

experience with the nation's anti-poverty effort makes clear that, even in periods of high employment and relatively rapid economic growth, providing job opportunities for large numbers of people unable to find work because they lack training, skill and job experience is stubborn and complex. It has become increasingly apparent that to achieve the goal of full employment even a highly industrialized nation such as the United States must be able to generate a broad spectrum of employment possibilities, with large numbers of jobs in the lesser as well as the more highly skilled categories. The garment industry, which provides approximately 1.4 million jobs, is one of the economy's major sources of manufacturing employment which typically does not require persons to have training or experience prior to being hired. Moreover, for a very large proportion of its workers alternative job possibilities are not readily available. To permit apparel imports to undermine this important employment base would only magnify critical domestic problems.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers has repeatedly called attention to the special character of the apparel import problem and the dangers that it poses. Together with other unions and interested industry groups it played a leading role in the developments which led to the negotiations of Short-Term and Long-Term Cotton Textile Arrangements under which international trade in cotton garments and cotton textiles have been governed since 1961. In spite of shortcomings in the Long-Term Arrangement, the Amalgamated urged its extension from the original expiration date in 1967 to September 30, 1970, and will continue to resist efforts by those outside and inside the government to weaken its administration or dilute the substance of the bilateral agreements covered by it. As a result of the intervention of the Amalgamated, together with other labor and industry spokesmen for the apparel and textile industries "Kennedy Round" tariff cuts in the textile-apparel sector were not as deep as would otherwise have been the case.

Unfortunately, the effectiveness which our government displayed in negotiating and, later, extending the Long-Term Arrangement covering trade in cotton garments and cotton textiles has not been repeated for non-cotton garments and textiles. As a result, a ever growing proportion of apparel imports are garments made of fabric other than cotton. The failure of our government to conclude international agreements covering trade in non-cotton apparel and textiles in the more than six years since the adoption of the special government program for textiles and apparel, and the total lack of progress in this direction in the past two years has been discouraging to proponents of an internal solution and has strengthened sentiment for unilateral action by Congress. The Amalgamated, in keeping with its long tradition of support for reciprocal trade, continues to prefer an international solution to the problem of apparel and textile imports but recognizes that there may be no practical alternative to unilateral legislation if the pursuit of international agreements means further protracted delay. The urgent need is for timely action of one kind or the other by our government to prevent market disruption and insure orderly trade in all apparel and textiles, regardless of fiber.

In calling for specific action to regulate the flow of apparel imports, the Amalgamated is not abandoning its traditional policy of support for the continued expansion of international trade on a reciprocal basis. It is urging, rather, that the overall cause of liberal trade policy will be better served by recognizing that there are key problem areas in the economy that should be dealt with practically in terms of economic, social and political effects. The doctrinaire approach, which lumps together without distinction all requests for safeguards against the consequences of international competition, and sees every situation as a simple choice between free trade and protection, will ultimately weaken the cause it is intended to serve, for it encourages a strengthening of the protectionist alliance and a broadening of its base of public support.

In the case of apparel imports the issue is not that of choosing between free trade and protection, but of weighing the full consequences of permitting the erosion of an important domestic industry which is one of the major sources of a type of employment opportunity the nation urgently requires to achieve its economic, social and political goals. Moreover, the economics of the industry is such that international competition tends to degenerate and to be based ultimately on the maintenance of substandard labor conditions instead of comparative efficiency. Garment imports do not protect the consumer against price gouging, inefficiency or monopoly profit, but turn back the wheel of history in an