



Look Beyond The Union Label: Archival Threads of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) into the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE) Labor Archive

Tailoring the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)’s slogan, “Look for the Union Label” into a legacy of multiracial/multiethnic labor organizing in Los Angeles, the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE) emerging labor archive grounds the history of the downtown UCLA Labor Center’s James Lawson Jr. Worker Justice Center building as the ILGWU’s former union hall. From digitization partnerships with the contemporary Garment Worker Center to the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA AFL-CIO) Los Angeles chapter, IRLE’s archive examines coalition-building throughout the garment industry that continues to serve the immigrant labor movement today. Current materials can be found on [Calisphere](#), as well as student researcher blog posts on [Memory Work | Los Angeles](#), and curated photograph and audiovisual collections on [Flickr](#) and [Vimeo](#). Forthcoming: IRLE ArchivesSpace & Online Archive of California instances.

The ILGWU was of the first unions to call for unconditional amnesty for undocumented workers in the American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), severing ties with the INS in response to the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). Local 23-25 in New York’s Chinatown expanded its Immigration Project to Los Angeles, where four consecutive Chicana and Latina union organizers directed the ILGWU’s Justice Center. 1995 marks both the merger between the ILGWU and ACTWU (Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union) into UNITE! (Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees), and the formation of Sweatshop Watch. Sweatshop Watch was composed of attorneys and immigrant worker centers surrounding the landmark case of human trafficking of 72 Thai garment workers in El Monte, California and 60 Latine sweatshop workers in a later case. Sweatshop Watch members went on to form the contemporary Garment Worker Center, who supported in reviving May Day marches in Los Angeles and continues organizing for immigrant rights in labor.