THE PATERSON SILK STRIKE OF 1913

Primary Materials
for the Study of the History
of Immigrants, Women, and Labor

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A. Description of the Project

The Paterson Silk Strike Project makes use of a dramatic and significant local event to involve students in the history of immigrants, women, and labor in the early 20th century. The design of the project is based on the belief that students can learn by being engaged with the raw materials of history—the written and visual documents—and with the actual physical setting of an historic event.

The curriculum package includes a collection of 44 documents on the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 and its historical background, with brief introductions and discussion questions. These documents are drawn from Paterson newspapers, Pulitzer's New York World, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) newspaper Solidarity, and the socialist New York Call; from the manufacturers' American Silk Journal, the progressive journal Survey, and the Greenwich Village magazine The Masses; from government reports such as the U.S. Immigration Commission report of 1907-1911, the Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage-earners in the U.S., 1911, and the report of the Commission on Industrial Relations, 1916; from interviews with silk workers such as Carrie Golzio and Sophie Cohen; from accounts by strike leaders such as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's Rebel Girl; and from selected photographs. The package also includes maps and descriptive materials for a field trip to Paterson, and a teacher's guide.

In this project, students study the 1913 Paterson strike from the points of view of workers, manufacturers, union leaders, newspaper reporters, and government investigators. They then go to the city to walk through the mill district where workers lived and where strike events took place. They visit the Lambert Castle Museum located in the opulent home of a successful English immigrant manufacturer who took a "hard line" against the strike. They also visit the American Labor Museum located in the home of a northern Italian immigrant silk weaving family; as many as 25,000 strikers gathered outside this house listening to speakers from its balcony. (Both historic sites are open to school groups and have staff interpreters.) Students see for themselves the character of the mills and homes, the streets, the spaces of the
industrial city, which still exist in modified form. In the follow-up session students discuss their understanding of the strike and explore the ways it illuminates the history of immigrants, women, and labor.

B. A Case Study

By focusing on a particularly rich case history—the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913—the project enables students to see history whole. Instead of being fragmented into women's history, immigration history, or labor history, history is experienced as a process, a human process. The advantage of doing a case study is that its human dimensions are manageable: students can see that history is the story of people, that people are not only shaped by history, as its objects, but that they also shape it, as its subjects. The advantage of using primary materials is that the students can be historians themselves, making the connections, analyzing the data, assembling the pieces of the puzzle—participating in the process.

The primary materials themselves are arranged along thematic as well as chronological lines. The broad chronological arrangement enables students to follow the story of the strike beginning with conditions in the silk industry and moving through the events of the strike to its defeat. Along the way, subgroupings of materials offer contrasting interpretations of the causes of the strike given by manufacturers and workers, contrasting attitudes toward immigrant strikers expressed by strike opponents and strike leaders, and contrasting descriptions of the clash between pickets and police provided by the two sides. The contrasting materials encourage the students to become aware of the fact that historical sources are not neutral and that they in fact express particular points of view.

C. Historical Themes of the Project

The Paterson Silk Strike of 1913 involved large numbers of immigrant men and women in conflict with manufacturers, many of whom were immigrants themselves. A study of the strike elicits understanding of late 19th and early 20th century industrial conditions and relationships and the roles immigrants played in them.

I. First, the project dramatizes major issues in the study of immigration: the importance of the immigrant family and community; the conflict between "old" and "new" immigrants in the workforce; the tendency toward class solidarity between different ethnic groups as well as the persistence
of tension between them; and the hostility toward new immigrants expressed by the local press and local authorities.

II. Second, it illustrates major issues important to the study of women: the tension between the prominent role played in the mills and the subordinant family role traditionally assigned to women in immigrant subcultures; the way many working women seized the opportunities offered by strikes to assert their collective strength; and the role of organizations like the IWW in encouraging women to assume positions of leadership.

III. Finally, the project highlights major issues related to the study of labor: the growing militance of skilled workers who had lost the protection of an apprenticeship system; the ambitious attempt to forge an alliance between skilled and unskilled workers; the conflict between craft unionism and industrial unionism; and the emergence of a labor movement oriented on worker's control.

D. Other Uses of the Project

1. The documents can also be used to teach skills in reading and evaluating primary sources and to help students become more sophisticated about points of view and bias. For example, the cartoon by Art Young (Doc.23) clearly expresses an anti-capitalist point of view; other documents treat the same strike events from very different points of view.

2. This project can be used as a model for students researching and/or producing materials on a local event from another historic site in another location in the United States.

3. The documents also provide the information needed by students to develop characterizations to be used in a role play on the strike: the mill worker, the mill owner, the local authorities, etc. Such a role play could be used before the field trip to help students absorb the documents, or after the field trip as a wrap-up exercise. For example, the excerpt from the interview with Carrie Golzio, included here, helps characterize a working mother juggling family responsibilities with militant activities during the strike.

4. The documents can be used without the field trip to reconstruct strike issues which illustrate broader historical concerns of the Progressive period. For example, Doc. 10, drawn from Report on the Condition of Woman and
Child Wage-earners in the United States, is an excellent example of Progressive Era governmental concern with poor industrial work conditions and the exploitation of women and children in the workplace.

5. The documents can be used selectively as resources to illustrate other historical issues. For example, Docs. 22 and 29 expressing prejudice against new immigrants can be used to focus discussion of American nativism in the early 20th century.

E. Guideline for Implementing the Project

1. Student preparation: students read and study the various documents on their own.

2. Classroom Discussion (two or three sessions): discussion of documents in class, using the accompanying questions to focus on significant information and points of view.

3. Field Trip (full day): visit the strike-related sites in Paterson, using maps, explanatory material and observation questions.

4. Follow-up Class: explore new understanding of the event developed from written materials and the site visits, using suggested discussion questions.

F. Using Documents for Classroom Discussion

By reading documentary materials and studying illustrations students obtain data and information about the strike and examine and understand points of view. Documents may be used selectively to develop particular themes being examined in your course.

The following questions can be used to help students identify points of view explicitly or implicitly expressed through a document.

When you read documentary sources (or examine pictures), ask yourself the following questions:

1. Who wrote this document (drew or photographed this picture) and why?

2. Who was the "audience" for this document?
3. What is this document's "point of view" toward its subject matter? Sympathetic, critical, hostile, curious, purely descriptive?

4. Is the data in this document "reliable" as factual historical evidence? Why or why not?

5. What does this particular document reveal about the silk workers and/or the strike?

G. Follow-up Class Discussion

The purpose of this session is to encourage students to integrate information and insights they have gathered at the two museums and on the walking tour with the pre-visit reading and discussion. (As an alternative follow-up exercise, students might be asked to address some of these questions in a written position paper to be discussed in class.)

Suggested questions:

1. What different vision of life is embodied in the homes of the immigrant workers and the wealthy immigrant entrepreneur?

2. How would you compare the role which women seem to have played in these two homes?

3. Were there aspects of the home life of the Botto women which were at odds with their work in the silk industry? Explain.

4. Why do you think a young woman like Carrie Golzio might have welcomed the 1913 strike?

5. Which side in the strike do you think Paterson public opinion favored, and why?

6. Why would outsiders like cartoonist Art Young have a different perspective on events than the local public had?

7. Why do you think Italian and Jewish workers banded together during the strike?

8. Why were strike meetings such an important part of worker organization? Why was singing such an important part of the meetings?
9. What does the Paterson strike tell you about the reasons for labor organization in the early 20th century?

10. Do you think the involvement of the IWW was a help or a hindrance to the cause of the strike? Why?

11. How has your understanding of the strike been altered by the visit to Paterson? Have your own sympathies changed?

H. Further Sources


FIELD TRIP TO PATERSON, NEW JERSEY AND ENVIRONS
1913 SILK STRIKE SITES

Map of Paterson area
Background Information on Principal Sites
Map of Walking Tour
Description of Walking Tour
FIELD TRIP

BACKGROUND ON PRINCIPAL SITES

A. LAMBERT CASTLE: Passaic County Historical Society, Valley Road, Paterson, NJ 07503. Group reservations required. Phone (201) 881-1761.

"Belle Vista", now known as Lambert Castle, was the home of Catholina Lambert, an English immigrant and Paterson silk manufacturer, his first wife Isabella (Shattuck) and his second wife, Harriet (Shattuck) Bibby. [For more information see Flavia Alaya, Silk and Sandstone, 1984, available from the Passaic County Historical Society]

Lambert was 79 at the time of the 1913 Strike and at the pinnacle of his success as a silk manufacture. He was a "hard liner," strongly opposed to accommodating workers' demands in any way. The opinion expressed in Doc. 43 probably expressed Lambert's position accurately. (On Lambert's attitude toward the new immigrants, see Doc. 29)

Lambert had been the first Paterson silk manufacturer to open weaving mills in Pennsylvania in the 1880s as a way of escaping the militance of Paterson silk workers. He also had ventures in Milan and Florence, Italy, so during the 1913 conflict his entire business was not tied up. There was a widely circulated, but undocumented rumor, that he and Henry Doherty had virtually come to blows over manufacturers' strategy during one of the closed manufacturers' meetings.

[ Drive to the Doherty Mill from Lambert Castle via Valley Road and Main Street; drive around the mill to Columbia Street and pause to view the mill.]

B. FORMER MILL OF HENRY DOHERTY SILK COMPANY: 1000 Main Street, Clifton(at Garden State Parkway) The mill, which can be seen easily from the Parkway, is in use and the exterior has been modernized.

The weavers of the Henry Doherty Silk Company, manufacturers of plain broad silks, precipitated the 1913 Strike at the end of January. (See Introduction to Strike Documents, and Docs. 17 and 20). The block-long, four-story Doherty mill was built around 1910 and was to be laid out in the newest, most efficient manner. Its many large windows and roof sky light (since removed) allowed for maximum natural lighting. At that time Doherty negotiated with the his weavers to install the four-loom system, which Doherty...
felt was the linchpin of competitive production. He even invited the American Federation of Labor (AFOf L) to organize his weavers and persuade them to accept four looms, but the weavers rejected the four looms and the AFOf L. (On the AFOf L see Doc. 31)

During the strike Doherty offered to turn the running of the mill over to the workers provided that (1) he would be guaranteed 5% of the profits and (2) the mill would be run on a four-loom system. His offer was rejected by his weavers, who were still opposed to four looms, and was not endorsed by most silk manufacturers, who were opposed to giving workers a say in decision-making.

Henry Doherty was an English immigrant silk worker from Macclesfield, England, the center of the English silk industry. He had immigrated to Paterson at the age of 18 in 1868, at a time when the English industry was experiencing considerable decline. Doherty worked as the foreman in a Paterson mill until 1879 when he opened his own firm, Doherty and Wadsworth. Not long after the 1913 strike, perhaps looking for a morale booster, Doherty financed Paterson's first semi-pro baseball team, the Silk Sox. The team played in a field along side the mill where Getty Avenue now runs.

[ The route from the Doherty Mill to the Great Falls Parking Lot takes you down Getty Avenue to Straight Street, right on 20th St., left on Beech Street to Essex Street where you make a left and continue on, under the railroad, where the street becomes Grand Street.]

C. FORMER SITE OF THE DEXTER, LAMBERT & COMPANY MILLS

SANDY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD: Straight Street and Beech Street, to Essex.

This neighborhood of mills, worker housing, and St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church is typical of many such neighborhoods in Paterson. There was no specialized municipal zoning, and workers lived within easy walking distance of employment. Picketing and strike disturbances took place literally in people's front yards and were neighborhood affairs. (Doc. 22) In one such incident (see description in Doc. 21), the police swept down Straight, Madison, and Beech Streets on horse back, past the mills and houses, scattering pickets and spectators, and arresting those who lingered.

D. FORMER WILLIAM STRANGE AND COMPANY SILK MILLS
E. FORMER BAMFORD RIBBON COMPANY MILLS: The Bamford mill became notorious during the strike, as its young workers exposed its working conditions and employment practices at strike meetings and to reporters. (see Doc. 25)

F. MEMORIAL DAY NURSERY: The nursery was organized in 1886 by the wives of mill owners and community leaders to serve the children of immigrant silk workers. The present building was occupied in 1904 after land and money for its construction had been donated by Jennie Tuttle Hobart as a memorial for her daughter. The nursery functioned much like a settlement house. At the time of the strike it offered a "Babies' Dairy" nutrition program, sewing classes, and a Working Girls' Club, in addition to child care. A relatively small number of children were cared for by the Nursery; most immigrant groups set up their own services.

G. DUBLIN SPRING MONUMENT: SW Corner of Mill and Oliver Streets; marks the location of the early source of water for this neighborhood and remained as a water source until 1920 when it was finally closed by public health authorities. (It is now buried under the street). The marker is a small sculpture of a boy and his dog created in 1931 by Gaetano Federici, an immigrant Italian sculptor who created many of the public monuments in Paterson.

DUBLIN NEIGHBORHOOD: The area beginning at the railroad, along Grand Street to Spruce and down to the Passaic River started as an Irish neighborhood in the middle of the 19th century. Thus its name "Dublin." The frame buildings still housing urban residents, now primarily Hispanic, are some of the oldest worker housing in Paterson.

H. SPRUCE STREET: This street is lined with buildings originally housing silk mills, flax spinning mills, and locomotive firms.

I. GREAT FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT: Park in Great Falls parking lot. Picnic in park or in bus. Take the Walking Tour, described separately, which takes about an hour.

WALKING TOUR. (See "Walking Tour Through Historic District") If the weather is bad, an alternative to walking is a visit to the Paterson Museum, located in the

ROGERS BUILDING. The first floor of the Rogers Building, the former Rogers Locomotive Erecting Shop, houses the Paterson Museum. Several pieces of silk machinery are on display in the Museum. There is a small admission fee.
[To continue on to the Botto House, drive through the Historic District to the West Broadway Bridge, following west Broadway to Belmont Avenue into Haledon via the ELECTRIC STREET RAILWAY ROUTE. Turn left on Norwood Avenue in the center of Haledon.]

J. ELECTRIC STREET RAILWAY TO HALEDON: (Trolley route: across West Broadway bridge, out West Broadway, to Belmont Avenue (formerly Van Winkle Avenue) to Haledon) The town of Haledon is an example of an early suburban community. Originally it was a tiny village, but by 1872 tracks had been laid to accommodate a horse-drawn trolley line connecting it with Paterson. In the 1880s trolleys went every 1/2 hour to the center of Paterson. By 1891 the trolley had been electrified and was inexpensive mass transportation. The trolley was in operation during the 1913 strike (see Doc. 36).

Haledon became a working-class suburb. Land along the trolley line was subdivided into modest-sized lots 25'x100' which the more successful working-class families could afford. Immigrant families from northern Italy (like the Botto family), from Holland, and from Germany who wanted to move up from downtown neighborhoods, built homes in Haledon and rode to work in the silk mills on the "street railway."

[For more information see John Herbst, A Slice of the Earth, 1982, available from the American Labor Museum].


During the 1913 strike, Pietro and Maria Botto and their four daughters, Albina, Adele, Eva, and Olga, offered their home as a strategic rallying place for strikers. Silk workers and sympathizers gathered in the natural amphitheatre in front of the home to hear speakers address them from the balcony over the Botto's front door. On some Sundays in 1913 there were 25,000 people listening to speakers, singing, and picnicking in front of the Botto House. (Docs. 27, 35, and 36).

Pietro and Maria Botto were northern Italians, having been born in Biella, in Piedmonte. Pietro worked as a skilled weaver, as did his four daughters when they became old enough. Maria kept house, did "outwork" as a "picker" for local silk mills, provided noontime board for working men, and did the cooking for the family's weekend "excursion" business. During the 1913 strike, the Bottos extended hospitality to a variety of strike leaders, as well as to the rallying strikers.
WALKING TOUR THROUGH HISTORIC DISTRICT

Time: Approximately one hour

Start by looking at the Falls, the source of abundant water power which made it possible to develop industrial enterprises in Paterson in the 19th century.

1. Modestino Funeral Parade: Leave the parking lot and cross the street to the corner by the "Great Falls Souvenir Depot". On April 22, 1913, what was described as Paterson's biggest funeral parade proceeded up Spruce Street to this intersection and crossed over the McBride Avenue bridge to the Laurel Grove Cemetery. The funeral was that of Valentino Modestino, a bystander who was shot during a picketing incident in the Riverside District. Modestino was shot by one of the O'Brien Detectives, a special guard force hired to patrol the Weideman Dye Works and deputized by the city and county. The murder galvanized outside support for the strike and prompted the production of the Strike Pageant. (see Doc.37)

2. Raceway Path: Walk down Spruce Street to the raceway path just before the first large mill, the Union Works Mill (1890), which now houses a pre-school.

3. Across the street you will see the remains of the 1865 wheelhouse (now Yankee Do-er Shop) of the Ivanhoe Paper Mill. Beyond the wheel house is Race Way Park, developed along the remains of the "upper race" portion of the elaborate raceway system built by the Society for Establishing Useful Manufacturers (S.U.M.) in the early nineteenth century to bring water from the Passaic River (above the falls) to the proposed industrial sites along the river. Portions of the raceway system are seen along the walking route.

4. Union Works and Rogers Building: Turn onto the raceway path in back of the Union Works Mills and walk up as far as the first wooden planking inlaid in the path. Looking back to your right you get a fine view of the back of the Union Works Mill and beyond, to the Rogers Locomotive Erecting shop, where railroad engines were assembled. The Rogers Building is now a well-restored office building housing the City of Paterson's museum on the first floor. Several examples of silk machinery are displayed in the museum. In the far distance you can see Interstate Route 80, which was built along, roughly, the bed of the Morris Canal. Above the highway towers Garret Mountain where Lambert Castle is
located (out of sight).

5. **Cook Mill No. 2:** Continue on the race path behind the red brick mill on the right, the Cook Mill No 2. This mill still houses textile firms, and on most days the roar of the textile machinery can be heard. Note that the large windows, formerly so important for providing natural lighting for silk weaving, are now boarded up. Follow the path as it makes a turn to the left and walk out and across McBride Street to the Franklin Mill. The raceway we have been following is the middle level of the raceway, which continues behind the mills for another block before spilling down to the lower race along Van Houten Street.

6. **The Franklin mill:** has been recently restored as office and commercial space, but it used to house silk firms. Multi-storied mills were served by wooden stairways at the end of the building which were the only approaches to the various floors. What is now an attractive glassed-in access area would have been a dark crowded stairway, the only inside space where workers could sit and eat lunch if they didn't go home to eat or if the weather was bad. (Doc. 25)

7. **Essex Mill Entry:** Continue on Mill Street to the Essex Mill on the left and walk along the mill intil you reach the arched passageway to the mill yard. The Essex Mill, now adapted to moderate income housing, used to house the R. & H. Adams cotton mosquito netting firm in the 19th century as well as silk manufacturing. The mill yard, which can be seen through the archway, (now attractive public space for the residents) would have served as an assembly area for workers as well as a fair-weather lunch room.

8. **Argus Mill, Thompson-Ryle Houses:** Across the street from the Essex Mill can be seen the Argus mill (1878) and the Thompson-Ryle Houses (1830s). The houses were moved to their present site in recent years to accomodate the modernizing of the area and the installation of the parking lot.

9. **Mill and Van Houten Streets:** Continue walking on Mill Street, noticing the spillway of the race at the end of the Essex Mill.

10. **Phoenix Mill:** Follow along the race as it turns down Van Houten Street and continue past the working mills (NRFashions) to the Phoenix Mill complex, another silk mill adapted to modern moderate income housing.

11. **Paterson Silk Throwing Company:** At the arched entryway look into the mill yard and notice the building at the far
side, the oldest building in this complex, which used to	house a thread-making establishment, the Paterson Silk
Throwing Company. Beginning in the 1880s Paterson
manufacturers, led by Catholina Lambert, began relocating
their silk-throwing operations in Pennsylvania to make use
of cheaper labor, and more importantly, to avoid the labor
militancy common among Paterson silk workers. Most throwing
work was semi-skilled or unskilled and didn't require an
experienced workforce. (Doc. 3)

12. Van Houten Street Dwellings: Across the street from the
Phoenix mill is a row of five 19th century dwellings. The
entire block which is now parking area was a densely
populated and largely Italian neighborhood at the time of
the strike.

13. Nag's Head Saloon: The brown building on the corner of
Van Houten and Cianci (named Cross Street at the time of the
strike) housed the Nag's Head Saloon where now is the
Question Mark Bar. Local lore claims that the Nag's Head
was a relief station where staple foods were distributed
during the strike (Doc. 41); it later became an IWW
headquarters.

14. Turn Hall: Walk up Cianci street to the next corner.
Across the street, where similar frame residential and
commercial buildings used to be, is now Federici Park, named
in honor of Gaetano Federici, an Italian immigrant sculptor
whose monuments and sculpture adorn many of Paterson's
public spaces. On the far corner of Ellison and Cianci once
stood Turn Hall, a building with a large social room on the
third floor and a saloon at street level. Turn Hall was
owned by Italians during the strike and was the meeting
place for broad-silk weavers and dyers' helpers. Every
morning except Sundays, workers would assemble at the hall.
(Doc. 34) The hall was closed to mass strike meetings by
public authorities on May 22, 1913. Smaller meetings and
rehearsals for the Strike pageant continued to be held
there. Farther along Van Houten Street, beyond the modern
parking garage, was Helvetia Hall, a similar meeting place
owned by Germans, where the ribbon weavers met.

15. Ellison Street: Turn the corner onto Ellison Street and
walk to Mill Street, noticing the buildings, (c. 1860), on
this street which are typical of the neighborhood as a whole
before urban renewal created the senior citizen housing
development and the parking areas.
16. **Public School No. 2**: At the corner of Ellison and Mill streets, if you look up Mill Street toward Garret Mountain, you will see Public School No.2, one of the earliest public school buildings still existing in Paterson, now derelict and awaiting restoration. It is the large brick, slate-roofed, building.

17. Continue up McBride Avenue past the Franklin Mill to return to the parking lot at the Great Falls. On your left, across the street, is a former silk ribbon mill (now Glenro). The mill also used to house the Sandoz Dye Company.

18. If time allows a quick trip to see the silk machinery at the Paterson Museum is worthwhile.
operations, such as throwing, to north eastern Pennysylvania to avoid this militancy and to take advantage of a cheaper labor pool of women and children. Thus Paterson increasingly became the the center for the types of silk which required skilled production.

The Cause of the 1913 Strike. The strike began in the Doherty mill, Paterson's largest and newest silk mill. Henry Doherty had built his mill with the broad-silk looms arranged in such a way that a single weaver could tend four looms. In January 1913 his broad-silk weavers struck against the four-loom system, in favor of the customary two looms per weaver. Feeling similarly threatened, other broad-silk weavers joined them, walking out of the mills on February 25th. They would be out for five months. During the strike, and after, everyone in the silk industry agreed that the introduction of the four-loom system had triggered the strike. But there agreement stopped. The weavers regarded four looms as a speed up, or "stretch out," which had to be resisted because of its effect on their standard of living. The manufacturers regarded four looms as a necessary step in modernizing the industry and keeping it competitive, a step which was inevitable and which could not really be resisted. Underlying this disagreement were two contrasting views of progress. To the silk manufacturers, progress was a result of technological changes and related economic processes; workers and manufacturers alike were forced to either adapt to progress, or be left behind by it. To the silk weavers, changes in the silk industry were a result of choices made by the manufacturers, and these changes only deserved to be called progress if they were of benefit to workers as well as to manufacturers. (Docs. 17, 18, 19, and 20)

The Strikers and the Police. The strike became the biggest in Paterson history when the dyer's helpers and ribbon weavers joined the broad-silk weavers within two weeks of the February 25th walk-out, and winders and throwing workers followed suit. Together they shut down Paterson silk mills and silk dyeing plants. The twenty-three thousand strikers adopted as their common demand an eight-hour day, in place of the customary ten hours.

On the first day of the strike police clashed with pickets; these clashes continued throughout the strike. Over 2,000 strikers were arrested. The common offense was peaceful picketing which the authorities (including the local judge who passed sentence) punished as either "unlawful assembly" or "disorderly conduct." The strikers saw the police offensive as proof that the local authorities, in contrast with their nineteenth-century
tradition of neutrality in labor disputes, had finally become pawns of the manufacturers. But all local participants agreed that the strike, given its intensity, duration, and size, was remarkably free of extreme violence by either the picketers or the local police—a point which was often missed by outsiders (Docs. 21, 22, and 23) Note that the private detectives supplied by the O'Brien agency of Newark were much more violent than the police. (see Walking Tour, Modestino Funeral Parade)

The Role of Women. About a quarter of the strikers who were arrested were women. Within the strike, women played a non-traditional role. The official local leadership of the broad-silk weavers, ribbon weavers, and dyers' helpers were male. But during the strike an informal group of rank-and-file leaders emerged, many of whom were female. These included teenage girls, like seventeen-year-old Hannah Silverman, and young mothers, like Carrie Golzio. Hundreds and thousands of women played an active role in the picket line, in the relief system, in shop meetings, women's meetings and mass meetings, and in the Paterson Pageant. These women drew strength from their numbers and encouragement from the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), which was programmatically committed to the active involvement of all workers, whether female or male, foreign-born or native, unskilled or skilled. Manufacturers were surprised to have their female employees join the strike. Though women had been involved in numerous strikes over the years, most attempts at unionization in the silk industry had involved skilled men, not women. Women and girls were considered by manufacturers to be more tractable and were often preferred as employees for this reason. Women were also considered cheaper labor and usually the tasks performed primarily by women, whether skilled or unskilled, commanded lower wages than "men's work." For these reasons, when new machinery was introduced which required less training and could be operated by women, manufacturers often found it advantageous to employ women. (See Doc. 10:2) (Docs. 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28)

New Immigrants and the Manufacturers' Strategy. The workforce was divided between recent immigrants like the Italians and Jews, and English-speaking workers who were themselves descended from earlier immigrants from northern and western Europe. The manufacturers sought to capitalize on these divisions, as they sought to capitalize on women. In the years prior to the strike they gave the less well-paid work to the Italians and Jews. During the strike they played on feelings of prejudice against the Italians and Jews, and appealed to nativist sentiments. With the
help of Flag Day and of the American Federation of Labor, the manufacturers hoped to rally patriotic sentiment, isolate the new immigrants, and split the strikers. (Docs. 29, 30, 31, and 32)

Solidarity Between Immigrants: IWW Strategy. The strikers and the IWW countered with an emphasis on solidarity. Strike meetings in Paterson and Haledon were designed to stop rumors that this or that ethnic group had broken the strike and returned to work. In addition, meetings were used to foster understanding between ethnic groups and to overcome language barriers. Throughout the strike, the emphasis was on what workers had in common. This strategy worked especially well between the Italians and the Jews, who established ties of genuine warmth. It did not work as well in overcoming the tension between Italians and Jews, on the one hand, and the English-speaking groups, on the other. But even here the tension was contained and the strategy was successful. On Flag Day, for instance, the strikers, including the native-born, did not respond to the patriotic displays by returning to work. The democratic ethos of the strike cut across nationality as well as sex lines, and helped to bind the strikers together, as members of a single working class. In the Paterson Pageant, this emphasis on solidarity was carried across the Hudson to New York City. (Docs. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, and 38)

The role of immigrant workers, both men and women, can be vividly seen in Paterson's silk industry. The industry provides a case study for understanding the place which immigrant peoples played in the industrialization and urbanization of the United States. The 1913 strike of the silk workers illustrates the dynamic interplay between immigrant workers and their new urban environment. It provides evidence which counters the popular notion that immigrants were ignorant, unskilled workers at the mercy of a confusing and exploitative new world.

The Issue of the IWW. From the beginning the strikers had invited the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) to send speakers to help them. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Carlo Tresca, Patrick Quinlan, and William D. (Big Bill) Haywood were sent by the IWW to Paterson, and were promptly arrested, freed, and re-arrested. The manufacturers insisted that they would not deal the the IWW, or with the strikers as a whole; if the men and women came back to work at the individual mills, their employers would discuss their grievances with them. The manufacturers were as united as were the strikers, and the strike was deadlocked. Both sides suffered enormous financial losses, as did the city as
a whole. Especially in Paterson, blame for the strike was focused on the "outside agitators." Looking back today at the newspaper editorials from 1913, one gets the impression that the IWW did everything and the strikers themselves did little or nothing. From 1913 to the present the myth has persisted that the outside agitators fomented the strike, and that the strike destroyed the silk industry. In fact the silk workers themselves called the strike and organized it, before the outside agitators arrived in Paterson, and they should get the major share of praise or blame. Whether praise or blame is a question of viewpoint, now as then. (Docs. 39 and 40)

The End of the Strike. At the end of July, the strike collapsed. The manufacturers had outlasted the strikers, largely because of annexes which they had previously established in Pennsylvania, and which they continued to operate during the strike. The strikers returned to work under the old conditions of ten hours. But the manufacturers, chastened by their losses, did not push ahead with the four-loom system for another decade. And the silk workers, although they were never able to recapture the extraordinary degree of solidarity achieved in 1913, continued to strike frequently. In 1919, they even won the eight-hour day. The manufacturers, however, continued as well to struggle for the right to run their businesses as they saw fit. Frightened by 1913, and despairing of winning the work force to their point of view, they moved more and more work to Pennsylvania. Those who remained in Paterson tended to withdraw from production, becoming middlemen who farmed out the work to hundreds of tiny family shops, run by weavers. In these shops, struggling to survive, family members worked as many looms, and as many hours, as possible.

The Paterson industry, in decline in the 1920s was finished off during the Great Depression by the introduction of rayon and nylon. Just a handful of textile firms are in business in Paterson today. Did the 1913 strike destroy the Paterson silk industry? It is more accurate to say that the industry was torn apart by the fierce conflict between the silk workers and the manufacturers, of which 1913 was the most dramatic manifestation. Underlying the fierceness of the struggle were incompatible notions of the proper relation between manufacturers and workers. (Docs. 41, 42, 43, and 44)
THE PATERSON SILK WORKFORCE

Doc. 1: Immigration to Paterson and Its Silk Industry

From the Civil War period when the silk industry in Paterson began to grow rapidly, successive immigrant groups found entrepreneurial opportunities and employment in various branches of the industry. The following excerpt from the federal report of the Immigration Commission (1911) describes some of the factors which drew various immigrant populations to the Paterson silk mills.

QUESTIONS: How does the Commission characterize various immigrant groups? What does the report mean by the term "race?" Can you discern what the primary concerns of the Commission might be? Why do you think the Commission only speaks of working men? Why were groups of workers attracted to Paterson, and why did some leave? How did immigrants learn about work opportunities in Paterson?


English Immigration....The reasons for the heavy English immigration [which peaked during the 1880s] may be assigned, first, to the high tariff which was maintained after the close of the civil war, which made it possible to manufacture in this country broad silks at a large profit; second, to the influence of the English employees who had been employed in Paterson mills from their establishment in getting their relatives, friends, and fellow-countrymen to come to the United States; and, third, to the installation of power looms in the American mills.

French immigration.---The rapid expansion of the silk industry during the late seventies and early eighties induced ambitious Frenchmen to come to Paterson and start several silk mills. They encouraged immigration from the French silk centers and succeeded in inducing from two to three thousand French workers to come to Paterson. The French immigrants were expert silk workers, and were soon employed in every branch of the industry. They were employed in the dyeing departments, in broad silk work, and especially in ribbon weaving. At the present time, however, very few French are employed in Paterson. Those who still remain are employed in positions requiring the greatest skill and expertness. They are now found chiefly in the ribbon-manufacturing establishments. Why the French have left the Paterson silk mills can not be clearly explained
beyond the statement that they earned little or no more in Paterson than in the French mills. A few left the community and returned to France in 1888 and 1890, and when the industrial depression of the early nineties closed a large number of the Paterson mills practically all of them returned to France. Those who remained were highly skilled workmen, who were retained and given work by the Paterson firms in order to keep them.

**Italian immigration.**—Italian immigration to Paterson began when a few families of fruit venders settled in the city shortly after the civil war. The first Italian workmen were brought to Paterson between twenty and twenty-five years ago and given employment on various public works and on the construction work of the street railways. Most of these early immigrants left Paterson after the railway construction was completed, but a few of them secured employment of one kind and another and remained in the community. Of the latter, a few found work in the dyehouses. This was the beginning of the employment of Italians in the silk industry. Between 1888 and 1890 a number of strikes occurred in Paterson among the dye workers. At that time the dyers were almost entirely English or Americans, with a few Germans, Scotch, Irish, and one or two skilled Frenchmen. For the most part the work was hard and dirty, while the dyehouses were wet and full of steam. The men accordingly struck for higher wages. One of the largest dyers secured Italians and used them as strike-breakers. From this time until 1903-4 a large number of the race were annually imported by all plants operating in the city, and to-day Italians are extensively employed in the silk industry. Prior to the "dyers' strike," as it was called, a few Italians, among those who had been employed on the railroad construction work, had entered the silk mills. As these men had worked in the same industry in Italy, they encouraged their friends to come over to this country, and it is freely asserted in Paterson that the manufacturers assisted in the encouragement. The large increase in the percentage of Italian workmen, however, dates from 1896-97. During the years following this date the industry expanded rapidly, and Italians were secured to meet the extra labor demands. The English-speaking workmen were displaced in many instances, and, as other lines of work paid them better wages, numbers of them left the silk industry. At the present time it is estimated that over 20,000 Italians are living in Paterson. The great majority of them are dependent on the silk industry, in which between 7,000 and 8,000 are employed. The majority of the Italian silk workers employed are from the northern States of Italy, and among the South Italians there are only a few Sicilians. The immigration of Italians was checked by the financial
depression of 1907, but was much less affected than immigration to other localities and other industries. Immigration of Italians to Paterson is, however, since the entrance of the Russian Hebrews, decreasing annually.

Hebrew immigration.--The immigration of Russian Hebrews to Paterson commenced about 1902 and is steadily increasing. The beginning of this immigration is not positively known, but it is claimed that it was begun by the Hebrew firms which in the last few years have gone into business in the community, and which immediately proceeded to influence others to come to the city. The Russian Hebrews were willing to work for lower wages and in worse surroundings than the English-speaking people, or even the Italians, and it was not long before they were employed as unskilled laborers in the silk mills. They are inferior to all of the other races now employed in the mills. The estimated number of Russian Hebrews employed at present is between 3,000 and 5,000.

Armenian immigration.--In 1901 about 300 Armenians were brought to Paterson as strike-breakers. They were employed for a short time, and then gradually drifted out of the community, until at present the number of the race in the silk industries is insignificant, probably not over 50 being found there. They left Paterson because they preferred to work in places where the Armenian population was larger. This was mentioned as the cause of the movement by officials of the silk mills, who cited neighboring manufacturing towns where the labor supply in certain industries is almost entirely Armenian.

Miscellaneous immigration.--In addition to the races mentioned above, which have been employed at various times in the silk industry, a few others have been employed in small numbers. Among these are Germans, Swiss, Irish, and a few Scotch.
Doc. 2: The Silk Workers: Age, Sex, Ethnicity

Throughout its history the Paterson silk industry supplied work for a very diverse group of people. By 1910, approximately 30% of Paterson's working men and women (16 years and over) were employed in one or another branches of the industry. The following chart was prepared by the federal government from information collected from 138 of the 218 silk weaving and throwing (thread-making) companies in business in Paterson in 1907, six years before the strike.

QUESTIONS: At that time which ethnic groups dominated in the industry? Did some ethnic groups tend to predominate in certain jobs? Was sex or ethnicity a greater determinant of the type of work one performed? If you were a German man, what kinds of work would you have been more likely to do? If you were an Italian woman? If you were a Dutch teenager?

## NUMBER OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN EMPLOYED IN EACH STATE, BY OCCUPATION AND RACE.

### NEW JERSEY.

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<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Irish</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>Other races</th>
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<td>29.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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</table>
Document 3: Age and Marital Status of Female Silk Workers

While a young man entering silk work might expect to work in the silk his entire life, or at least to work at some employment for his entire life, in this time period, girls and women usually move out of the paid work force when they married, and thereafter worked only as their marital and domestic duties dictated. This was also generally true in the Paterson silk industry, though some women, especially skilled women, worked all their lives "in the silk."

QUESTIONS: What percentage of the girls and women working in the silk mills in the early 1900s were single? What was the age range of the single women? What percentage of the women were married? Was it customary for a married woman to work in this era? Why might a married woman work in a silk mill?


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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed, Divorced, Separated, deserted</th>
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<td>Per cent.</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per cent.</td>
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<td>18 years</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29 years</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34 years</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39 years</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 44 years</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 49 years</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,641</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doc. 4: The Skilled Worker

Many of the silk workers in Paterson came from Europe with experience in silk or textile work. Many were also members of families with a tradition of employment in silk. Manufacturers like Horace Cheney, a Connecticut manufacturer with 50 years of experience in the silk business, valued these skilled employees. A few years after the 1913 strike, Cheney testified to a committee of Congress about some of the unique aspects of the silk industry.

QUESTIONS: What were some of the attributes of skilled silk workers? How were these attributes acquired? Why did Cheney prefer to hire certain immigrants as weavers, rather than using American? Do you think Cheney's statement also pertains to women in silk work?

[National Industrial Conference Board, Hours of Work as Related to Output and Health of Workers; Silk Manufacturing, Research Report No. 16 (Boston, Mass., 1919), 20.]

The hands of a silk worker are one of his important assets. Take a man from the fields of Siberia, from the plains of Austria, from Southern Italy, or from a farm in the United States...and it is a very different matter to make a silk worker of that man, a very different matter, from taking men who have been brought up in countries where silk is produced, where the very habits and occupations have developed the techniques and the kind of hand that makes the silk worker.... Machinery does not do away with the use of hands in silk manufacture. The hands still remain, and will always remain in my opinion, a very important factor in the operation. A man with clumsy, awkward hands handling silk warp is a very different factor from the man whose grandfather before him handled the silk fabric.
Doc. 5: The Unskilled Worker

In 1890 a reporter for Joseph Pulitzer's New York World visited Paterson to interview working girls and report on their working conditions. She talked with Joanna, an Irish hotel worker, about the many jobs she had held in her effort to be self-supporting. Immigrant workers like Joanna, without special skills, could find work in the silk mills; some stayed in the industry, others moved on to other jobs. Because of the value of the silks being produced, silk mills were cleaner and better lit than other textile mills. The air was not filled with lint as it was in cotton mills or with sprays of water as in the jute mills.

QUESTIONS: Why did Joanna prefer work in the silk mills? Why was she at a disadvantage there? Were Joanna's low wages only the result of her skill level?


I have lived in Paterson ever since I was a child. I went into the mill when I was about eleven and stayed there fifteen years off and on--off when I was too sick to work and on when I could get anything to do. I began on $1.25 a week, picking cotton. In a couple of years I got $2.50; then I learned to wind and earned $3 and from then I took a swift, getting $4 sometimes had as high as $1 a day, but never for any length of time. When I could get work in the silk mills I took it at $4.50 rather than go to the cotton or jute mills for more money. At the silk work a girl can be more decent than she can in the cotton mills, but when it costs her all she earns for board and there's nothing left for clothes she has to go back to the hard work. It's decency or a living with her, and she can take her choice of the two. Of course if she has a home to go to then she can be decent but if she lives alone and wants enough to pay for a crust and a rag and a bed she has to look like a sweep, work like a slave and get as rough as the men she is thrown with.
Doc. 6: Educational Opportunities for Silk Workers

In the early 20th century in New Jersey schooling was required for boys and girls to the age of 14. Though it was not uncommon for a mature-looking child to skirt the law and go to work earlier, the pattern was for immigrant and working-class young people to attend school until the age of 14.

QUESTIONS: What is the report's attitude toward the silk workers and their families? What appears to be the attitude of silk workers toward education? What kinds of educational opportunities did Paterson offer working teenagers and adults? Why was the Superintendent concerned about offering domestic science and manual training? Why was parochial schooling popular with silk workers? What problems did workers face in trying to get schooling?


EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

The tables and discussions relating to children at work, at school, and at home (p. 119) show that in New Jersey 42 children, or 4.7 per cent of the children 6 to 13 years of age, were at work, a small proportion, while 871, or 64.8 per cent of the children 6 to 15 years of age, were at school. That the proportion of children of silk workers at school is highly creditable to the families of silk workers in Paterson is shown by the fact that it is 3.3 per cent higher than the proportion of children 6 to 15 years of age at school, of the cotton-mill families in New England, where the laws regulating employment and school attendance of children are more stringent and more strictly enforced. It would, however, be erroneous to assume that while the parents of the children are doing their duty, the opportunities of the 871 children of silk workers' families to obtain an adequate or satisfactory common-school education prior to their entrance into the industrial life of the mills were good. On the surface this would seem to be so, for the public schools of the city are numerous, well equipped, and well managed. The day schools consist of kindergartens, 21 grammar schools, and 2 high schools. The report of the superintendent of schools for the year of the investigation shows, however, that owing to the overcrowded condition of the schools the educational opportunities of
many of the children were much reduced. This condition existed in the years previous, and the reports for 1908 show that it continues to exist.

The report states that at the close of the school year in June 1907, there were 3,869 pupils attending half-day classes.

These pupils were in 14 schools and in 94 classes. The president of the school board in his report said that the school accommodations were still very bad, and the mayor in his report for 1907 said that "a sense of justice demands that every child in our city be given a chance to obtain an education," and that special attention should be paid "to the large proportion of our children who find it necessary to leave school at the age of 14 or 15 to take their places in the industrial life of our city." Conditions were but little improved during the year following, for the new mayor on May 6, 1908, in his message "to the various municipal boards," says: "The pressing need of this department is relief for short-time scholars. There should be provided just as soon as possible a seat for every scholar for the full school day."

At the close of school June 26, 1908, there were 3,404 half-time pupils in 80 classes in 11 schools. In their reports for the years 1907 and 1908 the city and school officials considered the needs of the schools with special reference to the children who go to work in the silk mills.

The superintendent said:

Many young girls of our city enter the mills at the age of 14 and often continue their work after marriage. If they are to receive any training in domestic science, they must receive it at school, for the mother who has spent the best years of her life at the loom is unable to give her daughter any instruction in these matters so necessary to health, comfort, and happiness.

In pointing out that the manual training department has been unable to meet the demands of the greatly increased school population, he said:

In an industrial city like ours this department should receive every possible consideration. It is the skill of its weavers that makes Paterson the first city in the land in the production of silk.

In 7 schools of the city night schools are conducted and many children and adults who work in the silk mills during the day attend them. They are especially useful to foreign-born adults and children unable to read, write, or speak the English language. The night schools opened September 16, 1907, and closed December 17, a period of three months. Instruction was given for 2 hours each evening. The enrollment for September was 2,211 and the average attendance 1,425. This fell off each month until in December the enrollment was 791 and the average attendance 566. The agents of the bureau observed that many of the silk-mill children attending night schools became sleepy and inattentive. This was not surprising in view of
the fact that they were up at 6 in the morning and after 10 hours in
the mill were too tired to keep fully awake in school.

The following table shows the proportion of silk workers and those
in other industries attending 2 night schools, by sex and age groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>16 years of age and over</th>
<th>Under 16 years of age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silk mills</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other industries</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that 30 per cent of the pupils attending these
typical night schools were silk-mill workers, and that 21.5 per cent
of the children under 16 years of age attending were silk-mill workers.

Although the Hebrews form but a small proportion of the silk-mill
workers and of the population in general, the following table shows
that they take advantage of the night-school opportunities more
than any other race:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or nationality</th>
<th>16 years and over</th>
<th>Under 16 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bohemian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reported</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39
The per capita expenditure for all purposes for schools by Paterson for the year of the investigation, when compared with that for manufacturing cities of about the same size, indicates the desire of the community for a high standard.

In none of the public schools is instruction given in any subject relating to the manufacture of silk or in textile designing, and there is no public textile school. In this respect, when compared with the schools provided in its rival silk city of Lyon, France, as shown elsewhere in this report, Paterson is at a great disadvantage.

In addition to the opportunities afforded by the public schools to silk-mill workers, there were 10 parochial schools having 3,947 children attending them. Two hundred and fifty of these children were 13, 14, and 15 years of age, 3,697 being 12 years of age and under. A very large proportion of these were children of silk workers’ families.

For young women employed in the silk mills, additional educational opportunities are afforded by the Young Women’s Christian Association. In a total membership of 1,762 young women in this association, 574, or 32.5 per cent, were silk-mill workers. The 574 girls were employed in 108 silk mills. This includes 18 girls at work in 13 throwing mills.

The educational courses provided for in the evening classes were as follows:

- Domestic science, plain cooking, term of 15 lessons.
- Domestic science, advanced plain cooking, term of 15 lessons.
- Domestic art, millinery, term of 15 lessons.
- Domestic art, dressmaking, term of 15 lessons.
- Domestic art, embroidery and art needle work, term of 10 lessons.
- Domestic art, plain sewing, term of 15 lessons.
- Class for foreign-speaking women, term of 15 lessons.

An additional educational advantage made use of by a large proportion of the silk-mill workers is the free public library, having a circulation in 1907 of 148,243 volumes. During the year a branch library was established in a district having a large silk-mill population. At this branch the average monthly circulation of books for home use was 4,385.
Doc. 7: Militance Among Silk Workers

Throughout the history of the silk industry in Paterson worker protests were common. Men and women in both skilled and unskilled crafts for decades before the 1913 strike had asserted their own values, often successfully, by protesting hours, wages levels, wage cuts, working conditions, and various management practices. In the turbulent 1880s the Knights of Labor were strong among men and women silk workers. In the following article from the New York Call, a socialist newspaper which covered the Paterson strike, a ribbon weaver, Federick Molt, recalled the strike by ribbon weavers in 1894.

QUESTIONS: How does Molt compare the reaction of municipal authorities during the strikes of 1894 and 1913? Were the ribbon weavers of 1894 experienced in labor organization? What would have been the importance of previous strikes to the 1913 strikers?

["Silk Workers' Strike Brings Reminiscences of Former One," New York Call, March 3, 1913, p. 2.]

According to Federick Molt, one of the oldest readers of The Call the present strike of the weavers in Paterson can ill be compared with the strike there twenty years ago, when there was an impartial Mayor and a Socialist, Matthew Maguire, as Alderman, to help the workers.

The origin of the trouble then, said Molt, were the intolerable conditions simultaneously existing in the ribbon industry of New York, Paterson, and vicinity.

The unrest of the workingmen was evidenced by small meetings of protest held all over for the purpose of organization, with a view of preparing for the impending struggle. These small meetings were followed by a mass meeting, at which a general chairman was elected, in the presence of a large number of reporters from the capitalist press.

Then a general strike was declared for New York, Paterson, and vicinity for the purpose of securing a new "price wage schedule" on the piecework system. The workers of Paterson worked hand in hand with their fellow workmen in New York.

One of the prominent features in the thirteen-week strike that the weavers of twenty years ago waged was a march of 550 New York workers along what was then known as the Plank road, for eighteen miles, leading through the towns of Clifton and Passaic, to Paterson, where a great demonstration was made on their entrance. A big meeting was
held at the then Little Coney Island of the West Street Bridge. The dyers joined the weavers in a body, and the New Yorkers marched home to continue their strike to a successful conclusion.

Several days later a body of 800 Paterson weavers and dyers marched in a body to New York, taking with them several wagons full of provisions and bands of music.

They paraded the city and were royally entertained there by their fellows, and were finally escorted to the ferries to march back to Paterson.

After thirteen weeks the strikers won all their demands, a sweeping victory in every factory of the then entire silk industry of the country, and a big increase in wages, destined, however, to be wrested from them in later struggles, when the weavers allowed their organization to weaken.
WORKING CONDITIONS

Doc. 8: Silk Mill Processes and Occupations

Within the silk industry, at the turn of the century, there were a wide variety of jobs to be had. The throwing (thread-making) and the weaving (ribbons and broad-silk) branches of the industry employed men, women, boys and girls. The dyeing industry employed only men and boys. The following chart shows what the various tasks were, what machinery was involved with them, who was hired to perform the tasks, and how much skill they were considered to require.

QUESTIONS: Which jobs were considered skilled work? Which semiskilled? Which unskilled? In New Jersey what work did men and women perform in the mills (the sexual division of labor)? What work did young people perform? Who performed most of the semi-skilled tasks? the skilled tasks?

## Processes and Occupations in Silk Mills:

### Silk Throwing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Machine used</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Class of persons employed</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Skilled or unskilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soaking</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Soaker</td>
<td>(Men...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Unskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winding</td>
<td>Winding frame</td>
<td>Winder</td>
<td>(Men...</td>
<td>Pa...</td>
<td>Semiskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinning, first time</td>
<td>Spinning frame</td>
<td>Spinner, first</td>
<td>(Men...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Semiskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubling</td>
<td>Doubling frame</td>
<td>Doubler</td>
<td>(Girls and boys...</td>
<td>Pa...</td>
<td>Semiskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinning, second time</td>
<td>Spinning frame</td>
<td>Spinner, second</td>
<td>(Men...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Semiskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reeling</td>
<td>Reeler or reel</td>
<td>Reeler</td>
<td>(Men and boys...</td>
<td>Pa...</td>
<td>Unskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacing</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lacer</td>
<td>(Girls and boys...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Unskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundling</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Bundler or maker-up</td>
<td>(Men and women...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Broad Silk and Silk Ribbons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Machine used</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Class of persons employed</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Skilled or unskilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winding</td>
<td>Winding frames</td>
<td>Winder</td>
<td>(Women...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Semiskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubling</td>
<td>Doubling frame</td>
<td>Doubler</td>
<td>(Women and girls...</td>
<td>Pa...</td>
<td>Semiskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warping, horizontal</td>
<td>Warping mill</td>
<td>Warper, horizontal</td>
<td>(Men and women...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warping, Swiss</td>
<td>Warping mill</td>
<td>Warper, Swiss</td>
<td>(Women and girls...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warping, direct</td>
<td>Warping machine</td>
<td>Warper, direct</td>
<td>(Women and girls...</td>
<td>Pa...</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilling</td>
<td>Quilling frame</td>
<td>Quiller</td>
<td>(Women and girls...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Semiskilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twisting</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Twister</td>
<td>(Men and women...</td>
<td>Pa...</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loom fixing</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Loom fixer</td>
<td>(Men...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving, broad silk</td>
<td>Loom</td>
<td>Weaver, broad</td>
<td>(Men and women...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving, ribbons</td>
<td>Loom</td>
<td>Weaver, ribbons</td>
<td>(Men and women...</td>
<td>N. J.</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth picking</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Cloth picker</td>
<td>(Women and girls...</td>
<td>Pa...</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doc. 9: Wages in the Silk Industry

The New Jersey Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Industries, a state agency, prepared annual reports of data and information relevant to New Jersey industries. In this excerpt from the Bureau's 1913 report, which included information on the Paterson silk strike, weekly earnings for a "steady, uninterrupted week's work" in the silk are reported.

QUESTIONS: Though we can assume the wage figures are accurate, in what ways might they be misleading? Which jobs in the silk mills paid the highest? Which paid the lowest? Who usually held these jobs?


---


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade of Silk</th>
<th>Broad Goods Weavers</th>
<th>Ribbon Weavers</th>
<th>Loom Fixers</th>
<th>Twisters</th>
<th>Warpers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.50</td>
<td>16.50</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>12.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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45
The “loom fixers,” who are always men, are the only skilled employees who work by the day; weavers are so employed at times when experimenting or working out new designs.

Other branches of labor mostly performed by beginners and learners are, with the weekly earnings reported for them as follows:

- **Winders** ........................................... from $8.00 to $10.00
- **Winders’ helpers** ................................. “ 5.00 to 7.25
- **Quillers** ........................................... “ 6.00 to 8.00
- **Quillers’ helpers** ................................. 5.00
- **Pickers** ........................................... “ 5.00 to 8.00
- **Spinners** ......................................... 7.00 to 10.00
- **Reelers** ........................................... “ 5.50 to 6.00

In the broad silk and ribbon mills, the weavers, loom fixers, twisters, and warpers constitute approximately two-thirds of the total working force. In these skilled branches of the industry, women are employed in approximately the following proportions: Broad silk weaving, 38 per cent; ribbon weaving, 48 per cent; and warpers, 42 per cent. The loom fixers are all men.

The statistics of employment in the several branches of the silk industry for 1912 show the total number of persons employed to have been 29,132; of these, 21,927 were engaged in the broad silk and ribbon mills, 1,397 in the throwing establishments, and 5,808 in the dye houses. Divided as to sex and age, 16,054, or 55.2 per cent. of the total number employed are men 16 years old and over; 12,255, or 42.0 per cent. are women 16 years old and over, and 813, or 2.8 per cent., are children below the age of 16 years.

The weekly earnings quoted above, are for a steady, uninterrupted week’s work; if calculated on the experience of an entire year, the amount would, for obvious reasons, be much smaller. The average yearly earnings in the broad silk and ribbon mills during the year 1912, was $508.64, and in the dye houses, $489.38.

In 1911, the average yearly earnings in the broad silk and ribbon mills was $407.94, and in the dye houses, $393.62; the increases for the year 1912 were therefore, $104.88, or 21.7 per cent. for the mill employees, and $20.70, or 4.66 per cent. for the dye house workers. These averages are obtained by dividing the total aggregate amount paid in wages during the year to actual wage earners by the average number of such wage earners, men, women, and children employed during the same period of time.
Doc. 10: Working Conditions in the Mills

In 1907 as part of an extensive investigation of the working conditions of women and children in American industry, agents of the federal Bureau of Labor visited the Paterson mills to inspect and report on the conditions they found there. They visited a large number of operating mills as well as workers' homes to gather data.

QUESTIONS: From the following descriptions of (1) a broad silk weaving shop, (2) a ribbon weaving shop, and (3) a throwing (threadmaking) shop, can you determine some of the factors which accounted for whether men or women were hired for various jobs? What is meant by the term "piecework?" Are working conditions healthful and safe? What physical demands are made on the workers in these shops?


1. A Broad-silk Establishment.

The arrangement of the machinery in the several workrooms and the distribution of the work among the several floors is orderly and systematic. The weavers tend 2 looms each; sometimes husbands and wives work together, and since it is to their interest to help each other that the greater amount of earning may be made, the firm generally arranges to give them looms adjoining. All weaving is piecework. Women as a rule are preferred to men because they are cleaner and more painstaking in their work and lose less time. The foreman of the weaving department stated that many women are so clean about their work that they regularly wash up the floor around their machines, while men must be cautioned against spitting on the floor. (Men must provide cuspidors and clean them at least once a week.) Thus it is that women weavers are considered much more efficient than men on plain goods. But on Jacquard looms, which are high and of complicated mechanism, containing a long pack of cards which a plain-goods loom does not, women are at a disadvantage because of their inability to climb to the top of the loom to adjust cards and to make simple repairs. And so men are preferred on this class of looms.

Women's skirts and her inability to climb and get around as easily as a man are a hindrance to her in weaving on Jacquard looms. Warp pickers are women and are also pieceworkers. They do not work steadily, but come in for a number of hours in each day. Some become very skilled at
this occupation whether their work is done on fine embroidered goods or on plain goods. Their work consists in picking out knots from the warp. The work required of quill winders is very exacting in this establishment, since so many colors and grades of silk are used. The quillers are kept busy looking after their 60 ends and "don't get a minute's let-up all day." The quilling is done by women. They have almost no chance to rest, because the number of yards on each quill varies so that there is always a quill to be taken off and a new one put in its place. When the tiny quills called "poppets" are being wound the operator must give strict attention, since they are filled very quickly.

2. A Ribbon Weaving Establishment.

In this establishment, a large one, women and children are exclusively employed in all departments except twisting-in. This was the direct result of a long and bitter fight with the union employees. In soft [dyed] silk winding each operator tends about 64 ends. A double-decked machine is used, on the top row of which organizine is wound, on the under row, tram. The doubling is done on two kinds of machines, one of which simply performs the operation of doubling, the other combines doubling and quilling. In weaving each operator tends one loom; the number of picks depends entirely on the width of the ribbon to be made. A loom called a "speed loom" is used here. This loom was invented especially for use by women weavers. All the parts of the machine are within easy reach and the woman can adjust the machinery generally if any part does not work smoothly. The twistes-in are men. They sit at the back of the loom and lean or stretch over the warp as they work. There are two kinds of warping machines used, the direct and the horizontal. Workers begin on the former and are promoted to the latter if they are satisfactory and ambitious to do the hard work and receive the higher pay. In the cloth picking department there are both women and children employed. Some of the latter are engaged in blocking.

3. A Throwing Establishment.

The ordinary winding machine has two sides with 28 to 35 spindles on each side. One girl usually looks after 85 spindles. The speed of the spindles varies greatly, according to the quality of the raw silk that is being wound. On the average, a modern winding machine will wind 15 pounds of silk in a day of 10 hours, while an old-style machine
On the average, a modern winding machine will wind 15 pounds of silk in a day of 10 hours, while an old-style machine with same number of spindles has a capacity of only 12 pounds for the same period. As recently as 6 months ago winders looked after only 72 spindles. In May, 1907, the winders demanded an increase in wages from $6 to $7 per week. This demand was granted upon the condition that the winders tend 85 spindles instead of 72. The winders though kept busier than formerly, nevertheless still have opportunities of sitting down during the day. It is Mr.'s opinion that spinning is much too hard and trying work for women. There is so much bending and stooping to be done, in tending the spools on the lower decks of a spinning machine, the lower decks on either side being only 5 or 6 inches from the floor. For a similar reason the occupation of reeling is strictly a man's work, Mr.'s thinks. The flies which must be lifted in and out of the machine many times a day are too heavy for the ordinary woman to lift. In this plant, the work of reeling is intrusted to boys 16 to 20 years of age....
Doc. 11: Photograph of a Winding Room

In the winding room of a mill bobbins of silk thread were wound from skeins of silk put on reels. If the silk being wound was undyed, or raw, it was called "hard silk"; if it had been dyed it was called "soft silk." There were winding rooms in the "throwing" or threadmaking establishments (see Doc. 10:3) as well as in weaving mills (Doc. 10:2). From such bobbins as those pictured here smaller bobbins (called quills or "poppets") for the loom shuttles were wound. (See Doc. 10:1)

QUESTIONS: What might have been the ethnicity of the workers in this winding shop? (See Doc. 2) What skills are required for this work? Who do you think the man is, in the left center? Where does the power come from to operate the winding frames? What are the light sources of the room? What wages might have these workers earned? (See Doc. 9)

[Collections of the Passaic County Historical Society]
Doc. 12: Photograph of a Warping Shop

The warp is the length-ways thread in woven cloth. The warp for a broad-silk loom was made by winding thread from numbers of bobbins onto a roller or "beam" which fitted onto the loom. This photo, made around 1910, shows workers winding threads from hundreds of bobbins on the creels at the left in a carefully determined order onto the very large warping mill at the right. The finished warp was inspected by a warp picker (See Doc. 10:1) who snipped any knot ends from the warp. The warp was then wound onto the warp beam of a loom, and attached to the loom by a skilled worker called a twister (See Doc. 10:2). Warps for ribbon looms were made in a similar way (See Doc. 10:2)

QUESTIONS: What might be the age and ethnicity of the people at work in this shop? (See Doc. 2) Were most silk warpers women? What do you think the boy in the foreground is doing? the women seated at the far left? What skills are required by warpers? What wages did warpers earn? (See Doc. 9)

[Collections of the Paterson Museum]
Doc. 13: Photograph of a Ribbon Weaving Mill

In this photograph, made around 1910, women work at looms producing 40 lengths of ribbon at a time. Each weaver tended two looms. In the early years of the 20th century, as the new high-speed ribbon loom was introduced, women began to be hired as ribbon weavers, displacing men in shops where the new looms were installed. (See Doc. 10:2)

QUESTIONS: Have you noticed that the women in all these photos wear their hair braided and/or pinned up on their heads? Why is that? What might be the hazards of working on these machines? From what ethnic groups might these women be? (See Doc. 2) What wages would they have earned? (See Doc. 9).

[ Collections of the Passaic County Historical Society]
Doc. 14: Photograph of a Broad-silk Mill

In this weaving shop, depicted a few years after the strike in 1920, weavers are shown with plain-silk looms. Power looms were introduced in Paterson in the 1870s, soon replaced the traditional hand looms, and opened weaving as a craft to women where before it had been a male-dominated craft. These looms are powered by ceiling-mounted drive shafts. (See Doc. 10:1)

QUESTIONS: How would you characterize the working conditions of this shop? Who might the workers be? (See Doc. 2) What were the wages of broad-silk weavers in 1913? (See Doc. 9)

[Collections of the American Labor Museum]
Doc. 15: Work in the Dye Houses

The textile dyeing companies of Paterson were central to the silk industry there. Established after the Civil War by Swiss and French immigrant entrepreneurs, the dye houses employed master dyers from Switzerland, Lyons, France, and northern Italy whose reputation for expertise matched that of the weavers. The dyers' helpers, however, were unskilled. The following article was written by a dyers' helper and printed in the IWW newspaper, Solidarity, at the time of the 1913 strike.

QUESTIONS: Who worked as helpers in the dye houses? What were the hazards of working in a dye house? Why would hour and wage demands have been particularly important to dyers' helpers? Why is Bell suspicious of the master dyers?

(Bell, Scully, "A Paterson Dyer's Story," Solidarity, May 3, 1913, p. 2)

The strike in Paterson is the same today as it was eight weeks ago. But we have taught the manufacturers and master dyers a great lesson; that we, the textile workers, no longer look down at our looms and dye boxes to let them rob us, and put their schemes into operation whereby they may be better able to profit. About one year ago there was amongst the dyers' helpers a rumor of going on strike. On March 6, 1912, the dye houses had notices up to the effect that there would be an increase in wages of one dollar a week. In this way the talk of going on strike was abolished. Many of the workers appreciated the generosity of the employer, but there were amongst the wiser ones dissatisfaction and they considered it a great insult. They did not fail to see that the advance in wages was thrown at them as a robber would throw a bone to the barking dog, in order that he may be better able to carry out his crime.

Ever since the advance they resorted to all kinds of schemes in order that they may get their dollar and more back from the worker. They have taken boys from fifteen years of age from the dry rooms and from the wagons and have put them into the dye houses and have paid six, seven and eight dollars a week. When the slack season has come the boys have always had steady work, the men who had families to support were laid off. There are about ninety per cent of those dyers helpers who received the advance in wages who in the past year have not received a full pay. Some of their pays were from three to eighteen dollars for two weeks' work. And some of them were laid off for two and
three weeks at a time. But the master dyers did not stop at
this, instead of putting two and three skeins to a handful
they would put five and six, therefore doubling our work.

As everybody knows the dye house is the most dirty and
unhealthy part of the silk industry. A man who works in the
dye house must wear clogs that weigh from three to five
pounds apiece. These he must drag on his feet all day in
order to protect himself from the water, which is always
about three inches high in some places. In one of the dye
houses in Paterson in which I worked during the winter
months the water would freeze on the floor during the night
and in the morning we would have to put ashes on it in order
not to slip. There were also icicles hanging from the
ceiling. The sticks which the silk was on were also frozen
together. Many of the men working at this place were
compelled to wear sweaters and overcoats while working. Two
of my fellow-workers were discharged because they refused to
work while it was so cold.

The most dangerous things are when a man is working at
a box where the liquor is at a boiling temperature. Then he
is compelled to go from that to cold water. The shop is
always filled with steam, and at times it is impossible to
see the man whom you are working with.

In the summer it is about as bad; when the temperature
is one hundred and ten degrees above zero. You are likewise
compelled to work in boiling liquor. This liquor you must
taste from time to time in order to know if you have the
right amount of acid. This is not very pleasant especially
when you have a dark red or a navy. There is one quality of
dye which they call Shumake dye. The handfuls here are very
heavy. This liquor is very dangerous to the finger nails as
it causes them to rot off, and compels men to stay home for
weeks at a time. Others are affected by acids only not
quite as bad.

Many of the men in order to get a job in the dye house
pay twenty-five and thirty-five dollars to the dyers. These
are generally learners who receive seven and eight dollars
in one week. In case the learners ruin silk it is covered
up by the dyers and nothing is said to them.

Against these conditions we are striking.
We demand an eight hour day.
We demand $12 minimum wage for dyers' helpers.
We will stick 'till we win.
Doc. 16: Photograph of a Dye House

In this photograph made around the turn of the century, workers dye skeins of raw or undyed silk thread. Silk can be dyed as thread or as woven yard goods; here bolts of woven fabric (behind the workers) await dying.

QUESTIONS: Compare this photo with Bell's description in Doc. 15. How would you characterize the workers in this picture? What sort of protection do they have from the hazards of their work? What wages did dye workers earn?

[Collections of the Passaic County Historical Society]
THE CAUSE OF THE STRIKE

Doc. 17: The Weavers' View

This dialogue took place in Paterson one year after the strike. The Commission on Industrial Relations (established by the U.S. Senate after the Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1912 textile strike) wanted to mitigate future labor conflicts by understanding the causes of previous ones. In this spirit—which was the spirit of the Progressive period—the Commission came to Paterson. William O. Thompson was the lawyer for the Commission; he often asked the questions. Here he is questioning Adolph Lessig, a broad-silk weaver, who was a leader among the strikers and an official of the local IWW.

QUESTIONS: According to Lessig, how would four looms lead to lower wages for each weaver? Why does Lessig mention the shift from one loom to two looms which took place thirty years earlier? Do you agree with him that the weavers were wise to reject four looms?


LESSIG: ...if the thing became general throughout the trade, the three and four looms it meant the filling of the street with unemployed, which would mean a general reduction in wages, and that is what all the weavers realized....
[When asked by a commission member how the employers originally persuaded weavers to run two looms instead of one, Lessig answered:]
...By the same methods and process Mr. Doherty is using today, by appealing to the hungriest of the workers and making him believe that he is always going to continue on making that same amount of money.

THOMPSON: If the rates of pay offered to the workers who would remain had been sufficient, would there still have been a complaint that the weavers would have refused to use the new system?

LESSIG: Well, the workers all realized that it was only a matter of time: that the wages must come down if they were going to have that army of unemployed. They were wise enough to see that.
Doc. 18: The Manufacturer's View: 1

On the first day of the strike the New York Times' reporter observed the initial walkout, the police measures taken against the strikers and their IWW speakers, and the strikers' response. He also talked with some of the manufacturers, whose views he accurately reported.

QUESTIONS: How did the manufacturers argue for the necessity of four looms? Most of the large Paterson manufacturers owned mills in Pennsylvania also. Do you recall why they had moved some of their business to Pennsylvania? How does their ownership of mills in Pennsylvania affect their claim about the pressure of competition? The Board of Trade in Paterson, was dominated by silk manufacturers. Why did members of the Board of Trade quote the call for a general strike? What did it prove to them about the workers' understanding of progress?

Why did the police move against the strikers and their out-of-town speakers? What crime had they committed? Whose side does the New York Times' reporter appear to be taking? Why? Do you think that, in the long run, the police action had the actual effect of limiting, or of spreading, the strike?

[ New York Times, February 26, 1913, 22 ]

6,000 WEAVERS QUIT; I.W.W. LEADERS HELD
Paterson Police break up Mass Meeting and
Arrest Elizabeth Flynn and Carlo Tresca.

STRIKE AGAINST MACHINERY
Which Displaced Workmen--Guards Stationed at Silk Mills
to Prevent Disorder to-day.

Paterson, N.J., Feb. 25.--Under the leadership of
William D. Haywood's direct-action branch of the Industrial
Workers of the World the silk weavers and dyers here went
out on general strike to-day as a protest against new and
improved machinery.

The new machinery, reports of the operation of which
have spread to the 300 Paterson silk mills from the three or
four mills where it is in use, permits fifty silk weavers to
do the work that formerly required 100, because each machine
is so perfected that it practically weaves alone without the
guidance of a weaver.

When the first 4,000 of the strikers deserted their
looms this morning they attempted to parade to the other
mills in the hope of rallying supporters to their cause.
The Paterson police force, under command of Police Chief Bimson, bore down upon the strikers, seized their leaders and sent the chief of them out of town on an Erie Railroad train.

Disconcerted in their effort to parade, the strikers attempted to hold a general mass meeting in a hall they had hired for the occasion. Police Chief Bimson charged upon the meeting place and seized the three principal speakers, among them Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Carlo Tresca, both I.W.W. leaders associated in the waiters' strike in New York recently.

The strikers allowed their parade leader to be drummed out of town and allowed the speakers at their mass meeting to be placed under arrest without bringing on a general riot. But for many hours after the arrests the strikers moved in disorganized masses about town, threatening the police and the Mayor, and denouncing the treatment accorded them....

In Pennsylvania the silk-making industry has recently grown to proportions where Paterson's supremacy has been keenly challenged....

It was to meet this competition that the Paterson owners began to install the new machinery and to decrease the number of employes at the looms. They declared that if they are forced to go back to the two-loom-to-a-weaver plan, which the men demand, they would simply be committing economic suicide, in view of the Pennsylvania competition.

In the Paterson silk industry the amount of capital invested is $26,447,000, while the pay roll for the 22,000 men employed amounts to $8,872,000 a year. The output is valued by the Government statisticians at $46,000,000 a year.

To show how futile the strike is and how hopeless it is to expect that modern machinery can be eliminated because weavers don't like to lose their old positions, members of the Board of Trade called attention to this paragraph in the call of the I.W.W. for a general strike:

"The new four-loom system must be stopped. If we allow this system to exist hundreds of workers will not be able to find work. The weavers will take jobs as loom-fixers, twisters, and warpers, and will crowd into the dye houses at any price they can get. The bosses, as always, will employ the cheapest men they can get. The wages of all silk workers will therefore be cut down to the lowest possible level of starvation. Your mill may be the next one to adopt the four-loom system. Show your disapproval by striking all together. Don't scab on your future by remaining at work. The bosses are after our lives. They want to starve our
children and send them into the mills at an early age. Let us be men and women, and let us defend our lives and the lives of our families. It is better to starve fighting than to starve working."

It was also pointed out that the introduction of the newest machinery was being opposed by the same protests which marked the introduction of the first weaving machines in England in the last years of the eighteenth century.
The federal Commission on Industrial Relations, which investigated the Paterson strike in 1914, interviewed opponents as well as supporters of the strike. Moses Strauss was the manager of two ribbon-weaving mills in Paterson, both owned by the same company. One mill employed highly skilled male weavers who worked on old-style German looms, and the other employed less skilled female weavers who worked on new high-speed looms. Silk manufacturers often preferred hiring women where they could, on the assumption that women could be paid less and would generally be more tractable.

QUESTIONS: What does Strauss view as the human consequences of technological change in silk weaving? Does he regard such change as the result of automatic processes, or as the result of human choice? Is he right? Would the male ribbon weavers agree with him? Would the female ribbon weavers?


Strauss: A good deal of trouble comes from the fact that the silk business is passing through a change, that is gradually becoming a business for females; that in the next 15 to 20 years the males employed in the silk industry will be nil. The change is coming very fast. For instance, as far as ribbons are concerned, the high-speed looms are gradually changing from male to female and, as I say, in 15 to 20 years, or possibly less time, the mills will mostly be run by female labor.
Doc. 20: The Strike Committee's View

This statement was issued by the strikers themselves, in the middle of the strike. In it they sought to counter the manufacturers' argument that four looms in broad-silk meant progress.

QUESTIONS: The strikers' facts are essentially correct; what do you think of their argument? What is their definition of progress? Why do they bring in New England? Are they advocating bomb throwing? What do they mean "what's the use?"

["Statement of the General Strike Committee," Paterson Evening News, April 21, 1913: 1; and New York Call, April 22, 1913: 2]

For the benefit of the average citizen who is not familiar with the trade, we state, this is a struggle for a uniform wage scale; a shorter workday and, what is of far more importance, the abolition of the four-loom system in the broad silk branch of this trade and the running of two looms in the ribbon.

The manufacturers endeavor with specious arguments to establish the system under the guise of progress. Let us see in the broad silk: with the same looms without a single improvement under the same general working conditions, the weaver is today asked to operate four looms instead of two as formerly. Is this progress? Do the earnings of the weaver increase in a corresponding degree? Again let us see. An immediate reduction of 40% of the two-loom price was made disregarding the too evident purpose of the employer and blindly insensible of the fact that others are deprived of an opportunity to earn a living. Spurred on by selfishness and greed they are still able by straining their energies to the point of exhaustion to earn a trifle more than formerly. We will call this meanness in excelsis. But there remains the further cut of 10 per cent that is sure to follow. And the deed is done. Back to the old standard of wages and usually less giving in return double the amount of labor, and we are blandly told this is progress.

Ribbon Trade Worse.

The same condition obtains in the ribbon trade in a more aggravated form, for unlike the broad silk looms the ribbon loom in the last few years has increased in productiveness 500 per cent while the earnings of the weaver has decreased in about the same ratio, and still the question is asked why do men throw bombs?
To the average citizen who may ask for proof, let him study the history of the textile industry in New England. He will learn that, while machinery is constantly being improved and production is ever increasing, with a corresponding increase in the cost of living, wages remain the same as thirty years ago, and to maintain their meager earnings meant long, insistent and bitter warfare. What reason have we to believe that Paterson will prove an exception to the general rule; but then, of course, there is progress if four loom mean progress, then six looms. But what's the use?
THE STRIKERS AND THE POLICE

Doc. 21: A Newspaper Account

Much of the Paterson public kept abreast of the progress of the strike through the Paterson Call, a daily newspaper. Here the Call reports on police actions in the fifth week of the strike in the Sandy Hill area of Paterson.

QUESTIONS: Why did the police disperse pickets and take prisoners? What was their crime? Why were women and children on the picket line? Why do you think Police Chief John Bimson instructed his men to be extra careful with the women and children? On whose side is the Call?

[Paterson Call, March 28, 1913.]

POLICE DISPERSE PICKETS AT MILLS. Serious Outbreaks Prevented by Prompt Action...

To guard against a repetition of disorder in the mill district of the Sandy Hill section, Wednesday night and yesterday morning, when forty alleged picketers were arrested, the police, reinforced by firemen, swept that section of the city late yesterday afternoon, and by keeping the street clear of trouble-brewers, made it possible for those at work in the mills to return to their homes without interference and in perfect safety. No arrests were made but a crowd of several hundred who had collected either to continue intimidation tactics or to egg others on to disorder, were forced down the side streets and compelled to return to their own homes or those of their friends.

The situation in the vicinity of Madison, Straight and Beech streets had reached such a point that prompt, positive police action was necessary. That was shown by the events of the morning and the night before when the crowd which had collected defied police authority and in some cases compelled the use of night sticks by throwing stones. Taking the situation in hand Chief Bimson pressed a score of firemen into service in addition to the regular members of the police department, and at 5 o'clock, having provided the necessary police accoutrements, gathered the men in the assembly rooms and gave instructions.

He directed the course of action and then instructed the men to proceed down the several streets and see that they were cleared. "Unless the crowd rebels and resists your orders to move on," said the chief, "I do not want arms used. In case they do resist it is your duty to see that the streets are cleared and the crowd dispersed. It is not
an uncommon thing in cases like this for women and children
to be used in the crowds for the purpose of interfering with
the work of the officers. Such obstacles are to be removed.
While it may be said women and children have no place in
such a gathering at such times as these we must be extra
careful and humane. In case you need further assistance, if
the situation is so bad as it was this morning and yesterday
afternoon, send here for help and it will be awaiting your
call."

A few moments later the patrolmen had taken their
places in the two auto patrols and the remaining squad in
the old horse drawn patrol. They proceeded by back streets
to the Sandy Hill section, and a few moments later the
mounted men were on the way up the street. It was not until
the mounted men put the spurs into their horses and sharp,
rapid hoofbeats followed, that the general public had any
idea of an unusual situation.

On arriving at the mill section Sergeant Fritz led his
squad down Madison street, from Market street. The squad
marched abreast, the line extending from curb to curb. In a
similar manner Sergeant Murner and his men marched down
Market and Beech streets, and Sergeant Colledge and his
squad down Straight street. The streets at this time were
filled with spectators and pickets. Behind each squad of
men, as they swept down the street, was a police patrol in
which were officers whose instructions were to take in
charge those escaping police lines, and send them back to
police headquarters as prisoners. The three squads marched
down their respective street to Essex street, and the crowds
scattered before them, making no show of resistance...
Doc. 22: A Striker's Account

Edward Zuersher, a ribbon weaver and strike activist, described the attitude of the police toward foreign-born strikers for the federal Commission on Industrial Relations investigating the causes of the strike in 1914.

QUESTIONS: How does his account of police activity differ from that of the Paterson Call? What sorts of behavior did Zuersher find especially provocative?


In regards to the police when they would disperse pickets, if we were to believe the statement made by Capt. McBride, it would appear that a police officer would come to the pickets and say, "Now, boys, disperse from here and get away," which was not the case. He did not come in that way. They generally came with a drawn club, and sometimes with curses on their lips, especially if there were a foreign element on the picket line, and told them to get out the there, and called them Waps and Jews and such names as that, which incensed the workers a great deal. While there was no extensive clubbing done by the police, it was due to the fact that there was no resistance offered to their orders. But while there was no clubbing done, they arrested indiscriminately at every instance.
Doc. 23: An Outsider's View

Art Young was a successful commercial cartoonist who joined the staff of The Masses, a radical Greenwich Village magazine, because he wanted to express views which he couldn't express in the daily newspapers. In this cartoon, printed in The Masses during the strike, Young responds to a call for mob violence against the IWW which had been published on the front page of the Paterson Press.

QUESTIONS How does Young portray the manufacturers? What is the point of his caption? Does he see Uncle Sam as the enemy? Why do you think Young couldn't express his views in the daily newspapers?

[Source: The Masses, Vol, ix, No. 9 (June 1913), 15 ]
SPEAKING OF ANARCHY.
THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Doc. 24: Women Walk Off the Job

Early in the strike, the male ribbon weavers at one of Moses Strauss' mills joined the broad-silk weavers and dyers' helpers on strike. One week later the female weavers also went on strike. On strike, Strauss' female weavers told other strikers how he patronized them, telling them how to live their lives. In his own testimony to the federal Commission on Industrial Relations, Strauss described what happened when representatives of his striking female weavers returned to the mill to collect their back pay and to present him with their list of demands. (See also Doc. 19)

QUESTIONS: Strauss called his weaver "Bertha"; would she have called him "Moses"? Why did Strauss employ female weavers? Why was he so shocked by their strike behavior? (Do you think he was equally shocked by his male strikers?) Why wouldn't Strauss receive the paper with the demands? On whom did he blame the strike?


Strauss: When the committee came in and got their pay they handed me a piece of paper and I saw stamped on it the stamp of the I.W.W. I handed it back and said "I'll receive no paper with the stamp of the I.W.W. on it!" She handed it back to me, and I says, "Bertha, you better take it," and she shoved it to me and I tore it up and said, "I will never have anything to do with it."
Doc. 25: A Fifteen-Year-Old Weaver

As a rule, the wages and working conditions in silk mills in Paterson were not bad, especially when compared with the wages and conditions in other textile mills in other American cities. The Bamford Ribbon Mill was an exception to the rule. The mill employed teen-age girls exclusively to make inexpensive silk and had a practice of withholding half their pay until they had completed their first year at work. In 1913, Teresa Cobianci, who had been born in Italy, was fifteen years old and was working as a ribbon weaver at the Bamford Mill. Encouraged by Flynn, she became a striker, a speaker at strike meetings, and the unexpected hit at a big protest meeting held in New York on behalf of the Paterson strikers. Here she is interviewed, near the end of the strike, by two women writing for the radical Greenwich Village magazine The Masses.

QUESTIONS: Why did Teresa come to America, in the first place? Why did she come back to American, when she was twelve? What was her economic role in her family? If she had her choice, would she work or go to school? Why does she prefer Italy to America? Why does she like America better than she used to? What physical effect did work in the mill have on Cobianci? In what physical ways did she change as a result of the strike? Why did girls like Cobianci respond so positively to the influence of the IWW, especially to the influence of Flynn? How did her attitude toward employer/employee relations differ from that of her father? How would you account for the difference?


Teresa led us through a narrow passage way and into an inviting little garden, containing patches of vegetables and a grape arbor. There were gates into the neighboring enclosures and pleasant going to and fro. Children lived in these gardens, too--not on the street. What a contrast to the dreary back yards of so many American workers' houses--wastes of trash and empty cans! One grew quickly aware of a definite contribution from these Italians to the civic life of Paterson.

"It is like Italy!" was our involuntary exclamation as we sat down on the little bench by the grape arbor.

"Oh, no! It is not so beautiful like Italy," protested Teresa, shaking her pretty head.
We asked for her story. "How long have you lived in America?"

"I came when I was four, with my mother and my brother, but I went back when I was eight. I was with my mother when she went home to die."

"Do you like America?"

"No," thoughtfully, "I do not like this country. My mother did not like this country either." She paused broodingly. "She was not brought up to work. She spoke French as well as Italian, and she knew English before she came to America. Her father, my grandfather, has a silk mill near Naples. My mother was in school. She was only sixteen when she married. She made a mistake. After she married her life was very hard. When we came to America she went to work in the silk mills. She got consumption. The doctor said, 'You must not work so hard.' She said 'I must work for my children.' She got sick all the time. Some days the workers would bring her home fainting from the mills. She would tell people, 'Only for my children I would like to die.' All times she had a fever and some nights she was out of her head. Then she would say, 'I am so tired--I am so tired.'"

"One day she told father, 'I do not want to die in this country; I want to go back to Italy to die.' My mother had saved a little money. She took my brother and me and went back to her father in Caserta. In a few months my mother died."

"What became of you then?"

"Then my brother and I lived four years with our grandfather. I went to school three hours in the morning. I had a governess, too. She taught me music and embroidery, and would take me out in the hills in the afternoon. It was not like here. There was flowers everywhere. Even the poor people had flowers." Her eyes took on a far-away look. "I took my first Communion over there. It was lovely," clasping her hands, "with all the little white dresses and veils and candles and flowers. I still have my medal," fingerling it on the slender chain at her neck.

"Then when I was twelve, my father came for my little brother and me. My grandfather he wanted to keep us always. But my father said, 'No, they are mine.' He got some law papers, and my grandfather had to give us up. Over here I went to school for a year. I made two grades in one year and I wanted to stay. But my father he kept talking about the day when I shall go to work. His wages had been cut a little at a time, so he received only half so much as when he first come. And my stepmother, she said, 'Yes, Teresa will soon be able to go to the mills.' The summer I was thirteen my father he said, 'Now you must go,' and he fixed
it up at the City Hall. I cried, but I went to work as a winder in Hammil's mill."

There this child of thirteen walked back and forth ten hours a day, tending fifty-six spools. All Teresa remembers about that place is the ache in her feet, her longing to get out to play, and the crazing monotony of walking in front of the spindles like a little bear in a cage. One day she rebelled against this travesty on childhood and quit.

After resting a while Teresa became a ribbon pinner in Bamford's mill, then a ribbon weaver. She was so little the bosses had to make a bench for her to stand on so that she could reach over the loom to put in the ends.

"No, Bamford's is not a good place to work," was Teresa's reply to our questioning. "It's fierce every way. The air is bad. The windows are nailed down. The little panes that turn are never opened in winter, 'cause the boss he say he is afraid he should catch cold. In summer they are not open unless you ask. The floor is so rough great splinters stick into your shoes. It is very dirty, too, and other things are something fierce. But the girls in Bamford's other mill in Paterson say they have it worse; they are afraid of the rats. In winter they say there is no heat unless their fingers get so stiff they can't work fast. No, I don't know how it is in Bamford's Pennsylvania mill.

"When I started weaving ribbon my father and Mr. Bamford they made a contract over me for one year. Yes, all the other weavers are young like me and work on contract."

She began work at $3 a week. After a month of weaving her wage was raised to $3.75, then to $4, and just about a month before the strike she began to get $6. "Every pay we girls get only half. The mill holds back the other half until we've worked a year." And then the fines—for every conceivable offense. When the fines had been deducted from the halfpay, there was sometimes only 78 cents a week left! If a child leaves before the year is up, the mill retains the unpaid half of the wage.

"Most of the girls go before the year is up," explained Teresa: "They rather lose the money than stay and be treated so mean. The bosses they holier and curse at you so. The superintendent and forelady, they aren't so bad, but they have to holier when the bosses come round."

Teresa tended two ribbon looms, a task too heavy for a strong man. She does not know how much she weaves. The little clocks that keep the count are locked up so the workers cannot see. The last day she worked on the single loom Teresa overheard the man who reads the clocks say "twenty-two yards." That would be 352 yards of ribbon in a day. "I ask sometimes, how much I weave? They say, 'What for do you want to know? That girl over there weaves faster then you, you damn kid!' "

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Indeed, Teresa's story was one long record of "speeding up." The child hurried out of bed by lamp light at half past five in winter mornings. She gulped her breakfast and arrived at the mill breathless from the haste born of anxiety lest she should not arrive before the door shut. If the children are late at Bamford's they are frequently locked out half a day and one whole day taken off their wages. At noon the little workers must rush if they are to have a chance to wash their hands and get a drink before being locked out into the hall where the workers sit on the stairs to eat their lunch, stairs where the water leaks down on rainy days.

"Bye and bye," added Teresa, "I got so I felt sick. Every week I would have to go home two or three afternoons. It was such a pain in the pit of my stomach. The doctor said it was because I hurry so."

We continued to ply the child with questions--Had she had any other illness? "Yes, an accident. I was on the stairs one day eating my lunch. One of those big wheels with fire hose around came loose and fell on my head. And I don't know nothing after that for the whole afternoon. But they tell me I had fits. No, they didn't call the doctor--not on your life. They had fear of a damage suit. They gave me a free ride home in their automobile that night. They would get enlargement of the heart and die if they did more. My father called the doctor. He said I should stay home a while and not go back to the mill until I felt good again. The top of my head hurt all the time, but I went back to work after five days. My father he had been on strike nine months and we needed the money."

The father, in the stress of the strike, went to a lawyer to see if there was any way to get the child's $70 of back pay which was being held beyond the contract year on the ground that Teresa, owing to her head, had not worked a full year; but the lawyer said there was no escape from the contract.

In the fourteen weeks since she stopped working under this vicious contract she has gained eleven pounds. It is significant when compared with the fact that during her two years in the mills she gained only six pounds.

"I hate to go back to that mill," said Teresa, as we talked of her future. "I hate always to be fined and screamed at. Maybe a girl wastes a little silk. If they do not know who did it, they fine everyone of youse. Maybe you could not believe it, but they steal our hooks and scissors from us and then we have to buy them back again for thirty-five cents. Then we must clean up the mill Saturdays after twelve. No, we do not get paid for it. They take it out of our holiday."

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"I want always to go back to Italy, but since the strike I am more happy here," with an unconscious gesture toward her heart. "We are all together. We stand solid. My father he says there will always be bosses. I say, 'Yes? Then we shall be the bosses.'

"Yes, I am still a Catholic. These days I feel different. You go to confess and the priest he tries to find out all about the strike and he scolds us that we belong to the union. I like I.W.W. better than God. God, he don't talk for me like I.W.W.

"Yes," said Teresa after the strike, "for me it has paid me. I get 25 per cent increase in my wages. All of us at Bamford's get a raise, and no more children in the mill, so then there will be no more contract system after we have finished our contracts and got our back pay. Nor do they holler at us so.

"The labor inspector, he is on the job, too, since the strike. You should see how he makes Bamford's take a brace. There are guards on the dangerous machinery. There are rattling fire alarms, and there is whitewash all over the place."

"Will this last, do you think?" we asked.

"I don't know. If it don't, we strike again."
Doc. 26: The Working Mother

Carrie Golzio worked as a weaver in the Paterson silk mills for more than fifty years. Her parents were woolen weavers in Biella, in the Piedmont district of Italy, before becoming silk weavers in New Jersey in the 1880s. Golzio was born in 1888, and was already an experienced, skilled weaver when she was married in 1906. Her only child was born in 1909. As a weaver, she participated actively in the 1913 strike by speaking at mass meetings, leading a delegation of children to the mayor, and performing on stage in the strike pageant at Madison Square Garden. Later, in the 1930s, when the weavers successfully organized, she was on the union executive board. Here, in an interview, she expresses her attitudes toward her work.

QUESTIONS: What did Carrie Golzio learn from her father? Why do you think that she didn't stop working in the mills after her son was born? How did she manage her household responsibilities? How does Golzio's career differ from the stereotype of women who worked in the early twentieth century? Why did she want to go on strike in 1913? Do you think that there is a connection between her skill and her militance?

[Carrie Golzio, interview by Steve Golin, June 13, 1983, Haledon, New Jersey ]

My first job I had I went with my father to learn to weave on West Broadway; there was a mill right on the bridge.... My father was a jacquard weaver so he took me in there. I was about 10 years of age.

*   *   *

[The Bosses] were tough, oh they were tough. But I was tough too. That's one thing my father always taught: no matter where you go to work don't let them step on you. That was instilled in me when I was a kid.

*   *   *

With the boy and all I wasn't home a year and a half. I worked all my life. I used to take the boy and take it to my mother's and go pick it up at night and bring it home. That's what I done. I washed, I ironed, and I cooked and I done everything. And I'm here at 95.

*   *   *

[ During the 1913 strike, challenged by her husband:] "What do you want to go out for? Stay home. You don't belong out." "I can't stay home," I said, "I got to go out and fight."
Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was 22 years old during the strike. Of all the out-of-town speakers sent by the IWW to Paterson she was the one who got most involved in the daily life of the strike and became the most popular leader. Flynn was born in New Hampshire and was the daughter of Irish socialists who moved to the south Bronx when she was a girl. Her career as a radical began in 1906 when she was 16 and joined the IWW. Flynn was especially popular among the women, for whom she held regular weekly meetings. Here, in her autobiography, written forty years later, she describes episodes from strike meetings and the Haledon meetings, where she and other leaders spoke from the balcony of the Botto House.

QUESTIONS: Why were the strikers welcome in Haledon? Why did other people come, even from far away? Why were separate strike meetings held for women? for children? Why didn't the women laugh when Carlo Tresca said "More babies?" Why do you think birth control was considered a radical idea in 1913?


The life of a strike depends upon constant activities. In Paterson, as in all IWW strikes, there were mass picketing, daily mass meetings, children's meetings, the sending of many children to New York and New Jersey cities, and the unique Sunday gatherings. These were held in the afternoon in the little town of Haledon, just over the city line from Paterson. The mayor was a Socialist who welcomed us. A striker's family lived there in a two-story house. There was a balcony on the second floor, facing the street, opposite a large green field. It was a natural platform and amphitheatre. Sunday after Sunday, as the days became pleasanter, we spoke there to enormous crowds of thousands of people—the strikers and their families, workers from other Paterson industries, people from nearby New Jersey cities, delegations from New York of trade unionists, students and others. Visitors came from all over America and from foreign countries. People who saw these Haledon meetings never forgot them....

A touching episode occurred in one of our children's meetings. I was speaking in simple language about the conditions of silk workers—why their parents had to strike. I spoke of how little they were paid for weaving the
beautiful silk, like the Lawrence workers who made the fine warm woolen cloth. Yet the textile workers do not wear either woolen or silk, while the rich people wear both. I asked: "Do you wear silk?" They answered in a lively chorus. "No!" I asked: "Does your mother wear silk?" Again there was a loud "No!" But a child's voice interrupted, making a statement. This is what he said: "My mother has a silk dress. My father spoiled the cloth and had to bring it home." The silk worker had to pay for the piece he spoiled and only then did his wife get a silk dress!

We had a woman's meeting, too, in Paterson at which Haywood, Tresca and I spoke. When I told this story to the women clad in shoddy cotton dresses, there were murmurs of approval which confirmed that the child was right—all the silk they ever saw outside the mill was spoiled goods. Tresca made some remarks about shorter hours, people being less tire, more time to spend together and jokingly he said: "More babies." The women did not look amused. When Haywood interrupted and said: "No, Carlo, we believe in birth control—a few babies, well cared for!" they burst into laughter and applause. They gladly agreed to sending the children to other cities and, chastened by the Lawrence experience, the police did not interfere this time.
"Big Bill" Haywood's Account

"Big Bill" Haywood grew up in the West, becoming a miner and later a mine union official and still later, in 1905, a founder of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). At the time of the strike, he was the most famous leader of the IWW. Here, in an article he wrote for the International Socialist Review in the third month of the strike, Haywood celebrates the strength of the strike and highlights his view of the importance of the women strikers.

QUESTIONS: Why does Haywood single out women for praise—how were women helping the strike? How does he think that the strike was helping women? Why do you think he recounts the story about the mother in jail?


...The women have been an enormous factor in the Paterson strike. Each meeting for them has been attended by bigger and bigger crowds. They are becoming deeply interested in the questions of the hour that are confronting women and are rapidly developing the sentiments that go to make up the great feminist movement of the world.

With them it is not a question of equal suffrage but of economic freedom. The women are ready to assume their share of the responsibility, on the picket line, in jail, even to the extent of sending their children away. Hundreds of children already have found good homes with their "strike parents" in New York.

The Mother in Jail.

Among the strikers gathered in by the police was a woman with a nursing baby. She was fined $10 and costs with the alternative of 20 days in jail. She was locked up, but the baby was not allowed to go with her. In twenty-four hours the mother's breasts were filled to bursting, but the baby on the outside was starving. He refused to take any other form of food. In a few more hours the condition of both mother and baby was dangerous, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn went to see Recorder Carroll about the case. She told him unless the baby was allowed to have its mother it would soon die. Recorder Carroll's reply was as follows:

"That's None of My Business."
NEW IMMIGRANTS AND THE MANUFACTURERS' STRATEGY

Doc. 29: Dexter, Lambert & Company

Dexter Lambert's mill was a ribbon-weaving mill. At the beginning of the second week of the general strike, the ribbon weavers of Paterson debated the question of whether to join the broad-silk weavers and dyers' helpers, who had already walked out. Although the issue of four looms did not directly affect them, they finally decided to join the strike en masse, in part to protest the police action against the strikers and the I.W.W. speakers. Here, a short piece from the Paterson Evening News, shows how the manager at Dexter Lambert tried to keep his English speaking weavers from participating in the strike. However, they too soon went out on strike; in fact, five months later, after the general strike had ended, the Dexter Lambert mill was one of eleven mills which continued to be struck by its weavers.

QUESTIONS: Whom do you think the manager meant by "the foreigners?" Why would he send them home after dinner (i.e. lunch) and keep the other weavers at work? Do you agree with the account of the Evening News that it took courage for the forty-one to vote as they did? If you had been the manager, would you have been satisfied with the vote?

[ Paterson Evening News, March 6, 1913, 12. ]

Vote Taken at Dexter & Lambert's

In Dexter & Lambert's mill on Straight street Tuesday, the weavers had a "holiday." The morning previous the "boss" went around to all the "foreigners" and told them not to come after dinner until the trouble was over. At 5 o'clock the power was stopped and a shop meeting called by the boss to determine whether the weavers wanted to go on strike or not. Seventy-five voted "no strike" and forty-one voted "strike," the boss taking tally. This was a rather remarkable showing in the face of the circumstances, and it must have require a considerable amount of courage on the part of that forty-one to stand up and vote as they did.
Document 30: Flag Day

In an attempt to strengthen local sympathies with their position and to divide American-born silk workers from recent immigrants, the manufacturers agreed in March to stage a patriotic celebration by flying the American flag prominently near their mills.

QUESTIONS: What is the meaning of this symbolic action? From the account of the flag raising at the Columbia Ribbon Mill in Haledon what do you learn about the sympathies of the Paterson Morning Call? Who were the workers participating in this ceremony? Why does the reporter take especial note that the flag raiser is an English girl?

(Paterson Morning Call, March 18, 1913)

One of the best manifestations that the silk workers of this city are really not in favor of leaving their work occurred at the Columbia Ribbon company's works, at Haledon, during the snow storm yesterday morning.

In accordance with the general agreement among silk manufacturers, John Grossegebauer, the head of the firm, planned to have a flag raised over his mill, and he also decided that the employees who are working at the present time should have the privilege of participating in this flag raising if they so desire. So shortly after 11 o'clock and just while the snow flurry was at its height, the employees were summoned together and were given an opportunity to draw lots as to who should raise the flag. Numbered tickets were passed out among the employees and the one drawing number one was to have the right of raising the flag. The lot happened to fall to a little English girl. She was told by the superintendent that she need not raise the flag unless she wished to, but the young miss was exceedingly anxious to do so. The employees gathered around the girl, and as the flag, one of the largest in this section, was unfurled to the breeze, the employees sang "The Star Spangled Banner." It was a pretty sight to see the flag going steadily upward through drifting snow and to see the employees gathered around the pole braving the chill wind as they sang the patriotic song.
Doc. 31: The American Federation of Labor and the New Immigrants

The American Federation of Labor (A.F. of L.) had made various attempts to organize Paterson's silk workers into unions, prior to 1913. With the elite of native-born and male silk workers—namely, the highly-skilled loom fixers and horizontal warpers—the A.F. of L. was successful in creating small craft unions. But with the bulk of the weavers, including the Doherty weavers, and with lesser skilled workers, the A.F. of L. failed. During the 1913 strike, with the manufacturers' encouragement, the A.F. of L. opened another recruiting drive in Paterson, hoping to win the weavers over from the I.W.W. and to settle the strike, but again the weavers rejected the A.F. of L. After the strike, testifying to the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations, a local A.F. of L. official, James Starr, tried to explain his organization's lack of success in Paterson. Starr was the head of the Horizontal Warpers' Union, which he had founded twenty years earlier.

QUESTIONS: How does Starr explain the origins of the 1913 strike? Does he sound supportive of the strike? How does he describe the difference between older immigrants, like himself, and the new immigrants? Why do you think he and others like him might have had trouble organizing new immigrants?


Mr. Starr. Well, in regard to the causes [of the 1913 strike] I would state, first of all that in my estimation the cause of most of the trouble was too many immigrants coming into the silk trade that did not thoroughly understand the working of our organizations, or had not become Americanized, and the manufacturers hiring those foreigners at all kinds of wages; and after they had been here then for two or three of four or five years they become Americanized and want a little more than what they had been getting, what they had been hired for in the first place, and consequently they get discouraged and disheartened and they get agitation going on for higher wages and they want to come up to our American standard of living, and want to live better than they have been used to; and when the manufacturer finds out they are starting an agitation he tries to get rid of those and supplant them with other foreigners if he can do it, and in that way the agitation is
kept going on. You might say, of course, why don't we try to organize them? Well it is a hard proposition, in my estimation, to organize most of the foreigners that come over for several years. They are coming in so very fast.... I was a foreigner myself--born on the other side. I had to learn a great deal when I came to America, and have learned a great deal; but some of those other people who come along here perhaps are not so adapted to learning as some others can do, and it takes them a long time to learn and get into American ways and ideas.

Now in regards to the organization, we have tried a great many times since I have been in Paterson and have been connected with our organization to organize the foreigners as we find them and to make a good union man out of him, and also a good American citizen, if possible. In some cases it works and others it does not. The biggest majority, I should say, of the foreigners can't see a form of organization whereby they won't be allowed to strike just as soon as they are organized. They have got some radical ideas in their heads, and until those radicals have been supplanted with others by some kind of organization that don't stand for such things as what they would like to have and like to have carried out, we are going to have trouble going right on with those people.
Late in the strike, a spokesman for the strikers commented to the newspapers on the role of the Italians and Jews in the silk industry.

QUESTIONS: According to the spokesman, how had the role of the Italians and Jews changed? Why do you think that the silk manufacturers were able to pay them less at first? When the spokesman says that the Italians and Jews have become educated, what does he mean?

[Paterson Evening News, July 7, 1913, 1.]

...the manufacturers of Paterson for years have been trying to get the Italians and Jewish workers into the silk because they could get them to work cheaper than the others....but these people are educated now and they have awakened to the fact that they have been exploited and they are tired of it. The Jews and Italians were the most militant of the workers on strike...the manufacturers would like to get...them out of the silk but they will find that impossible.
SOLIDARITY BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS: IWW STRATEGY

Doc. 33: John Reed's Account

John Reed, a radical young Harvard graduate in 1913, was a magazine writer and poet and Greenwich Village bohemian. Reed was present at a small meeting in New York where "Big Bill" Haywood talked about the Paterson strike and the need for publicity. Indignant and intrigued, Reed went to Paterson to see the picket lines and police for himself. Here he describes, in a famous article from The Masses republished in the International Socialist Review, what happened to him when he got there.

QUESTIONS: Do you think Reed minded going to jail? Were the strikers ashamed of being in jail? Why did they argue with the Deputy Sheriff? What does Reed mean by the "active" strikers? According to Reed, which ethnic groups were well represented among the active strikers and which group or groups were poorly represented? What impact did jailing have on the strikers? How did Reed's experiences with Italians and Jews in jail change his attitude toward them? What, in turn, did he have to offer them?

War in Paterson

By John Reed

From "The Masses."

There's war in Paterson. But it's a curious kind of war. All the violence is the work of one side—the Mill Owners. Their servants, the Police, club unresisting men and women and ride down law-abiding crowds on horseback. Their paid mercenaries, the armed Detectives shoot and kill innocent people. Their newspapers, the Paterson Press and the Paterson Call, publish incendiary and crime-inciting appeals to mob-violence against the strike leaders. Their tool, Recorder Carroll, deals out heavy sentences to peaceful pickets that the police-net gathers up. They control absolutely the Police, the Press, the Courts.

Opposing them are about twenty-five thousand striking silk-workers, of whom perhaps ten thousand are active, and their weapon is the picket-line. Let me tell you what I saw in Paterson and then you will say which side of this struggle is "anarchistic" and "contrary to American ideals."

At six o'clock in the morning a light rain was falling. Slate-grey and cold, the streets of Paterson were deserted. But soon came the Cops—twenty of them—strolling along with their night-sticks under their arms. We went ahead of them toward the mill district. Now we began to see workmen going in the same direction, coat collars turned up, hands in their pockets. We came into a long street, one side of which was lined with silk mills, the other side with the wooden tenement houses. In every doorway, at every window of the houses clustered foreign-faced men and women, laughing and chatting as if after breakfast on a holiday. There seemed no sense of expectancy, no strain or feeling of fear. The sidewalks were almost empty, only over in front of the mills a few couples—there couldn't have been more than fifty—marched slowly up and down, dripping with the rain. Some were men, with here and there a man and woman together, or two young boys. As the warmer light of full day came the people drifted out of their houses and began to pace back and forth, gathering in little knots on the corners. They were quick with gesticulating hands, and low-voiced conversation. They looked often toward the corners of side streets.

Suddenly appeared a policeman, swinging his club. "Ah-h-h!" said the crowd softly.

Six men had taken shelter from the rain under the canopy of a saloon. "Come on! Get out of that!" yelled the policemen, advancing. The men quietly obeyed. "Get off this street! Go on home, now! Don't be standing here!" They gave way before him in silence, drifting back again when he turned away. Other policemen materialized, hustling, cursing, brutal, ineffectual. No one answered back. Nervous, bleary-eyed, unshaven, these officers were worn out with nine weeks incessant strike duty.

On the mill side of the street the picket-line had grown to about four hundred. Several policemen shouldered roughly among them, looking for trouble. A workman appeared, with a tin pail, escorted by two detectives. "Boo! Boo!" shouted a few scattered voices. Two Italian boys leaned against the mill fence and shouted a merry Irish threat, "Scab! Come outa here I knocka you' head off!" A policeman grabbed the boys roughly by the shoulder. "Get to hell out of here!" he cried, jerking and pushing them violently to the corner, where he kicked them. Not a voice, not a movement from the crowd.

A little further along the street we saw a young woman with an umbrella, who had been picketing, suddenly confronted by a big policeman.

"What the hell are you doing here?" he roared. "God damn you, go home!" and he jammed his club against her mouth. "I no go home!" she shrilled
passionately, with blazing eyes. "You biggsta stiffl!"

Silently, steadfastly, solidly the picket-line grew. In groups or in couples the strikers patrolled the sidewalk. There was no more laughing. They looked on with eyes full of hate. These were fiery-blooded Italians, and the police were the same brutal thugs that had beaten them and insulted them for nine weeks. I wondered how long they could stand it.

It began to rain heavily. I asked a man's permission to stand on the porch of his house. There was a policeman standing in front of it. His name, I afterwards discovered, was McCormack. I had to walk around him to mount the steps. Suddenly he turned round, and shot at the owner: "Do all them fellows live in that house?" The man indicated the three other strikers and himself, and shook his head at me.

"Then you get to hell off of there!" said the cop, pointing his club at me.

"I have the permission of this gentleman to stand here," I said. "He owns this house."

"Never mind! Do what I tell you! Come off of there, and come off damn quick!"

"I'll do nothing of the sort."

With that he leaped up the steps, seized my arm, and violently jerked me to the sidewalk. Another cop took my arm and they gave me a shove.

"Now you get to hell off this street!" said Officer McCormack.

"I won't get off this street or any other street. If I'm breaking any law, you arrest me!"

Officer McCormack, who is doubtless a good, stupid Irishman in time of peace, is almost helpless in a situation that requires thinking. He was dreadfully troubled by my request. He didn't want to arrest me, and said so with a great deal of profanity.

"I've got your number," said I sweetly.

"Now will you tell me your name?"

"Yes," he bellowed, "an' I got your number! I'll arrest you." He took me by the arm and marched me up the street.

He was sorry he had arrested me. There was no charge he could lodge against me. I hadn't been doing anything. He felt he must make me say something that could be construed as a violation of the Law. To which end he God damned me harshly, loading me with abuse and obscenity, and threatened me with his night-stick, saying, "You big ___ ___ lug, I'd like to beat the hell out of you with this club."

I returned airy persilglage to his threats.

Other officers came to the rescue—two of them—and supplied fresh epithets. I soon found them repeating themselves, however, and told them so. "I had to come all the way to Paterson to put one over on a cop!" I said. Eureka! They had at last found a crime! When I was arraigned in the Recorder's Court that remark of mine was the charge against me!

Ushered into the patrol-wagon, I was driven with much clanging of gongs along the picket-line. Our passage was greeted with "Boos" and ironical cheers, and enthusiastic waving. At Headquarters I was interrogated and lodged in the lock-up. My cell was about four feet wide by seven feet long, at least a foot higher than a standing man's head, and it contained an iron bunk hung from the side-wall with chains, and an open toilet of disgusting dirtiness in the corner. A crowd of pickets had been jammed into the same lock-up only three days before, eight or nine in a cell, and kept there without food or water for twenty-two hours! Among them a young girl of seventeen, who had led a procession right up to the Police Sergeant's nose and defied him to arrest them. In spite of the horrible discomfort, fatigue and thirst, these prisoners had never let up cheering and singing for a day and a night!

In about an hour the outside door clanged open, and in came about forty pickets in charge of the police, joking and laughing among themselves. They were hustled into the cells, two in each. Then pandemonium broke loose! With one accord the heavy iron beds were lifted and slammed thunderingly against the metal walls. It was like a cannon battery in action. "Hooray for I. W. W.!" screamed a voice. And unanimously answered all the voices as one, "Hooray!"

"Hooray for Chief Bums!" (Chief of Police Bimson).

"Doo-o-o-o-o!" roared forty pairs of lungs—a great boom of echoing sound that had
more of hate in it than anything I ever heard.

"To hell wit' Mayor McBride!"

"Boo-o-o-o-o!" It was an awful voice in that reverberant iron room, full of menace.

"Hooray for Haywood! One bigga da Union! Hooray for da Strike! To hell wit' da police! Boo-o-o-o-o! Boo-o-o-o-o! Hooray! Killa da A. F. of L! A. F. of Hell, you mean! Boo-o-o-o-o!"

"Musica! Musica!" cried the Italians, like children. Whereupon one voice went "Plunk-plunk! Plunk-plunk!" like a guitar, and another, a rich tenor, burst into the first verse of the Italian-English song, written and composed by one of the strikers to be sung at the strike meetings. He came to the chorus:

"Do you lika Miss J'lynn?"
(Chorus) "Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!"

"Do you lika Carlo Tesca?"
(Chorus) "Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!"

"Do you lika Mayor McBride?"
(Chorus) "No! No! No! No!"

"Hooray for I. W. W.!!"

"Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!!!"

"Bist Bist!" shouted everybody, clapping hands, banging the beds up and down. An officer came in and attempted to quell the noise. He was met with "Boos" and jeers. Some one called for water. The policeman filled a tin cup and brought it to the cell door. A hand reached out swiftly and slapped it out of his fingers on the floor. "Scab! Thug!" they yelled. The policemen retreated. The noise continued.

The time approached for the opening of the Recorder's Court, but word had evidently been brought that there was no more room in the County Jail, for suddenly the police appeared and began to open the cell doors. And so the strikers passed out, cheering wildly. I could hear them outside, marching back to the picket-line with the mob who had waited for them at the jail gates.

And then I was taken before the Court of Recorder Carroll. Mr. Carroll has the intelligent, cruel, merciless face of the ordinary police court magistrate. But he is worse than most police court magistrates. He sentences beggars to six months' imprisonment in the County Jail without a chance to answer back. He also sends little children there, where they mingle with dope-fiends, and tramps, and men with running sores upon their bodies—to the County Jail, where the air is foul and insufficient to breathe, and the food is full of dead vermin, and grown men become insane.

Mr. Carroll read the charge against me. I was permitted to tell my story. Officer McCormack recited a clever mélange of lies that I am sure he himself could never have concocted. "John Reed," said the Recorder. "Twenty days." That was all.

And so it was that I went up to the County Jail. In the outer office I was questioned again, searched for concealed weapons, and my money and valuables taken away. Then the great barred door swung open and I went down some steps into a vast room lined with three tiers of cells. About eighty prisoners strolled around, talked, smoked, and ate the food sent in to them by those outside. Of this eighty almost half were strikers. They were in their street clothes, held in prison under $500 bail to await the action of the Grand Jury. Surrounded by a dense crowd of short, dark-faced men, Big Bill Haywood towered in the center of the room. His big hand made simple gestures as he explained something to them. His massive, rugged face, seamed and scarred like a mountain, and as calm, radiated strength. These slight, foreign-faced strikers, one of many desperate little armies in the vanguard of the battle line of Labor, quickened and strengthened by Bill Haywood's face and voice, looked up at him lovingly, eloquently. Faces deadened and dulled with grinding routine in the sunless mills glowed with hope and understanding. Faces scarred and bruised from policemen's clubs grinned eagerly at the thought of going back on the picket line. And there were other faces, too—lined and sunken with the slow starvation of a nine weeks' poverty—shadowed with the sight of so much suffering, or the hopeless brutality of the police—and there were those who had seen Modestino Valentino shot to death by a private detective. But not one showed discouragement; not one a sign of faltering or of fear. As one little Italian said to me, with blazing eyes: "We all one bigga da Union. I. W. W. —
dat word is pierced de heart of de people!”

“Yes! Yes! Dass righ’! I. W. W.!
One birga da Union”—they murmured with suit, cager voices, crowding around.

I shook hands with Haywood, who introduced me to Pat Quinlan, the thin-faced, fiery Irishman now under indictment for speeches inciting to riot.

“Boys,” said Haywood, indicating me, “this man wants to know things. You tell him everything”—

They crowded around me, shaking my hand, smiling, welcoming me. “Too bad you get in jail,” they said, sympathetically. “We tell you ever’t’ing. You ask. We tell you. Yes. Yes. You good feller.”

And they did. Most of them were still weak and exhausted from their terrible night before in the lock-up. Some had been lined up against a wall, as they marched to and fro in front of the mills, and herded to jail on the charge of unlawful assemblage.” Others had been clubbed into the patrol wagon on the charge of “rioting,” as they stood at the track, on their way home from picketing, waiting for a train to pass! They were being held for the Grand Jury that indicted Haywood and Gruley Flynn. Four of these jurymen were silk manufacturers, another the head of the local Edison company—which Haywood tried to organize for a strike—and not one a workingman!

“We not take bail,” said another, shaking his head. “We stay here. Fill up de damn jail. Pretty soon no more room. Pretty soon can’t arrest no more picket!”

It was visitors’ day. I went to the door to speak with a friend. Outside the reception room was full of women and children, carrying packages, and pasteboard boxes, and pails full of dainties and little comforts lovingly prepared, which meant hungry and ragged wives and babies, so that the men might be comfortable in jail. The place was full of the sound of moaning; tears ran down their work-roughened faces; the children looked up at their fathers’ unshaven faces through the bars and tried to reach them with their hands.

“What nationalities are all the people?”
I asked. There were Dutchmen, Italians, Belgians, Jews, Slovaks, Germans, Poles. “What nationalities stick together on the picket line?”

A young Jew, pallid and sick-looking from insufficient food, spoke up proudly. “Tree great nations stick togedder like dis.” He made a fist. “Tree great nations—Italians, Hebrews an’ Germans;”—

“But how about the Americans?”

This sad fact appears to be true. It was the English-speaking group that held back during the Lawrence strike. It is the English-speaking contingent that remains passive at Paterson, while the “wops,” the “kikes,” the “hunkies”—the “degraded and ignorant races from Southern Europe”—go out and get clubbed on the picket line and gaily take their medicine in Paterson jail.

But just as they were telling me these things the keeper ordered me to the “convicted room,” where I was pushed into a bath and compelled to put on regulation prison clothes. I shan’t attempt to describe the horrors I saw in that room. Suffice it to say that forty-odd men lounged about a long corridor lined on one side with cells; that the only ventilation and light came from one small skylight up a funnel-shaped air shaft; that one man had syphilitic sores on his legs and was treated by the prison doctor with sugar pills for “nervousness”; that a 17-year-old boy who had never been sentenced had remained in that corridor without ever seeing the sun for over nine months; that a cocaine fiend was getting his “dope” regularly from the inside, and that the background of this and much more was the monotonous and terrible shouting of a man who had lost his mind in that hell hole and who walked among us.

There were about fourteen strikers in the “convicted” room—Italians, Lithuan-ians, Poles, Jews, one Frenchman and one “free-born” Englishman! That English-
man was a peach. He was the only Anglo-Saxon striker in prison except the leaders—and perhaps the only one who had been there for picketing. He had been sentenced for insulting a mill owner who came out of his mill and ordered him off the sidewalk. "Wait till I get out!" he said to me. "If them damned English-speaking workers don't go on picket I'll put the curse o' Cromwell on 'em!"

Then there was a Pole—an aristocratic, sensitive chap, a member of the local Strike Committee, a born fighter. He was reading Bob Ingersoll's lectures, translating them to the others. Patting the book, he said with a slow smile: "Now I don't care if I stay in here one year." One thing I noticed was the utter and reasonable religion of the strikers—the Italians, the Frenchmen—the strong Catholic races, in short—and the Jews, too.

"Priests, it is a profesh'. De priest, he gotta work same as any workin' man. If we ain't gotta no damn Church we been strikin' t'ree hundred years ago. Priest, he iss all a time keeping workin' man down!"

And then, with laughter, they told me how the combined clergy of the city of Paterson had attempted from their pulpits to persuade them back to work—a back to wage slavery and the tender mercies of the mill owners on grounds of religion! They told me of that disgraceful and ridiculous conference between the Clergy and the Strike Committee, with the Clergy in the part of Judas. It was hard to believe that until I saw in the paper the sermon delivered the previous day at the Presbyterian Church by the Reverend William A. Littell. He had the impudence to flay the strike leaders and advise workmen to be respectful and obedient to their employers—to tell them that the saloons were the cause of their unhappiness—to proclaim the horrible depravity of Sabbath-breaking workmen, and more rot of the same sort. And this while living men were fighting for their very existence and singing gloriously of the Brotherhood of Man!

The lone Frenchman was a lineal descendant of the Republican doctrinaires of the French Revolution. He had been a Democrat for thirteen years, then suddenly had become converted to Socialism. Blazing with excitement, he went round bubbling with arguments. He had the same blind faith in Institutions that characterized his ancestors, the same intense fanaticism, the same willingness to die for an idea. Most of the strikers were Socialists already—but the Frenchman was bound to convert every man in that prison. All day long his voice could be heard, words rushing forth in a torrent, to: a rising to a shout, until the keeper would shut him up with a curse. When the fat deputy sheriff from the outer office came into the room the Frenchman made a dive for him, too.

"You're not producing anything," he'd say, eyes snapping, finger waving violently up and down, long nose and dark, excited face within an inch of the deputy's. "You're an unproductive worker—under Socialism we'll get what we're working for—we'll get all we make. Capital's not necessary. Of course it ain't! Look at the Post Office—is there any private capital in that? Look at the Panama Canal. That's Socialism. The American Revolution was a smugglers' war. Do you know what is the Economic Determinism?" This getting swifter and swifter, louder and louder, more and more fragmentary, while a close little circle of strikers massed round the Deputy, watching his face like hounds on a trail, waiting till he opened his mouth to ridicule his bewildered arguments with a dozen swift retorts. "Trained debaters, all these, in their Locals. For a few minutes the Deputy would try to answer them, and then, driven into the corner, he'd suddenly sweep his arm furiously around, and bellow:

"Shut up, you damned cagos, or I'll clap you in the dungeon!" And the discussion would be closed.

Then there was the strike breaker. He was a fat man, with sunken, flabby cheeks, jailed by some mistake of the Recorder. So completely did the strikers ostracize him—rising and moving away when he sat by them, refusing to speak to him, absolutely ignoring his presence—that he was in a pitiable condition of loneliness.

"I've learned my lesson," he moaned. "I ain't never goin' to scat on working men no more!"

One young Italian came up to me with
a newspaper and pointed to three items in turn. One was "American Federation of Labor hopes to break the strike next week"; another, "Victor Berger says 'I am a member of the A. F. of L., and I have no love for the I. W. W. in Paterson,'" and the third, "Newark Socialists refuse to help the Paterson Strikers."


But I could not explain. All I could say was that a good share of the Socialist Party and the American Federation of Labor have forgotten all about the Class Struggle, and seem to be playing a little game with Capitalistic rules, called "Button, button, who's got the Vote!"

When it came time for me to go out I said good-bye to all those gentle, alert, brave men, ennobled by something greater than themselves. They were the strike—not Bill Haywood, not Gurley Flynn, not any other individual. And if they should lose all their leaders other leaders would arise from the ranks, even as they rose, and the strike would go on! Think of it! Twelve years they have been losing strikes—twelve solid years of disappointments and incalculable suffering. They must not lose again! They can not lose!

And as I passed out through the front room they crowded around me again, patting my sleeve and my hand, friendly, warm hearted, trusting, eloquent. Haywood and Quinlan had gone out on bail.

"You go out," they said softly. "Thass nice. Glad you go out. Prissy soon we go out. Then we go back on picket line."
Doc. 34: Strike Meetings

At a mass meeting in the fifth week of the strike, Bill Haywood sought volunteers from the audience to come up on the stage and tell in their own language what the strike meant to them.

QUESTIONS: Why would Haywood try this experiment? What qualities did members of the audience need in order to listen patiently to fellow workers who spoke a language different from their own?


He asked a crowd made up of perhaps twenty-five nationalities to select as many delegates, whom he sat on the stage in a row, calling upon them in turn to say a few words. The crowd had been on strike several weeks; which means that for several weeks those men, women and children had slept their fill, rested their limbs, listened for hours to argumentation, read pamphlets; their bodies and their minds were undergoing a crucial change; races were commingling, united by the same hopes; bold, energetic men with a halo of romance had come from the ends of the continent to lead their fight. Bellies were empty perhaps, but hunger is not so fierce in idleness as in time of factory speeding. A carnival spirit pervaded the hall; and the twenty-five were lined up on the platform, self-conscious, with the weak jaw of the scared or the swagger of the panicky.

Some of them rushed to the front when called upon and repeated stock phrases; these Haywood encouraged, in order to give heart to the others. Some launched upon a lecture. Some stuttered in a choked whisper; Haywood repeated their words, editing them a little for the benefit of the last row in the audience. Some were ridiculous and called forth a storm of mock applause and giggling. Haywood reminded the audience of the fact that the hardest workers are not the best talkers. When a sweet-faced, child-like girl, the Italian delegate, almost ran off the stage in a fit of fright, Haywood, with the attitude of a father to his young daughter or of a courtier to a princess, came to her, took her hand and with a bow presented her to the audience. And the girl feeling safe under the protection of the tall Cyclop, found something to say and the voice to say it.
Doc. 35: A Child's Perspective

A. Sophie Cohen was nine years old during the strike. Her father, a Jewish immigrant and strike sympathizer, took her to some strike meetings. Here she describes what happened in the audience at the huge outdoor meetings on Sunday in Haledon.

QUESTIONS: What does Cohen mean by "you didn't think?" Why was singing so important to the 1913 strike, and why did the IWW encourage it? Why do you think Cohen remembered the words of the song almost 70 years later?

[ Sophie Cohen, interviewed by Steve Golin, Youngsville, New York, December 27, 1981]

We'd all go [to Haledon] together. So the Italians came there and the Jewish people and so forth. Usually the Italians used to congregate by themselves, and the Jews. But the children—we used to run and bring [beer, etc.] back to the old folks. It made no difference. You didn't thing. Everyone spoke broken English (laughs). No one spoke perfect English, whether you were Italian or Jewish. And then when they sang songs, everyone sang, as best as they could....We had a song, that's not in the Wobbly songbook but something that was made up there and I remember it was either Gurley Flynn or Tresca would get up and they would have everyone present sing. Now the only way they could come through to them is

Do you like Mr. Boss?
No. No. No.
Do you like Miss Flynn?
Yes. Yes. Yes.
The IWW--hurray, hurray!

B. Later, as a teenager, Cohen worked in the silk mills and helped organize for the IWW in Paterson. Much later, she became a member of a traditional AFL/CIO union. Here, in two separate interviews, she tries to articulate the difference between the IWW and other unions.

QUESTIONS: According to Cohen, was the IWW revolutionary? IWW goals were far in the future; how could they help a worker living in the present in 1913? Does Cohen's description of the IWW help explain the attractiveness of the IWW to immigrant silk workers in 1913?
INTERVIEWER: What was that difference like?

COHEN: I think the difference was, in one way, the AF of L and that is, the trade unions were ... at least the IWW would not only fight for better conditions, a little more money, but also would give you a vision. You had something more to fight for, and towards. There was something that promised you to be a human being, took you out of the slavery. The others didn't. All they wanted was a few pennies more now. To quote, "to be a good and willing slave for the rest of your days," and that's about all. The IWW feels that with new values you can create a society where at least a person can live as a human being could.

INTERVIEWER: What did the IWW really want?
COHEN: We really thought we were building a new society. It wasn't only hours, it wasn't only an increase in pay. It was changing everything; that's what we felt.

The IWW brought us all together, Italians, Jews, Irish. We used to have family picnics, whole families. It was not just a union. The IWW stood for education and building a new world. We felt we had to educate ourselves to learn about history and literature. We studied, we listened to speeches.

We had to be rebels. There was no other choice.
Doc. 36: Going to Haledon

Among the many people who came to Haledon for the Sunday meetings were Socialists from New York City. Here Richard Perin, a member of the Socialist Party, urges his fellow Socialists to go to Haledon.

QUESTIONS: What good could outsiders do for the strikers by going to the meetings? What good does Perin think that they could do for themselves? In what way did he overestimate the power of the strikers?

[Richard Perin, "Go to Haledon," New York Call, May 17, 1913, 6.]

Go To Haledon

To any one who is convinced of the existence of the class struggle and who desires to further the solidarity of the workers upon the economic field (as does every genuine socialist), a trip to Haledon, N.J., on one of these five Sunday afternoons in May will prove a most inspiring event.

There may be seen the visible evidences of solidarity, the realization of that ideal. And the ideal itself, fine and inspiring as it is, pales before the fact.

Imagine a squalid little street crossing the trolley line leading into Paterson, some two miles away, a narrow little street which after three of four blocks ends abruptly in a wooded slope. The writer traveled from Paterson on the trolley and was just about to ask the conductor where the strikers were meeting when he happened to look up this little street. No questions were necessary. The closely packed thousands of heads at the end of the street could mean but one thing - the weekly meeting of mutual encouragement and heartening held by the IWW. The sight was inspiring and uplifting. These thousands, most of whom had trudged all the way from their Paterson homes on foot, had come there to be near one another, to give and to receive encouragement by close contact with their fellow workers.

The immense crowd was so calm, so self-contained, and yet study of individual faces convinced the observer that is was not the calm of apathy, but the quiet bearing which goes with the invincible determination to win, with firm courage in spite of gnawing hunger and vile oppression. For many of the faces showed traces left by hungry days and supperless nights. But there was hardly a face among them which showed the slightest sign of desperation.
These people had been born in all the four quarters of the globe, and yet they stood there, friendly shoulder pressed close to friendly shoulder, and between those of the most diverse tongues was never a shadow of suspicion. Indeed, why should there be, for they are all fellow soldiers in a righteous cause. And are conscious of that fact, as was plainly evident in the unanimous chanting of the phrase, "One for all and all for one. We will never work more than eight hours a day." Imagine that roared out, finally, by many thousands in perfect unison!

The strike at Paterson is almost won. Another ten days and it will be won - if the working class outside of Paterson does its plain and obvious duty. Let each give all that he or she can spare, whether it be much or little, and if the giver wishes to be rewarded for this contribution to the cause of solidarity, let him take the short trip to Haledon and his reward will far exceed his expectations.

There are many, many members of the Socialist Party who condemn the IWW and its propaganda, but the writer would say to everyone of these: "Go to Haledon, and see what you will see. Go to Paterson and observe with open eyes and open heart."

No organization which can realize the marvelous solidarity of the workers now in evidence in the Paterson strike can be condemned by any sincere and genuine socialist for trivial differences, whether of theory or of practice, for dislike or distrust of leading personalities, or, in fact for any reason. We are preaching the solidarity of the working class, the IWW is not only preaching the same thing, but realizing it, making it an accomplished fact. Who will throw the first stone?
1,000 SILK STRIKERS
PRESENT
GREAT LABOR PAGEANT

   Workers Dead.
   Strike.

2. Mills Dead.
   Workers Alive.
   Picketing and
   Police Brutality:
   Proletario's
   Order.

3. Funeral Scene:
   Yelling Our Dead.
   Strikers' Edge.

   Sending the Children to New York Strike Parents.

5. Haledon Mass Meeting.
   Strike Songs by Paterson Composers
   Internationale, Marsellaise, Red Flag.
   1,000 Voices.

6. Turn Hall Meeting.
   Direct Action Makes
   an Eight-Hour Day.
   Haywood, Gurley
   Flynn, Carlo Tresca.

THE PAGEANT OF THE PATERNSON STRIKE
PERFORMED BY THE STRIKERS THEMSELVES.
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 8:30 PM.

BOXES $2.00 TO $10. SEATS $2, $3, $6, $8, $10.
Doc. 37: The Strike Pageant

After Valentino Modesto's death on April 17th, Haywood described his funeral and other events of the strike to a small group of New Yorkers, meeting in a Greenwich Village apartment. He expressed frustration about the newspaper coverage of the strike in New York, and said he wished New Yorkers could see the strike for themselves. "I wish I could show them a picture of the funeral of Modesto," he said. Two Villagers who were there--John Reed and Mabel Dodge--suggested bringing the strike to New York in the form of a mass play. Three weeks later rehearsals of the play began in Paterson, led by Reed. On Saturday, June 7, with the strike still going on in Paterson, the play was performed in Madison Square Garden by the strikers themselves--over 1,100 of them, playing themselves and the strike-breakers and the police. It was called the Paterson Pageant. This advertisement for the Pageant appeared five days before the event, in the New York Call, which was a Socialist newspaper. It lists the six scenes of the Pageant.

QUESTIONS: Why is the first scene (described by Grace Potter in Document 38) called "The Mills Alive. The Workers Dead"? Why did the fifth scene, of a Haledon meeting, feature singing? What does the advertisement mean by "direct action makes an Eight-Hour Day"? Is the mood of the ad hopeful or gloomy? Does the drawing aim at making you feel sorry for the strikers?

[New York Call, June 2, 1913, 2.]
Doc. 38: An Account of the Pageant

Grace Potter, a New York psychologist who saw the Paterson strike Pageant, described the beginning of the play, as she and the rest of the audience experienced it, in an article she wrote for The New Review.

QUESTIONS: Was the Pageant good publicity? What could the Pageant show that even a good article could not show?


First we saw the mill, stretching its black stoves menacingly to the sky. Its windows were lit, its whistles blowing. We watched the still sleepy men, women and children, with their coat collars turned up to keep out the chill of the early morning--it was in February the strike began--we watched them swallowed, one by one, through the mill's hungry door. Then the unending whirr of iron-hearted machinery began. It seemed to us, waiting out there in the audience that the machinery was grinding those workers to pieces. We thought of industrial accidents and diseases, of how terrible toil sucked all life, all initiative out of the workers. They were dying, and it was the same all over the world. We held our breath, and then --something happened. The machinery stopped grinding. A faint free cry rises slowly, to deafening hosannas from the thousand throats as the workers rush from the mill. They wave their hands, they shout, they dance, then embrace each other in a social passion that pales individual feeling to nothing. They are a mad mob, glad and beautiful in their madness. They sing the Marseillaise. The strike is on!...Here and there, from the balcony, the boxes, and the great main floor, the sound of sobbing that was drowned in singing proved that the audience had 'got' Paterson.
THE ISSUE OF THE IWW

Doc. 39: The Mayor's View

Dr. Andrew F. McBride was the mayor of Paterson in 1913. Testifying to the federal Commission on Industrial Relations the following year, McBride insisted that the silk workers had gone out on strike for a lark in the beginning. Thompson, the Commission's lawyer, pressed McBride to explain why the silk workers had not then returned to work when the strike stopped being a lark, when they were suffering and hungry. The rest of their exchange is below.

QUESTIONS: Whom did McBride mean when he spoke of outside agitators? Did he take the concerns of the silk strikers seriously? Is his view of the cause of the strike closer to the view of the strikers or the manufacturers? Did it matter which side McBride favored? As a long-time doctor in Paterson, McBride knew many silk workers personally; why wasn't he able to talk with them during the strike?


McBRIDE: The agitators preached if there was any break in the line...the bosses would become more arrogant and conditions would become more intolerable and finally they would be treated just like slaves....THOMPSON: And these people had been working in the mills for some time before they went out on strike? McBRIDE: Yes.
THOMPSON: They were acquainted with their employers?
McBRIDE: Largely, I believe.
THOMPSON: But in your opinion they preferred to take the word and say-so of outside agitators who came in at that time, and so they stayed out?
McBRIDE: Why, many of them were absolutely influenced by the preaching of the outside agitators. They believed everything that was told them, and they worshipped them really as heroes, and you could not talk with them.
Doc. 40: The View of the "Best People"

John Fitch was a writer for The Survey, a Progressive magazine with a national audience. He came to Paterson in the middle of the strike and spoke to everyone he could, asking them about their perceptions of the issues.

QUESTIONS: Who does Fitch mean by the "best people?" What struck Fitch about the attitude of these people? Why do you think these people focussed their attention on the IWW leaders, rather than on the strikers themselves? How would these law-abiding citizens have justified using force to drive the IWW leaders out of Paterson? As for the manufacturers, was it really the IWW to which they were opposed—or unions as such?


Now it is Paterson, N.J., that is in a turmoil over the I.W.W. The strike that has tied up the entire silk industry there has been on since February 25. It cannot be without cause that working people numbering tens of thousands continue on strike, their incomes absolutely cut off, for a period of three months. Yet there is very little talk in Paterson today outside the ranks of the strikers, about the grievances, real or imagined, of the silk workers. In the offices, stores and cafes, in the meetings of the ministerial association, in the Charity Organization Society, in most of the papers and at the firesides of the more comfortable citizens, there is but one topic of conversation—the I.W.W.

There is a special reason for the feeling prevailing in Paterson. Justly or unjustly, Paterson has long been noted as the home of anarchists. In remote corners of the continent this report has found its way where nothing else about the New Jersey city is known. The citizens of Paterson know that there is ordinarily as little disorder in their town as in any other of its size. They know that, besides this, it is an unusually attractive place in which to live, with its comfortable houses, wide lawns and broad streets lined with trees. It has been said that there are no slums in Paterson, and while this may not be exactly true, comfortable and sanitary housing conditions seem to be more general than is the rule among industrial cities.

It is but natural that there should be resentment at the popular misconceptions regarding Paterson—misconceptions based as much upon ignorance of what anarchy
is as upon lack of familiarity with the town itself. Perhaps it is also natural that this should have led to an unusually violent reaction against the I.W.W. when the revolutionary leaders of that organization appeared in Paterson. But, after all, the sentiment there differs only in degree, if at all, from that existing in every other place where there have been I.W.W. strikes.

"The I.W.W. must go" is the sentiment that has prevailed at every council of disinterested citizens anxious to aid in ending the strike. On April 9 a great meeting was held in Paterson called by the Board of Aldermen to discuss the strike. The clergy of Paterson were there. They had been holding meetings for several weeks—Jews, Catholics and Protestants, all together—trying to find a reasonable basis for a settlement. I do not recall having observed in any other city such active and united interest in social and industrial matters, on the part of the clergy. They came to this meeting with some resolutions. The first of these put the ministers on record as having sympathy for the unfortunate and as favoring justice for all men. The second declared that "any strike is foredoomed to failure if led by men who proclaim the doctrine of sabotage, lawlessness and the dissolution of society." Later the chairman of the committee of ministers said to the audience, made up principally of striking silk workers: "Gentlemen, I wish to inform you than one of the things which the clergy do not approve of is the leadership of the working people by anyone except the silk workers of Paterson."

The manufacturers were represented at this meeting by one of their number who read a statement embodying the views of the manufacturers' associations. The statement read as follows:

"FIRST: We have at all times declined to meet any committee of employees representing strikers as a body, knowing, as we do, that they are completely dominated by the I.W.W.

"SECOND: On the other hand, individually, we have always been and are still willing to meet our own employees, who are independent of the I.W.W., to discuss any grievances they may have."

Among the professional people and the well-to-do in Paterson the feeling is quite general that the strikers may reasonably be expected to repudiate Haywood and the other leaders before any negotiation looking to a settlement can be entered into by the employers. In talking with some of the business and professional people, I have been much interested when some said that the "outside agitators" had no right to come to Paterson, and others, upon what authority I do not know, that some of the I.W.W. leaders are
persons of unconventional morals and that for that reason the strikers should repudiate them.

In spite of these statements, it is clear that the reason for the opposition is not that the leaders are from out of town, for the very people who opposed them on that ground welcomed the representatives of the American Federation of Labor who came from Massachusetts to organize a "respectable" union. Nor is the opposition due to any belief, however sincere, that the leaders are immoral, for I found none who made this charge who would say that all of the several hundred employers affected, none of whom are being asked to leave town, are men whose private lives are above criticism.

So these reasons are evidently not the real basis of the opposition. Rather, as a prominent Paterson clergyman said, "the crux of the matter is the I.W.W."

What has impressed me more than anything else is the attitude of the so-called "best people." They find it difficult to talk calmly about the I.W.W. More than once I have had Patersonians, wearing immaculate linen and irreproachable clothing, men who pride themselves on preserving the amenities, shouting at me, red-faced and gesticulating, their denunciations of Haywood and his fellows.

"These people never should have been permitted to come here at all," said one; "but having come they should be driven out. It is to the disgrace of Paterson that they have been allowed to remain."

A prominent business man with whom I talked told me with a calmness that carried conviction what he thought was the temper of the citizens of Paterson. He said:

"There is a feeling that the police have made mistakes and those mistakes are regretted, but there would nevertheless be no hesitancy about supporting the police in any action they might choose to take looking to a curtailing of the power and influence of the I.W.W. If the police had gone to the station the day the agitators first arrived, put them back on the train and compelled them to leave, or if they had by any other method deported them from this community they would have received general approbation and support."

"But," I ventured, "it would not be lawful for the police to take such action."

"No," he replied, "it wouldn't."

"It would generally be considered very dangerous to set aside some other law in that way--say the laws protecting property rights," I suggested.

"It would be," was his answer.

"Then it makes a difference on which foot the shoe is."
"That's just what it does," said he, "a big difference."

So there you have it. Paterson, like every other place where the I.W.W. has appeared, denounces the leaders of this new organization as preachers of violence, lawlessness and anarchy; and then proposes that methods frankly violent, lawless and anarchistic be used against them. I use the word "proposes" advisedly. It has gone beyond mere generalization and has reached the state of concrete proposal.

At a meeting of citizens who had formed themselves into a voluntary conciliation board, one of the members was quoted as saying that at Akron, Ohio, recently a committee of citizens had "driven the anarchistic horde" out of town, and that the example thus set should be followed in Paterson. "The sooner they are gotten out the better," said this conciliator. If this were not done, he declared that the city would have to go out of business. "But if we have to go down and out, let us go down fighting."

A leading afternoon paper published in Paterson had openly and repeatedly with display editorials on its front page urged the formation of vigilance committees to drive out the agitators. It sent an inquiry to San Diego to learn in detail the methods employed there. It published the reply, which, however, omitted some of the facts and urged that the example be followed in Paterson.

"Los Angeles, Akron, Denver, Ottawa and other cities kicked the I.W.W. out of town in short order," said this paper one day, adding significantly, "What is Paterson doing to discourage this revolutionary horde?" Another time, referring to Haywood, this appeal was featured at the end of a front page editorial:

"Akron, Ohio, could not find a law to banish this dangerous revolutionist and his cohorts, but a citizens' committee of 1,000 men did the trick in short order. Can Akron, Ohio, accomplish something that Paterson, N.J. cannot duplicate? The Paterson Press dislikes to believe it. But time will tell."

It is not alone against the I.W.W. that the employers have set their faces. Unionism, organization, under whatever name, is opposed whether its aims be "reasonable" or "revolutionary," because it "interferes with business."

The employer who denies the right to organize always offers an alternative--there is the right to quit. But employees as a class cannot quit. They know how to do only one thing. They have a little skill in one industry. They cannot, as heads of families, begin again as laborers in another industry with only a hope before them, which may never be realized, of finding there a better chance. Such a
situation makes them think of new weapons. Every strike lost and every union movement sternly repressed is the father of sinister thoughts. Finally comes the idea, now given definite form for the first time by the industrialists [i.e., the IWW]: Are you beaten? Is the strike lost? All right, go back and strike while at work. If the boss pays low wages, give poor work; if he makes you work ten hours, don't do over eight hours' work in the ten; if he won't adjust your grievances, put emery dust in the oil cups, spill acid that will eat the goods into the packing cases, send goods meant for Springfield, Ill., to Springfield, Mass. Let the boss know he's caught a Tartar." There you have sabotage.

This digression may help to explain why the I.W.W. is in Paterson. The employers have opposed the conservative American Federation of Labor just as now they oppose the I.W.W. "We could not get our grievances adjusted before this strike," a weaver told me; "If you made a kick to the boss about anything it put you under suspicion, and it wouldn't be long before they would find an excuse to let you go. If you were dissatisfied about anything, they seemed to think that made a union man of you." The employers, if pinned down, admit that they are opposed to unionism as such, and not to the I.W.W. alone. But the I.W.W. with its strange doctrines has put into the hands of the employers a weapon that they are not slow to use. By keeping these doctrines to the fore, and by charging them with many others that Haywood never has dreamed of, they have lined up the clergy and the professional and business men almost solidly in opposition to the medium through which the strike has expressed itself, which, in effect, means the strike itself.
THE END OF THE STRIKE

Doc. 41: A Cause of Defeat: Hunger

Early in the strike, the strikers created a Relief Committee to raise money and to distribute food and other necessities to those strikers who were in need. As the strike went on, more and more strikers were in need. A letter from the secretary of the Relief Committee to strike supporters in Brooklyn, late in the strike, shows how desperate the situation was becoming. Despite the success of the Pageant, and the subsequent flow of money from New York, the Relief Committee could not end hunger in Paterson. Two weeks after this letter was written the strike collapsed, and the strikers returned to work with only minor gains, after five months on strike. The manufacturers, who had mills in Pennsylvania which remained open, had been able to outlast the strikers.

QUESTIONS: Why couldn't the Relief Committee stem the tide of need of the strikers? Why were the manufacturer's at an advantage as the strike wore on?

[Letter from Peter W. Kirschbaum, Secretary of the Relief Committee, to the Brooklyn Defense Conference, in Paterson Evening News, July 8, 1913: 5]

As is only natural our bread line is growing longer and longer day by day. Clothes are becoming more threadbare, toes are sticking out of shoes, tears and sighs are increasing...as father and mother stand on line to get what we can give them. No money for shoes, impossible to pay for rent or gas. We can only give them food, and it grieves me to say not much of that. Just imagine, on one particular day our funds were so low that we could only give bread, 5,000 loaves at three and one-half cents each ($175), not to mention dinners to be paid for to keep all those who are single, at the rate of 28 cents per day....
Edward Zuersher, a ribbon weaver, became a member of the Central Strike Committee in 1913. After the strike collapsed, Zuersher went back to his employer, a man named Fisher, but was told that there would be no work for him. In his testimony to the Commission on Industrial Relations, he describes what happened next.

QUESTIONS: Why was Zuersher treated this way? Do you think other strike activists got similar treatment after the defeat? What would have happened, back in the shop, if the strikers had won?


MR. ZUERSHER. My experience in the blacklist has been thus. When I went on strike last year I worked for the Colonial Ribbon Co., and when the strike was over I went back to this mill, in a body with the men working in that mill. The foreman or head of the firm took whom he felt like taking back, and those whom he had no position for at the time he had some other excuse for them. He told me to come back the day after the entire shop went in and he would let me know what could be done in my case. I came back next morning and he said, "I have nothing for you, and I don't think I will have anything for your for at least 10 days." And notwithstanding the fact that there were looms standing with warps in them where weavers had left his employ and he knew positively they were not coming back, still, in all, he had no work for me.

I told him that [I would] take what tools belonged to me and what wages. I had [to look for] work elsewhere. And he gave me what wages I had coming and [we had an] understanding that I was no longer in his employ.

I then sought employment in other mills, and whenever I mentioned the firm's name who I worked for last I was told to leave my name and address and they would send for me but none of them ever sent for me. I worked in a mill called the Craft Hat Band--started at 1 o'clock in the afternoon and at half past 1 was discharged. I immediately asked the reason for my discharge and the foreman told me that he had instructions from the office. He would not give me any further information.

I then went to another firm and asked for a position. They asked me whom I worked for last, and I mentioned
Fisher, as he was more popularly known by that name than by the firm name. Well, he said, "I can't hire anybody from his place. I don't want him coming up here raising a racket here." I said "Very well." I went over immediately to Fisher, but before I went in there I took a skip of paper and wrote on this paper:

"This is to certify that Edward Zuersher is no longer in my employ."

With this in my pocket I went in to Mr. Fisher and asked him was he stopping me from getting employment in other mills. He said he was not. Then I asked him whether he understood that I was not in his employ. He said he did. Then I pulled out this paper and said, "Would you mind signing this paper so that when I ask for a position in any other place those people will take your signature for it that I am not in your employ?" He said he would not sign it, showing plainly that he believed in the blacklist and was, in fact, forcing the blacklist wherever he could do it.

I only cite this case of mine, as [there are] other cases of similar nature to mine; hundreds of them in the city of Paterson; there are hundreds of them. That is one thing that causes unrest in the city, because during the periods of depression, such as exist at the present time in the city in the silk industry, the manufacturer has a line on all men whom he knows are active in the movement for better conditions, and those men he weeds out first, keeping those whom he knows are not so active, who are more submissive to the conditions of the mills.
The *American Silk Journal* was the trade journal of the silk manufacturers. After the strike, an editorial in the *American Silk Journal* articulated the view of employer/employee relations which had been the basis of unity of the employers, during the strike.

**QUESTIONS:** According to the manufacturers, what was the principle for which they had fought? Do you think that the manufacturers would have accepted a union more moderate than the radical IWW, or were they opposed to unionism as such? What had they learned from the strike? What attributes do the manufacturers' value in their workers?


The main point upon which the silk manufacturers can congratulate themselves is that the operatives returned to work under the same conditions as existed before the strike, no concessions having been granted. The great importance of concerted action when reinforced by a just cause, is thus shown in the strongest possible manner and it behooves the manufacturers to stand together in this way no matter how they are attacked. If labor agitators seek by attacking the individual mill to accomplish piecemeal what they had before sought to bring about in a wholesale manner by attacking a number of mills, it still behooves the manufacturer to put up the same strong fight individually. The very life of the individual manufacturer depends upon running his own mill without interference on the part of his operatives. It is a basic principle of hiring and service that there must be a master and there must be a servant. The master must direct and success must depend upon skilled directions based upon justice.
Evald Koettgen was a Paterson ribbon weaver who, in 1912, had become a full-time organizer for the IWW. With Adolph Lessig, Koettgen was the most important local leader of the 1913 strike. After the strike, he wrote a pamphlet aimed at textile workers, in which he generalized from his experience in Paterson.

QUESTIONS: According to Koettgen, why are unions necessary? Do you know which freedoms or prerogatives of the employer were subsequently limited by federal legislation, especially during the New Deal of the 1930s? As a union, the IWW was unusual, in part because it focused on issues of shop control. Which of the demands that Koettgen mentions would still be considered radical today?

[Evald Koettgen, One Big Union in the Textile Industry (Cleveland, 1914): 10]

In a mill where there is no organization the boss is the absolute master. Whatever he says will be the law of the mill. He will determine what wages the workers shall receive, how long they shall work, under what conditions they shall work, how the work shall be distributed, who shall be employed or discharged, and so on. When the workers organize they will demand that they will have something to say as to what the wages shall be, how the work shall be distributed, what the sanitary conditions shall be, whether or not a worker shall be discharged or kept on, what the hours of labor shall be, etc.