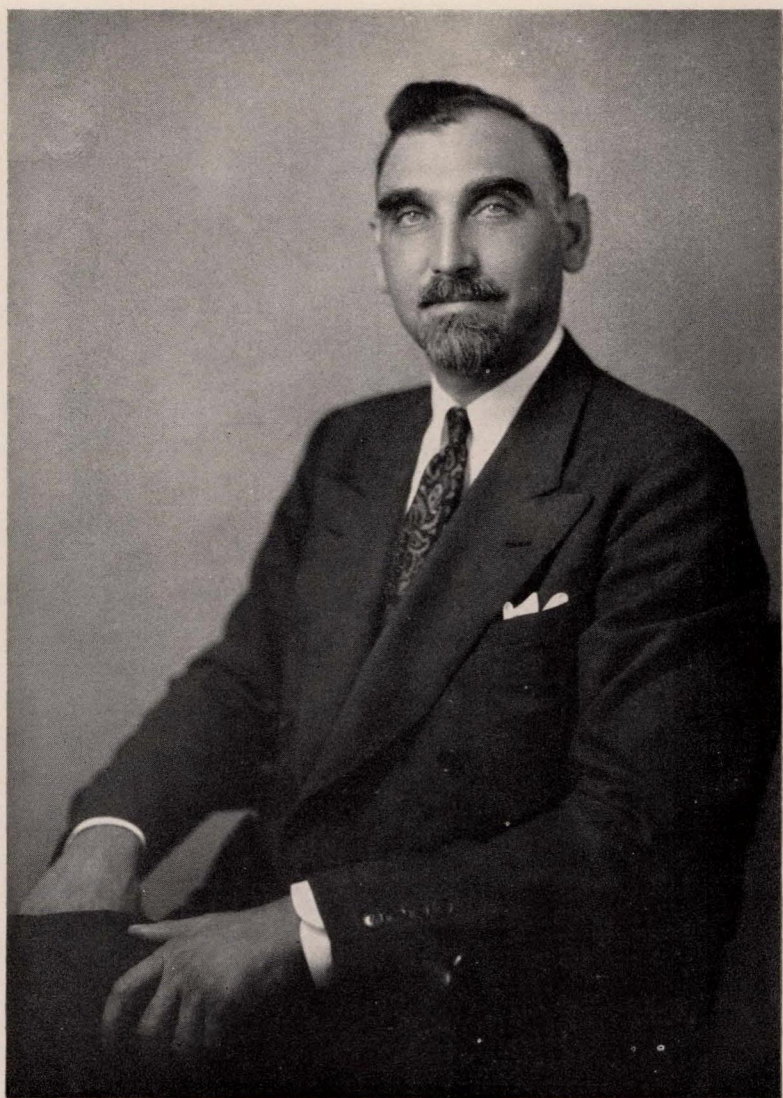

AMERICAN SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

FIFTEEN SELF-PORTRAITS

Edited by LOUIS FINKELSTEIN



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Jacob S. Petofsky

JACOB S. POTOFSKY

SEARCHING my mind for the most important spiritual influences in my life, I got lost in a maze of reminiscences and recollections of episodes of a crowded life, of fifty odd years, from early childhood in Czarist Russia to my present position as head of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

One man lighted the way. He was Sidney Hillman, a Lithuanian Jew whose "heart was drunk with a beauty our eyes could never see." Our lot was thrown together. He was my mentor, my brother, my friend.

To begin with, a few chronological facts.

I was born fifty-three years ago in the city of Radomisl, State of Kiev, Ukraine, Russia. My parents shared a large house with my grandparents on the outskirts of the city in a place called Novinke.

My father, the only son of a middle-class tradesman, was trained for the rabbinate, but turned agnostic shortly before he was to be ordained. He knew Talmudic lore, but he was essentially a philosophical anarchist. I greatly respected his judgment. He was wise, calm, patient, though stern. He said, when the children were noisy, "Let them; it is their time." He did not curb our growth. He said: "Next year you will know you are wiser than you are today."

My mother was the epitome of all Jewish mothers. She was a warm-hearted soul, concerned, always concerned, with the welfare of her husband and her children. But it was my father who was the moving spirit.

From the time I was old enough, I was entered in the public school from nine to two and Jewish "*cheder*" from three to ten. I received an elementary education in Russian and Hebrew. I also learned the story of the Bible, the Prophets, Pereck ("Ethics of the Fathers," a treatise of the Talmud, devoted to moral maxims) and Rashi, and even the first chapter of Talmud. What stands out in my memory of these years is the Saturday examination by my father as to what I had learned the week before.

When I was about nine, we moved to a village called Obichod, in the State of Vohlyn. There was no more attendance at school for me. My father had engaged a family teacher who lived with us and tutored us in all subjects.

My two elder brothers were in the neighboring cities of Korosten and Zhitomir. Both were teachers preparing themselves for the *gymnasium*. One was a nationalist, follower of Dr. Herzl, the other a social revolutionist.

What stands out in my memory of life in the village is the summer vacation period when my brothers came home and parties were held with all the young people about. They argued and sang. They dreamed of a new society and a new world. At these parties, I heard revolutionary songs; I heard the "*Hatikvoh*." I saw pamphlets, proclamations, books my brothers brought from Zhitomir—books and music. There were spirited discussions. They all enthralled a shy, introverted young boy who also dreamed dreams.

I developed early a love of nature. Books, music, and the arts also fascinated me. Particularly poetry. I acquired a feeling for the Russian poets—Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov. I read them, heard my brothers recite them, and still remember the "picture" of the "Lone Schooner" sailing the blue seas, the impressive poem, "Demon," by Lermontov.

The Jewish poets and lyricists left an indelible impression on my young mind. Russia produced some of the giants in Jewish literature—Frug and Bialik; Mendele Moicher-Sphorim and Peretz; Sholem Aleichem. They are as alive today as then.

My family migrated to America shortly after the 1905 Revolution. First my oldest brother, then my father. I heard much talk about free America. Two weeks after my father's arrival, he applied for citizenship papers. This was a land of his choice. He had come to stay.

With my father gone, my family moved to Bazaar where my older brother taught. I was twelve when I began to teach the pupils my brother would not take on. I recall having earned something like fifteen rubles from a couple of lessons. I earned enough to buy a made-to-measure suit for Passover. On Friday nights we gathered to hear read the latest installment of *Sholem Aleichem*. We also subscribed to *Kieveskava Misl*, a Russian daily paper.

When my older brother left for America and I became the head of the family, we rented a cottage and converted it into a private school, attracting some thirty children. An older sister and I were the teachers, and we taught two languages, Russian and Yiddish, reading and writing. It was a summer school and I remember some of our pupils were much older and taller than either my sister or myself. The summer over, my mother hired me out to a family as a private teacher to four children. The food was poor and I became ill. My mother sent me to my grandmother in Radomisl to convalesce. It was spring, 1908, and our steamship tickets were to arrive soon. Instead of going back to teach, I loafed for a couple of months.

Then in 1908, I sailed for America with my mother, two sisters, and a younger brother. The ominous whirrings of pogrom threats in the Ukraine filled the air and we said farewell to our native land.

Chicago became our new home. Almost immediately I entered a Hart, Schaffner, and Marx shop and became a loop-

turner at \$3 for a 54-hour week. It was my custom to walk from our home on the West Side to Market Street Shop 21 to save five cents carfare. After I had gone to public school for three months, I obtained working papers and went back to Hart, Schaffner, and Marx, this time to Shop 14; I earned \$5 per week.

At first we lived in a basement. Until we paid for the steamship tickets, my father, my brother, my sister and I worked in Hart's. Economic pressure was our constant goad. It was a hard existence, lightened only by the books and music in our home and the songs I sang at my machine.

Our social life consisted of belonging to an Educational Club, of which my brother was president and I was treasurer. We arranged lectures, picnics, and dances. The Chicago Hebrew Institute was the neighborhood settlement house. My parents went there to pray for the High Holy Days. In the year 1909-10, I attended classes in the Chicago Hebrew Institute.

My night school teacher made a profound impression. Another one who impressed me with his lectures was Judge Hugo Pam, who would come to our club to give us an occasional lecture on American history. I still recall his vivid description of the Battle of Concord and Lexington and his description of all the places in and around Boston which he had visited specially so he could tell us about them from first-hand observation.

On Sundays we attended Arthur Morrow Lewis's lectures at the Garrick Theater, on socialism and scientific subjects. I kept this up for a long time because I was hungry for knowledge. And the lectures were free except for a collection.

All this was prior to the strike of 1910.

And then late in 1910, fourteen girls in Hart's Shop 5 revolted. They rebelled against the wage reductions and sweatshop conditions prevailing in the sharply competitive clothing industry, which was rapidly growing into mass production. They called a meeting in Hull House. Bessie Abramowitz, who later married Sidney Hillman, was one of them and a leader.

With two others from Shop 14 I went to that meeting in Hull House. Just three of us from among three hundred and fifty. There were some four or five hundred from other Hart shops, but neither my father nor my brothers went.

I was drawn to that Hull House meeting as by hypnosis. My place was there I felt, knowing nothing, of course, of the American trade union movement; but I felt my place was there, and that the fourteen girls were speaking for me, too, for all of us. We were of mixed nationalities, each understanding scarcely a word of the other's tongue, but speaking each other's language fundamentally.

At the meeting it was decided to extend the strike to the other shops of Hart, Schaffner and Marx. The next morning I came in early; we prepared our co-workers for the walkout as soon as the bell rang.

I had been the foreman's favorite. I was the youngest in the plant. He helped me advance from errand boy to skilled mechanic.

There was considerable excitement. Groups gathered. We began to walk out on strike. The doors were ordered closed and the foreman tried to stop the stampede. He turned to me with pained eyes, and said quietly:

"Why do you do this to me?"

Swept by emotions beyond my control, I said:

"I must. I can't help it. I must. I must."

And so we marched out of the plant into the streets and to a hall. Men and women from other Hart plants and other clothing plants filled the streets, and America's revolt against the sweatshops was on. The Hart, Schaffner and Marx strike of 1910 was the shot heard through the length and breadth of our land. It lasted seventeen long weeks. From that strike emerged our great leader, Sidney Hillman, who struck a resounding blow for industrial democracy.

The agreement negotiated the following January provided for the establishment of a three-man arbitration board. On the face

of it, it appeared to be of no great moment. And yet it was actually the first realistic step in collective bargaining and arbitration in America.

From this small but epoch-making beginning developed the broad pattern of enlightened labor-management relations in America's apparel industries, of which Sidney Hillman was the soaring genius.

The autocratic leaders of the United Garment Workers, of which we then were members, lost favor because of their arrogant disregard of the workers' problems and grievances. Not so the Women's Trade Union League and the Chicago Federation of Labor. Three years later, a group of delegates seceded from the United Garment Workers convention at Nashville and set up the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, with Hillman at the helm.

From 1910 I was a soldier in the ranks. After the Hart strike, I became shop secretary, and later shop chairman. I was also elected to the executive board and later as treasurer of my local 144. I attended business college and got a smattering of double entry bookkeeping which served me in good stead years later. In September, 1913, I became office manager of the two largest locals in Chicago, the Coat Makers 39 and Pants Makers 144. Shortly thereafter Hillman was called to New York to become the chief clerk of the Cloakmakers Union. Our close relationship began there. Hardly a week passed that I did not hear from Hillman. In 1914, I became secretary-treasurer of the Chicago Joint Board.

I was so engrossed in my work at this period that there was no time for schooling. But I did find time to read, and sometimes tried my hand at poetry. It was more a record of reactions and reflections of pent up emotions that stirred my inner life than poetry. The melancholy stirring of a young, sensitive soul.

In October, 1916, in one of the most momentous decisions of my life, I took a leave of absence and came to New York as assistant general secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated at Hill-

man's request. I was at his side until the day he died thirty years later.

But before Hillman became the dominant influence during my manhood, there were James Mullenbach and John E. Williams. Mullenbach was chairman of the Trade Board created by the Hart peace agreement. John E. Williams was the first arbitrator under the agreement and he served as impartial chairman from 1912 to 1919. There were, too, my close friends, Levin, Marimpietri, and Rosenblum.

During the days of 1912-13 I belonged to Pants Makers Local 144 from which all opposition to Hillman leadership flowed. At that time we were regarded as rebels, as revolutionaries. We were the recalcitrants, the fault-finders. We were Hillman's opposition. Instead of patiently waiting for grievances to be settled through the regular machinery set up for the purpose, we called work stoppages. Of course, we were suspended, discharged, reinstated. Again and again.

But each time, Mullenbach would talk to me, make allowances for my youth and have me reinstated. It was Mullenbach who taught me the sanctity of the contract we had entered in, the meaning of genuine collective bargaining and industrial democracy. He was an esthetic, kindly, man, with a Lincolnesque approach.

Bearded Williams, who started life as a miner, had an absolute fascination for me. He understood completely the life of the immigrant. Language bars meant nothing to him. He cut clearly and swiftly to the heart of people, and warmed them with his love and compassion. He was a literary man, a music lover, a philosopher, and friend of Hillman and Clarence Darrow, who was our representative on the Board of Arbitration. I read everything he wrote. Besides his many decisions, he wrote a column in a Streator daily paper giving his reflections. I liked his style, his philosophy, his humanity. He was a great influence in Hillman's life and in mine.

I was unhappy in New York in the beginning. My duties were

few and far from clear. I yearned after the sparkling activity of Chicago. I missed contact with the shop chairmen, the excitement of the daily meetings. I missed the long walks with Frank Rosenblum, the musical and artistic life of my family, the contact with the workers by whose side I had worked and fought. I had not found myself.

I shipped my trunk back to Chicago and told Hillman I was going home. Chicago was home to me, for it was there I vowed I was an American. It was there I had discarded my use of Russian and Yiddish; it was there I had determined to learn English. It was there I dreamed of the unionization of the other big clothing plants. I had come to New York on a trial basis. My leave was for a couple of months. Now, after six months, I was not happy.

Hillman locked himself in a room with me and, for two hours, argued why I should remain. He pointed to the many pressing tasks ahead of us. It was a case of the man making the job. He held out to me his great dream of a mighty and liberated army of clothing workers everywhere in America, the abolition of child labor and the sweatshop which he hated with all the passion of his superb heart. He enveloped me with his warmth, his ardor, his intellectual power. It was from that moment on that I realized he also spoke for me. He made articulate my own hidden dreams. He was my exact opposite, eager where I was shy, bold and articulate when I was turned inward, and yet we were parts of the same. The compliment of my life has been my being called Sidney Hillman's *alter ego*.

And so I stayed. And the days became too short. I was no longer bored. I applied myself to creating new departments, getting *The Advance* (the official Amalgamated organ) under way, and doing a host of other union tasks. I was at the pulse of the organization. Thus began a thirty-year intimacy which covered the greatest epoch in modern industrial relations. Its days and nights, its months and years were shot through with incalculable drama. It had its moments of despair, terrifying in their nature,

because the lives of thousands of men and women, and their children, depended on us. They depended on our idealism, our wisdom, our courage, our vision, and our faith in them.

There began then the great campaigns to organize the clothing markets of Chicago, Rochester, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and elsewhere. The flame of Hillman's genius lit up everyone. The cry, "the sweatshop must go," was taken up everywhere. It was the era of the great strikes, the fight against child labor, against homework and all the evils attendant upon a debased and cut-throat industry. It was also a fight for bread, for a little more pay, fewer hours. Finally, it was a long-drawn-out struggle for union recognition, for workers' dignity, and the elementary principles of genuine collective bargaining.

Coincident with the fight for immediate gains were the long-term goals, dimly seen, except in Hillman's imagination—basic security, a floor for wages, a ceiling for hours, industrial responsibility, efficiency in management, civilized relations between workers and employer on an industry-wide basis, and the beginnings of a comprehensive social security system to protect the clothing worker and his family against seasonal unemployment, illness, accident, old age and, finally, death of the breadwinner. All this Hillman perceived in the early years and we talked it out as the ideas developed. He had vision plus a practical approach.

Thus in a period of great strikes, lockouts, recurring depressions and the First World War, emerged the edifice of permanent social reform in the clothing industry. Sweatshops vanished, child labor and homework were eliminated, arbitration replaced industrial conflict, unemployment insurance was initiated, and labor's cooperative housing and banking under the Amalgamated aegis served as models in their fields.

From 1916 to 1932, I was the "silent partner" in this "industrial revolution." As a soldier in the ranks, of course, I fought the good fight on the various fronts to which I was assigned by Hillman.

In the early years of my sojourn in New York my family and Hillman's lived close by each other. We were friends and neighbors. In 1924, an episode in my life resulted in an invitation from Hillman to live with him. And so I became a member of his family. It was a convenient arrangement. When at home, we could discuss organization problems, take long walks, and think aloud about new plans and dreams. Hillman would unfold his ideas and emotions. We shared a common interest in a movement that was to grow. Hillman was a man of ideas, a man of action, and his dreams envisaged more than the Amalgamated. He was always concerned with big things.

In 1925, we bought jointly a place in Flatbrookville, New Jersey, a primitive farm house with ninety acres of wooded hills near a brook and the Delaware River. Here we came weekends to relax and commune with nature.

Hillman loved to sit on the rickety porch and listen to the babbling brook and the katydids, watch fireflies, or sit in an open field with friends listening to music and watching a blazing open fire.

To me the place was "Novinke," like my grandfather's place. Here I recreated the physical environment of my early childhood. The place added strength and creative spirit. Here I would come for recuperation and meditation. No place in the world has afforded me so much peace and serenity as Flatbrookville.

In 1929, I was assigned to take the place of Sam Levin, manager in Chicago, who became ill. I was reluctant to do it because I felt I was unqualified to deal with employers, but Hillman convinced me. I stayed for ten months. It was a different Chicago than I had left in 1916. The employers, who had at one time operated the most vicious blacklist, were friendly. My relations with Mullenbach were different. Now he would bring to me, in the magnificent Amalgamated Temple built by the Chicago union, student groups from the theological seminary he was interested in. I had an opportunity to edit a

booklet on John E. Williams on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his death.

During these months in Chicago I learned things I never knew before. I learned to deal with manufacturers and understand their problems.

Why was I a silent partner? I cannot really explain why this was so. Perhaps the shadow of the great Hillman was too overwhelming. In the office, at the conference table, at meetings or in private, he was way ahead of us. He was so completely articulate, thought things first and faster, that generally he evoked acquiescence and awe. It was plain to me, very early, that he was thinking my thoughts, figuring out the problems as I thought of them, only he got there sooner.

However, the relationship toward Hillman in which I stood could not account for it entirely. I could not make an effective speech even when away from him. I recall the painful experience in 1917 when Local 25 in New York tendered a dinner. I was called upon to speak, froze on my feet, mumbled something incoherent and sat down. I could not do it. On the way home, I made, to myself, the speech I should have made, but which could not get past my lips.

I was shy and introspective. I traveled thousands of miles for the union, participated in countless meetings and gatherings of all kinds, spoke intimately in small groups, but rarely in large public meetings. "Why doesn't that man speak?" was the constantly recurring question in the eyes and on the lips of many.

Here is as good a place as any to speak of the Hillman influence, though words are a poor thing, and I cannot do him justice. But since this is a spiritual autobiography, I must try to put them down for my readers because of his profound effect upon my life. Especially since I am about to recount my own spiritual awakening which took place in the campaign to organize the shirt workers of the country.

Hillman was the most selfless man I ever met. He *never* thought of himself. For a man who rose to national and inter-

national heights, he never displayed personal vanity. He was courteous and a gentleman. He knew the shortcomings of people and made allowances for them. He was a great teacher. He was the great reconciler. His talent was to push wider, and ever wider, the areas of agreement between what seemed to be the most irreconcilable antagonists. His supreme achievement in this field was when he brought the British and the Soviet Trade Unions together in the World Federation of Trade Unions.

But Hillman was infinitely more than that. He was a creator of ideas, as surely as the artist standing before his easel or sitting at his desk. Ideas, humane, progressive and improving the fortunes of masses of men and women, were to him the wine of life. He never got drunk on them, however, constantly testing them in the crucible of hard reality.

Hillman was a religious man in the most sublime sense. He seldom went to synagogue or temple, but he carried around with him, always confidently, the concept of the unity between God and man. His was, generally, despite his physical frailty and recurring illness, a buoyant, optimistic nature which subscribed, positively, to man's essential goodness and greatness.

He never demeaned an antagonist, though he was a passionate warrior for his own cause. He held human dignity in most tender respect. This was all the more extraordinary when one considers that, all his life long, he was tied up in mass movements where the individual, perforce, is generally lost sight of.

He knew that man does not live by bread alone. That was why he sought, all his life, to help develop genuine leisure, opportunities for educational advancement and security against the ordinary hazards, for the hundreds of thousands of men and women whom he served with love. He was a man of vision—a man of action.

He hated oppression and exploitation. He believed firmly in the democratic process. Ideas and men had to be tested in the light of their contribution to human welfare and freedom.

I bathed almost daily in the warmth and light of this extraor-

dinary man. But the time finally came when I had to find myself. The demands of my own nature, suppressed and inarticulate for years, could not, at long last, be denied.

Perhaps it took the backwash of the Hoover depression to bring me out. Perhaps it was the bold stirrings of that new leader, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who held out hope to all Americans and a weary world. "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

Perhaps, too, Hillman thought my day had dawned. I must confess that a number of my colleagues were a little dubious about some of the missions I was to undertake, but not Hillman.

Late in 1932, Hillman sent me to Allentown to find out about the sweatshop conditions there in the shirt industry. Unlike our clothing workers, at this time, they were one of the most exploited groups in America. They were working for as little as \$3 and \$5 per week, and for as many as fifty or sixty hours per week. Their conditions were no better, and in many respects, worse than had been my lot twenty years before as a clothing worker in Chicago. The depression of 1929-32 had stripped them of everything, including hope.

I was shy, diffident as always. Never before had I been thrust into so large a situation. And the times did not seem to be propitious. Also, until then, my experience had been with immigrant workers of many stocks. The oppressed shirtmakers of Pennsylvania, upstate New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, and the South were principally native girls and women to whom labor union ideology was *terra incognita*, except for the daughters and wives of miners in the anthracite coal regions who had been suckled on the fierce mine struggles from 1902.

The first intimations of my own awakening came in Allentown. I found myself banging on the mayor's desk in an outburst against the sweatshops and child labor in the area. I demanded protection for the rights of pickets and for freedom of assembly. I had never done anything like that before in my life. My own enthusiasm and convictions impressed the Mayor and

civil rights were restored in Allentown. We made a beginning. The companies against which we were on strike agreed to deal with us, if we could show them agreements from others in the industry. So on we went to the anthracite coal district—Shamokin, Frackville, Mt. Carmel, Ashland.

Frackville, Pennsylvania (a small mining town near Pottsville), proved to be a revelation. Four hundred girl shirtmakers were gathered in a meeting hall. We were not sure they would respond—but they did. I was introduced. I jumped onto a narrow platform. I was terrified.

Then it came. I opened my mouth and heard myself saying: "You have been shorn as little lambs." There was a roar from the crowd. I was told later that I spoke for more than an hour. I did not remember a single word beyond my opening sentence. That I had been completely transported, there was no doubt. All I could remember was a tremendous feeling of exaltation. There was no effort to speak. Somebody was speaking through me. I know that I was flooded with compassion and love.

I felt an extraordinary kinship for these people in Frackville. Their presence, their communion ennobled me. I rose out of myself, and I trod on air. I knew I was their brother; their plight was mine, their concern was mine, and the quality of their life and of others like them would become a glorious obsession with me. There was communion with the people that was spontaneous and electrifying.

In many ways it was a shattering experience. Though it seemed that someone else had spoken, not I, I had finally burst through my shell. My diffidence was gone; I was one now with the people whom I had served so many years, and had somehow never reached. I could communicate with them now.

For a period of two weeks we combed the territory. Public meetings, parades, marches, picnics, songs, and tears. In the end we won. For the record, sixteen simultaneous strikes followed. And not only in Pennsylvania. We swept New Jersey, Connecticut, upstate New York. All over we preached the gospel

of brotherhood. Yes, we were our brother's keeper. I came back to Frackville, that Pennsylvania Dutch town; it was a lodestar. The people surrounded me, and they took my hand, and they took me in.

From then on, it was comparatively easy sailing. Our crusade spread like a prairie fire across Pennsylvania, into West Virginia and Maryland, into Virginia, the Deep South and the Middle West. In a few short years, we organized 75,000 shirt-makers, quintupled their earnings, reduced their hours of toil, and helped them restore their dignity as the children of God.

I led that fight. I believed in the people and fought in a climate made propitious by that great man of vision, Franklin Roosevelt.

Roosevelt had reiterated the principle: we are our brother's keeper. A life without mutual aid was less than worthless. "No man is an Island, entire of itself. . . ." I had learned it, at last. "We do not live by bread alone."

We went up and down the country, winning, wooing, persuading employers and workers alike to this viewpoint. We did it before state legislatures and before committees of the national Congress.

Under the Roosevelt leadership we snapped out of the depression. The New Deal captured the imagination of the people. Hillman became a close friend and adviser to President Roosevelt. Some of the things Hillman dreamed about in his early years were incorporated in the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Social Security Act, the Wage and Hour Law and the Wagner Act. It was the dawn of a new day. Labor gained rights and privileges it never enjoyed before. It was marching forward.

We supported and engaged in the great struggle against Hitler, and helped destroy what he stood for. We did our part in our respective communities. Our horizon and perspective broadened. We worked for the welfare of our country and the peace of the world.

In the clothing and related industries, we laid more and more

the foundation of decent human relations. National stabilization eliminated cut-throat competition between market and market, between employer and employer, which had always been at the expense of the worker. Then, from 1942 onward, were erected the giant arches of health, accident, life, hospitalization, maternity, and old age benefits for men and women who worked in clothing plants of America and gave that task the best years of their lives.

In these efforts Hillman always led. His contribution to labor's political activity and greater political consciousness is regarded as one of the most significant of our times. He served his country in war and in peace. He fell ill, disregarded the ominous shadows crowding in on him. Tired, spent, he fought on sheer nerve. Then, on July 10, 1946, he died.

The day before he died I went looking for him in the little room at our office where he sometimes rested. Perhaps it was a presentiment.

"Do you want to see me?" I asked him.

He looked up at me kindly and said:

"I always want to see you."

The next day he was gone—forever.

Just as we were unwilling to accept the fact of his death, so did no one think in terms of his successor. No one could fill his shoes, of course. There was but one Hillman. But 350,000 men and women of the Amalgamated, who had grown great in the Hillman tradition, required leadership.

I was named by our General Executive Board to succeed the man I loved, whose star shone brightly over us and was so far above us. I pledged that I would follow humbly in Hillman's footsteps. Privately and publicly I consecrated myself to his memory, his great deeds and his great dreams of a better world.

How better to close this account, than to quote from the last speech Hillman made to an Amalgamated convention in 1946. The speech was an improvisation. The reporters present had asked him to say something, in closing. They were impatient for

news of the moment. Look how he spoke for a lifetime, and for all humanity.

"We want a better America, an America that will give its citizens, first of all, a higher and higher standard of living so that no child will cry for food in the midst of plenty. We want to have an America where the inventions of science will be at the disposal of every American family, not merely for the few who can afford them. An America that will have no sense of insecurity and which will make it possible for all groups, regardless of race, creed or color to live in friendship, to be real neighbors; an America that will carry its great mission of helping other countries to help themselves."

JACOB S. POTOFSKY

Born in Radomisl, Russia, and came to the United States when he was thirteen; he began working in Chicago at the age of fourteen, going to night school at the same time; a widower, he has two daughters and a son.

Participated in Hart, Schaffner and Marx strike in 1910; member of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America at its inception in 1914; secretary-treasurer, Chicago Joint Board, 1914-16; assistant secretary-treasurer, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, 1916-34; assistant president, 1934-40; general-secretary-treasurer, 1940-46; elected general president of Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America by General Executive Board on death of Sidney Hillman, July, 1946; president, Amalgamated Insurance Company; chairman, Amalgamated Insurance Fund; chairman of board, Amalgamated Bank of New York; director, Amalgamated Bank, Chicago.

Other positions: chairman, Committee of Latin-American Affairs, Congress of Industrial Organizations; Congress of Industrial Organizations' representative executive board, Greater New York Fund and New York National War Fund; treasurer, United Service Organization Clothing Division, 1941-42; member, Congress of Industrial Organizations Executive Board; chairman, Congress of Industrial Organizations Red Cross, 1945-46, War Fund Greater New York; director, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; director, New York City Center of Music and Drama, Incorporated; member, Clothing and Cotton Garment Minimum Wage Industry Committee, 1939-1941.