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JOHN H. WALKER

LABOR LEADER OF ILLINOIS 1905 - 1933

(TITLE)

BY

ANTHONY BARGER BARRETTE

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION: ORGANIZED LABOR'S CHALLENGE IN AN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY..... 1

II. JOHN H. WALKER'S LIFE: A COAL MINER BECOMES A LABOR LEADER..... 14

III. REFORMER IN THE RANKS OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA: 1905-1933..... 34

IV. SERVING THE ILLINOIS STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR: 1913-1930..... 70

V. JOHN H. WALKER'S LEGISLATIVE GOALS FOR ORGANIZED LABOR: 1905-1930..... 98

VI. JOHN H. WALKER IN ILLINOIS POLITICS: 1905-1928..... 131

VII. CONCLUSIONS..... 150

Appendices

Bibliography

PREFACE

A study of John H. Walker's life is of significant historical value for two reasons. Walker lived in a period of vast economic growth and tremendous social change stretching from the 1870's to the 1930's, and his activities, influenced by these changes, reflect the attitudes, the hopes, and the dreams of many men responding to the age. His life, therefore, gives the student of labor history some insight into the nature of the men in organized labor, and what they tried to accomplish. At the same time, Walker's life is interesting because it gives the student of Illinois history some feeling for the great changes which were taking place in this state both economically and socially.

Walker was involved in the labor movement in Illinois in two official capacities. His first position was as President of District 12, United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA), which was all of Illinois, from 1905 to 1913 and from 1931 to 1933. His duties in this office consisted of bargaining with the mine operators, dealing with miners' problems, and participating in the affairs of the national organization. As a vigorous and outspoken critic of the national officers after 1908, Walker was one of the group of reformers within the miners' organization who led the fight against John L. Lewis

between 1920 and 1930. The attempt of this group to drive Lewis out of the organization failed in 1931, and soon after that Walker, an old man, became business manager for The Men Teachers Union of Chicago. He was never again active on the state level in organized labor.

Between the years of 1913 and 1930, however, Walker was one of the major officials of the labor movement in Illinois. He served as President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, (IFL), during these years, with the exception of 1919. As President of the IFL, he was involved in building a strong state federation and in administering to the needs and interests of the various independent labor organizations around the state. He fought for the passage of laws which were beneficial to labor, and took an interest in national, state, and local politics.

Walker's activities place him with a group of labor leaders known as the progressives. He was interested in reforming American society and making it a better place for those whom he felt would otherwise remain exploited. His idealistic nature made him blind to some of the economic and political realities of the day, but added to his determination to achieve his goals. While he was not always successful in reaching these goals, it is to his credit that he attempted to do so much for so many.

Throughout the period under discussion, much more so than today, labor union people were often ungrammatical. With

little education and a deep mistrust of intellectuals, these people preferred to speak the language of their constituents. For the sake of convenience, authenticity, and historical accuracy, therefore, the customary sic has been omitted throughout.

I wish to thank my thesis director, Dr. John Keiser, for his constructive criticisms and timely suggestions regarding the research and preparation of this manuscript. I also want to extend my gratitude to my wife, who did all of the typing of this manuscript.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
ORGANIZED LABOR'S CHALLENGE IN AN INDUSTRIAL AGE

The period before the Civil War in the United States saw very little activity on the part of organized labor. The major reason for this was that relatively little manufacturing or industrial growth was taking place during this time. The United States was largely agricultural in orientation, and only a few states were noted for their industrial pursuits. The Civil War changed this aspect of economic life in America, and at the same time brought about a new breed of man, the labor leader. He was the man who directly met the challenge of the new industrial age, with all its vexing social and economic problems.

The period between 1870 and 1930 has probably never been equaled in United States history for the magnitude and far reaching importance of the economic changes that occurred within its span. Throughout the United States as a whole, this period was one of extraordinary economic expansion. New forms of transportation were devised, new industries were developed, and new economic processes replaced older ones. The United States became a world power from the economic and diplomatic standpoint, then turned its back on the world even as the wheels of industry in the United States, so intricately meshed with industry in the rest of the world, were slowly beginning to grind to a halt.

Many factors stimulated industrial growth in the United States during the latter half of the nineteenth-century. Industry was able to expand because the European immigrants provided a large and cheap labor supply. Domestic capital provided funds necessary for the nation's internal development, while European capital supplemented domestic savings particularly in mining, railroads, and banks. The United States constitution prohibited states from imposing restrictions on interstate commerce, thereby allowing industrialists to search far and wide for new markets and raw materials after the means to transport products became available.

The enlargement and transformation of the transportation system was a key factor in the industrial development. The period from 1830 to 1860 in the United States saw the beginning and increased expansion of the railroads and a corresponding decline in water transportation. This growth continued between 1868 and 1893, and, "(b)y 1915, when the railroads boasted some 250,000 miles of track, not an important community in the country lay outside this extensive system."[1]

In bringing all sections of the nation into closer contact with one another, the railroads stimulated economic growth by reducing the cost of production and by creating a national market for goods and services. No longer were manufacturers

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[1] Samuel P. Hays, The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 5-6. (Hereafter cited as Hays, The Response to Industrialism.)

excluded from distant markets or from the raw materials they needed for their products. This stimulated mass consumption and greatly encouraged the growth of mass production. The specialization of a laborer's job duties and the separation of labor and management functions were the ultimate outgrowth of this expansion of the economy.[2] It was these changes which led some men to call for the formation of labor unions.

The railroads served another function in the economic growth pattern of the United States; they helped to create certain basic industries. The major one of these was the iron and steel industry, which soon became the foundation of industrial America. The demand for iron and steel came from the railroads, which used over half of the total iron produced in the United States in the building, rebuilding, and maintaining of their systems.[3] A less spectacular growth was experienced in the coal mining industry because of the technological shift from charcoal to coke which resulted from the increased demand for iron.

No less important in accelerating the tempo of economic life in the United States was the development of rapid nation-wide communication systems. The telegraph, the telephone, and the modern newspaper press helped to co-ordinate the many business transactions of a growing economy and to bring the consumer and the producer together in a much shorter length

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[2] Hays, The Response to Industrialism, pp. 9-10; Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 52-53. (Hereafter cited as Taft, Organized Labor.)

[3] Hays, The Response to Industrialism, p. 8.

of time. The new communication systems supplemented the new transportation systems, ". . . in creating the highly integrated and complex human relationships inherent in modern industrialism."[4]

Social attitudes were also affected by the vast economic changes taking place in the late nineteenth-century. The American people, as they adapted themselves to the new industrialism, became increasingly reckless regarding economic matters, and the economic growth of the post-Civil War period transpired in an atmosphere of speculation, waste and disorder. Natural resources appeared to be unlimited and people were not concerned about conserving them. Many property holders became speculators because they were convinced that the value of property would rise in the course of rapid economic growth, and the desire to amass wealth seemed to possess all Americans. In time, these attitudes led to a breakdown in the moral fiber of the country. Very few businessmen felt compelled to retain the confidence of their associates and the public. The rush to secure as large a profit as possible gave rise to sharp competitive practices, often illegal in nature.[5] The laborer and the farmer seemed to suffer the most from these new concepts regarding economic practices. Again, it was the trade union movement which took up their cause.

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[4] Hays, The Response to Industrialism, p. 8.
[5] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

In industrial America material success became the predominent measure of human achievement, and the term success implied owning material property and amassing great fortunes. Businessmen now commanded the most prestige in society, and the new wealthy argued that men of talent or ability should enter business and industry rather than other occupations. Politics, once an avocation of the gentleman, became an ignoble profession, "fit only for those who failed at economic enterprise."[6] The Horatio Alger stories, with their mundane, moral precepts, entertained thousands who had dreams which never came true.

The adjustment to new industrial processes came slowly and painfully for many Americans. Some people were disgusted by the crudeness of the new age, the graft, the corruption, the destruction of natural resources, and the praise of material values which accompanied it. The people who became wealthy found it difficult to believe that social unrest could abound in a nation rich with natural wealth and opportunities. Yet the farmer and the laborer, convinced that the new organization of economic life was simply a selfish capitalistic trick which could be undone, sought to destroy the new economic order in which they had become entangled. "The last third of the nineteenth century was an era of popular schemes for remaking society, of simple solutions to complex problems, of endeavors to escape from the industrial innovation rather

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[6] Hays, The Response to Industrialism, p. 22.

than to come to grips with it."[7] The Granger and Populist movements, the formation of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, and the industrial conflicts such as the Haymarket Riot and the Pullman Strike are excellent examples of this attitude in American society.

The dawn of the twentieth-century in America did not bring with it any radical changes in the economic or social problems which faced those living in the nineteenth-century. The younger generation, whose fathers had protested through the Granger and the Populist movements or become involved in the conflicts between labor and management, did not find American life any better because of their parent's protests. What they did discover, however, was an even more complex and involved industrial society. A society in which group action had at last become important; a society in which the economic processes were now rapidly maturing and becoming solidified in form. As the industrial revolution advanced, the nation inevitably became a world power.

The dominent theme in the realm of economics in the twentieth-century was the continued expansion of industry. Added to this, however, was the development of a world market for American products in addition to the national market. For example, just after the Civil War annual exports hardly reached $400,000,000, yet by World War I they came to $2,500,000,000 a year.[8] Imports rose as rapidly as did exports. In response

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[7] Hays, The Response to Industrialism, p. 24.
[8] Ibid., p. 164.

to the increasing needs of an industrial society, foodstuffs and raw materials replaced manufactured goods as the major items purchased from abroad.

These new economic contacts helped to broaden the American spheres of interest. The businessman's attention was turned to the untapped markets of eastern Asia, South America, and Canada, and foreign investments, though less important than commercial contacts, increased as well. As a result, a larger concept of national security was generated and a special emphasis was placed on a new navy and the necessary naval bases. The first President of the twentieth-century, Theodore Roosevelt, dramatized this need with his actions regarding the Panama Canal. America's entrance into World War I in 1917 was another event illustrating this need for national security.

The continued expansion of industry during the twentieth-century was also evidenced by the changing methods of transportation and sources of power during this period. The increased production of goods demanded that more miles of railroad be laid, that more ships be built, and that the use of transportation by motor vehicle be started. As a source of power, electricity became important. Between 1902 and 1930, the total number of electric utilities in the United States increased from 2,507 to 91,112.[9] Whenever these changes took place in the economy,

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[9] The Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present (Stamford, Connecticut: Fairchild Publishers, 1965), p. 506. (Hereafter cited as The Statistical History.)

laborers were faced with making changes to adjust to them. The coal mining interests, for example, were faced with hiring fewer men or being ruined by the cheaper cost of electricity and natural gas. Organized labor, particularly the United Mine Workers of America union, was faced with this problem in industrial America.

Within the realm of social change in the twentieth-century, the outstanding feature was the new reliance on the power of the group.[10] Until the end of World War I this was most dramatically characterized by the actions of the Progressives, the socialists, and the newly formed labor organizations. Each of these groups attempted to cope with the problems of industrialism. The Progressives turned to exposing the problems of society to the public as a means of correcting problems. It was hoped that in this way the federal and state governments would take some action. The trade union movement also turned to government on the federal and state level hoping to obtain relief, while the socialists advocated economic reforms of their own for the correction of problems. With the exception of the socialists, these groups were partially successful in achieving their goals before World War I. When the war ended, however, the federal government, and the state governments in some instances, reverted to a lassez-faire attitude toward business and industry, and these groups were no longer regarded as beneficial to society. When this

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[10] Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 215-271. (Hereafter cited as Hofstadter, The Age of Reform.)

occurred, the Progressive movement came to an end; the Socialist Party was split into factions and never regained its former importance; and the labor organizations were seriously hindered and were barely able to survive.[11]

From 1920 to the middle of the 1930's, the dominent social and political trend was to favor the business community at the expense of those groups who protested against its power and prevalence in American life. Only when the business community failed to control its own destiny and allowed the new economic processes of industrialism to run amuck, resulting in one of the severest depressions this country has ever known, did the federal government step back into the picture and begin to give labor organizations their demands. The challenge of the 1920's for labor leaders such as John H. Walker was to keep the limited gains they had achieved before the war.

In Illinois many of the major economic and social trends just mentioned were taking place between 1870 and 1930. One reason for this was the excellent geographical position of the state, which placed it directly in the path of westward expansion and the building of the railroads. A second reason was the tremendous growth of the population of the state between 1859 and 1910, and the rapid development of several urban areas, particularly Chicago. A third reason was the abundance of natural resources and the

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[11] Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, pp. 282-287; H. Wayne Morgan, ed., American Socialism, 1900-1960 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 95-96; Taft, Organized Labor, pp. 341-410.

presence of rich farm land, which attracted the entrepreneur and the businessman, and the capital they had to spend, to the state.

The development of the railroad system in Illinois dates back to 1856, when the Illinois Central railroad began operations with 705 miles of track between Chicago and Cairo, Illinois. In the years following this opening date, the Illinois Central increased its mileage by construction, purchase, and lease, until it covered 2,888 miles within the state in 1893. With this extensive system, the railroad dominated industry in Illinois, and caused other lines to consolidate in order to compete with it. This development made Illinois the leading railroad state in the union, in respect to the number of miles of line, and it held this title until 1907, when Texas surpassed it.[12]

The Illinois Central, and the other lines, served the agricultural interests of the state in the immediate post-Civil War period, and the mining and manufacturing concerns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. The grain trade between the central and southern parts of the state and Chicago was particularly important, and made the city one of the two primary grain markets in the country. Livestock was another important commodity which was shipped to Chicago, and the city became well known for its slaughter houses and meat-packing industries. Coal mining interests used the

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[12] Ernest L. Bogart and John M. Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, 1893-1918 (Springfield; Illinois Centennial Commission, 1920), pp. 120-132. (Hereafter cited as Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth.)

railroads for shipping also, particularly from the 1870's onward. It can be seen, therefore, that the presence of such an extensive system of transportation in Illinois was a continual impetus for further economic development, and led to the state being one of the early industrial centers in the period of the industrial revolution.

A second factor in the industrial development of Illinois was the continual growth of population. In 1850, Illinois ranked eleventh in the nation with a population of 851,470. Sixty years later, in 1910, it ranked third in the United States with a population of 5,638,591.[13] This tremendous growth stimulated the industrial development of the state by providing an adequate labor supply to meet the needs of industry. It also created a number of urban markets for the manufactured goods.[14] Without the presence of this large population, therefore, it would have been impossible for any of the industrial and manufacturing interests to develop in the state.

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[13] Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, p. 3.

[14] Ibid., p. 9. Bogart states, "...one of the remarkable features about the development of Illinois is the fact that while it holds first place in the union as an agricultural state, it ranks second in the value of the products of the mines, and third in those of manufactures. If Illinois be compared with other states in the union as regards the urbanization of the population, that is the proportion living in cities of 25,000 or over, it is found to rank sixteenth in this respect in 1880, eleventh in 1890, and seventh in both 1900 and 1910. In the last year, it was outranked by Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey, and equalled by California. It is evident from this grouping that from 1900 on, Illinois must be classed among the industrial states with a large urban population engaged in industrial pursuits."

A third factor leading to economic changes in Illinois was the presence of a variety of raw materials which could be transformed into useful commodities. Illinois ranked third in manufacturing in the United States by 1893. This high rank was due primarly "to the preeminence of the state as a producer of foodstuffs and to its location in the corn belt, for three out of the first five manufacturing industries were closely linked with agriculture, and in the not far remote past had been carried on upon the farm . . . . ."[15] These three major manufacturing concerns were the slaughtering and meat-packing industry, the distilled liquor industry, and the flour and grist mill products industry.[16]

But agricultural resources were not the only raw materials. Illinois also had forests, natural gas, and mineral products which could be turned into useful products. The presence of coal, especially, was useful in developing the iron and steel industries in the state as well as for providing an inexpensive source of fuel. Illinois was ranked second in the nation in mining products as early as 1890, largely as a result of the development of the coal mining industry in the central and northern parts of the state. Between 1900 and 1907 this industry was further developed in sourthern Illinois. It continued to be important until other forms of fuel began to replace it in the 1920's. It is evident, therefore, as one historian of the period pointed out,

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15 Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, p. 91.
16 See Appendix A for a list of the major manufacturers in Illinois in 1914.

that,". . . the growth of manufactures in Illinois rested upon a substantial foundation of natural resources. . . ."[17]

Because of the rapid industrial development in Illinois the state was faced with a number of social problems in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. This was true especially for urban areas, such as Chicago, where certain problems such as poor housing, unemployment, low wages, long hours of work, and the use of child labor developed. Yet these problems could and did develop anywhere around the state, and since the majority of Illinois manufacturers were not particularly concerned about this, it seemed to some that Illinois paid a heavy price in human suffering for its high rank as an industrial state.[18]

Under the leadership of John H. Walker and others like him it became organized labor's self-imposed responsibility and goal to correct the social and economic problems in the state. Through the Illinois Legislature, through public education, through bargaining with the employers, organized labor in Illinois endeavored to change what it felt was wrong with the new industrial society. They did not always succeed for it was not an easy task, but it was a challenging one.

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17 Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, p. 97.

18 Ibid., p. 97. Bogart states, "The dominant note of Illinois manufactures in the past has been a vigorous, at times almost a ruthless, purpose to succeed."

CHAPTER II

JOHN H. WALKER'S LIFE: A COAL MINER BECOMES A LABOR LEADER

John H. Walker's heritage is rooted in nineteenth-century Scotland. His father, William Walker Sr., the son of a weaver employed in the textile mills of Scotland,[1] was born May 30, 1851 in Cumbernauld, Scotland, approximately ten miles from Glasgow and thirty miles from Edinburgh.[2] This area was traditionally the economic center of Scotland, and in the nineteenth-century the country's major natural resources of coal, iron ore, and salt were taken from this region. After receiving a brief formal education, William Walker, a quiet man with laughing eyes and curly hair, entered the coal mines in this area. In the 1860's he married Sarah Hunter and they settled in Binnie Hill, Scotland, where John, the oldest of eight children to reach adulthood, was born on April 27, 1872.[3]

John Walker was exposed to the ideas of organized labor even as a child. The coal miner suffered from economic exploitation and terrible working conditions at this time, and William Walker worked hard to improve these conditions by attempting to start a co-operative movement and by helping

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[1] Martia Hempel (Walker's daughter), interview with the author, April 17, 1966.

[2] John Walker to Hugh Williamson, January 18, 1918. Papers of John H. Walker. University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. (Hereafter cited as Walker Papers.)

[3] Martia Hempel, interview with the author, April 17, 1966.

to organize the Scottish Miners' Union. The men in Sarah Hunter's family were also coal miners and her grandfather supposedly organized the miners' first local union in Binnie Hill.[4] The family was traditionally oriented toward the goals and ideals of organized labor, and passed these ideals along to their oldest son.

In 1881, William Walker emigrated to the United States in order to escape what he felt to be the "tyranny of England".[5] He left his family in Scotland, but within a year arranged for them to join him. They settled in the vicinity of Braceville, Illinois, located in the Wilmington coal field,[6] and it was here that young John, who only finished the third grade, went to work in the coal mines. He was ten years old, four years under the legal minimum age when a boy could enter the mines.

Between 1882 and 1890, John Walker became a practical miner like his father. He learned the skills, hazards, and hardships connected with coal mining, and came to appreciate the value of organized labor in the industry. Walker joined the open branch of the Knights of Labor in 1883 and also belonged to the American Miners' Federation and the Mine Laborers during the 1880's.[7]

Walker saw a great deal of his adopted country during these years. When William Walker was black-listed in Illinois for attempting to organize a miners' union, the family moved to the Oklahoma territory where John worked in the mines with his father..

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[4] John Walker to John Steele, January 5, 1926, Walker Papers.
[5] Martia Hempel to the author, March 15, 1966.
[6] Martia Hempel, interview with the author, April 17, 1966.
[7] Eugene Staley, History of the Illinois State Federation of Labor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp. 307-308. (Hereafter cited as Staley, IFL.)

Walker made numerous trips back to Scotland during these years also, "riding the rails" to points of debarkation and working his way aboard ship. In Scotland, Walker would work in the mines, visit with relatives, and then return to the United States.[8]

From 1890 to 1905, Walker was active at the local level in the newly formed United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). In 1894, during the first major strike called by the miners, he attempted to organize a local union in Braceville, Illinois. This attempt, like the strike failed and Walker was driven out of the area.[9] Two years later he succeeded in organizing local union 505, UMWA, at Central City, Illinois. In 1898, he represented this local at the convention of District 12, UMWA, in Springfield, Illinois, where the first agreement between the Illinois Coal Operator's Association and the miners was ratified.[10]

Although Walker was well known in the Braceville area as a result of such activities, his reputation as a trade union leader was not widely recognized until the UMWA strike of 1897. This strike gave Walker a chance to demonstrate his leadership abilities at the state level. During the strike, called July 4, 1897, Walker and John Mitchell, President of the UMWA from 1897 to 1908, served together as special organizers in Illinois, and were successful in keeping the spirit of the strike alive during the nine months it lasted.[11] The

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[8] Martia Hempel to the author, March 15, 1966.

[9] Twenty-fourth Annual Convention Proceedings, District 12, UMWA, February 18-26, 1913, Peoria, Illinois, p. 348. (Hereafter cited as District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1913.)

[10] Staley, IFL, p. 308.

[11] Elsie Gluck, John Mitchell, Miner: Labor's Bargain with the Gilded Age (New York: The John Day Company, 1929), pp. 27-34. (Hereafter cited as Gluck, Mitchell.)

friendship formed between the two men during this time of trial was to last until Mitchell's death.

In 1900, President Mitchell appointed Walker as an international organizer for West Virginia.[12] Walker worked with Mrs. Mary (Mother) Jones, one of the few women organizers in the UMWA, for a year in West Virginia in an effort to bring about a strong union in that state. His attempts, like those of many others, failed and the state remained one of the weakest districts in the union. This failure was due primarily to the operators, who were notorious for their anti-union feelings and sometimes used force as a means of preventing union organizing.[13] To Walker, this was just another example of why organization of miners was warrented. He went back to Illinois more determined than ever to build a strong organization in that state.

By 1901, Walker was high in the councils of District 12. In that year he was elected President of the Danville sub-district. He became a delegate to the UMWA national convention from local union 272, UMWA, in 1902,[14] and attended these conventions as a delegate for twenty-one consecutive years. From 1902 to 1903, he served as an executive board member of District 12. In 1904, he became Vice-president of the district and in 1905 he was elected President.[15] It is little wonder, with this type of

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[12] Staley, IFL, p. 308.

[13] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1913, pp. 16-18.

[14] Thirteenth Annual Convention Proceedings, UMWA, January 20-29, 1902, Indianapolis, Indiana, p. 24. (Hereafter cited as UMWA, Proceedings, 1902.)

[15] Summary of John H. Walker's work experience, Walker Papers.

background, that Walker was a knowledgeable, forceful and constructive leader in Illinois trade union circles.

Walker brought numerous assets to the executive positions he held in Illinois labor organizations. Standing five feet, eleven inches, and weighing over two-hundred pounds, he possessed great physical and mental endurance and was capable of withstanding the physical and mental punishment of working and traveling long hours. His sense of humor, sharp wit, and mercurial temperment made him popular with the rank and file. He was the type of speaker who, although untrained, left little doubt in anyone's mind about his convictions regarding the labor movement.[16]

Walker's personal habits were beyond reproach also. He was always an ideal gentleman in public, and photographs of him indicate he was a careful dresser. He rarely touched alcohol or used obscene language and was shocked by his union associates who had either habit. His favorite sports, hunting and fishing, made him popular with union associates and with people outside the union movement.[17]

Always conscious of being a representative of the trade union movement, Walker went out of his way to buy union-made goods and to promote the union label. Once, he even refused to own a home in Springfield, Illinois when he found that it was built by a non-union contractor.[18] Because of this attitude,

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[16] Martia Mempel to the author, March 15, 1966.

[17] Samuel Insull once invited Walker to hunt on his private estate any time he wished. Samuel Insull to Walker, November 21, 1927, Walker Papers.

[18] Walker to Gifford Ernest, October 7, 1920, Walker Papers.

there was little in his private life that union men could criticize.

Walker realized that organized labor gained respectability if it provided leadership in areas outside its own field. He became active in municipal affairs in later years, therefore, belonging to the Springfield (Illinois) Planning Commission[19] and numerous other civic organizations. He always accepted honorary appointments, and considered it his civic duty to serve on such committees.[20] His gregarious nature led him to join numerous fraternal organizations,[21] thus broadening his contacts with people outside the union movement.

In 1896, Walker married Phoebe Fox, of Mason, Illinois.[22] The young bride's background was similar to her husband's and she shared his interest in organized labor. Phoebe's father was Welsh and worked in the Illinois coal mines. Her mother was Dutch-English and came from Pennsylvania.[23] The marriage was long and successful, marred only by the loss of several children in infancy or childhood. Those losses must have been terrible blows for Walker because he was always an extremely

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19 Mayor of Springfield, Illinois to Walker, January 24, 1922, Walker Papers.

20 Two examples; Walker was appointed to serve on the Committee on Suggestions for the Lincoln Centennial Association in 1923. Walker to Governor Len Small, January 7, 1923, Walker Papers. He was on the Reception Committee for Charles A. Lindbergh in Springfield, Illinois, August 15, 1927. "Charles A. Lindbergh's Visit to Springfield, Illinois, August 15, 1927," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XX (April, 1927-January, 1928), p. 461.

21 There are numerous letters from the Moose, the Elks, and other organizations in the Walker Papers.

22 Walker to E. J. Fox, October 7, 1918, Walker Papers.

23 Martia Hempel to the author, March 15, 1966.

sensitive, emotional, and intense person.

The people whom Walker admired reflect this sensitivity and emotionalism in his personality. The Scotch poet, Robert Burns, was one of these men. Once in the early years of his marriage, Walker's wife bought him a Christmas gift with some grocery money they had been saving. Walker became outraged when he found that the money had been spent and demanded to see the gift. Phoebe brought him the gift and his anger turned to tears at the sight of a portrait of Robert Burns.[24] Such emotional outbursts were not unusual for Walker.

Another one of Walker's heros was Abraham Lincoln. Walker collected books and clippings regarding his fellow Illinoisan and often quoted Lincoln in his speeches. He felt that Lincoln was a great humanitarian, and once said of him,

> Were Lincoln living today, he would be standing for and supporting the labor movement, joint bargaining, the farmers' and other co-operative societies, cleaniness and honesty in public life. He would be doing this in the interest of humanity... .32

This was the type of reverence which Walker held for those whom he admired.

Walker could dispise a man with just as much intensity. After John L. Lewis became President of the miners' union and forced some of Walker's friends out of the organization, Walker wrote a pamphlet which he entitled, "John L. Lewis, Liar Coward,

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[24] Martia Hempel, interview with the author, April 17, 1966.

[25] Speech given before the Lincoln Centennial Association (n.d.), Walker Papers.

Traitor". In the pamphlet Walker called Lewis "an indefensible liar. . ., a yellow coward. . ., an infamous traitor. . ., indiscriminate, common, ordinary, cheap liar. . ."[26] Similar pronouncements are scattered throughout Walker's letters to his union associates.

One historian has observed that, "Walker is a man of strong emotions; feeling, not logic, is the key to his spirit."[27] This was undoubtedly true, for Walker saw issues as right or wrong, good or bad. Like the socialists with whom he associated in the early years of the twentieth-century, Walker was bound to an idealism which was unswerving in principle and unbending in nature. As a result, he made a number of errors in judgement when he attempted to assess political or economic issues in the United Mine Workers organization. Yet, his idealism was also a source of his aggressiveness while he was President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, (IFL). It inspired him to develop an aggressive state federation in Illinois, motivated him to promote labor legislation in the state legislature, and caused him to involve Illinois labor in national, state, and local politics.

A major factor contributing to Walker's emergence in Illinois labor was his position within the structure of organized labor. This position was local rather than national. As a result, Walker had greater freedom to do as he pleased, and unlike national labor leaders, he did not need to worry about

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[26] Pamphlet by John H. Walker (n.d.), Walker Papers.
[27] Staley, IFL, p. 308.

being in the spotlight or trying to guage the mood of the nation.

Within the ranks of the United Mine Workers of America,(UMWA), Walker was identified with the reform elements. He felt a close attachment to the organization, and to the miners' struggle with centralization of power. His concern with technological changes, and with a hostile management motivated him to try and correct these problems. He was involved in UMWA politics and union intrigues at different times during his entire career, and this involvement ultimately led to his expulsion from leadership in Illinois labor circles.

Walker was President of the Illinois district of the United Mine Workers (District 12) from 1905 to 1913 and 1931 to 1933. During this time, he directed the economic policies of the Illinois miners, often coming in conflict with the national officers of the union over these policies. His criticism of UMWA President Tom L. Lewis, who was in office from 1908 to 1912, and other national leaders caused one student of the union's history to remark, "With the exception of John Mitchell, there was probably no man in the union whom Walker did not attack at one time or another,. . .."[28]

Walker ran for President of the UMWA three different times during his career. Each time he was unsuccessful. In 1908, Tom L. Lewis, John Mitchell's Vice-president, defeated him. In 1916, Walker lost to John P. White, and in 1918 he was defeated

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[28] David Thoreau Wieck, The United Mine Workers of America: A Study in Centralization (unpublished manuscript: Wayne State University, 1943), p. 59. (Hereafter cited as Wieck, A Study in Centralization.)

by Frank J. Hayes. According to Walker and the group of UMWA leaders that supported him, each election was won fraudulently, providing a further impetus for radical action. During the early 1920's, Walker was part of the group which opposed the national officers, including John L. Lewis. The turbulence within the UMWA resulting from this opposition finally led to an attempt to remove Lewis from office by creating a new miners' organization, the United Mine Workers of America Reorganized. Walker was elected an officer of this organization after helping to found it. When the Reorganized was abolished, he ran for President of District 12 and won. It was the last time that he was active in the miners' union.

Walker's activities in the Illinois State Federation of Labor were totally at odds with his activities in the United Mine Workers. He was not interested in engaging in radical reform of the state organization or its parent, the American Federation of Labor, (AFL). While he did not agree with all the policies of Samuel Gompers or William Green when they led the AFL, he accepted their leadership and their policies for the most part and did their bidding. This does not mean that Walker was out of character as President of the IFL, however, for he still pursued a number of idealistic goals.

Walker recognized that the IFL had a much broader base in Illinois labor circles than the UMWA and District 12. The former organization consisted of independent unions which banded together in order to better co-ordinate individual union activities. The miners' union, on the other hand, was narrow in interest and only

served one group of laboring people. For this reason alone, Walker may have decided that he would rather serve as President of the IFL, when he was elected to the position in 1912. Whatever his reasons for becoming President of the state federation, he found this position more rewarding and remained in it, with the exception of one year, from 1913 to 1930.

The broad base of the IFL made Walker's duties as President numerous and diverse. Essentially, he was responsible for strengthening the trade union movement through organizational work. He was in charge of promoting better relations between the unions and the general public and of educating the individual trade unionist in the principles of organized labor and his responsibilities in American society. Lastly, he was responsible for economic, legislative, and political policies of organized labor in Illinois.

Walker's organizational work began before he entered the Presidency of the IFL. In 1908, while still President of District 12, he arranged for the miners to enter the IFL. In this way Walker's own position in the IFL was strengthened, District 12 was given the additional support of the IFL, and the IFL gained some 300 local unions and additional income from union dues.[29] After Walker became President of the IFL he continued trying to persuade affiliated unions to join the IFL and the AFL. Of course, organizational work went on outside the union structure too. Walker arranged for unions to enter many phases of industry in

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[29] Staley, IFL, p. 308.

Illinois, and helped to gain recognition for these unions after they were organized.

The problem of promoting better relations between unions and the general public was met by establishing communication between the two groups. Walker believed there was a need for organized labor to have its own newspapers and other forms of public media. He worked to secure a wider audience for labor newspapers in Illinois, and established the IFL News Letter as the official organ of the federation in 1915.[30] This weekly newspaper was sent to every local union affiliated with the IFL. Other ways of placing labor's message before the general public were public speaking engagements, conventions, and the use of radio, after it became popular.

The work of educating trade unionists in the principles of organized labor and in the responsibilities of laboring people in society went on in several ways. According to Walker, the basic principles of organized labor was a belief in democratic procedures. Walker rarely attempted to rule arbitrarily, believing that all members of organized labor could and should participate in the governing of the organization through the delegates they sent to conventions. He emphasized this principle in IFL conventions and in his daily activities as President of the IFL.

Walker warned workers to avoid violence during strikes, pointing out that such actions harmed labor's image.[31] The Herrin, Illinois killings in 1922 appalled him, and while

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30 Twenty-sixth Annual Convention Proceedings, District 12, UMWA, March 23-April 10, 1916, Peoria, Illinois, p. 405. (Hereafter cited as District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1916.)

31 District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1913, pp. 10-24.

he sympathized with the miners regarding scab labor, he felt co-operation, not bloodshed, was the only solution to the problem.[32]

Walker heartily endorsed adult education and urged members of the IFL to participate in such programs. He felt that every laboring person should strive to improve his knowledge of world, national, and local affairs, and told the delegates at IFL conventions that this was necessary.[33]

True to his idealistic nature, he also believed that patriotism was a noble trait in people. He worked closely with the Illinois State Council of Defense during World War I, co-ordinating IFL activities with the war-time efforts of industry in Illinois.[34] After the war, Walker endorsed the American Legion and urged veterans who belonged to unions to join this organization.[35]

Walker's background as President of District 12 gave him a firm foundation in union economics particularly in the areas of negotiations and the handling of strikes, and when he became President of the IFL he was well equipped to handle the economic responsibilities he assumed.

As President of District 12, Walker participated in most

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[32] Walker to John Steele, June 26, 1922, Walker Papers.

[33] Forty-second Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, September 8-13, 1924, Peoria, Illinois, p. 45. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1924.)

[34] "Illinois State Council of Defense Passes into History," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XII (Fall, 1919), p. 502.

[35] Speech by Walker made before the Eleventh Annual Convention of the American Legion, Department of Illinois, September 14, 1929, Walker Papers.

of the negotiations of contracts with the Illinois Coal Operator's Association. Contracts involving wages and other benefits for the miner were signed in 1906, 1908, 1910, and 1912. In 1908 and 1910, Walker was able to gain wage increases for the miners; in 1906 and 1912 he maintained the wage standard established by the prior contracts. Walker also obtained a number of fringe benefits for the miners during this period. In the 1908, 1910, and 1912 contracts, the Illinois Coal Operators provided shorter working hours, better tonnage rates, and payment for shot firers.[36] These benefits helped the miners economically.

Another of Walker's economic duties while President of the miners was arbitrating disputes and enforcing the contracts which the union signed. In this function, Walker proved himself to be capable and fair to miners and operators, thus strengthening the organization and helping to bring greater recognition from Illinois operators. Arbitration was Walker's major economic consideration in the IFL also. He handled hundreds of disputes between unions and management from 1913 to 1930, and in this way, induced management to turn to labor when problems arose.[37]

The handling of strikes, an important economic weapon of organized labor, was another one of Walker's duties as President

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[36] Twenty-second Annual Convention Proceedings, District 12, UMWA, February 21-March 1, 1911, Springfield, Illinois, p. 16. (Hereafter cited as District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1911.) District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1913, pp. 10-24.

[37] The Walker Papers deal with this economic consideration to some extent. See also, P. Millet, "Trial in a Coal Mine," Outlook, LXXXIX (June 6, 1908), pp. 296-301.

of District 12 and the IFL. Walker used the strike in 1910 to gain benefits for the miners from the coal operators.[38] He also was in charge of strike funds and the payment of strike benefits to miners out of work. As President of the IFL, Walker handled strike benefits for individual unions and provided moral support to strikers by helping to gain recognition of the strike from other unions. He had no authority to call a strike himself, however.

Walker had a sincere desire to begin a co-operative system in Illinois while he was President of District 12.[39] This became a reality in 1915, when the Illinois State Co-operative League was formed. Walker, as President of the IFL, was in an excellent position to lead the co-operatives, and did so for a number of years. At first, he concentrated on building the League in mining towns, but it spread to other segments of organized labor in time.[40]

A host of other economic problems were confronted by Walker during his Presidency of the IFL. He became active in reforming convict labor policies in Illinois. He worked to build a state employment service. He promoted the building of hard roads in the latter part of the 1920's, and even supported a flood control program for the Mississippi River. Walker con-

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[38] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1911, p. 16.

[39] Ibid., p. 29.

[40] The Walker Papers contain a good deal of correspondence regarding co-operatives from 1916-1920. From 1915 to 1925, the IFL News Letter carried a great deal of information about co-operatives in Illinois also.

sidered these numerous projects within the scope of the IFL's economic policies.[41]

The passage of labor legislation was Walker's second important responsibility as President of District 12 and the IFL. Most labor leaders considered legislation a primary means of improving the economic situation of the individual laborer. John Mitchell worked hard to achieve the passage of such laws, and Samuel Gompers made labor legislation one of the AFL's principle interests. Walker followed the example these men established.

At the 1912 District convention, John L. Lewis, then Secretary of the legislation committee for the Illinois miners, told the delegates, "in securing the enactment of . . . various laws, too much credit cannot be given to our efficient president, John H. Walker."[42] Walker deserved this tribute. He served on the Mining Investigation Commission, established by Governor Deneen, after the Cherry Mine disaster in 1909, and played a leading part in the passage of legislation establishing Mine Rescue Stations, enacting a Miner's Qualification Law and a Shot Firers Law, and revising the Illinois Mining Code.[43]

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[41] Walker made a speech February 7, 1927, regarding labor's interest in hard roads, Walker Papers. There is a resolution regarding flood control of the Mississippi in the May 16-31, 1927 file, Walker Papers.

[42] Twenty-third Annual Convention Proceedings, District 12, UMWA, February 20, March 1 1912, Springfield, Illinois, p. 87. (Hereafter cited as District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1912.)

[43] Earl R. Beckner, A History of Labor Legislation in Illinois, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929), pp. 283-374. (Hereafter cited as Beckner, Labor Legislation.)

When Walker became President of the IFL, his legislative activities covered a wider field, and he was responsible for the passage of numerous bills considered important to labor. He worked for twelve years to have an injunction-limitation bill enacted in Illinois and finally achieved this aim in 1925. Legislation regulating wages, safety and health in industry, occupations and apprenticeships, health insurance, old age pensions, the hours of work for women, child labor, and the administration of labor law were also his concern.[44] He did not always achieve his goals regarding legislative matters, but he did make some improvements.

In addition to supporting legislation favorable to labor, Walker opposed bills which hindered organized labor's function in society. The most unfavorable legislation was considered the Constabulary law, which was defeated for a number of years by labor, before it finally became law and established the State Highway Patrol. Walker's fear, perhaps exaggerated, was that such a state-wide police force would be used to control and coerce workers who participated in strikes.[45]

Walker's close involvement with labor legislation led to action in national, state, and local politics. He was active in politics during his entire career, usually campaigning for a political candidate, but sometimes becoming the candidate himself. Walker's political philosophy consisted of one basic

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[44] See Beckner, Labor Legislation, for a complete history of the development of labor laws in Illinois, and Walker's contribution to this development.

[45] IFL Weekly News Letter, April 2, 1921 to March 17, 1923, cites a great deal of opposition to the Constabulary bill. Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 70-71.

rule: always support the politician or party most likely to be pro-labor. His political activities, therefore, appear to be very chaotic and inconsistent, but this was not the case at all.

From the turn of the century until 1916, John Walker was an ardent socialist.[46] He was prominent in the Socialist Party in Illinois, and aligned the miners with this party during his Presidency of District 12. By 1912, the socialists were in the majority on the Executive Board of the District.[47] Although the Socialist Party in Illinois never achieved spectacular success at election time, it did serve to dramatize the miners' demands for reform, thereby making the public and the Illinois legislature more aware that action needed to be taken. This is probably one reason Walker belonged to the party. Another reason was the idealism of the party's economic doctrine. Walker told the 1912 miners' convention that he believed, "that everyone who desires to be classed as one of the workers should be a member of both the economic and political unions of the workers."[48]

In 1916, Walker abandoned the socialists for major party candidates. He endorsed Woodrow Wilson for President and Edward F. Dunne for Governor of Illinois.[49] The Socialist

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[46] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1912, p. 29. Walker to Socialist Party members, 1913-1916, Walker Papers.

[47] Twentieth Annual Convention Proceedings, District 12, UMWA, February 16-24, 1909, Peoria, Illinois, pp. 181-222. (Hereafter cited as District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1909.)

[48] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1912, p. 29.

[49] Peoria Daily Journal, November 5, 1916, p. 11. The ad states, "Woodrow Wilson and Edward F. Dunne are representatives of the common people and the spirit of their times. They stand for new and enlarged opportunities for labor, for a square deal for laboring men, for social justice and for economic and social progress all along the line."

Party revoked Walker's membership because of these activities, at the same time chastizing him for his views on the World War. The letters exchanged between Walker and Adolph Germer, then Secretary of the Socialist Party, indicate the bitterness that developed between labor and the socialists about this time.[50]

Walker did not remain an orthodox party supporter for very long. In 1919 and 1920, he became active in the Farmer-Labor Party which developed in Chicago. In the 1920 election, he supported a full slate of Farmer-Labor Party candidates for office, and ran for Governor of Illinois on the same party ticket.[51] He lost the election, but this never dampened his enthusiasm. Walker only left the Farmer-Labor Party after the communists became active in the movement in 1922.

In 1924, Walker again became active in state and national politics. On the state level, he decided to support the Republican incumbant, Governor Len Small, because of the close working relationship between the two men. Small, who won re-election, was openly sympathetic to labor and helped Walker achieve the passage of several significant pieces of labor legislation.[52] In national politics, Walker endorsed the

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50 Letters between Walker and Adolph Germer, October, 1917 to January, 1918, Walker Papers.

51 IFL Weekly News Letter, June 12, 1920, p. 1. (Hereafter cited as IFL News Letter.)

52 Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 57. Walter M. Lacyk, Illinois Labor Unions in the Election of 1924 (unpublished master's thesis: University of Illinois, 1955.), p. 1. (Hereafter cited as Lacyk, Illinois Labor Unions.)

Progressive Party and Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin. The AFL supported LaFollette because of his pro-labor views, and a significant portion of labor seemed to be behind the independent party movement.[52] LaFollette's defeat, however, ended labor's hope of gaining the sympathy of a national political leader.

In the 1928 national elections, Walker supported Herbert Hoover for President and Len Small for Governor of Illinois.[53] Walker campaigned for Hoover because of the latter's administrative role in World War I. He considered Hoover idealistic and pro-labor.[54] Len Small, running for a third term, was Walker's choice for Governor because of his help to organized labor between 1921 and 1927. When Small failed to receive the nomination in the April, 1928 primaries, Walker refused to endorse any candidate.[55]

After 1928 the problems within the UMWA overwhelmed Walker, and he was not directly active in Illinois and national politics. But long after he lost his leadership role in Illinois labor, he maintained an interest in politics and supported the men he considered labor's friends.

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[52] Lacyk, Illinois Labor Unions, p. 1.

[53] Walker to W. N. Doak, October 9, 1928, Walker Papers.

[54] Walker to Miss Anna Weinstock, Women's Committee for Hoover, October 13, 1928, Walker Papers.

[55] Walker to Harry Jensen, October 9, 1928, Walker Papers.

CHAPTER III

REFORMER IN THE RANKS OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA: 1905-1933

John H. Walker's activities in the United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA), were influenced by three factors: the organization and changes that occurred within the political structure of the union; the economic conditions of the coal industry from 1890 to 1930; and the leadership of John Mitchell, Walker's close friend and mentor. The combination of these elements, along with Walker's own abilities, ideals, and asperations, were the major motivating forces causing Walker to participate in reform activities.

The UMWA was established when the National Progressive Union of Miners and Mine Laborers and the National District Assembly of 135 of the Knights of Labor consolidated their forces at a convention held in Columbus, Ohio on January 25, 1890.[1] The creation of the UMWA was a proud but empty boast of the miners at the Columbus convention. They were neither united nor did their union extend across the United States. In the first eighteen years of the organization's existence it was faced with the task of formulating union policies and gaining recognition from the coal operators in order to live up to the name it chose.

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[1] David J. McDonald and Edward A. Lynch, Coal and Unionism; A History of the American Coal Miner's Union (Indianapolis: Cornelius Printing Company, 1939), pp. 22-23. (Hereafter cited as McDonald and Lynch, Coal and Unionism.)

Almost immediately after the union was organized its first President, John B. Rae, began to set up a structure which would handle the affairs of the miners in different areas of the country. Jurisdiction over the immediate activities of the mine workers in the various coal fields was delegated to district unions.[2] "Each district was required to supervise the affairs of the local unions in its geographic area and to render service necessary for their guidance."[3] This policy established the precedent of district autonomy. Annual conventions were also established in order that the miners might express their views and take action on matters affecting the objectives of the UMWA. The national convention possessed absolute power and was the highest law-making body in the miners' union[4] during the period from 1890 to 1908. It dictated the goals and purposes of the organization.

After 1908, when John Mitchell left office, the power structure within the UMWA slowly became more centralized. The union was established in most of the coal fields and its

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[2] The following districts were organized: District 1, Anthracite, Pennsylvania; District 2, Central Pennsylvania; District 3, Low Grade, Pennsylvania; District 4, Coke regions, Pennsylvania; District 5, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; Districts 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Ohio; District 11, Indiana; District 12, Illinois; District 13, Iowa; District 14, Missouri and Kansas; District 15, Colorado, Washington and the territories; District 16, Maryland; District 17, West Virginia; District 18, Virginia; District 19, Tennessee and Kentucky; District 20, Alabama and Georgia; District 21, Texas, Arkansas and the Indian Territory.

[3] McDonald and Lynch, Coal and Unionism, p. 25.

[4] Frank J. Warne, The Coal-Mine Workers: A Study in Labor Organization (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1905), pp. 4-6. (Hereafter cited as Warne, The Coal-Mine Workers.)

formative period was completed. The rank and file in the 1902 national convention decided to hold elections for the national officers rather than choose these men during conventions.[5] This policy gave the national officers more freedom and, with treasury funds at their disposal and a staff of national organizers to do their bidding, they could control elections and more effectively determine policies. But in the process of establishing this centralization of power, Presidents Tom L. Lewis, John P. White, and John L. Lewis met with opposition from certain district leaders who remembered the early period and policies of the organization, and longed to re-establish these guidelines.

The major reason for the increased centralization of power is found in the economic conditions of the coal industry between 1890 and 1930. The UMWA was formed just as the industrial revolution was beginning to stimulate an economic growth in the coal industry. The organization grew as the coal industry became more important economically and centralization of power within the UMWA occurred to balance the new power of the coal operator. When the coal mining industry began to have economic problems in the 1920's, the UMWA experienced its most difficult internal problems because of increased opposition from the coal operators who could not afford to recognize aggressive UMWA leaders.

John H. Walker understood the realities of the economic changes taking place in the coal industry. In June, 1926, he wrote to B. M. Flaherty, an old friend, stating, "(t)he

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[5] UMWA, Proceedings, 1902, pp. 134-138.

mining industry is in bad shape. A great many men who have put in their whole lifetime at it, are being compelled to seek work elsewhere . . ., and when a man has to do that late in life it is a pretty sad experience."[6] But Walker did not understand the increased centralization of power within the structure of the UMWA. He believed this power belonged to the districts and the national conventions as it had before 1908, and when national leaders did not follow these precedents Walker was certain it weakened the UMWA.

Walker's views regarding the organization and policies of the UMWA were directly influenced by John Mitchell, President of the organization from 1897 to 1908. Mitchell, who was born in Braidwood, Illinois, a mining town near Walker's home, in the winter of 1870,[7] understood the dangers and economic hardships connected with the mining of coal, and wanted to create a union powerful enough to convince the operators that they must eliminate these problems from the industry. His goal was the establishment of better working conditions in the coal industry and interstate contracts between the coal operators and the UMWA. Because he was partially successful in these undertakings, Walker felt that Mitchell was a great leader.

In directing the organization and policies of the UMWA, Mitchell adhered to the principles of district autonomy and control of the union by the national conventions. If disputes

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[6] Walker to B. M. Flaherty, June 3, 1926, Walker Papers.

[7] Gluck, Mitchell, p. 5.

arose between coal operators and the miners' organization, Mitchell allowed district officials to handle the matter and only acted when called upon to do so. This same policy applied to matters of discipline within the UMWA. Men who opposed Mitchell were not dealt with by the miners' President but by the national convention or the district organization. After the trend toward centralization began, Walker repeatedly cited these policies when he criticized national officers of the UMWA.

Walker's activities in UMWA politics began soon after he became President of District 12 in 1905. At the 1905 national convention of the UMWA, Mitchell was attacked by delegate Robert Randell of Pennsylvania. Randell charged Mitchell with failing to exercise his leadership responsibilities, compromising with the coal operators and deserting his duties. After Randell's speech, Walker arose to defend Mitchell and then made a motion to expel Randell from the convention for his views. This motion was seconded and carried when Randell refused to retract the charges he made against Mitchell.[8]

In the 1906 convention Mitchell faced opposition similar to that of Robert Randell when Patrick Dolan attacked the UMWA President. The attack upset Walker so much that he told the convention that he thought Dolan should be hanged, if it was not a violation of the UMWA constitution. The convention did not go to this extent, but the matter was referred back to the district and Dolan was forced out of UMWA affairs.[9]

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[8] Sixteenth Annual Convention Proceedings, UMWA, January 16-23, 1905, Indianapolis, Indiana, pp. 230-231. (Hereafter cited as UMWA, Proceedings, 1905.)

[9] Gluck, Mitchell, pp. 179-190.

In 1908, when Mitchell retired from office, Walker decided to run for President of the UMWA. He was certain that "(w)earing the Mitchell mantle, he was destined to become another Mitchell."[10] His dream never came true. Tom L. Lewis, Mitchell's Vice-president, was elected to the position in a very close race which Walker claimed was fraudulently manupulated.[11]

From 1908 to 1912, Walker continually opposed Lewis in an attempt to curtail his influence in the UMWA. After the 1908 election, Lewis sent two men to see Walker regarding the possibility of some kind of working agreement. Walker refused to deal with the miners' President, informing the contacts that Lewis would have to prove he was honest before he would support him. The relationship between the two men was strained as a result of this action.[12]

The issue over centralization of power within the UMWA during Lewis' term of office centered around the problem of interstate contracts between the coal operators and the UMWA. The national organization believed that interstate contracts were the best form of dealing with the coal operators across the country, and Lewis realized that such agreements would reflect credit upon his office. Walker felt that the districts should deal with the coal operators, and that contracts on the state level were better than interstate agreements. Since the

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[10] Agnes B. Wieck to the author, May 14, 1966.

[11] Gluck, Mitchell, p. 230.

[12] Typewritten copy of the Thirty-first Annual Convention Proceedings, UMWA, September, 1921, Indianapolis, Indiana, Walker Papers. (Hereafter cited as Typewritten copy, UMWA, Proceedings, 1921, Walker Papers.)

Illinois Coal Operators' Association agreed to this policy, Walker never paid a great deal of attention to Lewis' wishes for an interstate agreement. This caused a number of controversies to occur between 1908 and 1912.

In 1909 a dispute between Lewis and Walker developed over Walker's refusal to vote for an interstate joint conference between the coal operators and the UMWA at a meeting called to set up the conference. Lewis claimed that Walker's vote was a further impetus for the Illinois coal operators not to attend the interstate joint conference. Walker alleged he was justified in refusing to vote for such a conference because the Illinois operators were not present at the meeting setting up the conference. Also, since the 1908 agreement between the Illinois operators and District 12 was already in effect, Walker saw no reason to agree to an interstate contract.[13]

In 1910 the contract between the Illinois coal operators and District 12 expired and Walker began to negotiate for a new contract. The demands of the Illinois miners were not agreeable to the Illinois operators, however, and negotiations broke down until a strike forced the mine owners to concede almost all of the points in the new agreement.[14] This victory for Walker was a direct threat to Lewis' power since it won

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[13] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1909, p. 11.

[14] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1911, pp. 17-18.

prestige for the President of District 12 and placed pressure on Lewis to better miners' conditions in other parts of the country. Lewis reacted by attacking the agreement between District 12 and the Illinois operators.

On December 5, 1910, Lewis issued a circular which implied that the District 12 officers were not fully informing the miners of all that was taking place at the bargaining table. He inferred that Walker and other District 12 officials may have had shady dealings with the Illinois operators, and that such dealings were not entirely for the best.[15] Walker answered these charges at the District 12 convention held in February and March, 1911. He claimed that the contract and the joint conference between the district officials and the Illinois coal operators were given full publicity, and closed by telling the convention, "I may add that this act on the part of President Lewis is similar in character to that which he has been doing to the Illinois officers ever since he held the position of International President."[16]

Walker also claimed in the 1911 District 12 convention

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[15] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1911, p. 23.

[16] Ibid., p. 23. The Chicago Daily Socialist printed everything necessary to support the Illinois miners during the strike and then printed the complete proceedings on the negotiations for the 1910 contract.

that:

> (c)ertain statements have been circulated from high sources to the effect that the miners of Illinois should not retain what they have won which the miners elsewhere have not secured, which means we should give up to the operators of Illinois every concession we have gotten from them which their competitors are not giving the men working for them. 17

In Walker's opinion giving up the benefits gained by contracts would place the Illinois miners on a basis with non-union miners and create additional economic burdens for the District. Lewis, on the other hand, felt that differences in the contracts between the several districts and the various coal operators produced rivalaries within the UMWA and thus weakened the organization. Although he took no action regarding the 1910 contract, the issue over the scope and duties of the District organizations was certainly questioned.

In 1912, John P. White defeated Lewis for President of the UMWA, becoming President of the union when Illinois was one of the strongest districts within the organization.[18] Walker's economic success with contracts between District 12 and the Illinois coal operators prompted White to remark at the 1913 District 12 convention that "(t)he movement in Illinois grew with such rapidity it practically revolutionized the industry."[19] White's leadership of the UMWA was hardly based

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17 District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1911, p. 23.

18 McDonald and Lynch, Coal and Unionism, pp. 86-87.

19 District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1913, p. 285.

on this type of militancy or agressiveness. He did very little to strengthen the union in West Virginia, Alabama or other areas of weakness, and in one instance he violated the precedent of district autonomy by investigating Alex Howat's activities in District 14.[20] His apparent conservatism bothered the more radical district leaders, while his interference in district affairs angered them. They did not approve of the trend toward centralization of power.

At the same time that White became President of the UMWA Walker moved from his narrow base of power within District 12 to the broader base of power as President of the IFL. He was nominated to head the IFL in 1912 but was defeated. At the IFL convention in 1913, the 212 delegates representing District 12 swung the vote for Walker and he was elected President by a vote of 285 against 268 for Edwin R. Wright.[21] From 1913 to 1916, Walker concentrated on his duties as President of the IFL, establishing at the same time, a more aggressive reputation within the UMWA. He was the logical candidate against White in the 1916 election, therefore, after an interstate contract between the coal operators and the UMWA was signed which apparently displeased the rank and file.

Walker announced his candidacy for President of the UMWA in late June, 1916, when he wired E. L. Doyle of District 15,

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[20] McAlister Coleman, Men and Coal (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1943), p. 88. (Hereafter cited as Coleman, Men and Coal.)

[21] Staley, IFL, pp. 191, 214.

(Colorado), UMWA,[22] and other supporters in various parts of the country. His announcement prompted unfavorable as well as favorable replies. Martin J. Flyzik, President of the Washington UMWA District, wrote to Walker in August, 1916 stating:

> No doubt you will be considered the strongest opponent that could be brought out in the field against John P. White but his record in the miners' movement is unassailable and the achievements accomplished by the organization under his guidence stand out with such prominence which practically insures re-election. 23

Flyzik went on to remark that he would call upon his district to support White. Another observer of the political situation within the UMWA, however, had a different reaction to Walker's candidacy and expressed these thoughts in the following poem:

As I sat alone last evening
I was filled with pure delight
When I noticed in the paper
About co-operative Jack.

Says he's going to run for president
of the U. M. W. of A.
He has said enough already
For he will win on election day.

He is powerful as a mountain
Yet peaceful as a lamb
Before he serves his term out
Look out old Alabam.

He'll finish up Kentucky
Then knab on Tennessee
Then line up Colorado
How easy that will be.

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[22] Walker to E. L. Doyle, (n.d.) June file, Walker Papers.

[23] Martin Flyzik to Walker, August 6, 1916, Walker Papers.

He is not afraid to fight them
And knows just how its done
Of course it takes some courage
But for him its only fun.

We know he is ever faithful
And know he'll serve us well
But two more years and he'll
Be forced to head the A. F. of L.

He has built co-operation
So it never can go back
So let us all show honor
To co-operative Jack. [24]

As the poem indicated, Walker had the support of many aggressive UMWA leaders in the 1916 election.

Alex Howat was Walker's ardent supporter in Kansas and Missouri. John Lawson of Colorado, John Moore of Ohio and William Mitch of Indiana were three other militant district officers who believed that Walker should be elected. Socialists within the ranks of the UMWA also assisted the President of the IFL until White charged that these elements were trying to capture the union through this support.[25] The common goal of all these men was to prevent centralization of power in the UMWA and to do this they had to defeat John P. White.

In September, 1916, nominations for candidates were filed by local unions within the UMWA. White received 376 nominations from locals while Walker was nominated for the Presidency by 329 locals.[26] The small number of nominations, some 700 out of a possible 3000, did not seem to bother Walker, and he

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[24] F. M. McAlister to Walker, September 11, 1916, Walker Papers.

[25] File folder of correspondence on the 1916 election, Walker Papers.

[26] Clipping from the Cleveland Press, September 13, 1916, Walker Papers.

claimed that the large number of locals which did support him indicated that there was dissatisfaction regarding White's leadership.

Although Walker recognized that there was dissatisfaction, he did nothing to stimulate it by presenting election issues in a concise and serious manner. Since the reform elements supporting Walker did not develop a constructive platform either, Walker had no formulated goals to offer the rank and file as an alternative to White's past performance. As the election drew near he stressed White's lack of leadership ability, honesty, and sense of fair play, but this type of opposition to White was not enough and Walker lost the election by approximately 9,000 votes.[27]

Immediately after the election Walker filed a formal protest with the international tellers regarding certain voting procedures. He contended that many locals filed their votes in violation of the UMWA constitution and that a thorough investigation should be made.[28] He was supported by many of the men who sympathized with him before the election, but the tellers did not uphold the protest.

In private correspondence, Walker went even further in his

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[27] The official tally sheet of the national election for 1916 may be found in the file folder of correspondence on the 1916 election, Walker Papers.

[28] Copy of a petition sent to the tellers in Indianapolis protesting the 1916 UMWA election and proposing that a study of the voting procedures by made, Walker Papers.

charges. He stated that White deliberately manipulated enough votes to secure re-election, and he believed that White was so intoxicated with his own power that he was destroying the UMWA. He told Ben F. Morris of West Virginia that:

> I think an active campaign should be started to see that organizers are made to keep their places and do the work for which they were hired and paid for by the miners of this country; that our journal should be made a medium of education and information, and should not be prostituted to secure the political ends of any self-seeker in our movement; that autonomy be given to the local unions and the district organizations in the largest measure that it can be given to them,. . .. 29

This campaign to end increased centralization of power never became a reality, since White resigned from office in October, 1917.

Before White left office, however, the issue of district autonomy in Colorado became the center of attention in UMWA affairs. In January, 1917, following a long controversy, the International Executive Board of the UMWA ordered that districts which were not financially self-sufficient should be placed under the control of the international office. The leaders of District 15, the state of Colorado, protested this action but their protests failed.[30]

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[29] Walker to Ben F. Morris, December 27, 1916, Walker Papers. On June 4, 1917, Walker wrote to John R. Dodds, stating: "I have sworn evidence to enough dishonesty now to make a rather startling piece of information for our membership and if I can get but a few more pieces of positive and reliable evidence (of) dishonesty in the past election, I shall be able to upset it, and put our organization on an honest basis once more." Walker Papers.

[30] John R. Lawson to Walker, February 16, 1917, Walker Papers.

Walker's reaction to the situation in Colorado was one of dismay and anger. He told his friend, Ben Morris, that White had always approved of the concept of district autonomy, and his action in this matter was not only wrong, but contrary to everything that he believed in prior to 1916.[31] Furthermore, Walker believed that White went "farther than any man who ever held the presidency in our organization, in interfering in the internal affairs of the district organizations."[32] He was certain that action opposing these decisions should be taken at the UMWA national convention of 1917, in order to end this type of interference.

When White left office, Frank J. Hayes, Vice-president of the organization, became President. He appointed John L. Lewis, international statistician for the UMWA, as his Vice-president. The appointment of the unknown Lewis angered Walker,[33] who was certain that this action was an attempt to keep the national offices under the control of a small clique of men. As a result, when Walker was approached by Lewis in November, 1917, he stated that he definitely would not form an alliance with the new Vice-president.[34] Walker was determined to become President of the

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31 Walker to Ben F. Morris, December 27, 1916, Walker Papers.

32 Ibid.

33 John Brophy, A Miner's Life (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 150. (Hereafter cited as Brophy, A Miner's Life.)

34 Tom Wilson to Walker, November 28, 1917, Walker Papers. This letter opened with the statement: "It has been suggested to me by persons supposed to represent John Lewis, International Vice Pres. U.M.W. of A., that it might be well for yourself and Lewis to form a sort of an alliance in connection with your probable candidacy for International President of the U.M.W. of A."

UMWA by the elective process.

In early February, 1918, Walker notified a friend in Colorado that he was again going to be a candidate for President of the UMWA in the 1918 election.[35] About the same time, he began looking for a possible running-mate who could defeat Lewis, since he was now certain that it would not do any good to defeat Hayes and leave Lewis in power. His first choice for the Vice-presidency was John Moore of Ohio, but Moore decided in July, 1918, to remain in office as President of the Ohio district.[36] Walker then called upon Thomas Kennedy, President of District 7, UMWA, to become a candidate, and Kennedy agreed.[37]

Walker received the same type of backing in 1918 as he had in the 1916 national election, except for the socialist vote in Illinois which remained in the background. Alex Howat was his ardent supporter in Kansas and Missouri. William Mitch, in Indiana, openly supported Walker's election also. John Brophy gave Walker some support in Pennsylvania, while James Lord, President of the AFL Mining Department and an old friend of Walker, campaigned for him around the country.[38]

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[35] Walker to Ben Farrimond, February 7, 1918, Walker Papers.

[36] Walker to John Moore, July 18, 1918, Walker Papers.

[37] Clipping from the Standard-Sentinel, Hazelton, Pennsylvania, November 4, 1918. Walker to Andrew Mattey, August 4, 1918, Walker Papers.

[38] See file folders on the 1918 UMWA national election, Walker Papers.

Most of these men sincerely believed that Hayes and Lewis were unfit for the positions they held.

In the 1918 national elections, Walker again chose to base his campaign on personal issues. In August, 1918, he received information from Panama, Illinois stating that William McDonald, a confidential associate of John L. Lewis, had abscounded with funds from the Panama UMWA local union treasury.[39] Since Lewis came from Panama, Illinois, Walker was certain that this close association with corruption would harm Lewis' chances of being elected Vice-president.

This optimism was re-enforced in September, 1918, when Walker learned that the Panama, Illinois local union had nominated him and Kennedy to oppose Hayes and Lewis. Walker wrote to Kennedy stating:

> Local union #1475, Panama, Illinois nominated you for International Vice-President and me for President. This is John L. Lewis' home town and the Local Union in which he holds his membership. It would not do any harm for you to give this some publicity. [40]

Kennedy gave the item publicity, but Walker's hope that it would defeat Lewis' standing with the rank and file was completely unrealistic. When the final vote was recorded by the tellers, Hayes and Lewis were elected by a huge majority.[41]

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[39] John R. Schaeffer and Henry Meyer to Frank Farrington, September 12, 1918, Walker Papers. This communication lists in detail the funds missing according to the auditor's examination. The grand total was $3960.56.

[40] Walker to Thomas Kennedy, September 5, 1918, Walker Papers.

[41] Thomas Paskell to Walker, February 7, 1918, and the official election tally sent to Walker by the 1918 election tellers, Walker Papers.

Walker immediately claimed that Hayes and Lewis were fraudulently elected. He was certain this was so because in the middle of December, 1918, he was unofficially declared President and received several congratulatory notes. Furthermore, the general concensus of opinion among his friends and supporters was that Walker had been elected because the rank and file understood he should have been elected President in 1916.[42] The official decision of the tellers, therefore, was a serious set-back for Walker and made him more certain that the national leaders were winning office by corrupt and unscrupulous methods.

As in 1916, Walker petitioned the tellers in early January, 1919, protesting the counting of the votes from certain local unions. He based this petition on the UMWA constitutional law which stated that official vote tabulations were due in the national office by a specified date,[43] but the tellers refused to acknowledge his petition, stating that it was not received within the alloted ten day period after the election as the UMWA constitution provided. After this Walker had no choice but to accept the official decision.

In March, 1919, Walker made one final protest over the 1918 election. He wrote a bitter letter to the UMWA election officials objecting to the fact that the special journal on the election recorded him as receiving 68,507½ votes instead of 88,507½ and

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[42] Walker to John R. Schaffer, December 24, 1918, Walker Papers. This letter states: "Information late yesterday satisfies me I have carried Illinois by at least ten thousand majority. Understand the other side are getting petition signed to contest national election."

[43] Walker to Thomas Haggerty, January 23, 1919, Walker Papers.

attributed this error to an attempt to further weaken his image before the rank and file.[44] Walker's letter was answered by Thomas Paskell, a friend of Lewis, who attributed the error to a misunderstanding on the part of the publisher.[45] It will never be known which man was correct, but the events which occurred in early 1920 indicate that Lewis, who became acting President when Hayes took an extended leave of absence, did not want Walker involved in UMWA activities while he was President.

John L. Lewis forced Walker out of UMWA affairs by invoking a number of technicalities in the organization's constitution. In 1919, Walker was elected as a UMWA delegate to the 1920 AFL national convention. On March 26, 1920, Lewis wrote to Walker stating:

> In giving consideration to the qualifications of delegates to represent the United Mine Workers of America in the approaching convention of the American Federation of Labor, I find that you are not eligible to act as such. Constitutional provisions affecting this matter are such as to disqualify you from serving in the aforementioned capacity. [46]

Walker angrily replied to Lewis' March 26, 1920 communication on March 30, 1920, asking for a complete statement of facts regarding the cosntitutional provisions allowing Lewis to make such a decision, and pointing out that he had been a delegate to the AFL convention from District 12 for a number of years.[47] Lewis replied in early April, 1920. He cited three articles regarding qualifications of delegates as his basis for dis-

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[44] Walker to the International Tellers, UMWA, 1918 national election, February 27, 1919, Walker Papers.

[45] Thomas Paskell to Walker, March 15, 1919, Walker Papers.

[46] John L. Lewis to Walker, March 26, 1920, Walker Papers.

[47] Walker to John L. Lewis, March 30, 1920, Walker Papers.

qualifying Walker.[48] None of these articles, according to Walker, applied directly to him except in the narrowest sense of their meaning. Therefore, Walker petitioned to have a hearing before the UMWA Executive Board[49] and Lewis granted this request, stating, "I desire to say that your appeal from my decision will be made a matter for consideration by the International Executive Board at it next meeting, the date of which will be fixed later."[50] Lewis kept his word, and in late July, 1920, the Executive Board upheld his decision after the AFL national convention had already been held.[51] From the time of this decision in July, 1920 until March, 1930, when Walker became involved in the UMWA Reorganized, Lewis was able to legally prevent Walker from having any official recognition in UMWA affairs.

The move by Lewis to disqualify Walker as a delegate from the UMWA to the AFL convention received the attention of several district leaders. In June, 1920, Walker received letters from Henry Drennan, President of District 27, and G. W. Savage, Secretary-treasurer of District 6, expressing regret and dismay regarding Lewis' action. Both men stated that they felt

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[48] Lewis to Walker, April 5, 1920, Walker Papers.

[49] Walker to Lewis, April 9, 1920, Walker Papers.

[50] Lewis to Walker, April 12, 1920, Walker Papers.

[51] Walker to Alexander Howat, August 4, 1920, Walker Papers. The District 12 leaders attempted to influence the Executive Board of the UMWA in Walker's favor. Frank Farrington cabled John Zimmerman, Executive Board member from Illinois stating: "The men in this district are watching the Walker case with deep concern and I am convinced that a decision sustaining Lewis' ruling will be decidedly displeasing to them." Farrington to Zimmerman, July 21, 1920, Walker Papers.

Walker was dealt with unfairly.[52] Walker expressed the same sentiments to John Zimmerman, International Executive Board member from District 12, in late August, 1920, when he stated:

> How President Lewis could permit Board member Ely to be elected an International officer while he was serving as president of the Montana Federation of Labor, . . . and at the same time make a ruling of this kind in my own case, and at the same time claim to be honest and consistent or be governed by the laws of our organization or his obligations aa an officer, I cannot understand. How he could permit Ex-President John P. White to act as a delegate when he had resigned his official position in our union and took a job with a non-union powder manufacturing corporation and not let it impair his standing or rights to serve as a delegate to the American Federation of Labor convention, and at the same time make such a ruling in my case, is also beyond my comprehension. 53

The meaning of Lewis' action became clear to Walker in the following years.

On three different occasions during the 1920's, Lewis prevented Walker from becoming officially involved in UMWA activities. In January, 1921, Lewis ruled that Walker was not eligible to be a delegate from the UMWA to the AFL national convention.[54] Since the precedent was set by the UMWA Executive Board, Walker had no choice but to abide by the decision. In November, 1926, a similar situation occurred. On this occasion, Walker received notification that he was nominated as a delegate from the UMWA to the 1927

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[52] Henry Drennan to Walker, June 1, 1920; G. W. Savage to Walker, May 25, 1920, Walker Papers.

[53] Walker to John Zimmerman, August 25, 1920, Walker Papers. Walker blamed Zimmerman for the action of the Executive Board. He told Robert Harlin that, "I am satisfied if our own Board Member in this state would have stood right, I would have beaten Lewis by almost unanimous vote." Walker to Robert Harlin, August 4, 1920, Walker Papers.

[54] Walker to Frank Farrington, January 19, 1921, Walker Papers.

convention, and accepted the nomination by letter. When the official ballots were handed out, however, Walker's name was not listed. He wrote to Secretary-treasurer Thomas Kennedy inquiring about this, and found that the 1920 ruling was still in force.[55] Lewis did not forget his enemies. In 1928, Walker was again informed that he could not participate in UMWA affairs. When a grass-roots movement in Illinois nominated him to run against Lewis, the miners' President declared that Walker was ineligible,[56] and ended his chances of making a fourth campaign for the Presidency.

The curtailment of Walker's influence within the UMWA did not prevent him from becoming involved in controversies which developed during the 1920's. In the 1920 UMWA national election, Walker was in the thick of the fighting, opposing Lewis at every opportunity. Lewis' opponent in this election was Robert Harlin, President of the Washington District, while Alex Howat ran against Lewis' Vice-president, Phillip Murray. Walker campaigned for Harlin and Howat throughout Illinois in the fall of 1920. To aid Lewis' opponents, he published the complete correspondence between Lewis and himself, regarding Lewis' decision to prevent him from being a delegate to the AFL

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55 Walker to Thomas Kennedy, November 27, 1926; Thomas Kennedy to Walker, November 30, 1926, Walker Papers.

56 Walker received nominations or inquiries regarding the possibility of his candidacy from Pana, Terre Haute, Harrisburg, Collinsville, Sawyerville, Centralia, Benton, Wilsonville, and Galesburg. He then wrote to Lewis inquiring about his status, and was told he was ineligible to run for office. Walker to Lewis, August 10, 1928; Lewis to Walker, August 16, 1928, Walker Papers.

convention, in the Belleville Labor Review.[57] By November, 1920, Walker was certain that Lewis and Murray were finished. The strength of the national officers was greater than Walker anticipated, however, and Harlin and Howat were defeated. Walker was certain that the election returns were tampered with, but he could not produce any evidence.

Almost at once Lewis began to wield his power within the union in order to centralize the influence of the national officers. In July, 1921, Lewis informed Howat and the other district officers in Kansas that they should comply with the 1920 Kansas Industrial Court Law which prohibited strikes, even though they did not agree with it.[58] He also warned the Kansas district leaders that coal miners on strike at the Dean and Reliance strip mines must be sent back to work. When Howat refused to follow these orders, claiming Lewis had no right to interfere in the internal matters of a district, Lewis referred the matter to the Executive Board which made a study of the problem and then recommended that District 14 affairs be turned over to the international office.[59] Lewis decided, however, to bring the matter up in the UMWA national convention, meeting in September 1921, in order to justify his position.

At the national convention Howat's supporters, including Walker, argued for a reversal of the board's recommendation.

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[57] Copy of the Belleville Labor Review, November 23, 1920, p. 4, Walker Papers.

[58] Alex Howat to Walker, July 19, 1921, Walker Papers.

[59] Typewritten copy, UMWA, Proceedings, 1921, p. 151, Walker Papers.

Walker claimed that such action would be an admission that the leaders of the union could not agree among themselves regarding the action to be taken toward the Kansas Industrial Law. He also claimed that Lewis' charge that Howat was continually calling strikes in violation of the contracts with the Kansas operators was inaccurate, and pointed out that many of the so-called strikes were actually mines closing down because of financial failure.[60] Frank Farrington, President of District 12, argued along the same lines, stating it was not Howat who first broke the contracts but the Kansas operators. These operators, according to Farrington, violated the contracts by siding with Governor Allen of Kansas in his passage of the law, thus causing conditions to change in spite of contract agreements, that neither party would instigate changes while the contract was in force.[61] A third Howat supporter pointed out that Howat was a great leader and the UMWA could not afford to dismiss him. He stated, "Howat was one of the men who helped to organize the Southwest. He went to the front and fought, not only with all the mental skill he had but also with his fists . . . ."[62] The appeals of these men and others were brushed aside by the national officers and the Executive Board's decision was upheld.[63]

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60 Typewritten copy, UMWA, Proceedings, 1921, p. 33, Walker Papers.

61 Ibid., p. 17.

62 Ibid., p. 91.

63 Ibid., p. 91.

Less than a month after the convention, on October 1, 1921, the officers of District 14, convicted of violating the Kansas Industrial Court Law, were imprisoned.[64] On the same day the miners in District 14 went on strike as a means of protesting this action.[65] This was the chance for which Lewis had been waiting. On October 21, 1921 he suspended the district's charter,[66] and from October to January, 1922, the four months that the strike lasted, he sent international organizers to establish his own control. Howat and the other district officers watched helplessly as their power was taken away.

The men who supported Howat at the 1921 UMWA convention experienced the same sense of helplessness during these months. In November, 1921, Walker went to Washington D. C. to see Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, regarding Howat's situation. When he returned from the interview he informed Howat by letter that Gompers was sympathetic toward the district President, but he would not interfere publicly because Lewis might bolt the AFL.[67] No strength could be counted on from this area, therefore, and Walker was certain that the fight would have to be waged from within the UMWA. Throughout the winter and spring of 1922, he went on campaigning for a fair settlement of the problem, arousing enthusiasm for Howat among other dissident groups, debating Lewis' organizers

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64 IFL News Letter, December 24, 1921, p. 5.
65 Ibid., p. 5.
66 Ibid., p. 5.
67 Walker to Alex Howat, November 3, 1921, Walker Papers.

who attempted to gain control of District 14, and raising money for the striking coal miners.[68] In the end, these efforts were of no avail. By May, 1922, the Kansas district was governed by Lewis' men, and the opposition was completely defeated.[69]

After the expulsion of Howat from District 14, Lewis' major opponents were the more radical elements within the UMWA. Radicals of various shades began to exercise some influence because the recurrent disputes between the districts and national leaders over the desparate state of the coal industry made it possible to inject larger political issues into the economic struggles of the UMWA. Thus, the Communist Party led by William Foster, the Progressive International Committee (PIC) led by Mike Halapy and Thomas Myerscough, and the "Save the Union Committee" of John Brophy all fought Lewis and each other for control of the UMWA.[70] None of these groups found any way of coping with Lewis' counter-strategy, which was simply to expel his opponents.

Walker's reaction to this new trend of opposition was, at first, to encourage such a development. He was active within the group which formed the nucleus for the PIC as early as October, 1920. In November, 1920 he attended a convention of the Progressive miners and in March, 1921 he distributed some

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[68] At one point Walker was attacked in a circular addressed to the Kansas miners, and pictured as a radical who had to fight for every cause, a person who simply had political ambitions and wanted to live off the trade union movement. Circular, November 23, 1921, Walker Papers.

[69] John Steele to Walker, April 5, 1922, Walker Papers.

[70] Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, The American Communist Party (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), pp. 263-266. (Hereafter cited as Howe and Coser, The American Communist Party.)

literature on nationalization of the coal mines sent to him by Brophy.[71] He continued these activities for more than a year. In early 1923, however, Walker realized that the FIC was being infiltrated by the communists, and withdrew his support from the group. He did not trust the communists and did not want to be identified with this wing of the opposition to Lewis. In the 1924 UMWA election, the FIC ran George Voyzey, a communist miner from Illinois.[72] Walker did not campaign for Voyzey at all. In the 1926 UMWA election, John Brophy ran against Lewis and organized a "Save the Union Committee" with branches in many mining towns. Walker would not participate in this campaign either.[73]

Because of this inactivity on Walker's part one observer believed that Walker relinquished his role in the UMWA entirely,[74] but this was not the case at all. He merely refused to become involved with the radicals, and waited for a better opportunity to oppose Lewis. The opportunity came in 1929 when the UMWA President threatened to usurp the autonomy of District 12.

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[71] Mike Halapy to Walker, October 20, 1920; Walker to Halapy, October 20, 1920; John Brophy to Walker, March 7, 1921, Walker Papers.

[72] Howe and Coser, The American Communist Party, pp. 263-266.

[73] Ibid., pp. 263-266. The best indication of the lack of participation on Walker's part comes from his correspondence; he told a friend in November, 1926 that he was not active in the Brophy campaign. Walker to Charles Krallman, November 8, 1926, Walker Papers.

[74] David Thoreau Wieck, A Study in Centralization, p. 468. Wieck states: "Walker had busied himself with the Illinois State Federation of Labor, and concerned himself with the United Mine Workers only to emit periodical protests against being ruled off the international ballot as candidate for delegate to the American Federation of Labor."

In early 1929, a controversy regarding financial matters developed in sub-district 9 of District 12,[75] which Lewis recognized as a perfect excuse for eliminating the autonomy of the one district which he was not able to effectively control. In March, 1929, therefore, he ordered the sub-district officials to report to the UMWA headquarters in Indianapolis, and discuss the matter.[76] The officials refused, stating that the district could take care of its own affairs. In May, 1929, Lewis again ordered the sub-district leaders to appear and explain the situation; again they refused. On October 15, 1929, therefore, Lewis revoked the charter of District 12 and set up a provisional government, removing Harry Fishwick, President of the district from office because he supported the sub-district officials.[77] This action caused the local UMWA leaders and Walker to begin to consider ways of establishing a new group of national officers.[78]

In early December, 1929, Walker told a friend that he was certain Lewis could not be defeated for President of the UMWA in an election.[79] The only possible way to unseat the miners'

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75 The Illinois Miner, August 17, 1929, pp. 1-2.

76 Ibid., October 26, 1929, p. 1.

77 Ibid., October 26, 1929, p. 1.

78 Walker to V. R. Tompkins, October 26, 1929, Walker Papers. This letter states that there was a movement underway in Illinois to oppose Lewis and save the union.

79 Walker to Alfred Broad, December 16, 1929, Walker Papers.

President was to create a new set of national officers through convention action. Walker, and other dissident members of the UMWA, felt this might work legally since the UMWA constitution had expired on March 30, 1929, and the union was not governed by any official laws. On February 15, 1930, therefore, a group of Lewis' bitter enemies held a "state of the union" meeting in Chicago, Illinois and called for a convention to reconstitute the organization.[80] The convention call, in the form of a resolution, alleged that it was the right of the rank and file to hold such a convention since the constitution had expired. It designated Springfield, Illinois as the meeting place, and set the date for March 10, 1930. The election of new officers, according to the resolution, was to be one of the major items of business.[81]

Lewis, realizing that the Springfield convention threatened his position, also called a convention for March 10, 1930, in Indianapolis and the race for the name began. Each faction was convinced that the first to hold its convention would thereby gain the legal right to call itself the United Mine Workers of America. The reformers won the race. At Springfield, on March 10, 450 delegates adopted the parts of their proposed constitution

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80 Irving Bernstein, The Lean Years; A History of the American Worker 1920-1933 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. 368. (Hereafter cited as Bernstein, The Lean Years.)

81 See Appendix B for the complete text of the resolution calling this convention.

dealing with name and jurisdiction exactly forty minutes before the Indianapolis convention extended the expired UMWA constitution. "Each faction now had a paper basis for claiming to be the UMWA."[82] This basis was not enough to insure success for the Reorganized, however, for the problems it faced were overwhelming.

The first problem of the Reorganized was to establish a positive program of leadership. This the convention failed to accomplish. "The economic program . . . would have done nothing to improve the conditions of the coal miner."[83] As it finally stood, it merely consisted of charges that Lewis was personally responsible for the ills of the industry and "vacuously called for scales negotiated 'on the sound competitive basis so ably announced . . . by John Mitchell'."[84]

The second problem facing the Reorganized was the lack of a broad base of support. The largest number of delegates to the Springfield convention came from Illinois, while other districts were either barely represented or not present at all.[85] The Reorganized faced an economic crisis from the beginning, therefore, because it had no funds to organize miners.

A third problem of the Reorganized at the Springfield convention was a lack of control. In the opening session, the

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[82] Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 368.

[83] Ibid., p. 369.

[84] Ibid., p. 369.

[85] Proceedings of the National Convention, UMWA Reorganized, March 10-15, 1930, pp. 11-21. (Hereafter cited as UMWA Reorganized, Proceedings, 1930.)

convention degenerated into democratic license, and Harry Fishwick, who began as temporary chairman, was hooted from the platform. Alex Howat, always popular with the miners, was installed in his place. The delegates then insisted that committees should be elected rather than appointed, causing further controversies when personalities clashed. Two days were spent in debate over the seating of Frank Farrington, past President of District 12 and enemy of Lewis.[86] This cost the Reorganized money and gave Lewis an additional issue to dwell upon when he criticized the Reorganized. The lack of control carried over into a struggle over the slate of officers for the Reorganized. The signers of the convention call had agreed that Walker should be President and that Howat should be Vice-president. This plan was upset by Oscar Arminger who threw his weight behind Howat because Walker would not agree to allow the Illinois Miner, which Arminger edited, to remain being printed outside the state.[87] Howat won and later did not effectively carry out his duties. Walker was elected Secretary-treasurer of the Reorganized, but this position was not as powerful as the Presidency, and Walker was unable to determine policies. From the beginning, therefore, the organization suffered from a lack of leadership.

Finally, the Reorganized was faced with the problem of John L. Lewis, who had no interest in peace. Controlling the

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[86] UMWA Reorganized, Proceedings, 1930, pp. 22-29.

[87] Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 369.

Indianapolis assemblage, Lewis had the delegates authorize him to revoke the charter of District 14, thereby unseating Howat and his Kansas followers. Twenty leaders of the Reorganized, including Walker, were ordered to appear before the Executive Board of the UMWA to show cause why they should not be expelled from membership. "Most important in the long run, the convention adopted a constitutional amendment empowering the president at his discretion and without limit as to time to revoke the charters of and establish provisional governments for districts, sub-districts, and local unions."[88] In this way, the UMWA became a constitutional dictatorship with Lewis the dictator.

The numerous problems facing the UMWA Reorganized resulted in its collapse inside of a year. The lack of any guidelines for economic policies resulted in mine owners ignoring the Reorganized or opposing it as a mere radical organization. The failure of the Reorganized to obtain a broad base of support resulted in a financial crisis when Lewis invaded Illinois, "sopping up its limited resources of manpower and money."[89] Howat's inability to provide effective leadership for the organization resulted in a loss of initiative, and by the summer of 1930, it was clear that Lewis had the upper hand.[90]

The final blow to the UMWA Reorganized came in late February, 1931, and was struck by Judge Harry Edwards of the Lee

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[88] Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 370.
[89] Ibid., p. 372.
[90] Ibid., p. 372.

County Circuit Court at Dixon, Illinois. His decree restored the UMWA to the status that existed before October 15, 1929. The Lewis order of that date, revoking the charter of District 12 was rescinded and the officers of District 12 were restored to office until April 1, 1931. But the decree also declared Lewis the official President of the union, and the UMWA constitution the official document. The constitution adopted by the Springfield convention was not the legal document of the UMWA, therefore, and the Reorganized was legally dead.[91]

The person to suffer most from the events taking place in 1931 was not Lewis, but Walker. Even before the Springfield convention, Lewis had asked Green to remove Walker as President of the IFL. Since the two old miners were friends, this was a painful task. On March 6, 1930, however, Green demanded an explanation of Walker's participation in the Springfield convention call. Walker replied that he had acted as a mine union member rather than as an official of the IFL, in an effort to save the UMWA. Green refused to accept this explanation and on March 20, 1930, insisted that Walker resign. The Executive Council of the AFL confirmed this decision, so on April 9, 1930, Walker submitted his resignation in a bitter nine page letter. To be doubly sure, however, that Walker remained out of the IFL, Green instructed Victor Olander, secretary of the Federation, that no one from the Reorganized was to be seated at the 1930 IFL convention, and he notified Walker in October that he would

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[91] The Illinois Miner, February 21, 1931, p. 1.

not be allowed to attend the AFL convention.[92] Walker's influence in Illinois labor was virtually at a standstill.

The loss of the Presidency of the IFL and the uncertainty of the new post as Secretary of the UMWA Reorganized prompted Walker to run for President of District 12 in the fall of 1930 after Harry Fishwick announced that he would not be a candidate. He won election and when Judge Edwards restored the District 12 charter Walker automatically moved to the Presidency on April 1, 1931.[93] For a year there was an uneasy truce in Illinois. Walker and Lewis eyed each other suspiciously, waiting for an excuse to oppose each other. The chance came with the expiration of the contract between District 12 and the Illinois Coal Operators' Association, (ICOA), on April 1, 1932.

The ICOA, determined to lower the wage scale, demanded a 30 per cent cut in the $6.00 daily base rate. Walker refused, and in the absence of a contract a walk-out of 50,000 miners commenced. For three months the strike wore on without success, then Lewis stepped in and demanded that Walker make concessions. The President of District 12 reluctantly conceded and on July 8, 1932, initiated an agreement providing for a $5.00 day underground and a reduction in the rate of those working above ground from $8.04 to $5.70.[94] But Walker had seriously underestimated the militancy of his membership. On July 16, 1932, the Illinois miners, particularly in southern Illinois, rejected the contract

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92 Bernstein, The Lean Years, pp. 370-371.

93 The Illinois Miner, March 7, 1931, p. 4.

94 Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 373.

in referendum by a margin of four to one.[95] The strike continued and Lewis took over the Illinois negotiations.

Late in July, 1932, with the friendly intervention of Governor Emmerson, Lewis renegotiated an agreement. While there were a few minor improvements, the wage rates were the same. Again the miners indicated they would not accept such a contract. The referendum took place on August 8, 1932, and the first returns from about 100 locals the next day showed a heavy majority in favor of repudiation. On August 10, 1932, the ballots were stolen.[96]

> Lewis, conveniently ignoring the fact that duplicate tallies were available at the locals, immediately proclaimed a state of emergency within District 12. Because of the alleged stealing of the ballots he would have to act in the best interests of the union. That same day, August 10, he pronounced the agreement ratified and signed with the producers. [97]

The effect of this action was immediate and violent Throughout many parts of Illinois men fought one another over the wages and the right to return to work. The militant faction within District 12 wanted to remain on strike in spite of the agreement; less aggressive miners wanted money to feed their families. Walker was caught between these two groups.

Throughout 1932 Walker attempted to steer a middle course. He condemned the actions of Lewis and his gang, but he admonished the militants when they formed a dual union -- the Progressive

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[95] The Illinois Miner, July 23, 1932, p. 1.
[96] Bernstein, The Lean Years, p. 374.
[97] Ibid., p. 374.

Miners of America -- and broke with the UMWA. His refusal to support either faction finally cost him the Presidency. Although he was re-elected in the winter of 1932, in February, 1933, the District 12 Executive Board asked Lewis to establish a provisional government in Illinois because of the chaos and financial weakness of the district. "The International union assumed the District's financial obligation of $225,000 and Lewis named William J. Sneed provisional President to succeed Walker."[98] He thereby snuffed out autonomy in the most important bituminous district in the nation and eliminated John H. Walker's influence in the UMWA.

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[97] Bernstein, The Lean Years, pp. 376-377.

CHAPTER IV

SERVING THE ILLINOIS STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR: 1913-1930

John H. Walker viewed his reform activities as only one of his functions in organized labor. He also had a sincere desire to better the status of all working men, and to carry out the programs and objectives of organized labor. From 1913 to 1930, with the exception of 1919, he was able to partially fulfill this desire through his position as President of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, (IFL).

Walker's major responsibilities as President of the IFL incompassed a broader spectrum of activities than his role in District 12 of the United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA). He was charged with co-ordinating and leading the organizational work of the various independent state unions. He felt it was his duty to bring the message of labor to society-at-large, and to increase the ways and means of communicating with non-union people. He also believed it was his task to educate laboring people regarding union principles and to inform them of their rights and duties as American citizens.[1] Finally, he was to serve the economic interests of trade unionists whenever possible. Since the IFL was as strong and vital

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[1] Staley, IFL, pp. 1-2.

link in the Illinois labor movement when Walker assumed the Presidency in 1913, his four major tasks were not as difficult as one might suspect.

The IFL, however, had not always been the powerful organization that Walker took control of in 1913. Its history followed the ups and downs of organized labor at all levels, and on more than one occasion it suffered from internal weaknesses and external pressures.

Originally known as the Illinois State Labor Association, the IFL was formed in 1885, one year after sixty-one delegates from various trade unions met in Chicago, Illinois to promote such an organization.[2] In 1888, the organization affiliated with the infant American Federation of Labor,(AFL), revised its constitution, and changed its name.[3] These actions were insignificant at the time, because the growth of the IFL was very slow.

The major problems facing the IFL in the 1890's were internal politics and a lack of leadership. Although the federation played a part in electing Governor John T. Altgeld, it was dominated mostly by self-seeking men who cared little about the strength or image of the organization.[4] William C. Pomeroy's name was most widely associated with these activities, and he was finally expelled from the IFL by the American Federation of Labor. The socialists, single-taxers,

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[2] Staley, IFL. p. 47.
[3] Ibid., p. 49.
[4] Ibid., pp. 86-87.

and other groups also caused internal problems.[5] It was not until the turn of the century that the IFL began to make any significant gains within the state.

During the first twelve years of the twentieth-century the IFL became a power in the labor movement in Illinois. The organization's membership was increased bringing about a pronounced improvement in the financial condition of the federation. During this time, officials of the organization began to act as full-time representatives of organized labor in Illinois. Factionalism and corruption were also eliminated from the IFL, and it began to achieve some of its goals.[6]

In 1913, when Walker entered office, he declared that one of his first goals would be to increase the membership of the IFL through organizing activities. During his first year in office, he sent out circulars and spoke to local unions urging them to join the IFL. In Witt, Illinois, he helped to bring warring factions of the teamsters local together, and in Harrisburg, Hillsboro, and Chicago, Illinois he assisted local unions in obtaining agreements with employers.[7]

During the same period, Walker urged the formation of city central bodies and trades and labor councils throughout Illinois. At Canton, Royalton, Hillsboro, and Harrisburg,

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5 Dogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, pp. 163-165.
6 Staley, IFL, pp. 179-304
7 Thirty-Second Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, October 20-24, 1914, Peoria, Illinois, p. 10. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1914.)

Illinois, he helped to organize city central bodies and locals of independent labor unions.[8] At Westville, where he lived, Walker helped to form the Westville Trades and Labor Council in early 1915. After the Council was formed it performed such duties as creating a retail clerk's union, opposing the selling of non-union bread in the town, and organizing the town bakery. One of the Council's officials stated, "We intend to have every man and woman in Westville who works for a living, carrying a union card."[9]

In many areas around the state Walker offered a helping hand in order to gain the confidence and friendship of laboring people. In the fall of 1915, he took an active hand in the Chicago Teachers' union problem, and helped to prevent its destruction. The Chicago School Board, by a vote of eleven to nine, had adopted a resolution denying teachers the right to maintain an American Federation of Teachers' local.[10] On September 8, 1915, a mass meeting was held to protest the resolution. Walker, John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and Samuel Gompers were among those who made speeches.[11] Later in the year, when the mayor of Chicago, William H. Thompson, became involved in the dispute, the IFL requested all affiliated unions to write the mayor protesting the anti-union resolution. Nearly 300

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8 IFL, Proceeding, 1914, p. 10.
9 IFL News Letter, October 2, 1915, p. 1.
10 Ibid., September 3, 1915, p. 1.
11 Ibid., September 11, 1915, p. 1.

letters arrived on Thompson's desk.[12] Eventually, the Board rescinded its resolution.

In December, 1915, Walker attended an organizational meeting for a teachers' union in Peru, Illinois, speaking on the benefits of a teachers' union and illustrating his talk with examples from the 1897 coal strike.[13]

The result of such activities was a tremendous growth in the membership of the Illinois Federation of Labor by 1916. Between December, 1915 and February, 1916 alone, seventy-one local unions joined the organization making it the largest of its kind in the United States.[14] Still, Walker was not satisfied, and the IFL Weekly News Letter told the working people of Illinois that the federation's "full strength will not have been reached until every eligible local union in Illinois has become affiliated."[15] The fact that the IFL doubled its entire membership pleased Walker,[16] but it did not deter him from continuing to press for greater strength through organizing activities.

In the March 18, 1916 issue of the IFL Weekly News Letter, Walker pointed out that the opportunity for the working people to become strongly organized was excellent. He told trade unionists that they should demand shorter hours, an increase

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12 IFL News Letter, December 11,, 1915, p. 1.
13 Ibid., December 24, 1915, p. 3.
14 Ibid., February 5, 1916, p. 1.
15 Ibid., p. 2.
16 District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1916, p. 404.

in pay, Saturdays as half-day working days, and the establishment of the safest and most healthful conditions in industry. He went on to say that, "The organized workers should insist on these things. Getting them will mean giving the strongest kind of incentive to the unorganized to come into our ranks, ..."[17]

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Walker recognized that some enemies of organized labor might attempt to use the war as an excuse for curtailing the growth of the IFL.[18] Because of Walker's war efforts, however, the IFL continued to grow until the depression era after the war, when the labor movement throughout the country received a setback. For a brief period in the early 1920's the federation suffered a decline in membership, but quickly made up this loss and by 1927 topped its previous record high of 183,000 members.[19]

Walker approached the problem of organizational work, with all of its ramifications, from another aspect. He understood that labor needed to educate the general public regarding its economic policies, its legislative goals, and its political beliefs, and he felt an increased dissemination of this type of information would make the organizational tasks of the trade unions less difficult, possibly bringing about a better understanding between labor and the general public. He began to work on this problem almost as soon as he took office.

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17 IFL News Letter, March 18, 1916, p. 1.
18 Ibid., April 6, 1918, p. 3.
19 Staley, IFL, p. 315.

The first task was to establish an official publication for the IFL which would keep the entire membership informed of labor activities around the state. When Victor A. Olander, Secretary of the IFL, suggested a weekly newspaper Walker agreed, and the IFL began mailing such a letter to every local in the state, whether it was affiliated with the IFL or not.[20] This news-sheet rapidly grew from a one page printed circular to a four page paper, and a subscription rate had to be set up. There were 2,500 subscribers around the state by 1921, when the IFL dropped the subscription basis and took the cost of the paper out of the general fund in order to reach all of the affiliated locals. As late as 1928, the Illinois State Federation of Labor was the only organization of its kind which furnished a weekly information service of this type.[21]

Walker was not content with the success of the IFL Weekly News Letter, however, and wanted to help establish an adequate number of independent labor newspapers which could print labor's view on issues. He continually called for support of this type of newspaper from laboring people around the state, therefore, and always asked the delegates at the IFL conventions

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[20] Staley, IFL, p. 329. In referring to the IFL News Letter at the District 12, UMWA, Convention in 1916, Walker told the delegates: "It is true that it is not a very large paper, but it reaches, to the extent of one or two or three copies, every local union in the state of Illinois, not only those that are in the State Federation but the organizations that are unaffiliated as well. And while it may seem from a financial point of view to be hardly fair to send the newspaper to the local unions that do not subscribe for it, I attribute much of the sentiment that has resulted in organizations coming into the State Federation to the information that has been disseminated through that Newsletter, ..." District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1916, p. 405.

[21] Staley, IFL, p. 329.

to urge the members of their locals to support local labor papers.

In 1923 the concern over the establishment of labor newspapers developed into a debate among the IFL Executive Board Members. Some of these members were in favor of establishing a state daily newspaper, while others, including Walker, were still convinced that the IFL should simply encourage the creation of local labor papers. The opinion of the President carried, and the Board endorsed the latter policy.[22] This was unfortunate, for there were many problems plaguing these small labor newspapers.

For one thing, most of these newspapers printed "old" news which was neither interesting nor informative except to a narrow audience. This was because the papers were weeklies rather than dailies. In addition, the subscription rate for these papers was relatively high because the circulation was small and the cost of printing expensive. Advertizing did not help to pay these costs, since labor papers would not accept advertisments for non-union goods or businesses. There was a shortage of advertizers also because the papers did not reach a wide audience.[23]

As late as 1927, it was admitted that the problem of establishing an independent labor press was not solved, and attempts were made to study the situation.[24] Walker wrote to

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[22] IFL, Proceedings, 1924, pp. 399-406.

[23] Staley, IFL, p. 338.

[24] Forty-Fifth Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, September 12-18, 1927, East St. Louis, Illinois, p. 119. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1927.)

the editors of labor newspapers throughout Illinois, approximately twenty-two in number,[25] asking them to suggest how the IFL might help them. The replies of these editors indicated that the greatest concern was still the matter of meeting financial obligations, and most editors asked the IFL to urge trade unionists to patronize the advertizers in labor papers and to subscribe to these papers. These requests were passed along to the 1927 IFL convention delegates by Walker in his Presidential Report,[26] but from a realistic point-of-view, the attempt to create a strong and active labor press had failed.

Although Walker failed to establish as vigorous an independent labor press as he wanted, there was still another means of reaching the general public and the laboring people of the state. This was through the medium of public appearances and speeches by the officials of the IFL. Walker was a strong proponent of debate and public discussion of labor matters. He was continually urging locals to hold public meetings discussing labor's goals and policies, particularly on Labor Day.[27]

Walker set a good example for other IFL leaders and the members of affiliated locals regarding this policy. In 1914 alone, he addressed over 200 meetings in the interest of the

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[25] Forty-fourth Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, September 13-18, 1926, Streator, Illinois, p. 24. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1926.)

[26] IFL, Proceedings, 1927, p. 208.

[27] IFL News Letter, September 8, 1917, p. 1.

trade union and the co-operative movements. Among these meetings were three legislative conventions of the railway brotherhood, a meeting of the locomotive engineers at Chicago, a farmer's state convention, a state convention of the bricklayers' union, and a meeting of the steam and operating engineers' union.[28] He was such a strong advocate of communication between the representatives of organized labor and non-union people that he once even accepted an invitation to speak at Harvard University, at Felix Frankfurter's request, in spite of the long distance he had to travel and the numerous duties he had to perform as President of the IFL.[29]

When Walker ran for President of the International UMWA in the fall of 1916, he resigned from his position as President of the IFL, in accordance with the laws of the IFL constitution. James F. Morris, of Springfield, Illinois, who had been Secretary of the IFL from 1901 to 1913, was nominated and elected without opposition to the vacant post. When Walker failed to win the office he was seeking, Morris asked leave to withdraw and the Executive Board of the IFL requested Walker to continue in office. This arrangement was approved by the IFL convention in 1917.[30] It resulted in Walker being in office when World War I began.

Walker's activities during World War I, and afterwards, serve as an excellent example of how he felt about educating

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[28] Staley, IFL, p. 325.

[29] Walker to Felix Frankfurter, March 13, 1920, Walker Papers.

[30] Staley, IFL, pp. 311-312.

trade unionists in their rights and duties as members of society. The labor union movement, in Walker's opinion, was an instrument of socialization as well as a means of improving the worker's status, and a constant theme in Walker's speeches and activities was what the individual laborer should and should not do as a citizen of the United States.

America's entrance into the First World presented Walker with a major dilemma. As a socialist, he was opposed to war, and felt that he should give his own life rather than submit to a compromise of this principle.[31] But in 1917, he realized that the trade union movement would be called upon to aid in the war effort, and if it did not help it could well injure itself and the people it represented. Walker broke with the Socialist Party's policy of opposing the war, therefore, and followed instead the lead of the AFL in supporting the war.[32]

When Governor Frank Lowden of Illinois appointed Walker as a member of the Illinois State Council of Defense (ISCD), he immediately accepted the position, which came without any reimbursement for the time or work involved.[33] The ISCD was formed at the request of Newton Baker, Secretary of War and Chairman of the Council of National Defense, the parent body of the state Councils of Defense. It was organized to

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[31] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1913, pp. 103-105.

[32] Staley, IFL, pp. 346-347.

[33] William T. Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois: The Life of Frank O. Lowden, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 345. (Hereafter cited as Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois.)

oversee every conceivable war activity, to collect and disseminate information regarding the war, and to help to wake up Illinoisans to the meaning of the war.[34] Samuel Insull of Chicago was appointed Chairman, while fourteen others were appointed to subsidiary positions.[35]

Walker was also a member of the group of trade unionists who called the convention forming the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in September, 1917. The Alliance urged that organized labor follow a policy of unity of action and loyalty to the federal and state governments.[36]

Finally, Walker served as a member of President Wilson's Labor Mediation Commission and was instrumental in settling a number of strikes across the country.[37] He worked to settle a copper strike in Arizona and a dispute between workers and the Pacific Telephone Company on the west coast. In the state of

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[34] Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, p. 345.

[35] M. E. Jenison, War Documents and Addresses, vol. 1 (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Historical Society, 1923), p. 122. (Hereafter cited as Jenison, War Documents.) Walker served with the following figures: Samuel Insull, president of the Commonwealth-Edison Company; J. Ogdon Armour, president of Armour and Company; Dr. Frank Billings, representing the medical profession; Mrs. Joseph T. Bowen, representing women's committees; B. F. Harris, banker and farmer; John H. Harrison, newspaper editor, Danville; John P. Hopkins, former mayor of Chicago; Levy Mayer, representative of the legal profession; John G. Oglesby, lieutenant Governor; Victor A. Olander, Secretary-treasurer of the IFL; David E. Shanahan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, fifieth General Assembly; John A. Spoor, Chairman, Union Stock Yard and Transit Company; John P. Hopkins, who died October 13, 1918, was replaced by Roger C. Sullivan; and Charles H. Wacker, Chairman, Chicago Planning Commission; Fred W. Upham, president, Consumer's Company.

[36] Staley, IFL, p. 347.

[37] IFL News Letter, April 13, 1918, p. 1.

Washington, he was involved in negotiations in the lumber industry, while in Illinois a strike between the packers and the food manufacturers was averted with his help.[38]

Walker's acceptance of these responsibilities during wartime did not silence the critics of organized labor in Illinois, but it did leave them standing on weak ground. In an April, 1918 speech before the United States Senate favoring the Sedition Law, Senator Lawrence Y. Sherman of Illinois, stated that Walker was, among other things, the "arch disturber of law and order in five states . . ." while he was in Illinois, but in Washington D. C. "he wraps himself about with santimonious patriotism." [39] It was the wrong thing to say. Outraged protests came from all over Illinois, and Governor Lowden, seemingly as a rebuke, appointed Walker as the Illinois delegate to a convention entitled "Win the War for Permanent Peace" held in Philadelphia, May 16-17, 1918.[40]

Walker also had problems with the socialists because of his position regarding labor's role in the war effort. At the IFL convention in 1917, he was severely criticized by Edward A. Wieck for his part in helping to organize the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy.[41] Later in the year, Adolph Germer, Secre-

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[38] Staley, IFL, p. 349.

[39] IFL News Letter, April 13, 1918, p. 1.

[40] Ibid., May 4, 1918, pp. 1-2. One trade unionist wrote of Sherman, "When he climbs the dunghill for the purpose of spattering mud on Jack Walker, he seeks to harm a man who has more friends in Illinois in a day than Llarry Sherman could gain were he to live until the end of time and live the live of a saint."

[41] Staley, IFL, p. 347.

tary of the Socialist Party and long-time friend of Walker, exchanged a series of emotional letters with the IFL President regarding the war. Germer criricized Walker for joining hands with the capitalists in the war effort, while Walker condemned him for aiding the enemy in thought, if not in deed, by refusing to support the United States' efforts in time of war.[42]

Walker's many activities during the First World War may have helped to save organized labor in Illinois from receiving a serious setback. It is conceivable that the war hysteria which was directed toward the socialists and German immigrants in Illinois might just as easily have been used against labor if Walker had aligned himself with the socialists and attempted to obstruct the war effort through his office. Governor Lowden was not readily sympathetic to those who opposed the war. "In his view, pacifism differed little from disloyalty . . .."[43] Samuel Gompers took the same attitude. He told the convention of the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy that "slackers and pacifists merited nothing but denunciation."[44] If Walker's feelings about the war had differed with these men's feelings

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[42] Letters exchanged between Walker and Adolph Germer, October, 1917 to January, 1918, Walker Papers. See Appendix C for a more detailed description of the controversy and exercerpts from the letters.

[43] Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, p. 379. See also Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, pp. 478-481.

[44] Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, pp. 362-363.

there most certainly would have been conflicts in the Illinois labor movement.[45]

Again in 1918, Walker's attempt to win the Presidency of the UMWA caused him to resign as President of the IFL. George L. Mercer and Duncan McDonald, two prominent leaders in District 12, ran for the office. McDonald was elected by a vote of 39,767 to 35,502. Walker was asked to continue to represent the IFL in Springfield for the remainder of the 1919 legislative session, and he agreed to do this.[46] In the 1919 IFL election, he ran against McDonald and defeated him.

During the year that he was out of office, Walker embarked upon a campaign to help establish a permanent peace. He believed strongly in President Wilson's formula, and through the help of Samuel Gompers he became a speaker for the League to Enforce Peace. This group went on an extensive tour of the United States in the summer of 1919, advocating that the Versaille Treaty be signed by the United States. Walker rather bluntly told an audience in Omaha, Nebraska, "'This peace treaty must be signed at once and things must settle down.'"[47]

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[45] Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, p. 481. The authors state: "Organized labor was regarded by many as a potential anti-war factor; yet labor made one of the significant contributions to the winning of the war. With labor leaders agreed that the working classes throughout the world were opposed to war, it was no small task which John H. Walker, Victor Olander, and their followers essayed when they undertook to demonstrate that the cause of the workers can not best succeed under an autocratic government and 'for that reason the Kaiser must be defeated'."

[46] Staley, IFL, p. 311-312.

[47] IFL News Letter, June 7, 1919, p. 1.

Walker's interest in the League of Nations did not end when the Versaille Treaty failed to be ratified by the United States Senate. He was active throughout the 1920's in organizations which supported the League, and believed strongly in the peaceful goals of the organization. In particular, he was interested in the International Labor Organization (ILO) and felt that it was one of the primary agencies serving the League's purposes. Toward the middle of April, 1928, he decided to combine a vacation from his work with a visit to the ILO International Convention in Geneva, Switzerland, in order to discover more about the ILO.[48] The League of Nations Non-Partisan Committee of Illinois paid part of Walker's expenses to the convention in return for a full report of the proceedings. Governor Len Small and AFL President William Green wrote letters of introduction for him. Upon his return from the convention in July, 1928, Walker published a pro-League of Nations pamphlet entitled, "The I. L. O. as viewed by an American Trade Unionist."[49]

As a citizen interested in social problems connected with labor, Walker was active in pardon and parole work in Illinois.[50] Industrial conflicts occasionally resulted in trade union men being convicted and sentenced to prison unfairly. Walker's idealistic nature was opposed to the "rail-roading" these men

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[48] Walker to Frank Farrington, April 30, 1928, Walker Papers.

[49] William Green To Walker, July 20, 1928, Walker Papers. John H. Walker, The I. L. O. as viewed by an American Trade Unionist (Chicago: Mid-West Office, League of Nations, Association, 1928), pp. 1-56.

[50] Walker to Will Colvin, Superintendent, Division of Pardons and Paroles, State of Illinois, August 19, 1925, Walker Papers.

received, and he used his position as President of the IFL to bring pressure on state officials when he felt this was the case.

On one occasion, Walker appeared before the Board of Pardons and Paroles regarding the pardon of twelve international officers of the flat janitors union. These men were convicted of conspiracy against unknown persons. Walker's testimony was given to counter-balance the testimony of a man who supposedly represented a respectable group of interested citizens in Chicago. Walker declared that the man was nothing more than a paid agent of an anti-labor group in Chicago. John Fitzpatrick testified to the same affect. The men were pardoned by Governor Len Small.[51]

In 1927, Walker secured labor's direct participation in pardon and parole work when he interceded with Governor Len Small and managed to have Harry Jensen, President of the District Council of Carpenters, appointed as a board member of the Pardon and Parole Commission.[52]

The many and varied civic activities which Walker participated in during the time he was President of the IFL set an example for labor union people in Illinois. But Walker was not content to merely set examples; he felt it was his duty to continually exhort trade unionists to better inform and educate themselves.

In the 1920's, taking his cue from the AFL which had long supported improvement of the educational system in the United

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[51] IFL Proceedings, 1926, p. 73.

[52] Walker to Harry Jensen, September 30, 1927, Walker Papers.

States,[53] Walker embarked on a crusade to convince working people in Illinois that education was one of their greatest advantages. He told the delegates at the 1924 IFL convention that:

> During this era the idea has been quite generally accepted that farmers and other laborers need not be educated. In fact it has been believed by many that it is not only useless but even dangerous to teach a man to read and think if he is to work with his hands and make his living largely by physical labor. A correlative idea is that a small, highly-educated class is sufficient to do the thinking, planning, inventing, organizing, directing, and administrating of industrial, commercial and political affairs. [54]

To Walker this small highly-educated class of leaders was not enough because man's basic nature was evil, and only a broad middle class could off-set this evil nature and maintain the ideals and goals of a democracy. It was every working man's responsibility, therefore, to be aware of the problems that existed in society and to try and cope with them.[55]

At the 1926 IFL convention Walker pointed out that the American Federation of Labor had gone on record as favoring the establishment of adult education. He stated that this should be the policy of the IFL also, and urged the convention delegates to take some action on the matter. He stressed the need for a better understanding of contemporary problems also,

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[53] Workers Education Bureau of America, Labor and Education; A Brief Outline of the Resolutions and Pronouncements of the AFL in Support of the General Principles and Practices of Education from 1881-1938 (Washington D. C. :American Federation of Labor, 1938), pp. 77.

[54] IFL, Proceedings, 1924, p. 48.

[55] Ibid., p. 48.

in order that working people could "properly discharge the duties of citizenship in a democratic government . . . ."[56]

At Herrin, Illinois in 1928, Walker told the IFL convention delegates:

> I am . . . recommending to this convention, that every local union and every active trade unionist in the state, try to arrange whenever possible, that lectures are provided for, and that our membership generally and their families try to inform themselves on these subjects that are so vitally important to them and theirs, and that we continue our efforts to make our school system what it was originally intended to be, and what the necessities of our time now requires that it should be, the most thoroughly equipped on a modern basis 57

This appeal was prompted by the program which the Illinois State Teacher's Association had proposed for the upgrading of education in Illinois. Walker asked the delegates at the convention to pass a resolution endorsing this program. He also pointed out that the standards of education should be raised to a point where a high school certificate was the minimum educational requirement for a young person. He told the convention that such a law would "take out of the mines, mills and work shops, the young immature minds and bodies that are there now . . . ."[58] In turn, this would improve the economic conditions in certain industries by creating more jobs for older people who needed them.

Walker's conception of labor's economic struggle was clear-cut and bordered on a belief in a class struggle. Such an attitude

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[56] IFL, Proceedings, 1926, p. 23.

[57] Forty-sixth Annual Convention Proceedings, November 8-14, 1928, Herrin, Illinois, p. 164. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1928.)

[58] Ibid., p. 164.

may have been formed in part by Walker's early experiences, or it may have resulted from his association with the socialists before 1916. Whatever the origin of this attitude, it was enough to make him an outspoken critic of industrialists, and an aggressive trade unionist when it came to dealing with business leaders and management. To combat the system of low wages and high prices, Walker also started the co-operative movement in Illinois.

In 1909, Walker observed that the industrial system which had developed in the United States had drawn people into one of two groups: the "haves" or the "have nots". In regard to this, he stated:

> . . ., this is a battle in which every human being is involved. On one side we have a few men fighting to maintain a condition by which they are able to control . . . everything material . . .. On the other is the great majority of human kind struggling to establish a condition which will mean the using of the earth . . . for the benefit of the entire human race. 59

Walker maintained this economic viewpoint during the entire time he was active in the Illinois labor movement. It was the heart of his economic beliefs, and gave rise to all other observations.

A basic part of Walker's economic beliefs was concerned with the profit motive of the "few men" attempting to control all material goods. In 1916, when Walker spoke before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations in Chicago, he elaborated on this, accusing management and the owners of industrial enterprises of a double standard. This, according to Walker, was the chief cause of industrial unrest. He told the commission:

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59 District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1909, p. 24.

> According to the double-standard the workingman, no matter what his trade or calling, may not ask from his employer a wage or return for his labor that exceeds the employer's conception of the value of labor. . . . If the worker, by any chance, . . . presumed to ask for a wage in excess of the value of the service rendered, and the employer can show that to be true, then everybody universally condemns that worker for being nothing short of a thief. That is one side of the present double-standard -- the other side used to judge the worker.
>
> The other side of the present standard, the method by which the employer is judged, is exactly the opposite. When the remuneration of the employer, his wage or profit, is under consideration, the value of his labor or the actual service he renders is not given much thought. In fact, all the employer concerns himself about is: 'How can I, by hook or crook, perform my function in a manner that will enable me to get the largest possible return for myself, regardless of the services I render?' 60

Again in 1926, he told the delegates at the IFL convention that the double-standard still existed, and that "the motive of making profits . . . is the dominating influence in our business today; . . . ."[61] Walker's attitudes regarding the economic conditions in American society were the impetus for aggressive action.

Walker believed that the state government should take an active interest in the economic welfare of the worker, and worked to obtain this objective. In 1915, he asked for and received an appointment to the General Advisory Board of the Free Employment Services, established by the state. He spent a good deal

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60 John H. Walker, "The Double Standard", The Survey, XXXV, (February 26, 1916), p. 639.

61 IFL, Proceedings, 1926, p. 44.

of time investigating the extent and causes of unemployment in Illinois as a result of this appointment, and his numerous years of service on this board aided many trade unionists and gave him some insight into the problems of unemployment.[62] By 1928, he felt that certain definite steps should be taken to end unemployment, and recommended that:

> we (should) strive to bring about a complete system of honestly and completely conducted national government free employment offices; a National Unemployment Insurance Law; an Old Age Pension Law; . . . (a) shortening of the work week; . . . (and a) raising of the standards of education by providing for a high school certificate. . . .[63]

Walker worked hard to have special legislation passed by the state which would help to improve the economic status of working people. For example, he helped to secure a pension and tenure law for Chicago teachers in 1917,[64] and in 1926 he was successful in having a law passed preventing convict labor goods from being sold in competition with union-made goods.[65] The broom-makers union was particularly pleased with this latter law. There were many other legislative proposals which Walker wanted enacted involving the economic welfare of the people. He was not completely successful, but did achieve some of his goals.

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62 IFL News Letter, September 11, 1915, p. 1.

63 IFL, Proceedings, 1928, p. 15.

64 Freeland G. Stecker, "History of the Men Teachers' Union," The Men Teachers Union of Chicago (November, 1934), p. 8, Walker Papers.

65 IFL, Proceedings, 1926, p. 42.

Walker believed that the strike and the boycott should be used by labor if it was necessary. In 1924, when the coal mining industry was in economic trouble, he sent out a letter to all trade unionists affiliated with the IFL urging them to buy Illinois coal in preference to coal shipped in from other states.[66] He also secured an agreement with the State of Illinois, through Governor Len Small, to the effect that only Illinois coal would be bought by the state government.[67]

Strikes were necessary, according to Walker, when industries and businesses did not recognize trade union demands. He supported local strikes whenever he felt the strikers had legitimate demands and were acting within the law according to their contracts. One such occurred in Rosiclaire, Illinois, located in Hardin County, in the fall and winter of 1916.

The origin of the strike at Rosiclaire was an attempt by sixty-eight Fluorspar miners to organize a local union affiliated with the Western Federation of Miners. This attempt failed and the mine manager dismissed the men on May 12, 1916.[68] Less than a month later, on June 3, 1916, the other miners walked out, demanding that the dismissed men be re-hired and that the miners be given the right to take up their grievances with the mine management through a union organization.[69] Both of these demands were disregarded

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66 IFL News Letter, October 11, 1924, p. 5.

67 Letters between Governor Len Small, Walker and the head of the Purchasing Department, State of Illinois, May, 1926, Walker Papers.

68 IFL News Letter, July 8, 1916, p. 1.

69 Ibid., June 24, 1916, p. 3.

by the mine management.

The major grievances of the Flurspur miners centered around the company houses provided for them, the long hours with relatively poor wages, and the physical dangers in the mines. The company houses, in particular, were in poor shape physically, overcrowded, and without running water in many cases.[70]

Walker was the first to come to the aid of the Rosiclaire miners. In June, 1916, he assigned William J. Sneed, then a prominent miner and union organizer from Herrin, Illinois, to look into the Rosiclaire strike.[71] Sneed spent a great deal of time in the Hardin county area trying to convince the mine managers to bargain with the strikers and keeping the hopes of the strikers alive. He was constantly in touch with Walker during the summer months regarding the strike,[72] and Walker used some of Sneed's information in the IFL News Letter when he issued an appeal for strike funds to the affiliated unions in the IFL.[73] These funds were readily supplied and successful efforts were made from July to November, 1916, to aid the strikers.

The mining company countered this strike support by hiring thugs and strike-breakers in an attempt to drive the striking miners from the area. A number of times the situation was in danger of resulting in violence,[74] but on each occasion this was averted. After the strike had lasted four months, Walker was

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70 IFL News Letter, July 15, 1916, p. 1.

71 Ibid., June 24, 1916, p. 3.

72 Walker's Papers are filled with this correspondence.

73 IFL News Letter, July 8, 1916, p. 1.

74 Ibid., August 5, 1916, p. 1.

able to convince Governor Dunne that state intervention was needed, and the strike was brought to a close when the company conceded to go along with the striker's demands.[75]

Walker handled the funds to support strikes at other times while he was President of the IFL, but the Rosiclaire strike of 1916 is probably the best example of how the IFL was involved in strikes while Walker was President.[76]

In addition to his other economic activities, Walker was involved in the co-operative movement in Illinois. He was a strong advocate of the Rochdale system of co-operation, which was founded on the following principles:

> 1. The democratic organization of the association.
>
> 2. The limitation of individual share holdings and the payment of market interest on shares.
>
> 3. The sale of goods at market prices accuring surpluses being returned to the members in proportion to their purchases. . . .
>
> 4. The sale of all goods on a cash basis.
>
> 5. The establishment of an educational fund to place before the people the advantages of co-operation. [77]

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[75] Walker met with Governor Dunne September 19, 1916. Telegram, Walker to Victor Olander, September 16, 1916, Walker Papers.

[76] One strike and its aftermath which Walker apparently did not become involved in was the Herrin coal strike of 1922. There is only one letter in the Walker Papers regarding the strike and the massacre connected with it (see footnote 32, Chapter Two). Paul M. Angle's book, Bloody Williamson, does not make mention of the IFL or of Walker. There was coverage of the trials in the IFL News Letter, but this was the extent of it, as far as this author knows.

[77] Colston E. Warne, The Consumer's Co-operative Movement in Illinois (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926), p. 2. (Hereafter cited as Warne, Consumer's Co-operatives.)

His belief in this method of co-operation made it the most popular form, and practically all of the co-operative societies in Illinois were based on "laws copied almost verbatim from the local branch society laws governing the Rochdale system in Great Britain, ..."[78]

Walker's desire to see a co-operative movement started in Illinois was closely linked with his basic economic views. He was firmly convinced that trade unions required the employer to give the employee the wages to which he was entitled, while the co-operative supplied the working man with the goods to which he was entitled at a fair price.[79] He also believed that the co-operative societies were a great help to the trade union movement because they provided goods for striking workers and because they helped to recruit more people into the ranks of organized labor.[80] For these reasons he was advocating that a co-operative movement be formed long before he became President of the IFL.[81]

However, Walker's plans for starting a state wide system of co-operative societies was not initiated until after he became President of the state federation. In the spring of 1913 the first co-operative store was established in Sawyerville, Illinois.

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[78] IFL News Letter, May 15, 1915, p. 2.

[79] Ibid., June 15, 1918, p. 4. Walker stated in an article on co-operation which he wrote: "There are two processes through which the workers are generally robbed. One of them is in the price they are forced to accept for their labor, and the other is in the prices they are compelled to pay for the things they buy, which they must have for themselves and their families." IFL News Letter, June 24, 1916, p. 4.

[80] IFL News Letter, June 24, 1916, p. 4.

[81] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1913, p. 353.

Stores at Gillespie and West Frankfort, Illinois were formed later in the year. In 1914, six more co-operatives were begun, and in 1915 nine were started.[82] Most of these societies increased their membership between 1913 and the beginning of the war. At Gillespie, for example, the number of members climbed from sixty-seven in 1913 to 183 in 1916.[83]

In 1915, the Illinois State Co-operative Society, later known as the Central States Co-operative Society, was formed to unite the various stores around the state. At its first convention, held in March, 1915, the delegates elected Walker president of the Society.[84] He immediately set about to improve the movement. A state law was passed protecting the co-operatives from financial harm in 1915.[85] Walker set up an information service which passed out pamphlets regarding co-operatives in which he described the results of co-operation as giving "workers a better commercial, financial, political and industrial standing: . . . ."[86] In 1917, a wholesale department was formed to reduce the cost of goods to the various societies.[87] All these improvements resulted in a continued growth and by 1919 there were approximately seventy stores in operation in Illinois.[88] Walker, however, was responsible for many other stores being in operation across the country because of his efforts and leadership in the co-operative movement.

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82 IFL News Letter, April 8, 1916, p. 3.
83 Ibid., p. 4.
84 Staley, IFL, p. 341.
85 IFL News Letter, May 15, 1915, p. 2.
86 Ibid., April 29, 1916, p. 4.
87 Ibid., July 21, 1917, p. 3.
88 Ibid., January 25, 1919, p. 2.

The post-war depression was the first major set-back for the co-operative movement in Illinois. Although there was still a great deal of enthusiasm for the movement in 1921 and 1922, the co-operatives, like regular business, suffered from financial losses causing some stores to fail completely.[89] A co-operative banking plan, proposed by delegates at the 1922 IFL convention, had to be abandoned because of the depression, and in East St. Louis the local co-operative wholesale society failed, making some people suspicious of the movement.[90] In spite of these set-backs, Walker remained a strong advocate of the system, and even convinced other Illinois labor leaders, such as Frank Farrington, President of District 12, that the movement was beneficial to organized labor and trade unionists.[91]

After the depression ended for most areas of the economy, the co-operative movement regained the losses it had suffered and continued to expand. Walker took the lead in the American Federation of Labor, (AFL), for promoting co-operative activities and was selected Secretary of the Bureau of Co-operative Societies for the AFL.[92] At the 1923 IFL convention a similar bureau was established for the purpose of strengthening the Rochdale system of co-operation.[93] As a result, co-operation has remained a vital link in the economic system of organized labor in Illinois until the present day.[94]

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89 Warne, Consumer's Co-operatives, pp. 66-69.

90 Staley, IFL, p. 344.

91 IFL News Letter, April 9, 1921, p. 3.

92 Ibid., March 25, 1922, p. 1.

93 IFL, Proceedings, 1924, p. 195.

94 Rueben Soderstrom, Interview with the author, March 8, 1966.

CHAPTER V

JOHN H. WALKER'S LEGISLATIVE GOALS FOR ORGANIZED LABOR: 1905 - 1930

John H. Walker considered labor legislation important because it provided working people with a better life. One historian of organized labor in Illinois has noted that, "In the legislative battles of labor John H. Walker feels and talks of 'decency and humanity,' leaving the subtleties of constitutional law to others." [1] This type of attitude is clearly reflected in the laws which Walker, as President of District 12 and the Illinois State Federation of Labor, (IFL), helped to obtain for the labor movement.

During the period he was President of District 12, United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA), almost all of the legislative acts Walker attempted to pass into law were designed to improve the working conditions and the safety factors in coal mines. Since Illinois was one of the earliest states to enact legislation of this type, Walker's task was not too difficult.

As President of the IFL, Walker found his legislative duties broader in nature, but he still concentrated on laws which would be of service to working people. He fought to improve the Convict Labor law and the Workmen's Compensation

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[1] Staley, IFL, p. 309.

law. He counted among his greatest victories the passage of the 1925 Injunction-limitation law. He also worked to defeat several bills he felt would injure the labor movement.

There were numerous reasons for the development of the idea that organized labor in Illinois should actively participate in legislative matters. The underlying cause, of course, was the rapid industrial growth of the state which caused numerous social and economic problems, but several other reasons existed also. The American Federation of Labor, (AFL), worked to secure labor legislation on the federal level, and the IFL followed this policy.[2] The development of labor legislation in other industrial states and in some European countries stimulated similar efforts in Illinois. Finally, the growth of trade union organizations around the state was a factor in the enactment of labor legislation.[3]

It cannot be said, however, that the IFL and other labor unions in Illinois made great progress in securing laws favorable to their interests in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. There were at least three groups which opposed or

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[2] The Labor Leader, October 26, 1916, p. 1. Walker once described the IFL in the following manner. "The Illinois State Federation of Labor means to the State of Illinois what the American Federation of Labor means to the United States and Canada. It is a voluntary association of the workers for the purpose of . . . assisting in increasing their wages and shortening their hours, making their conditions of labor more safe, healthful and pleasant . . ., through the enactment of legislation, ..."

[3] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 505.

hindered the development of labor legislation, and these groups kept organized labor's gains at a minimum.

The Illinois Manufacturer's Association, (IMA), represented the first of these groups, the employers. This association fought labor legislation for many years. Under the leadership of John M. Glenn, Secretary of the IMA, it effectively ended labor's chances of passing a minimum wage for women bill, a one day rest in seven bill, and several other bills favored by the IFL in the 1920's. To Walker, John Glenn represented one of the worst enemies organized labor had in Illinois.[4]

The second group which hindered the development of a comprehensive body of labor laws in Illinois was the state courts. "The courts, especially prior to 1910, formed the graveyard for many an act designed to protect or to advance the interests of the worker."[5] This was due primarily to the individualistic outlook of the judges, who felt that precedents regarding the freedom of contract established prior to the growth of industrialism should be followed. Since labor legislation often times placed a great deal of responsibility on the employer at the benefit of the employee, labor laws were also considered class legislation and declared unconstitutional.[6]

The third group which obstructed the passage of labor laws, perhaps to a lesser degree than the employers and the courts, was

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[4] IFL News Letter, September 2, 1922, p. 3.

[5] Deckner, Labor Legislation, p. 506.

[6] Elizabeth Brandeis, "Labor Legislation," History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1935), p. 399. (Hereafter cited as Brandeis, History of Labor.)

the vast majority of the general public in Illinois. Since industrial development occurred in a relatively short period of time in the state, and was concentrated to a large extent in Chicago, most of the state had an inadequate conception of industrial life. This lack of awareness made it easier for unscrupulous employers to continue inhumane practices without the general public becoming aroused and demanding that the state legislature take some action.

Regarding the state legislature and the matter of labor legislation, it should be noted that, for the most part, this body remained neutral in attitude and simply mirrored the relative strength of organized labor and the groups opposed to labor legislation. "At times when the demand for a given law was very great, real, honest, straightforward legislation was enacted;... .."[7] For the most part, however, legislative sessions were a "succession of attacks and counterattacks in which those desiring a continuance of the status quo gained the victory."[8] The fact that so many victories were won by the opponents of organized labor was a heavy burden for Walker to bear.[9]

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[7] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 507.

[8] Ibid., p. 507.

[9] In a letter to trade unionists around the state, Walker said, "The Illinois State Federation of Labor is mainly responsible for what labor legislation there is on the statutes at this time; it has assisted in the passage of every law having for its purpose the general welfare of the people. That it has not been able to accomplish more is mainly due to opposition from the enemies of labor and the common people;. . .." IFL News Letter, December 27, 1924, p. 1.

Walker's attitude toward labor legislation, which was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, was probably influenced as much by his early association with John Mitchell and District 12, as it was by Samuel Gompers and the AFL. This was because the first major labor legislation passed by the General Assembly in Illinois was directed at ending some of the unfavorable and dangerous conditions in the coal mining industry.

The first mining law for Illinois was passed in March, 1872. It covered a number of problems including ventilation, escape shafts, hoisting of coal, and the reporting and investigating of mine accidents. A year later several sections of the law were amended, and in 1877 other amendments were added. The first general revision of the law was made in 1879. These revisions strengthened parts of the law and were more detailed concerning safety in mining operations.[10]

Between 1879 and 1899, when the second general set of revisions was made, more amendments were added to the mining law. These dealt with the weighing of coal, the payment of wages, the duties of mine inspectors, the examination of supervisory help in the mines, and several other matters.[11] Still, the laws were not satisfactory and in 1899, when the General Assembly met, Governor Tanner urged them to enact a new mining code. A bill was prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and submitted to the legislature, where it was passed without

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[10] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 292.

[11] Ibid., p. 293.

any difficulty. The new law made Illinois one of the most advanced states in the nation in regard to mining regulations.[12]

When Walker assumed the Presidency of District 12 in 1905, there was an agreement between the coal mine operators' association and the miners' union that neither group would introduce bills into the General Assembly which affected the Illinois mining code without first consulting the other party. In 1906 and 1908, when contracts with the operators were renewed, Walker worked to obtain an agreement on certain legislation he wanted passed, but the operators would not agree. In 1909, therefore, Walker decided it would be necessary to introduce three bills into the legislature without prior agreement with the operators, and the District 12 officials prepared these bills for submission to the General Assembly.[13]

The first of these bills was a miners' qualification bill which set up standards and technical requirements for all men working in the mines of Illinois. The second bill required that ventilating fans be provided with an instrument recording their speed, and the third bill required the use of mechanical devices when dynamiting was done.[14] The operators were strongly opposed to the first and third bills because the former strengthened the union's position in the state and the latter involved extra costs since the mechanical devices were not perfected.[15]

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[12] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 295.
[13] Ibid., pp. 296-298.
[14] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1909, pp. 59-60.
[15] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 297.

After a great deal of bargaining, the operators finally agreed to the laws requested by the union, provided the District 12 officers agreed to a bill creating a commission to study all mining bills in the future. The officials agreed to this, and all bills were submitted to the General Assembly, which passed them.[16] The new legislative body was designated the Mining Investigation Commission,(MIC), and played an important part in legislative matters connected with the coal mining industry.[17]

The MIC was made up of nine men, three from the operator's association, three from the miners' union, and three non-partisan members. Governor Deneen appointed Walker one of the members representing District 12.[18] In this capacity, Walker was one of the principals involved in improving the mining laws in 1910, after the Cherry Mine disaster, at Cherry, Illinois, indicated that revision was again necessary.

The Cherry Mine disaster was one of the worst mine accidents in the history of the state. The tragedy, which resulted from a failure to provide an adequate means of preventing and combating mine fires, resulted in the death of more than two hundred miners

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16 Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 297-298.

17 Ibid., p. 299. Beckner states that, "In the work of the Mining Investigation Commission genuine collective bargaining of the highest type has prevailed. All the good that comes from joint agreements made with the full sense of responsibility on each side has crowned its efforts."

18 Ibid., p. 300. Other members of the commission included: Richard Newsam, G. W. Traer, and J. W. Miller representing the operators; Charles Burch and Bernard Murphy representing the miners; Professor H. H. Stoek, of the University of Illinois, Dr. J. A. Holmes, of the United States Geological Survey, and Professor Graham Taylor, associate editor of the Survey to serve as non-partisan members.

and moved the people of the state to immediate action.[19] Governor Deneen called the General Assembly into special session, and asked that the MIC draft suitable bills for better protection of the miners. The commission submitted three bills which it considered necessary to help prevent similar accidents in the future.[20]

The first of these bills made detailed provisions for fire fighting equipment in coal mines, and provided for additional mine inspectors in order to guarantee enforcement of the act. The second bill called for the establishment and maintainence of mine fire fighting and rescue stations in important coal mining centers of Illinois. The last bill established miners' and mechanics' institutes for the purpose of giving technical training to coal miners. The first and second bills were approved by the General Assembly and signed into law. The third bill was not passed, however, because it was not within the scope of the General Assembly's special session.[21]

Walker had a major part in the enactment of the two laws passed, and was given credit in particular for helping to establish the mine rescue stations. At the convention of District 12 in 1911, Governor Deneen pointed out that mine rescue stations were established because the District 12 officers demanded them. He also reminded the delegates that such stations were the first of their kind to be established by any state legislature.[22]

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19 IFL News Letter, November 18, 1916, pp. 2-4.
20 Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 300.
21 Ibid., p. 301.
22 District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1911, p. 4.

In 1911, the time appeared right to revise the entire mining code again. Walker and other members of the MIC drafted and submitted five more bills to the General Assembly. These bills, which were passed without trouble, completely revamped the mining laws, and added several additional safety features.[23] The revised law also provided for extensive additions to the powers and duties of the State Mining Board, which previously had been given authority to enforce the mining laws.[24] These new laws once more gave Illinois one of the finest mining codes in the country.

The practical training Walker received in legislative matters, from his experiences as a member of the Mining Investigation Commission, was a continual help to him when he became President of the IFL in 1913. It gave him the necessary background for dealing with various other laws in Illinois which were beneficial to labor. These laws included the Convict Labor Law, passed in 1903, and the Workmen's Compensation Law, passed in 1911. While he did not participate directly in the passage of either of these laws, Walker was responsible, as President of the IFL, for strengthening each of them.

The proper use of convict labor was a serious problem for the people of Illinois during most of the nineteenth-century. Trade unionists in particular were concerned about the matter because competition between convict labor and free labor was sometimes

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[23] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 302.
[24] Ibid., p. 310.

ruinous to certain occupational groups, and contrary to their concept of justice.

From the 1830's to the 1880's, convict labor in Illinois was based on the contract system, whereby the state remained in custody of prisoners, but contracted out the labor of convicts at a given rate per day. In 1886, a constitutional amendment was passed which was supposed to end this practice, but the new law did not solve the problem.[25] Convicts were still used to manufacture certain basic commodities under the contract system, although they no longer worked outside the prisons.

In 1903, therefore, a law was passed which created a Board of Prison Industries. This board was composed of various prison officials who were given the task of seeing that all products manufactured by prisoners were sold to other state institutions and not on the open market. The law prohibited the contract system, and all prison labor contractors were required to remove their property from the penitentiaries. This law solved the chief problems but organized labor was "constantly on the alert . . . to prevent the employment of convicts in ways that might prove detrimental to free labor."[26]

In 1915, this alertness aided the International Broom and Whiskmakers' union in securing the end of broom manufacturing at Joliet penitentiary. Walker, along with the officers of the Chicago Federation of Labor, was able to help in this matter.[27]

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[25] Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 133-134, 139-140.

[26] Ibid., p. 133.

[27] Ibid., pp. 148-149. IFL News Letter, November 6, 1915, p. 1.

In 1920, Walker appointed a special committee to investigate the entire matter of convict labor goods in Illinois. The committee submitted its report to the 1921 IFL convention, and drafted a special bill, which was introduced into the General Assembly, concerning the use of labels on all convict labor goods.[28] This bill failed to pass, but it indicated the extent to which the IFL wanted to control these products.

Walker was more successful with legislation concerning Workmen's Compensation than he was with the Convict Labor law. The Workmen's Compensation law of 1911 helped to establish the idea that employers were responsible for helping injured employees, but there was still a great deal of improvement needed in the law. From 1913 to 1930, therefore, Walker made certain that additional amendments were added to this law.

At the beginning of the twentieth-century many European countries had laws providing compensation for injured workmen. In the United States, however, there was no recourse for a working person injured in the course of employment, except that furnished by damage suits against the employer through the courts. Since the courts permitted the employer several methods of defense against this type of legal action, the injured party was often left physically and financially ruined.[29]

In Illinois, interest in the subject of compensation received a tremendous impetus from the mine disaster at Cherry, Illinois in 1910. The special session of the General Assembly,

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[28] IFL News Letter, March 26, 1921, p. 2.

[29] Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 430-431.

called by Governor Deneen, was asked to consider a change in the existing system of employer's liability, in addition to improving the mining code. The General Assembly authorized an investigation commission to make an extensive study of industrial accidents. Its report formed the basis for the Workmen's Compensation Law of 1911.[30]

This law provided that, in case of injury to an employee, the employer was to furnish first aid, and medical, surgical, and hospital expenses for a period not longer than eight weeks, if the costs of these benefits did not exceed $200. If an injury resulted in death, and the deceased left heirs whom he supported, the employer paid a sum equal to four times the average annual earnings of the employee, provided the amount was not less than $1,500 nor more than $3,500. If there were collateral heirs, a certain percentage of the death payment went to them. If the employee left no heirs, the employer provided $150 toward burial expenses.[31]

In addition to the hospital and medical care, the employer was expected to pay compensation if the period of disability lasted longer than six working days. This amount of money was equal to one-half of the employee's weekly earnings, but not less than five dollars nor more than twelve dollars. This was paid on a weekly basis and lasted as long as the employee was disabled, provided that the amount did not exceed the maximum death benefit of $3,500 or a period of eight years. After the period of eight years or the maximum death benefit was reached, annual compensa-

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[30] Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 440-450.

[31] Ibid., pp. 455-462.

tion, equal to eight per cent of the death benefit, was to be paid for life.[32]

The provisions of the 1911 Workmen's Compensation law were nominally elective for some employers, but compulsory for a few occupations and industries. Unless notice was given to the contrary, however, all employers and employees were assumed to come under the act. Employers refusing to abide by the law were denied the usual defenses they used in court when law suits were brought against them, but employees were denied the right to recover damages by suit, except when injury resulted from the intentional omission of safety equipment which should have been provided by the employer.[33]

In order to guarantee payment of compensation under the act, employers could insure themselves. This insurance was not compulsory, according to the law, but the injured employee had first claim against an employer's property and other assets if insurance was not carried.[34]

There was no board or other administrative body created to enforce this law, so in the beginning the Bureau of Labor Statistics was in charge of the administrative functions, while disputes were handled through arbitration or recourse to the courts. In 1913, however, the General Assembly passed an amendment to the law which established a three man non-political body called the Industrial Board. This board, appointed by the governor for six years, was

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[32] Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 455-462.

[33] Ibid., pp. 455-462.

[34] Ibid., pp. 455-462.

responsible for administering the law.[35]

Beginning in 1915, the Industrial Board asked that representatives of the employers and the employees come to a joint agreement concerning amendments to the 1911 law. This was agreeable to organized labor, and between 1915 and 1923, all amendments submitted to the General Assembly were decided upon in advance.

In 1915, the agreed amendments increased the amounts payable as compensation in some areas of the law, and changed some of the procedures for settling claims. Walker told the IFL convention delegates that, while these amendments fell short of what organized labor wanted, the wisest course was to accept the improvements made possible by the joint agreement. He was "thoroughly convinced there would have been no progress made if such an arrangement had not been achieved."[36]

In 1917, when the United States Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of a New York compulsory compensation law, the joint committee of employers and employees, called together by the Industrial Board, agreed upon a similar measure and introduced it into the General Assembly. The scope of the 1911 law was not changed by this amendment, but the law's provisions were made to apply automatically to all employers and employees. Governor Lowden supported the bill, and it was passed into law. Walker claimed, "This is the second step towards providing adequate

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[35] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 463.

[36] Thirty-third Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, October 18-22, 1915, Alton, Illinois, p. 68. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1915.)

protection for men and their families in the event of injury or death, ..."[37]

In 1919 and 1921, amendments were made to the 1911 law which extended the compensation benefits and insured more success in administering it.[38] There were no major changes made, however, and the employers' representatives at the joint conferences became more and more reluctant to concede to organized labor's demands. In 1921, Walker reported to the delegates at the IFL convention that, "year by year our experiences in attempting to make reasonable progress under the compensation law by joint conferences have been getting more and more difficult, disagreeable and uncertain . . . ."[39] For this reason, Walker and other labor leaders began questioning the usefulness of such a method, and finally decided to introduce bills which had the support of labor alone.[40]

In 1923, a bill was introduced by Representative Reuben Soderstrom of Streator, Illinois,[41] which extended the compensation law by adding to the list of hazardous industries, by extending the act to include employees injured outside of Illinois if the employer resided in the state, and by providing for increases in compensation payments. This bill was passed by the

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37 Thirty-fifth Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, October 15-20, 1917, Joliet, Illinois, pp. 39-41. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1917.)

38 Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 464-467.

39 Thirty-ninth Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, October 17-22, 1921, Aurora, Illinois, p. 317. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1921.)

40 Ibid., pp. 85-86.

41 Soderstrom became President of the IFL in 1930, when Walker resigned to become secretary of the UMWA Reorganized.

House of Representatives, but the Senate committee to which it was referred never convened and the amendment was lost.[42] When the 1925 session of the General Assembly convened, a bill containing many of the 1923 amendments was introduced by both the employers and organized labor, and passed with practically no opposition.[43] Again in 1927 and 1929, amendments were added to the law making it more effective.

Although the Workmen's Compensation law of 1929 was more substantial and comprehensive than the original law, it is doubtful that Walker was entirely satisfied with it. In 1927, for example, when he spoke before the convention of the American Association for Labor Legislation, Walker claimed that a better system of compensation should be developed by state legislatures in order to reduce to a minimum the economic suffering of those injured while working. He was certain that stricter compensation laws with higher benefits for the injured employee would help to make the employer more aware that safety should be his major concern.[44]

One of Walker's major responsibilities as President of the IFL was to promote legislation insuring the legal status of trade unions. He considered it very important, therefore, that some kind of law was passed to insure that injunctions by courts would be limited to a minimum.[45] In many cases, one of the most powerful weapons that employers had against labor unions was the

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[42] Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 468-469.
[43] Ibid., p. 469.
[44] IFL News Letter, January 29, 1927, pp. 1-2.
[45] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 54.

injunction, and too frequently, it seemed to labor leaders, employers used this method of ending strikes or boycotts. For twelve years, from 1913 to 1925, Walker sought passage of an injunction-limitation bill favored by organized labor in Illinois. When it was finally enacted into law, he considered this his greatest legislative achievement.

An injunction is a restraining order issued by courts prohibiting certain persons from doing or requiring them to do specified acts. In the case of labor unions, injunctions were issued to prevent irreparable injury to property rights, since some judges felt that strikes or boycotts could result in such damage to an employer. Punishment for violation of an injunction was brought about by contempt proceedings by the court issuing the injunction, and could be such fine and imprisonment as the court wished to impose. In the case of such proceedings, defendents were not allowed to have a jury trial.

The use of the injunction in industrial disputes apparently originated in England. One of the earliest known cases where an injunction was used against workers occurred in this country in the early 1800's. In this case, the plaintiff asked that the " 'Defendents. . . be restrained from printing or publishing any placards. . . whereby the property of the plaintiffs, or their business, might be damnified.' "[46] The request to the court was made because the workmen had printed signs while they were out on strike.

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[46] Felix Frankfurter, The Labor Injunction (Gloucester, Massachusetts: P. Smith, 1963), p. 20.

Injunctions were issued in Illinois in connection with labor disputes as early as 1886.[47] The injunction problem was not serious in the state, however, until after the famous Debs injunction was issued by a federal court in 1894, during the Pullman strike. The issuance of this injunction was the cue to employers to start appealing to the courts for restraining orders whenever they became involved in a strike or boycott.[48]

In 1908, two injunctions were issued against Walker and other District 12, UMWA, officials as a result of strikes being called. Walker indicated why he was opposed to injunctions when he pointed out to the delegates at the 1909 convention of District 12 that, "In both injunctions cited. . . the right to free speech and free press is absolutely prohibited, notwithstanding the fact that the fundamental laws of our country guarantee them to every citizen in our land."[49] There was very little Walker could do about the use of the injunction, however, until he became President of the IFL.

Officials of the IFL began introducing injunction-limitation bills into the General Assembly as early as 1901, and the "fight for bills of this nature became a regular feature of legislative sessions in Illinois."[50] When Walker entered office, he assumed this responsibility, and expanded the publicity campaign for the bill. In 1915, the IFL called a special conference in Springfield, Illinois to arouse support for an injunction-limitation bill patterned after the Clayton Act of 1914. The conference was attended by 1046

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47 Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 43.
48 Ibid., p. 46.
49 District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1909, p. 22.
50 Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 53.

delegates from all parts of Illinois, but this show of strength failed to convince the General Assembly that it should act on the measure.[51]

In April, 1916, a similar conference was called to meet in Chicago in May.[52] According to a report in the IFL Weekly News Letter, "The conference was decided upon after a consultation between President Walker of the State Federation and President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor."[53] A number of officers of international unions having headquarters in Illinois, as well as many local officials, attended the conference. President Gompers was the keynote speaker for the one day session. Walker was hopeful that this kind of conference would secure the passage of the injunction-limitation bill by the next General Assembly, but this hope was in vain.[54]

In the fall of 1916, with the state elections close at hand, the IFL attempted to obtain the views of candidates for the General Assembly regarding the injunction-limitation bill. Victor Olander sent out a letter to all candidates asking them for their opinion of the bill,[55] and later publicized the answers in the

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51 Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 54.

52 Thirty-fourth Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, October 16-20, 1916, Quincy, Illinois, pp. 24-25. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1916.)

53 IFL News Letter, April 29, 1916, p. 1.

54 Ibid., p. 1. This article stated, "It is the opinion of the Federation officials,. . ., that by a conserted and systematic effort on the part of the labor movement in this state, beginning immediately with a publicity campaign ... ., it will be possible to secure the enactment of an effective anti-injunction bill at the next session of the Illinois Legislature."

55 IFL News Letter, September 2, 1916, p. 3.

IFL Weekly News Letter. It was hoped that this type of pressure would lead to enactment of the bill, but again the 1917 General Assembly failed to pass it.

In part, the expanded publicity campaign for the injunction-limitation bill was started by the IFL officials because an unusually large number of injunctions were being issued between 1915 and 1917. The war in Europe was stimulating industry in Illinois, and unions were taking advantage of the period of prosperty to demand higher wages and more benefits. Injunctions against strikes were impeding this progress, however, and Walker was upset that this should happen.[56] Since the General Assembly would not enact a law to help the unions, the IFL, in conjunction with the Chicago Federation of Labor, (CFL), became determined to provide another kind of aid.

In early 1916, the two federations created a special legal department to deal with the injunction problem. Four outstanding members of the legal profession, W. B. Rubins, Angus W. Kerr, Frank P. Walsh, and Clarence Darrow, were contacted and went to work for organized labor on injunction cases. It was agreed by all concerned that the IFL and the CFL would pay only what they could for the legal help.[57] This legal department served the IFL and other unions in the state from 1916 to 1921, when it had to be

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[56] IFL News Letter, September 8, 1917, p. 1. Walker was so upset that he charged there was an "army of Hessians under the guise of judges . . ." ruling the courts. These judges "murdered the rights of the working people, and made them a specie of slave through the issuance of 'despotic edicts' named injunction writs."

[57] IFL, Proceedings, 1916, p. 60.

dissolved because there were not enough funds to maintain it.[58]

Between 1918 and 1920, Walker and other officials of the IFL attempted to secure the passage of the injunction-limitation bill without success. In March, 1919, just before he left office, Walker testified for the bill before a hearing in Springfield.[59] He also made certain that complete reports on the progress of the bills reached all laboring people in the state during each legislative session, by publishing news about the bills in the IFL Weekly News Letter.[60] In this way the issue over injunctions was kept before the public.

When the Illinois General Assembly commenced in January, 1921, Walker was prepared to see that the injunction-limitation bill which had been used in previous sessions was again introduced. A problem arose, however, when the United States Supreme Court handed down a decision which destroyed the effectiveness of the Clayton Act of 1914. The injunction bill proposed by the IFL was based on this act, and it was necessary to redraft the bill to avoid having it meet a similar fate. The work of redrafting was taken over by Angus Kerr, Victor Olander, and Walker.[61]

The new bill explained specifically what Walker and other officials of the labor movement in Illinois wanted as an injunction-limitation law.

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[58] IFL, Proceedings, 1921, pp. 58-59.

[59] IFL News Letter, March 22, 1919, p. 1.

[60] See IFL News Letter, March 3, 10, 31, 1917; April 7, 14, 21, 1917; May 19, 26, 1917; June 2, 9, 16, 1917; February 8, 22, 1919; April 19, 1919.

[61] Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 54-55.

> It was designed to define clearly the status of labor as an attribute of life distinct from property, to declare the right of working people to organize into trade and labor unions for the purpose of mutual aid in maintaining and advancing their economic and social conditions, to assert their right to quit work either singly or in concert and to persuade others so to do, and to assist each other during industrial disputes by the payment of strike benefits and in other ways. [62]

Of course, the bill forbade any court or judge from issuing injunctions which would take away the above rights. The hope that all these rights could be obtained for organized labor was unrealistic, however, and the bill was never reported out of Committee.[63] The same bill was introduced in 1923, but again it failed to be enacted.

In January, 1925, a new bill was drafted as a result of an Arizona Supreme Court decision declaring unconstitutional an anti-injunction bill. It was believed that the 1921 bill needed to be modified in some respects in order to survive. When it was introduced into the General Assembly, it met strong opposition from the Associated Employers of Illinois and the Illinois Manufacturers Association. Walker, Olander and others testified in favor of the bill before the House Committee on the Judiciary. This bill was favorably reported out of Committee, before it was defeated.[64]

Immediately after the defeat of the first bill, a new and more modified bill was prepared by the officers of the IFL, and submitted to the General Assembly. This bill dealt with the problem of injunctions against picketing and stated that:

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[62] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 55.
[63] Ibid., p. 55. IFL, Proceedings, 1921, p. 42.
[64] IFL News Letter, February 14, 1925, pp. 1-2, March 14, 1925, p. 1.

> No restraining order or injunction shall be granted by any court of this state, or by a judge or the judges thereof, in any case involving or growing out of a dispute concerning terms or conditions of employment, enjoining or restraining any person or persons, either singly or in concert, from terminating any relation of employment, or from ceasing to perform any work or labor, or from peaceably and without threats or intimidation recommending, advising, or persuading others so to do; or from peaceably and without threats or intimidation being upon any public street, or thoroughfare or highway for the purpose of obtaining or communicating information, or to peaceably and without threats of intimidation persuade any person or persons to work or to abstain from working, or to employ or to cease to employ any party to a labor dispute, or to peaceably and without threats of intimidation recommend, advise, or persuade others so to do. 65

The bill was favorably reported out of the House Judiciary Committee, passed both houses of the General Assembly[66] and was signed into law by Governor Len Small.

At the IFL Convention in 1925, Walker told the delegates that the Injunction-Limitation Law had "already modified the attitude of not only the few injunction judges of this state, but that type of judges everywhere else in our country."[67] The following year he reported the same thing.

> There has been quite a marked reduction in the number of injunctions that have been issued in Illinois, for the purpose of breaking strikes, since the enactment of our injunction limitation law, as compared with the number of those orders that have been issued for that purpose in years previous to the enactment of that law. 68

He seemed satisfied that the IFL had achieved its purpose, and

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65 Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 57-58.

66 The bill was passed in the House by a vote of 78 to 65, and in the Senate by a vote of 28 to 17. Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 56-57.

67 Forty-third Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, September 14-19, 1925, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, p. 134. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1925.)

68 IFL, Proceedings, 1926, p. 83.

he probably would have disagreed with one historian of the period who reported that, "It appears . . . that organized labor has gained practically nothing of immediate importance through its injunction limitation law."[69]

Walker's success with the injunction-limitation bill was offset to some extent by the defeat of a number of bills which he considered important. Five of these, a women's minimum wage bill, a women's eight hour bill, a one day rest in seven bill, an old age pension bill, and an anti-yellow dog contract bill reflect Walker's trend of thinking regarding legislative matters. These bills were designed to improve the economic and social position of the working person in society, and it was very easy to speak of decency and humanity when referring to them.

Minimum wage bills for women were introduced into the General Assembly each year from 1913 to 1921, with the exception of 1919, but none of these bills were ever passed. The Women's Trade Union movement considered a bill limiting the number of hours a woman worked as more important, and the IFL officials followed their lead in this matter.[70] When bills were introduced, however, Walker spoke out for them. In 1915, for example, he wrote a letter to the members of the legislature which pointed out the "serious consequences of the condition that requires women to work for less than a living wage . . . ."[71] According to Walker, such conditions caused physical suffering, starvation, dependency on

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69 Beckner, Labor Legislation, pp. 58-59.

70 Ibid., pp. 130-132.

71 IFL News Letter, May 8, 1915, p. 1.

charity, a loss of self respect, and, in many instances, "a life of shame", for these women.[72] He could not understand why such a bill was not passed.

Since the main emphasis of the Women's Trade Union League was on the Eight Hour bill for women rather than the minimum wage bill, Walker campaigned more for this bill. A number of such bills were introduced into the General Assembly, and he always made note of their progress in his reports to the IFL conventions. In 1917, after the Women's Eight Hour bill was defeated, Walker told the IFL convention delegates that,

> Every little two by four cross roads grocery man, every little one-horse restaurant keeper, - every petty businesse man of the peanut caliber of all descriptions worked night and day, by fair means and foul, to prevent the enactment of this legislation. 73

In 1927, Walker defended the Women's Eight Hour bill in a joint session of the House and Senate committee on Industrial Affairs. He cited a long list of reasons why the bill should become law including the fact that the United States Supreme Court had ruled in favor of a ten hour law for health reasons. He pointed out that five states had already passed Women's Eight Hour bills, and that the trend was toward a forty-eight hour week.[74] In closing he stated:

> The limiting of the hours that women work in industry, to 8 per day in the state of Illinois, will not mean a great deal in the solution of that problem. It will hardly be noticible, but it will not impair our necessary human labor supply, and it will improve the health and well-being of the mothers of our future generations. . .. It will mean a vital influence in the right direction. 75

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72 IFL News Letter, May 8, 1915, p. 1.
73 IFL, Proceedings, 1917, pp. 38-39.
74 IFL News Letter, March 19, 1927, pp. 1-2.
75 Ibid., p. 2.

Walker's testimony did not move the Committee and subsequently the bill was defeated.

The passage of legislation providing for one day off a week was unsuccessful during Walker's time in office. Several efforts were made to secure such legislation, however. In 1913, four bills pertaining to this were introduced into the General Assembly. In 1915, one bill passed the House, but the Senate amended it in such a way that the House refused to accept it.[76] Walker went before the House Committee on Industrial Affairs and Labor in 1921 to testify for s similar bill[77] which was later defeated. In 1923, another bill received support from many sources, but still failed to pass. As late as 1929, One Day's Rest in Seven bills were still being introduced without success.[78]

The arguments advanced by Walker and others in organized labor, regarding the One Day's Rest in Seven bill, centered around the idea that practically every investigation made indicated that the seven day week broke down the worker's home life, his health, efficiency and ambition, and tended to lower his standard of living.[79] The arguments were unsuccessful.

Walker considered the Old Age Pension bill just as important as the One Day's Rest in Seven. This bill became an issue in the General Assembly during the 1920's, and organized labor fought to have the bill passed several times. In 1927, for example, two of labor's foremost legislators, Senator William J. Sneed and

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[76] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 186.
[77] IFL News Letter, April 9, 1921, p. 3.
[78] Ibid., September 7, 1929, p. 4.
[79] Beckner, Labor Legislation, p. 186.

Representative Reuben Soderstrom, introduced Old Age Pension bills into their respective chambers.[80] Walker was on hand to testify in favor of the bills. In 1929, a similar bill was introduced, but never got beyond committee stage.[81]

The last piece of major legislation which Walker wanted passed was an anti-yellow dog contract bill. This bill was drawn up because employers were attempting to stifle the growth of labor unions by having workers sign contracts forbidding them to join unions. The bill was first introduced into the General Assembly in early 1927, and immediately was "regarded as of primary importance to the working people of the state."[82]

Before the bill was reported out of the committee on Industrial Affairs, Walker spoke to the group stating:

> This is a bill, as we understand it, that only protects the worker in the exercise of a right that everyone agrees that not only the workers have, but that every other citizen of the nation has - that is, to belong to an organization composed of those who are associated with him in the same business or endeavor. [83]

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[80] IFL News Letter, May 14, 1927, p. 1.

[81] Ibid., September 7, 1929, p. 4.

[82] IFL News Letter, March 26, 1927, p. 1. The text of the bill was as follows:

"Be in enacted by the People of the State of Illinois represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. Every undertaking or promise hereafter made, whether written or oral, express or implied, constituting, or contained in, any contract or agreement of hiring or employment between any individual, firm, company, association, or corporation, and any employee or prospective employee of the same, whereby (a) either party to such contract or agreement undertakes or promises not to join, become, or remain, a member of any labor organization or of any organization of employers or (b) either party to such contract or agreement undertakes or promises that he will withdraw from the employment relation in the event that he joins, becomes or remains, a member of any labor organization or or any organization of employers, is hereby declared to be contrary to public policy and wholly void."

[83] IFL News Letter, April 16, 1927, p. 4.

Walker's hope that the bill would be passed was ended when it failed to receive a second reading in the House and was stricken from the calendar by its author, Representative McCaskrin.[84]

In 1929, the Anti-Yellow Dog contract bill was again introduced into the General Assembly. It was immediately opposed by the employer's groups, the Associated Employers of Illinois and the Employer's Association of Chicago, and was eventually defeated in committee hearings.[85] Walker was determined that the bill would be passed someday, however, and the IFL Weekly News Letter reported that,

> The campaign of the Illinois State Federation of Labor and its associated local unions, councils, city central bodies and state organizations to secure the passage of the bill . . . will be continued with the same vigor and persistency that characterized the long struggle which resulted in the passage of the Illinois Injunction Limitation Law. [86]

Walker felt that his legislative duties included opposing bills which were harmful to organized labor as well as promoting bills favorable to labor. In the 1920's, particularly, this became one of the major legislative purposes of the IFL,[87] and its officers actively sought the defeat of a number of bills, including the Turnbaugh Anti-Labor bills of 1921, the 1922 revised State Constitution, the Constabulary bill, and a bill giving certain powers to the state Supreme Court.

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[84] IFL News Letter, July 23, 1927, p. 1.

[85] Ibid., July 20, 1929, p. 1.

[86] Ibid., p. 1.

[87] IFL News Letter, July 2, 1921, p. 1. The article stated, "Organized labor in Illinois, . . ., must . . . be constantly on guard to prevent the enemies of labor from not only misleading the state legislature, but also from mutilating the constitution of the state."

The Turnbaugh Anti-Labor bills, as organized labor called them, were introduced into the Senate in March, 1921 by Senator John D. Turnbaugh.[88] The bills, described by the IFL Weekly News Letter as "vicious", were designed to limit strike activities and hinder trade unions financially. One of the bills carefully set down a number of legal prerequisites which unions had to abide by before they could order strikes. A second bill made it unlawful for any person to intervene between an employer and a workman in order to induce the worker to leave his job. A third bill provided that all unincorporated and voluntary associations could be sued in the name of the organization.[89] The IFL Weekly News Letter carried a full summary of each of the bills so that trade unionists would understand why each should be defeated. When the measures failed to pass, credit for their defeat was given to Walker.[90]

In 1922, when the new state constitution was proposed, the IFL made a careful study of the document and decided that some of the changes gave impressive powers to labor's enemies. Walker turned the task of making this study over to Victor Olander and Angus Kerr. In October, 1922, at the Annual Convention of the IFL, Olander reported to the delegates,

> It will be quite clear to all who read the proposed new constitution, . . ., that the Constitutional Convention has, in effect, recommended a return to the ancient practice of government by persons as opposed to government by law. Judicial mandate will, in a very large measure, supercede legislative enactment as a law making force in Illinois if the new Constitution is ratified. 91

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88 IFL News Letter, April 2, 1921, pp. 1-2.
89 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
90 Ibid., July 2, 1921, p. 1.
91 Fortieth Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, October 16-22, 1922, Rockford, Illinois, p. 169. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1922.)

Because of their findings, the officers of the federation began a systematic campaign to help defeat the constitution, which was scheduled to be voted on December 12, 1922.[92]

In the November 4, 1922 issue of the IFL Weekly News Letter, an article was published stating that the proposed Constitution would make enactment of the initiative and referendum forever impossible. On November 11, 1922, Olander argued in the News Letter that the proposed Constitution violated the United States Bill of Rights. The following week, in the News Letter, he laid the blame for giving the Illinois Supreme Court excessive powers in the proposed Constitution at the feet of Wall Street, particularly the J. P. Morgan interests. On December 2, 1922, Walker contributed an article to the IFL News Letter entitled, "Tricking the Farmer". In this piece, he blamed the corporation lawyers for many of the articles in the proposed Constitution relating to the agricultural interests and claimed that the farmers would suffer rather than benefit if the proposed constitution was passed.[93]

Other labor papers also voiced criticism about the proposed constitution. The Illinois Miner stated that the 1922 Constitution did not give home rule to cities, and that it curtailed the privilege of habeus corpus by withdrawing the right of bail.[94] It listed seventeen other reasons why the proposed Constitution should be defeated.

In a special general election on December 12, 1922, the people of Illinois voted not to accept the proposed Constitution. IFL

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92 IFL News Letter, November 11, 1922, p. 1.
93 Ibid., November 4, 11, 17, 1922; December 2, 1922.
94 The Illinois Miner, December 9, 1922, p. 1.

officials claimed the defeat was made possible by their continued efforts to see that laboring people and the general public understood exactly why the new Constitution would not serve them well. According to an article by Olander, the action of the IFL convention and the response of local unions to the call of this convention was the major factor in the constitution's defeat.[95] Walker claimed the same thing. He told the 1923 IFL convention delegates that, "We led the way and we furnished the information to practically every other influence that was fighting the proposed constitution to enable them to make their work effective."[96]

While most bills that organized labor opposed were introduced into the General Assembly only once, the Constabulary bill, which proposed creating a state police force, was a measure which Walker continually fought while he was President of the IFL. His opposition to this bill was fostered by a deep suspicion that such a bill would inevitably result in such a police force being used to coerce strikers and break up strike demonstrations. Whenever he testified against the bill, Walker cited examples from other states where a state police force was used for just this purpose.[97] For this reason, Walker was certain the bill was unamerican and undemocratic in spirit, and often referred to the Pennsylvania State Police force as the "Cossacks".[98]

A bill to create a state police force was introduced into

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95 IFL News Letter, December 16, 1922, p. 1.
96 The Illinois Miner, September 8, 1923, p. 2.
97 Pennsylvania and West Virginia were two states Walker referred to when he argued against this bill. IFL News Letter, March 8, 1919, pp. 1-2; March 12, 1921, p. 3.
98 IFL News Letter, March 8, 1919, pp. 1-2.

every session of the General Assembly during the 1920's. Each time such a bill appeared, Walker personally advocated its defeat. He wrote numerous articles for the IFL Weekly News Letter, and made certain that other labor papers received copies for print. His arguments against the bill became sophisticated after a time, as when he pointed out that jealousies would develop between local authorities and the State Police if such a force was created.[99]

Walker also testified against the bills at hearings. In April, 1927, he appeared before the Senate Committee on Community Welfare and the House Committee on Military Affairs to oppose the bill. In his argument, he indicated his deep faith in the democratic process by stating,

> We are in favor of maintaining the fundamental American form of government laid down by the forefathers. We believe in the honesty, integrity and intelligence of the American men and women who make up the citizenship of our state. We are opposed to the importation of a foreign military police into our state. We believe we should continue to police our own communities during peace times from amongst ourselves by people we know. In that way we can maintain our democracy and protect ourselves. 100

In 1929, organized labor in Illinois indicated it was interested in preserving democratic procedures in another way. In the legislative session of that year, companion bills appeared in the House and Senate which would have transferred powers to the Supreme Court of Illinois which were normally exercised by the legislature. These powers included making rules of pleading, practice, and procedure in courts of record in Illinois. Walker felt these bills were dangerous because they gave the Supreme Court

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99 The New Majority, February 10, 1923, pp. 1-2.
100 IFL News Letter, April 30, 1927, pp. 1-2.

authority to prevent defendents from carrying law suits to the United States Supreme Court by charging excessive court expenses.[101] He worked to see that these bills were defeated, therefore, and was rewarded when the bills failed to pass.

Walker's wide range of interests in labor legislation made it mandatory that some kind of organization be formed to co-ordinate the many legislative activities. It was impossible for one man to assume the sole responsibility for making all the decisions. In order to serve the interests of the various unions in the state, therefore, the IFL created the Joint Labor Legislative Board. The aim and purpose of this board, according to Walker, was to develop a strong influence in Illinois politics for the different unions. With the advice of this board, the federation could function as a lever in obtaining a political and legislative program favorable to organized labor in Illinois.[102]

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101 IFL News Letter, February 23, 1929, p. 1.

102 IFL, Proceedings, 1924, pp. 118-119.

CHAPTER VI

JOHN H. WALKER IN ILLINOIS POLITICS 1905 - 1928

John H. Walker's attitude toward organized labor participating in politics was influenced, in part, by Samuel Gompers' policies toward politics. Gompers believed that the American Federation of Labor, (AFL), and its affiliated state and local organizations should remain non-partisan toward political candidates. In this way, it could support those who were friendly to labor and oppose those who were unfriendly. Gompers was against any type of party being formed by labor, since he felt this weakened labor's power and often helped to elect its enemies. He was also against any alliance with a third party, and against blanket endorsements for members of any party. For Gompers, the only policy was endorsement for those who supported labor, and opposition against those who did not.[1]

Walker felt that Gompers' approach to politics was one means of political action for trade unionists in Illinois, but his idealistic and progressive nature allowed him to explore other avenues of approach to the problem. Walker firmly believed in the Socialist Party's doctrines, and was a member between 1900 and 1916. In

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[1] Staley, IFL, pp. 371-372.

1918, he helped to form the Labor Party of Illinois. In 1920, he ran for Governor of Illinois on the Farmer-Labor ticket. These activities were the natural result of the idea that organized labor could reach its legislative goals only if it elected men sympathetic to such goals.

Walker's association with the Socialist Party, while he was President of District 12, was based on his belief that members of this party were the best spokesmen for organized labor and the working people. At the turn of the century, socialist leaders recognized that their party appealed mainly to the working people of the country. They also knew that the most effective means of action by the working people was expressed through the trade union movement. One of their chief efforts, therefore, was to influence labor unions to become a part of the Socialist Party.[2] While they were not very successful in achieving this aim, their espousal of political power for labor unions and working people influenced Walker to support the Socialist Party in Illinois.

The democratic organization of the Socialist Party also appealed to Walker. The party recognized the states as the key units in the structure of its organization. Walker was active at the state level in organized labor, and found it convenient to work with the Socialist Party of Illinois. National activities

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[2] Thomas H. Greer, American Social Reform Movements; Their Patterns Since 1865 (New York: Prentice Hall, 1949), p. 49. (Hereafter cited as Greer, Reform Movements.)

of the Socialist Party were co-ordinated and planned at annual national conventions of delegates from the various states. These conventions were organized in the most democratic manner, permitting the delegates themselves to elect a chairman and all regular committees. Between conventions, administrative authority was vested in a national committee, composed of one member from each state, but all acts of this body were subject to a referendum vote by the entire membership.[3] These safeguards against centralization of authority appealed to Walker.

Walker was active in forming a close bond between the Socialist Party in Illinois and District 12, United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA), in a number of ways. He ran for political office on the Socialist ticket at least twice while he held office in the miners' organization. He worked to gain recognition for the Socialist Party's political activities at conventions, and he continually spoke of socialist political principles to other trade unionists.

In 1904, while he was Vice-president of District 12, Walker opposed Charles A. Allen for a seat as a representative in the General Assembly. Allen defeated Walker, who ran on the Socialist ticket, 20,675½ to 2,534.[4] In 1906, Walker was again a candidate for the Socialist Party and ran for Congress against Joseph G. Cannon. Cannon won this election, 20,804 to 1,551.[5]

In 1905, Walker appointed a committee for political action which was asked to make recommendations regarding the political activities of the District. The following year, this committee

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[3] Greer, Reform Movements, p. 49.

[4] Blue Book of the State of Illinois (Springfield, Illinois: James A. Rose, Secretary of State, 1905), p. 648.

[5] Blue Book of the State of Illinois (Springfield, Illinois: James A. Rose, Secretary of State, 1907), p. 631.

submitted a resolution to the District 12 annual convention which clearly indicated that they wanted the District aligned with the Socialist Party. The resolution stated:

> Be it resolved, that no campaign expenses be paid out of the District Treasury unless the candidate is a member of the United Mine Workers of America and stands for all working class principles. Same to be subject to the approval of the District Executive Board, and no political candidate shall receive any assistance, financial, or moral, until he shall have signed a resignation with the date blank, which resignation shall be filed with the District Secretary and in the event of disloyalty to the interests of the working class the Secretary-treasurer shall date the resignation on file and file it with the proper authorities and have him removed from office.
>
> Signed and presented to this convention by the Committee on Political Action.
>
> W. T. Haywood
> Chairman
> James Lord
> Tom Smith
> T. R. Davis
> June Crandall
> Secretary[6]

A great deal of debate occurred when this resolution was introduced.[7] The term "all working class principles" upset some leaders in the district, who argued that it favored candidates on the Socialist ticket. Walker declared, "I cannot imagine how any unprejudiced member could find any reason to bias him one way or the other because of the phrase used in that resolution."[8] The debate continued, however, until the new resolution was defeated.

Walker was active in promoting socialist political principles within the district organization. Since the Socialist Party

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[6] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1909, p. 181.
[7] Ibid., pp. 181-222.
[8] Ibid., p. 181.

was active at the community level in politics, Walker advocated this policy. In 1912, he told delegates at the District convention that,

> I believe . . . that the political organizations of the workers should begin with the government of the community in which they live. If control of even the village or municipality is in the hands of the workers, then in the event of trouble, or the desire to have legislation enacted in their interests, they will find things altogether different to what it is when the employers or business interests are in control. 9

Walker attempted to follow this policy by endorsing socialists running for state and local offices. There was little chance that any of these candidates would win, however, and Walker grew less and less optimistic about the chances of the party's success. By 1915, he felt that the Socialist Party was not helping the trade union movement to achieve its aims.[10] When the national elections were held in 1916, therefore, Walker abandoned his alliance with the socialists in Illinois in order to support Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic party.

There were a number of reasons why Walker supported Wilson in 1916. Early in his first administration, Wilson indicated that he was sympathetic to organized labor by appointing William B. Wilson, Secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers, as the first Secretary of Labor and gave him a cabinet post. He also managed to see that organized labor was given some legitimacy by supporting the passage of the Clayton Act of 1914. This law, although it contained nothing of practical importance for trade

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[9] District 12, UMWA, Proceedings, 1909, p. 29.

[10] IFL News Letter, July 17, 1915, pp. 1-2.

unions, announced that labor was not a commodity and declared that unions were not conspiracies in restraint of trade. The national recognition of organized labor and their apparent deliverance from the courts was a sign to Walker that trade unions were at last gaining a place in society. What the Socialist Party was attempting to achieve, the Democratic party was achieving.

On the eve of the 1916 elections, Walker called for trade unionists in Illinois to put their political preferences behind them, and unite in working to re-elect Wilson.[11] He pointed out that the Executive Board of the IFL, as a body, was endorsing Wilson, regardless of the "political leanings" of the individual members.[12] He also stated that Wilson's opponent, Charles Evans Hughes, was one of organized labor's enemies, and that his election would mean a set-back for organized labor. Walker hoped that every trade unionist in Illinois would investigate the facts and then vote according to his conscience.[13]

In the 1916 race for Governor of Illinois, Walker favored the re-election of Governor Edward Dunne. He gave his support to Dunne because he had helped to secure a number of laws favorable to organized labor,[14] and because Dunne's opponent, Frank O. Lowden, was apparently unsympathetic to labor. Lowden had allegedly supported George M. Pullman during the Pullman strike of 1894, and was the "tool" of the Chicago business interests.[15] The assurances

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[11] IFL News Letter, October 28, 1916, pp. 1-3.
[12] Ibid., p. 1.
[13] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[14] The Labor Leader, November 2, 1916, pp. 1-3.
[15] Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, p. 269.

of Lowden's supporters that these charges were untrue were not enough for Walker.

When the Republican primaries occurred in September, 1916, Walker supported Frank L. Smith as the Republican candidate for governor.[16] The reason for this was obvious. It was hoped that Smith, who seemed favorable to organized labor, would gain the Republican nomination, while Dunne received the Democratic nomination. In this way, either candidate would be favorable to organized labor.

As the November elections approached, the IFL stepped up its support for Dunne and increased its opposition to Lowden. Campaign funds were used to place full page advertisements in city newspapers. Lowden and Hughes were attacked because they were "candidates of the predatory interests that live by exploitation of the people."[17] Dunne and Wilson were praised as representing "the spirit of the times."[18] When election day arrived, however, organized labor found that its efforts to defeat Lowden were not enough. While Wilson won re-election, Governor Dunne was defeated by nearly 150,000 votes.[19]

Walker's fear that Lowden would be against organized labor in Illinois was unfounded. Lowden worked hard to keep peace between organized labor and the employers. He campaigned in the General Assembly for some of the bills which the IFL and Walker favored, and made certain the union leaders were given their share of re-

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16 Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, p. 283.
17 Illinois State Register, November 4, 1916, p. 1.
18 Ibid., p. 1.
19 Hutchinson, Lowden of Illinois, p. 291.

sponsibilities during World War I. It was still apparent to Walker and others in the labor movement, however, that many politicians made promises that they did not keep regarding labor legislation, because of its failure to be passed. The need for an independent labor movement, based on a political party dedicated to labor's interests, was thought to be the answer to this problem.[20]

On October 6, 1918, the Chicago Federation of Labor, (CFL), in conjunction with the Cook County Labor Party took the first step toward forming such a party when it requested Walker to call a convention to consider the matter.[21] At the annual convention of the state federation, this request was agreed upon, provided that a referendum vote by the rank and file indicated that a majority of the trade unionists in the state were in favor of forming a labor party. This referendum was held and a majority accepted the proposal. The IFL issued a call for a state convention, therefore, which was scheduled to meet on April 10, 1919.[22] On that date 611 delegates assembled to organize the Labor Party of Illinois. A constitution was adopted and a platform was drawn up to emphasize the party's demands.[23] In June, 1919, the Cook County Labor Party and the Labor Party of Illinois met to consider the formation of a national Labor Party, and a conference was called to consider this in August, 1919. The conference was so small, however, that

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[20] Thirty-eighth Annual Convention Proceedings, IFL, October 18-23, 1920, Galesburg, Illinois, pp. 13-15. (Hereafter cited as IFL, Proceedings, 1920.)

[21] Staley, IFL, p. 362.

[22] Ibid., p. 363.

[23] Ibid., p. 365; IFL News Letter, April 26, 1919, pp. 2-3. See Appendix D for the full text of the platform.

another meeting was scheduled for December, 1919.[24]

On December 22, 1919, more than twelve hundred delegates from thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia met and formed the Labor Party of the United States. Walker, who had been absent during the summer of 1919, was appointed permanent Vice-chairman. The party platform was patterned after the platform of the Labor Party of Illinois, except that it was broader in the number of subjects if covered.[25]

The creation of the national Labor Party was a sign for Gompers and other conservative members of the AFL to begin to take steps counteracting the growing influence of the party. A national Non-Partisan Campaign Committee was formed and requested that local and state organizations form non-partisan committees on political action. Labor newspapers were requested to help and information regarding the success of non-partisan campaigns was sent to many locals.[26] In answer to this campaign, the IFL News Letter announced:

> In Illinois the organized labor movement has declared itself as of the opinion that the proposed ends may be best attained through the medium of the Labor Party. Other states have taken similar action. The development of a spirit of antagonism between those who favor action through the Labor Party and those who believe that the A. F. of L. declaration is not favorable to the growth of such a party, can only result in making a successful political campaign very difficult, if not nearly impossible, in some parts of the country. The anti-labor forces know this and are now endeavoring to misconstrue the position of both the American Federation of Labor and the Labor Party. The trade unionists of Illinois will not permit themselves to be misled, however, and will remain steadfast in their adherence to both the A. F. of L. and the Labor Party. 27

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[24] Staley, IFL, p. 370.
[25] Ibid., p. 370.
[26] Ibid., pp. 371-372.
[27] IFL News Letter, February 21, 1920, p. 3.

This promise was kept although Gompers managed to "draw away influential local labor men from the Labor party."[28]

On June 4 and 5, 1920, the Labor Party of Illinois held its second annual convention in Springfield, Illinois. This convention nominated a state ticket for the November elections. Walker was chosen to be a candidate for governor, and a number of other local leaders were placed on the ballot for other offices. A new platform was adopted which placed "labor above property;. . .", declared that working people had the right to "organize in trade and labor unions;. . .", and proposed "guarantees to safeguard the liberties of the working people . . . ."[29] This convention did not have as large a number of delegates attending it, and seemed to have lost some of its support due to Gompers' attitude toward the Labor Party.[30]

At the national convention of the Labor Party, later in the year, the influence of Gompers' conservative policies was especially felt. "The Illinois delegation, instead of representing 241 local unions and 16 central bodies as it had the year before, now represented 171 local unions and 2 central bodies."[31] To off-set this influence, delegates to the convention agreed to join with several farmer's groups, the Non-Partisan League, and the Committee of Forty-eight, when these groups requested that they be allowed to attend the convention.[32] The delegates agreed to change the party's

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[28] Staley, IFL, p. 372.
[29] IFL News Letter, June 2, 1920, p. 1.
[30] Staley, IFL, p. 373.
[31] Ibid., pp. 373-374.
[32] IFL News Letter, July 24, 1920, pp. 1-2.

name to Farmer-Labor Party, and attempts were made to gain Senator Robert M. LaFollette's consent to run for President on their ticket.[33] When LaFollette refused the nomination, Farley Christensen and Max Hayes were chosen as the Presidential and Vice-presidential candidates.[34] to oppose James M. Cox, former progressive governor of Ohio, and Warren G. Harding, the candidate who advocated a return to "normalcy".

On the state level, Walker was running against Len Small, the Republican candidate, and James H. Lewis, former United States Senator and Democratic candidate.[35] Walker began his official campaign on August 22, 1920 at the first annual Farmer-Labor Party picnic.[36] After that, requests that he speak arrived daily at his Chicago campaign headquarters, and Victor Olander had to be appointed his campaign manager.[37]

In late September, 1922, Walker spoke in Bloomington, Illinois where he attracted much larger crowds than anticipated. During his speech, he indicated the major theme of his campaign when he stated:

> The program of either of the old political parties means a continuation of the present system of profiteering and exploitation of all the peoples of the earth. Indeed, we could not expect otherwise, when both the Democrat and Republican parties are owned, controlled and dominated by the profiteers. [38]

In other campaign speeches, Walker attacked the activities of Attorney-General Palmer and governmental repression of the mine

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[33] IFL News Letter, July 24, 1920, p. 1.
[34] Ibid., p. 1.
[35] Illinois State Register, November 2, 1920, p. 1.
[36] The New Majority, August 21, 1920, p. 3.
[37] Ibid., October 23, 1920, p. 6; Staley, IFL, p. 375.
[38] The New Majority, October 9, 1920, p. 7.

strike of 1919 under the war-time Lever Act.[39]

Walker had the complete support of the IFL during his campaign. The Executive Board members of the federation formed a Walker for Governor State Campaign Committee, and the IFL urged everyone connected with its affiliated organizations to work toward electing Walker, "regardless of differences that may exist regarding other candidates or questions."[40] Trade unionists were reminded that "The election of John H. Walker for governor of Illinois -- or even the polling of a large vote in his favor -- will add strength to the labor issue . . ." and "improve the chances for favorable legislation in the coming session of the State Legislature. . .."[41]

The hope that Walker and other Farmer-Labor Party candidates would be elected, or would indicate a huge following by polling a large vote, was ended when Harding won in a landslide. Christensen received less than one per cent of the total vote in the country, and only polled 49,630 votes out of a 2,090,468 total in Illinois. In Cook County, particularly, the Farmer-Labor Party failed to gain a large proportation of the vote. Christensen gathered only 4,966 votes in this county.[42]

Walker did not fair any better in his campaign for governor. Over the entire state, he received only 56,480 votes, and ran fourth behind the Republican, Democratic, and Socialist candidates. In the largest county of the state, Walker received only 3,666

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39 Staley, IFL, p. 375.
40 IFL News Letter, October 9, 1920, p. 1.
41 Ibid., p. 1.
42 Staley, IFL, p. 377.

votes.[43] It was obvious that the Farmer-Labor Party was doomed.

The disasterous results of the election convinced many labor leaders in Illinois that the project of forming a political party based on trade union support should be abandoned. Victor Olander, who had only half-heartedly given his support to the project, refused to continue such activities. Walker began "inwardly to waver, though he did not publicly yield to the persuasions of the American Federation of Labor adherents for some time."[44] Others, such as John Fitzpatrick, remained advocates of this type of political action until 1924.[45]

The immediate problem facing labor leaders of the IFL in 1921 was what policy to take toward the Labor party now that it was obvious that organized labor had not strengthened its political position in the 1920 elections. The Joint Labor Legislative Board made a study of this problem, and issued an appeal that "more practical and sensible methods be used by labor in dealing with political matters . . . ."[46] It was pointed out by the Board that the Labor party venture had lessened the IFL's influence in the General Assembly by causing the defeat of two legislators friendly to labor, R. G. Soderstrom and K. C. Ronalds. Furthermore, members of the General Assembly were often noticably less inclined to support legislation favored by the IFL, since the organization had nothing to do with the election of the legislators.[47]

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[43] Staley, IFL, p. 377.
[44] Ibid., p. 379.
[45] Ibid., p. 379.
[46] IFL, Proceedings, 1921, pp. 178-180.
[47] Ibid., pp. 178-180.

In his report to the 1921 IFL convention, Walker also advocated more practical methods in politics, though he continued to support the idea that the workers could organize their own political party. He defended the Farmer-Labor Party against critics who argued that it defeated politicians friendly to labor, by pointing out that the party had decided to put no candidates in the field in certain districts where such action would assure the election of labor's enemies. In such situations, according to Walker, the party favored the election of the major party candidate most sympethetic to labor. Walker felt these tactics were working to the advantage of organized labor and eventually would result in building up an organization with enough strength to end the political problems of the working people.[48] This prediction never came true.

In 1922, the Farmer-Labor Party of Illinois again entered elections, supporting several candidates for the General Assembly and other local offices. The results were just as disappointing. "Farmer-Labor candidates polled only four to six thousand votes in Cook County; the Socialist ticket again received more support than the Farmer-Labor."[49] The national Farmer-Labor Party, at its annual convention in Chicago on May 27, 1922, also showed a loss of support. This convention attracted only seventy-two delegates from eighteen states.[50]

When the IFL held its annual convention in October, 1922, very little mention of labor party affairs was made. One resolution was introduced endorsing independent political action and the Farmer-

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[48] IFL, Proceedings, 1921, pp. 68-69.
[49] Staley, IFL, p. 383.
[50] Ibid., p. 383.

Labor Party. This resolution was quickly disposed of, without a word of discussion, by approving of it unanimously. The Federation was on record as favoring a labor party, but there was little enthusiasm.[51] A major reason for this was probably because Gompers and Olander had persuaded Walker to leave the leadership ranks of the party.[52]

The end of the association between the IFL and the Farmer-Labor Party came in 1923. In July of that year, the annual convention of the national Farmer-Labor Party, meeting in Chicago, Illinois, was captured by members of the Communist Party led by William Z. Foster. The communists changed the name of the organization to Federated Farmer-Labor Party and imposed their own program on it. Members of the Chicago Federation of Labor withdrew from the organization and tried to keep the old party alive, but their efforts were in vain.

> Henceforth for a few years the middle ground on the subject of labor's political policy was to be no-man's-land. There was no room for a 'progressive' trade unionist to advocate a Labor party; either he must come into the fold of the American Federation of Labor . . ., or he must betake himself into the outer darkness with the fanatical Communists. 53

Walker, who mistrusted the communists, became a supporter of Gompers' non-partisan policy.

At the 1923 convention of the IFL, the Chicago Federation of Labor introduced a resolution which called upon the AFL to form an independent political party of its own based upon trade unions, farmer groups, and other liberaloorganizations. The resolution

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51 Staley, IFL, p. 383.
52 Ibid., p. 384.
53 Ibid., p. 384.

created much debate.[54] The committee reporting on resolutions declared that the introducers should take the matter up through the international unions.[55] It was pointed out that there was not any reason for the IFL to send a delegate to the AFL convention to propose such a project because the IFL had only one vote among 43,000 votes. What good could a delegate do with so little power or influence?[56]

Walker was more direct in his argument against the resolution. "'From experience men get a new light and they change their views,' he said.'"[57] There were already enough political parties for organized labor, and there was no need to create a new one. The only result would be dissension and factionalism. The best policy, therefore, was to "stick together", and abide by the decision of the majority.[58]

Victor Olander argued that experience had shown that feeling for a Labor party was not as widespread as had been thought, and that now the communists were attempting to control such parties. It was dangerous for organized labor to become involved with such a movement.[59]

Supporters of the resolution, including Foster, offered a number of arguments for its adoption, but these were to no avail. Late in the evening the debate came to an end when Walker called for a vote on the resolution. It went down to defeat, 456 to 65, and the IFL formally repudiated the policy of independent politi-

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54 Staley, IFL, p. 387.
55 IFL News Letter, September 22, 1923, p. 2.
56 Staley, IFL, p. 385.
57 Ibid., p. 385.
58 Ibid., p. 385.
59 Ibid., pp. 385-386.

cal action.[60]

In 1924, the IFL maintained its position of non-partisan endorsement for candidates. At the national level, Senator Robert M. LaFollette was running as an independent candidate for President of the United States. Burton Wheeler of Montana was his running-mate. These candidates received the official endorsement of the AFL on August 2, 1924, the last of the national convention.[61] Later in the month, the IFL declared it was following the policy of the national organization, and endorsing LaFollette and Wheeler.[62] Walker was chosen as one of the Electors from Illinois for the LaFollette-Wheeler ticket.[63]

In the state elections, the IFL declared itself for the re-election of Governor Len Small.[64] This support was based on Small's legislative record as Governor, and because the Republican party in the state included a plank in its platform favoring the abolition of the use of the injunction in labor disputes.[65] This plank was obtained because Walker wrote to each of the major party candidates and asked them to consider the incorporation of such a declaration into the state platforms.[66]

When the national elections were over, LaFollette and Wheeler, although defeated, had polled nearly five million votes.[67] On the state level, Len Small won re-election. It was apparent, there-

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60 IFL News Letter, September 22, 1923, p. 2.
61 Ibid., August 9, 1924, pp. 1-2.
62 Ibid., August 16, 1924, p. 3.
63 The Federation News, September 6, 1924, p. 1.
64 IFL News Letter, October 11, 1924, p. 6.
65 IFL, Proceedings, 1924, p. 150.
66 Ibid., p. 150.
67 Green, Reform Movements, p. 129.

fore, that the official policy of the AFL was fundamentally correct. Organized labor did gain a stronger position by supporting the candidate rather than the party. This method was not challenged by the IFL or its constituent organizations again.

In 1926, the Joint Labor Legislative Board of the IFL and Walker endorsed Frank L. Smith, Republican candidate for United States Senator, in the April primaries. Smith received the nomination and won the election in the fall of the year. He was supported, according to the concept of the non-partisan policy, because he had favored the passage of the Injunction-Limitation law in 1925.[68]

In 1928, the same non-partisan policy was followed by the IFL. In the Republican primaries, Walker and the Joint Labor Legislative Board supported Len Small for a third term as Governor of Illinois.[69] Louis Emmerson ran against Small in the primaries, and defeated Small for the nomination. Walker believed that Emmerson was opposed to organized labor, and after the primaries refused to endorse either of the major party candidates for the governorship.[70] Since there was no other candidate in the field that seemed favorable to organized labor, this was the only alternative left according to the policy of non-partisanship.

In the national elections of 1928, the field of candidates

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68 IFL News Letter, March 13, 1926, p. 8.

69 The Illinois Miner, April 7, 1928, p. 2.

70 Walker to Harry Jensen, October 19, 1928, Walker Papers.

was no better than the one on the state level. Walker's humanitarianism led him to personally endorse Herbert Hoover, however, because of Hoover's position as head of the Food Administration during World War I. Taking on the task of feeding millions of starving people in Europe was evidence enough for Walker that Hoover would be sympathetic to organized labor. It must have been something of a shock to him then, when Hoover remained aloof to the suffering of so many Americans after the depression began in 1929.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

John H. Walker's activities in the labor movement in Illinois indicate that he was a member of the trade unionists who advocated progressive trade union policies. Men confirmed to these policies had a deep sense of humanitarianism, a firm belief in democracy and democratic procedures, a feeling of urgency in connection with legislative reform measures, a liberal attitude toward labor unions' participation in politics, and a sincere, dedicated commitment to the improvement of the trade union movement. Each of these elements influenced Walker's activities as President of the largest district in the United Mine Workers of America, (UMWA), and the Illinois State Federation of Labor, (IFL).

Within the UMWA, Walker's commitment to progressive unionism was formalized in 1903 and continued to express itself for the entire time that he was active at the state level in organized labor. Walker's firm belief in democratic procedures was a major reason for his opposition to the national leaders in the organization. His deep sense of humanitarianism prodded him to seek legislation to improve the miners' working conditions and to safeguard their health.

In 1930, his commitment to improving the trade union movement forced him to resign from a secure position in the IFL, in order to fight John L. Lewis through the UMWA Reorganized. His decision to run for President of District 12 in 1931 was also based on his firm conviction that he could best serve the miners in Illinois in that capacity.

As President of the IFL, Walker's activities lend credence to the argument that he pursued a policy of progressive trade unionism. His organizational work for the IFL indicates that he was fulfilling his commitment to better the trade union movement. The means he employed to accomplish this task, the labor press and speaking engagements, also indicate his desire for the movement's amelioration. Walker's activities during World War I indicate that he felt the concept of democracy was closely linked with co-operation, and he carried this concept with him when he began his work with the State Council of Defense. His humanitarianism was expressed throughout his post-war activities. When Walker advocated the working people's need to inform themselves and become better educated, he was again indicating his wish for improvement in the labor movement, and, at the same time, reaffirming his belief in democracy.

Walker's economic program for the IFL was based on three characteristics of progressive unionism. His humanitarianism enabled him to work actively to form a co-operative movement to help end the exploitation of working people, so prevelent during this period. His outspoken criticism of the "double-

standard" indicated that his belief in democracy was tenacious. His activities supporting strikes, as in Rosiclaire, display his dedication to the improvement of working conditions, as well as the trade union movement.

His legislative goals for organized labor primarily support the concept of Walker's stalwart sense of duty to humanity. Yet, there was also a sense of urgency expressed in Walker's commitment to the passage of the Injunction-limitation law, a Women's Eight Hour Bill, and other bills that were mentioned. This sense of urgency becomes even more apparent when one realizes that the IFL and Walker supported numerous bills in the General Assembly which only indirectly affected the lives of working people.

Walker's liberal attitude toward organized labor's involvement in politics was expressed during the early years of his career in organized labor, when he was a member of the Socialist Party, and again from 1918 to 1923, when he participated in the activities of the Farmer-Labor Party. The sincere, dedicated commitment to organized labor is also expressed, however, through his decision to follow Gomper's policy of non-partisan political activity in the 1916 state and national elections, and again in 1923.

Progressive unionism, as expressed by Walker through his trade union activities, achieved only a limited amount of success. From 1905 to 1919, it managed to gain some economic, social, and legislative gains for working people in Illinois. Walker admitted, however, that the advancement was slow. It seemed as if a great

many forces in society were aligned against the development of the trade union movement as a legitimate economic and social institution.

The situation became worse between 1920 and 1933. During these years, the only major success of the progressives in the labor movement in Illinois was the sustained holding action they achieved against the reactionary forces opposed to labor. It is legitimate to argue that organized labor might have lost many of the small achievements they gained in the first period, from 1905 to 1919, if progressive trade unionists had not been active at the leadership level.

APPENDIX A

LEADING MANUFACTURES IN ILLINOIS, 1914[1]

INDUSTRY	NUMBER OF ESTAB-LISHMENTS	AVERAGE NUMBER OF WAGE EARNERS	VALUE OF PRODUCTS	VALUE ADDED BY MANUFACTURE
All industries.....	18,388	506,943	$2,247,322,819	$907,139,412
Slaughtering and meat packing.....	98	31,627	489,230,324	77,215,741
Foundry and machine-shop products.....	1,371	55,261	141,328,624	80,722,363
Printing and publishing.....	2,722	32,838	112,833,427	79,555,812
Clothing, men's including shirts.....	604	35,119	89,144,448	47,033,982
Agricultural implements.....	73	19,556	65,337,663	32,460,102
Iron and steel, steel works and rolling mills.....	25	15,408	64,995,121	29,057,057
Cars, steam-railroaded not including operations of railroad companies.....	23	18,000	61,315,638	20,886,071
Liquors, distilled...	7	855	51,596,022	42,989,814
Flour mill and grist mill products.....	406	2,398	49,493,224	6,652,317
Electrical machinery, apparatus, and supplies.....	142	16,483	45,667,456	26,283,292
Bread and other bakery products.....	2,278	10,404	45,250,060	21,611,189
Lumber and timber products.....	618	14,870	42,064,008	17,939,874
Cars and general shop construction and repairs by steam-railroad companies.....	94	28,682	41,496,130	23,177,666
Liquors, malt.....	89	5,749	39,435,995	29,029,593
Furniture and refrigerators.....	283	13,766	32,999,567	17,286,793
Gas, illuminating and heating.....	75	3,990	28,170,560	20,135,071

[1] Bogart and Mathews, The Modern Commonwealth, p. 95.

Tobacco manufactures	1,622	7,653	26,036,729	15,982,887
Iron and steel, blast furnaces.....	5	1,450	25,861,528	4,067,381
Copper, tin, and sheet-iron products	508	7,445	24,815,389	10,990,536
Paints and varnishes	72	2,110	24,488,449	9,011,951
Confectionery.....	147	5,009	22,138,559	10,043,926
Coffee and spice, roasting and grinding.....	34	1,193	22,044,388	4,950,990
Butter, cheese, and condensed milk.....	267	1,755	21,792,220	3,556,588
Soap.....	27	2,144	21,420,035	6,167,142
Clothing, women's...	241	8,113	20,750,550	9,531,354

APPENDIX B

RESOLUTION[1]

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA to meet in Springfield, Illinois, March 10, 1930:

WHEREAS, there is no International constitution of the United Mine Workers of America and no law by which its activities can be governed, and

WHEREAS, the former International officers have no legal right to exercise the prerogatives provided by the lapsed International constitution and now hold their respective positions merely by sufferance of the membership, and

WHEREAS, the said usurping officials have no authority to call a convention and that authority lies solely with the membership of the United Mine Workers of America, and that membership desires that said United Mine Workers of America be reorganized and revived so that it can again assume its former proud place among the labor unions of the world and can again give its members that protection for which it was first established, and

WHEREAS, the members of the United Mine Workers of America, affiliated with the various Districts and representing the various coal mining regions on the continent, have formed an Organization Committee and have directed that committee to take the necessary steps for the rehabilitation of the United Mine Workers of America:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that a convention of delegates representing local unions in good standing with their respective organizations and representing groups of coal miners from localities where the organization has been destroyed because of the Lewis policies, and who are desirous of rebuilding the United Mine Workers of America, is called to meet in the City of Springfield,

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[1] Taken from the Convention Proceedings, UMWA Reorganized, Springfield, Illinois, March 10-15, 1930, pp. 8-10.

Illinois, on the tenth day of March, 1930, at 9 o'clock,[2] for the following purposes:

1: To establish an International organization of the United Mine Workers of America.

2: To adopt an International constitution of the United Mine Workers that will place the control of the organization in the hands of the rank and file by restoring home rule to the districts; secondly, that will prevent the International officers from meddling in the affairs of self-supporting districts, and thirdly, that will place the ownership and control of the property of the districts, sub-districts and locals in the hands of those who created it.

3: To elect International officers of the United Mine Workers of America in accordance with the provisions of said constitution.

4: To adopt ways and means to accomplish the complete reorganization of the United Mine Workers of America, to unionize the unorganized coal fields and stabilize business as may properly come before such convention, and be it further

RESOLVED, that local unions are entitled to one delegate for each one hundred dues-paying members or fraction thereof, and one additional delegate for each additional one hundred dues-paying members or major fraction thereof (but no local union shall have more than five delegates), who shall vote the entire membership of such local union, and that groups of coal miners where the organization has been destroyed because of the Lewis policies but who meet the conditions of this call be entitled to delegates on the same basis, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the secretary of this Organization Committee send this call to the Recording Secretary of all such Local Unions and coal miners as he can by diligent inquiry ascertain now to exist.

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[2] The convention was originally called for 12 o'clock. Immediately after the Resolution was read to the convention it was amended to read 9 o'clock, Convention Proceedings, UMWA Reorganized, March 10-15, 1930, p. 10.

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Alexander Howat
John H. Walker
J. M. Thornton
Oral Daugherty
August Dorchy
Peter Markunos
Fox Hughes
John Brophy
Adolph Germer
Harry Fishwick
George L. Mercer
Walter Nesbit
Joseph B. Casassa
Carl Wright
Joseph Loda
Allan S. Haywood
F. W. Wenschoff
Gust Fritz
Joe Hartley
Brice Holland
Geo. B. Stouffer

SEND CREDENTIALS AT ONCE TO WALTER NESBIT,
Illinois Mine Workers Building, Springfield, Illinois.

BE SURE TO SEND DELEGATES

Do not be intimidated by John L. Lewis, by non-union coal operators or by other enemies of Labor. Your membership will be safeguarded and protected.

APPENDIX C

The exchange of letters between John Walker and Adolph Germer began obstensibly over the remarks which Walker made concerning Germer's experiences in Germany before World War I. In the letter opening the exchange, Germer stated:

> I was very much surprised to read in the papers the other day that you quoted me as saying that I was obliged to furnish an advance copy of my speech delivered in Germany,. . .. [1]

Germer denied that he had ever told Walker anything of the kind, and went on to defend his previous actions of opposing the United States' entrance into the war in 1917. At one point he stated:

> You may or you may not believe me when I say that I have no inclination to make any defense of the Kaiser. I have as little use for him as you, and my supreme hope is that the people of Germany will follow the splendid example set by their Russian comrades. But neither can I get the consent of my mind to lock arms with the American oppressors of labor and indulge in love feasts with them . . .. I cannot get my mind to believe that your friends on the various councils of defense, state and national, through whose instrumentality labor has been shot down and jailed and hung in every part of the country, have any more commendable designs than the royal snobs of Europe. It may be true, that if I put my feet under the same table and looked them squarely in the eye, that all of the differences between capital and labor would vanish, and that the slums and the capital hills would revel in common brotherhood. Perhaps unfortunately, I am not visionary enough to conceive of the possibility of such a love feast. [2]

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[1] Adolph Germer to Walker, October 23, 1917, Walker Papers.

[2] Ibid.

Walker's reply to Germer's letter set the tone for the rest of the correspondence. He stated:

> I am not going to get into any argument with you about what would happen to you in Germany if you did the same things there against the government that you are doing here, against the American Government in this war, and was helping the American Government that was fighting Germany, the same way you are helping the German Government, which is fighting our country, but without question in my judgment, you would have been shot long ago, no matter what you say your attitude is towards the German Government, at this time. You are doing everything you can to assist it to the extreme limit, without putting yourself liable under our laws, and I know that you are concious of what you are doing. So that so far as I am convinced, there is no doubt in my mind, but what you are on the side of the German Government in this war, and that you are doing everything you can, that you feel you can do safely, to injure the United States in this war. [3]

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[3] Walker to Adolph Germer, October 29, 1917, Walker Papers.

APPENDIX D

PLATFORM OF THE LABOR PARTY[1]

The first convention of the new State (Labor) Party enunciates the following program of issues to which it pledges itself, its members and its candidates.

1. Democratic control of industry and commerce for the general good of those who work with hand and brain and the elimination of autocratic domination of the forces of production and distribution either by selfish private interests or bureautic agencies of government.

2. The unqualified right of workers to organize and to deal collectively with employers through such representatives of their organizations as they choose.

3. The freedom from economic hazard which comes with a minimum wage based upon the cost of living and the right of the worker to maintain without the labor of mothers and children, himself and his family in health and comfort, with ample provision for recreation and good citizenship.

Shorter Working Hours.

4. Leisure in which to enjoy happiness and improve the mind and body by the institution of a maximum working day of eight hours, and a maximum week of forty-four hours, both for men and women.

5. Abolition of unemployment by reducing the hours of work still further, as necessary, to permit all who are able to work to find occupation; and full pay for those who, for a time, are unemployed because of illness, accident or temporary lack of work.

6. Equality of men and women in government and industry, with complete enfranchisement of women and equal pay for men and women doing similar work.

7. Reduction of the cost of living to a just level, immediately and as a permanent policy, by the development of co-operation, and the elimination of wasteful methods, middlemen and all profiteering in the creation and distribution of the products of industry and agriculture, in order that the actual producers may enjoy the fruits of their toil.

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[1] IFL News Letter, April 26 1919, pp. 2-3.

Revise State Constitution.

8. Complete revision of the State Constitution to reclaim it for the people so that instead of its being, as at present, the fortress of reactionaries and the backbone of the big business organization that grips the State, it will become the bulwark of the workers, built upon the theory of guaranteeing human rights instead of exalting property rights. Now, the workers' measures are unconstitutional. It must be rewritten so that the proposals of crooked big business will be unconstitutional. It must be made easy of amendment. It must give the state a new and just revenue system. It must guarantee the initiative, referendum and recall. It must release the bonding power of communities so that public ownership and operation are made possible.

9. Taxation of inheritances and incomes at a graduated rate progressing with their size, and taxation of land values, but not of improvements.

10. Public ownership and operation of all public utilities, including grain elevators, warehouses, stock yards, abattoirs, insurance and banks. Development under public ownership of the water power sites of Illinois. Public ownership, preferably Federal, of the mines of Illinois, and in the meantime State regulation which will prevent wasteful, competitive methods of mining.

Homes for Workers.

11. State aid to provide land and homes for Illinois residents in town or country.

12. Abolition of employment of all children under the age of 16 years.

13. A democratic system of public education from kindergarten to university, with free text books, and with opportunity for full cultural of vocational education for every child. Re-education of disabled soldiers, and the application of same restorative treatment to disabled industrial workers.

14. Old age and health insurance, an adequate workmen's compensation law and a mothers' pension that will put an end to child poverty and permit the full development of every child under its mother's care.

15. Use by the State of only such supplies and materials as bear the Union label, including school text books.

16. Full political rights for civil service employes.

Abolish Strike-Breaking Agencies.

17. Abolition of private employment, detective and strike-breaking agencies and the extension of Federal and State employment services to make them agencies for finding jobs for workers, instead of merely finding workers for jobs, and to prevent them from placing workers in positions that do not pay a living wage.

18. Abolition of the State Senate.

19. Abolition of the power of judges to issue and enforce injunctions to deprive citizens of their rights in industrial disputes and enactment into law of the right of citizens to trial by jury for contempt of court committed elsewhere than in the presence of the court.

20. No law to be declared by the Supreme Court unconstitutional unless three-fourths of the judges so decide.

21. All State work to be done, not by contract, but directly by the State.

Co-operative Stores and Factories.

22. The development of co-operative trade and industry and enactment of needed legislation favorable to that purpose.

23. Immediate repeal of the infamous espionage law and complete restoration, at the earliest possible moment, of all fundamental political rights--free speech, free press and free assemblage; removal of all wartime restraint upon interchange of ideas and movement of people among communities and nations; and liberation of all persons held in prison or indicted under charges due to their championship of rights of labor or their patriotic insistence upon rights guaranteed to them by the constitution.

24. That the federal government assume responsibility for a reconstruction program of land improvement, home building and production of useful commodities, which will provide useful and well paid employment for the unemployed workers of the country and that the State of Illinois and the municipal government in the state co-operate in such a program.

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The John H. Walker Papers were made available to the author by the University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. They are currently deposited in the rooms used by the Illinois Historical Survey, but at the time the author used them they were contained in thirty-four cardboard cartons. The bulk of the correspondence covers the years from 1913 to 1933. After this date the letters are mostly of a personal nature, and deal less and less frequently with union matters. From 1913 to 1933 there are important letters regarding the co-operative movement in Illinois, the national elections of the United Mine Workers of America in the years 1916, 1918 and 1920, and Walker's activities in the Illinois State Federation of Labor. The complete financial record of the United Mine Workers Reorganized is located in the files. Letters pertaining to the formation of the Farmer-Labor Party and the candidacy of Robert M. LaFollette in 1924 are also located in the files. There are numerous letters to John Mitchell, President of the mine workers' organization from 1897 to 1908, Alex Howat, President of the Kansas district, William Mitch, Secretary-treasurer of the Indiana district, James Lord, President of the national organization's Mining Department, Thomas Kennedy, President of the Pennsylvania district, and John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers during the 1920's and 1930's. There is a series of letters between Walker and Adolph Germer, Secretary of the Socialist Party, in 1917 and early 1918 which sheds some light on the controversy between organized labor and the socialists over the United States' entry into World War I. There are also many letters from Illinois politicians, including Governor Dunne, Governor Lowden, Governor Small and Governor Emmerson.

The Illinois State Federation of Labor Weekly News Letter, 1915-1930, can be considered a manuscript source. Letters and communications by Walker and other Illinois labor officials can be found in the columns of this paper. Since it was the custom during these years to print the minutes of the federation's yearly conventions and other important conferences, the Weekly News Letter is an invaluable source of information about

Walker's activities and thoughts regarding the labor movement in Illinois.

Of unusual assistance in the securing of particular pieces of information were letters and interviews from those who knew John H. Walker. Those who contributed were: Reuben Soderstrom, Martia Hempel, Agnes D. Wiseck, Earl Browder, Glenn Walley.

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