 17, 1949 (handwritten), Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.
113. Raymond Davis to George O. Pershing, Nov. 15, 1949, Local 285 files, box 61, Joint Board Papers.
114. *Binghamton Sun*, May 9, 1947.
115. Howard A. Swartwood to Charles F. Johnson, Jr., July 21, 1948, box 23, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers.
116. "Wage Increases and Decreases, March 16, 1931, to December 1, 1952." Between 1951 and 1955, over nine million dollars in bonus payments were distributed to Endicott Johnson workers—equivalent to about two or three weeks' wages a year for every worker. "Charles F. Johnson Biographical Sketch," n.d., box 1, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers.
117. Smith, *The Endicott Johnson Corporation*, 63–64; "To the Workers" notice, Oct. 24, 1947, box 34, ser. 1, Charles F. Johnson, Jr., Papers.
118. The corporation published retirement dinner booklets giving short profiles of retiring workers and celebrating their long years of service to the corporation. See box 13, ser. 3, Frank A. Johnson Papers, for some examples.