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Protests, pageants, and publications: Narratives of labor agitators, 1913-1914

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PROTESTS, PAGEANTS, AND PUBLICATIONS: NARRATIVES OF LABOR AGITATORS, 1913-1914

An Abstract of a Thesis

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in Partial Fulfillment

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ABSTRACT

In the vast historiography on the American labor movement workers have been treated as noble artisans, brave unionists, martyrs to the cause of unionization, and losers in the triumph of the "free market". They have not been treated as historians producing their own stories. In crafting their own narratives labor activists acted as historians, reaching beyond recent events to contextualize their struggles and create a narrative that would mobilize both labor and non-labor audiences behind their goals. They offered a vision of the past as leading to present or recent problems and framed unions or labor solidarity as the solution to these problems in a progressive narrative. Labor movement leaders attempted to frame their struggle using ideas of history, tradition and patriotism. They framed themselves as standing within a progressive American historical tradition and as the true defenders of American rights and values against wealthy oligarchs who sought to subvert and destroy those values.

This work examines three instances of laborers producing their own history: the Paterson Strike Pageant, the response to the Ludlow Massacre, and the Tarrytown Free Speech Fight. The Paterson Strike Pageant created a bottom-up people's history of the strike which represented industrial conflict writ large. The Ludlow Massacre became infamous for the massacre of strikers' families resulting in an outcry from the labor movement. In the framing of this event labor activists used ideas of tradition and patriotism to cast themselves as true Americans fighting against an oligarch. Both of these events were attempts to create an effective narrative. The Tarrytown Free Speech

Fight demonstrated the effort made to link labor and tradition. This event also showed that while labor's historical narrative experienced a degree of success; the same arguments could be turned back upon labor. Tarrytown represented a failure of the messengers. Their opponents were easily able to portray the anarchist and IWW protesters as radical which resulted in hostility towards them.

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INTRODUCTION

On the night of October 23, 1913 in the coal fields of Colorado an armored car mounting a machine gun fired into a tent camp occupied by striking coal miners. The attack killed one miner, and injured several children, including one boy who was shot nine times in the leg. Others were only spared by hiding in their dugouts, created after previous attacks by private detectives and mine guards. The 1910's witnessed some of the most violent strikes and labor disputes in the history of the United States. The decade ended with the Red Scare which devastated the left wing of the labor movement.

Key to these labor struggles was mobilization of workers, and their potential allies in the middle-class behind the movement. One of the most important means of mobilizing support for labor was the use of narrative, the positioning of labor at the center of the American story. These narratives were formed by workers' and labor activists' analysis of their history, and the lens they viewed it through. From this would flow the solution to past and present grievances, as well as establish the path to progress. The American labor movement struggled over the proper narrative in which to frame their struggle. One obvious solution was that of class warfare. The ideology of class warfare provided a narrative that framed the workers as a cohesive whole, one with common interests standing against an exploitative capitalist class. This analytical lens held the twin promises of unifying the workers and mobilizing them against a common foe.

The historian Eric Foner argues that the class warfare narrative failed in the United States where there is a notable absence of large unions or political parties supporting such a narrative. The class warfare narrative resulted in the alienation of the middle classes. It prevented labor from attempting to reach beyond itself to form an alliance for the advancement of its goals.[1] When examining labor's attempts to tell its story there is another narrative present, that of the people vs. oligarchs. In this narrative rather than indicting a whole class, the control of a few wealthy men over the country is the target of criticism. Targeting was limited to the most egregious abusers, and held out an olive branch to those who considered themselves middle-class. This narrative though discernible found itself consistently muddled by class warfare rhetoric. Most valuably the people vs. oligarchs' narrative could more easily be placed within the context of the American tradition. Rather than one class against another it was in the universal interest of the American people to stand up to despotic power, which was characterized as un-American, and a threat to liberty.

In this thesis I argue that American labor activists in the Progressive Era acted as their own historians. Activists worked to contextualize their struggle in ways that would appeal to the public and spread their message. By framing themselves within American history and tradition they aimed to connect with the broader public and advance the goals of the labor movement. This is significant to the fields of Labor History and Public History. In Labor History there is an abundance of historiography regarding workers using internationalist ideology to frame their positions, but use of national tradition and

[1] Eric Foner, "Why is there no Socialism in the United States?" *History Workshop Journal* 17, no. 1 (1984).

history has been virtually ignored. In terms of public history the case studies in this thesis present examples of public history ideas and techniques being used by activists to achieve political objectives.

Labor activists framed and analyzed events to place them within their preferred historical narrative. Often, they acted as public historians presenting their historical narratives to the public through publications, protests, and events such as the Paterson Strike Pageant. Labor activists never agreed on a single narrative. Some preferred a class warfare interpretation, while others preferred to portray a people vs. oligarchs narrative. Many combined elements of these two narratives. Activists also sought to frame their efforts within the American tradition. In doing so they portrayed workers as defenders of American rights and values. This message was in many cases hindered by the messengers. Labor activists were often tarred as radicals which made it difficult for them to use tradition in their fight and easy for their opponents to use it against them. This can be seen in events such as the Tarrytown Free Speech Fight, and the First Red Scare.

The following chapters focus on how the labor movement and its opponents' used American tradition and history to frame their positions. Another key theme of this work is the creation of narrative by labor activists and their attempts to form a workers' history. The tension between the narratives of class warfare and the people vs. oligarchs is also explored. Each chapter explores this process using a different medium, pageants, publications, and protests, in each event labor activists and agitators created a narrative.

Events were memorialized very quickly by the labor movement. The Paterson Strike was turned into pageant and presented upon a stage in New York a mere four months into the strike, while the Ludlow Massacre quickly generated an official union pamphlet telling the miners' version of the story and was immortalized by a stone monument only four years after the event. The Tarrytown Free Speech fight attempted to convey a similar narrative through protest. Its failure is emblematic of the failure of labor's narrative to take hold. The goal of creating history that appealed to the working class obscured the need to speak to the middle class as well. Class warfare overshadowed other narratives resulting in a failure to secure broad public support.

The following case studies were chosen for the use of public history by labor activists in the years 1913 and 1914. Paterson and Ludlow are also significant within labor history while Tarrytown is representative of the free speech movement which labor tied itself to. The Paterson Strike is among the largest strikes organized by the IWW on the East Coast. For the purposes of this thesis the pageant is the critical element of the Paterson strike. The labor movement seized upon popular forms of historical theatre as a way of propagating their message. This demonstrated the importance of history, and its use to sway mass audiences. Ludlow is perhaps the most well-known incident of labor conflict during the period. This was due to the creation of the massacre narrative by labor activists, and their success in selling this narrative to the public. Free speech fights became popular forms of labor protest during the early twentieth century. In these protests labor groups framed themselves as defenders of American rights and traditions. Aspects of the free speech fight and the funerals that concluded it demonstrated labor's

use of memorialization and the framing of the movement within American tradition. The Tarrytown Free Speech fight, particularly the popular response to it, demonstrated the limitations of labor's narrative. It failed to have the mobilizing power needed to attain labor's goals. The close proximity of these events is useful for focusing analysis. The events described in this work all occurred in the space of eighteen months.

Historians have often approached labor history from a standpoint of advocacy, a belief that what happened was wrong, focusing upon the issue as a great lost cause. What is implied is that the history should have taken a different course. This implies an upward trajectory, or at least that history is somehow working for a particular outcome, in this case outcomes that were thwarted. This is essentially identical to the Whig Theory of History with all of its attendant criticisms.[2] Historians guilty of this include Howard Zinn, E.P Thompson, and Herbert Gutman. This has led to reductionism where rather than explain what did happen, they attempt to explain why a different outcome did not happen. Rather than the triumphalist narrative of what is usually thought of as Whig history one instead sees it in an inverted form, the progress that should have happened but did not. Progress is depicted as inevitable and right, though it failed to occur. This led to a tendency by some historians to place blame for any failures by the labor movement entirely on outside causes, absolving activists of responsibility for their own fate.[3]

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[2] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (Kensington, N.S.W.: University of New South Wales Library, [1931] 1981).

[3] William Cronon, "Two Cheers for the Whig Interpretation of History," American Historical Association, September 2012, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2012/two-cheers-for-the-whig-interpretation-of-history.

The American tradition has always been a difficult concept to pin down, and has generated a great deal of argument. The primary disagreement is over what is the key element of American identity. One element of the question is why have socialist groups in the US been unable to succeed as they have in other Western industrialized countries? Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America* focuses on the dominance of individualist liberal ideology in America. Hartz's argument is that America never experienced a feudal society or class structure such as Europe's and that class solidarity rose out of that feudal structure. Lacking this base, and with the complete enshrinement of liberal principles, socialism could not succeed. He also weds this to the archetype of Horatio Alger's books, the self-made man who became a model for Americans. This fit perfectly into the narrative of liberal individualism. Hartz concluded that America had worked its way towards a consensus view of history. In his view the labor movement was unneeded; all significant battles had already been won.

Howard Zinn in his *People's History of the United States* identifies two strands, a tradition of resistance to oppression, and class warfare present from the earliest moments; however there is a narrative of progress. Eric Foner in *Why is There No Socialism in the United States* addresses the dichotomy in the United States of workplace labor militancy, accompanied by an absence of political class consciousness. He blames the failure of socialism upon the disjuncture between socialist politics and unions, the overly ideological bent of the socialists, and their failure to compete with mass culture, mass consumption, and mass politics. The last approach is the most sustainable, relying on both the role of the Left as well as upon society at large. His point regarding the overly

ideological bent of the Socialists, once again points to a failure in creating narrative, they fell too far down their own ideological rabbit hole to reach the audiences whom they needed to reach.[4]

This thesis uses tradition in both the above terms, as a way of explaining historical developments, but also in the sense of how people conceptualize their history and connect it to the present. *In Mystic Chords of Memory* Michael Kammen addresses the importance of how common people interpret their history, how they view key events, and decide what is most vital. He points out that fact is less important than myth; belief shapes views of history. Most relevant here is his argument that to be successful a reformer must propose modes of change that seem consistent with a society's values. David Glassberg's *Sense of History* provides another look at American tradition, both in how it is felt personally, and how it can be used to send messages based on who included, or excluded. These works both point to the strength of a narrative that can appeal to tradition or history.[5] This is precisely what many labor activists did. They crafted a working class history, and combined it with elements of American tradition, in order to form their narratives.

According to Sean Wilentz, organized labor in the US began with artisans in East Coast cities who organized along lines similar to guilds, forming journeymen societies

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[4] Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America; an Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1955); Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York City: HarperCollins, 1980); Eric Foner, "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?," *History Workshop Journal* 17, no. 1 (1984).

[5] Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: the Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991); David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

that served as proto-unions. Labor groups in the early US embraced the ideology of Labor Republicanism. Labor Republicanism organized itself around the following ideas: that the preservation of common good was the goal of society; to keep sight of this common good; citizens had to be independent of other men's wills; and that citizens had to be politically engaged. Labor Republicans were also against the division of labor. They believed that this led to hierarchy which was by its very nature anti-republican. Division of labor also meant the de-skilling of labor resulting in the weakening of their economic position. Their goals were thus both political and material in defense of small craftsmen. The early 19th century witnessed not just small unions of craftsmen but the first union including multiple trades, the Mechanics Union of Trade Associations. [6]

There was also political activism in the formation of "Working Men's Parties" fielding candidates in local and state elections, as well as supporting the 10-hour day movement. Unions and strikes were not held to be legal during this time often resulting in conspiracy charges. Interestingly the United States produced Thomas Skidmore, who in his writings in the late 1820's anticipated many of the ideas of Karl Marx, dividing society into proprietors and non-proprietors. His influence within the labor movement proved to be short-lived. On the issue of slavery white workers proved either supportive of slavery or indifferent to the arguments of abolitionists. One common argument was that slaves had it better, and that whites had to beg bosses for the privilege of being

[6] Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Murolo, Priscilla, and A. B. Chitty. *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor In the United States*. New York: New Press, 2001.

slaves. Women's labor was treated during the time as a threat to men's labor. Thus there was little solidarity between the white workers, women, and slaves.

1866 witnessed the foundation of the National Labor Union, the first nationwide labor group, though it proved short-lived it paved the way for later groups such as the Knights of Labor. The Panic of 1873, a financial crisis, triggered a drop in union membership and increased resistance from employers. Labor tensions, in this period, reached their height during the railroad strikes of 1877. Following a cut in wages railroad workers in West Virginia began a strike; they were quickly joined by 100,000 workers from across the country. Workers stopped trains resulting in the deployment of the militia, use of injunctions, and finally federal troops. The combination of court injunctions with federal force would prove to be an enduring pair when addressing labor unrest. Many states began professionalizing their militias due to their failure to quell the strikes and their propensity to actively join strikers.[7]

The next major force in the Labor Movement was the Knights of Labor, a group that eventually reached 800,000 members at its height and included 20% of all workers. The Knights adopted rituals similar to those of societies such as the Free Masons, and campaigned for the eight-hour day. The Knights followed a producerist ideology, similar to labor republicanism in that it split society into producers and non-producers. Non-producers were those who took money they did not earn. Producerists were also concerned with the idea of selling one's labor as opposed to products, believing that the

[7] Murolo, Priscilla, and A. B. Chitty. *From the Folks Who Brought you the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States*. New York: New Press, 2001; Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State & Labor in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

former undermined one's independence. Both the Knights and the Eight Hour Day movement were dealt a blow by the Haymarket Affair. On May 4, 1884 during a rally in support of the eight hour day, as well as protesting the killing of several workers by the police, someone threw a bomb into police ranks. Haymarket led to a crackdown on labor, and a series of witch hunts for alleged anarchists. This reflected a growing tendency in by the media to associate syndicalism and anarchism with "foreign" agitation.[8]

The passage of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in 1890 proved to be a blow to unions, while it was framed as being an anti-monopoly measure it was quickly applied to unions. In practice this resulted in strikes being found in restraint of trade. According to the logic used by the courts, unions violated the cartel provision of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. This resulted in injunctions and troops being used to quell strikes. These practices continued until the passage of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act in October 1914 which specifically exempted unions. Thus from 1890 to 1914 unions, and especially strikes were technically illegal though the application of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act depended on the judge in question. The 1899 Pullman strike demonstrates the application of the act to Union activity. The American Railroad Union (ARU) led a strike against the Pullman Palace Car Company. One aspect of the strike was a boycott in which ARU members refused to work on trains containing Pullman cars. This was found in violation

[8] Murolo, Priscilla, and A. B. Chitty. *From the Folks Who Brought you the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States*. New York: New Press, 2001; Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State & Labor in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Rosanne Currarino, *The Labor Question in America: Economic Democracy in the Gilded Age* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and soldiers were sent to deal with the strike, resulting in the deaths of thirty strikers.[9]

One of the most controversial issues concerning labor in the Progressive Era was the violence afflicting strikes. Violence was endemic to strikes during this period, not only brawling during protests, but deaths as well. Many of these incidents involved private detectives who were hired by management to break strikes. Other incidents involved police and militia. Striking was by no means safe. When the decision to strike was made workers were risking their safety as well as legal repercussions. This time period was also characterized by growing diversity in the American labor force, with increasing numbers of unskilled workers entering the country. This added to divisions between native workers and immigrants as well as between skilled and unskilled with the two categories often overlapping.[10]

Contrasts within the labor movement at the time can be seen by comparing the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), formed in 1886 and 1905 respectively. The AFL's founders built it around the idea of craft unionism and recruited skilled workers. The goal of craft unionism is to unionize workers based upon their trade or skill. This tended to leave semi-skilled and unskilled workers unorganized. The IWW on the other hand focused upon industrial unionism,

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[9] Murolo, Priscilla, and A. B. Chitty. *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States*. New York: New Press, 2001; Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State & Labor in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

[10] Murolo, Priscilla, and A. B. Chitty. *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend: A Short, Illustrated History of Labor in the United States*. New York: New Press, 2001; Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State & Labor in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

which is the idea that workers should be organized according to their industry rather than skill, the idea being that this made strikes more effective. The IWW built upon this with its concept of "One Big Union" which was the idea of all workers being part of a single great union. The IWW stood out for its policy of admitting all workers regardless of race or sex as an extension of the "One Big Union". The IWW rejected political action in favor of direct action, and most members were proponents of class warfare.[11]

While its overarching goals are clear, the IWW's ideology is difficult to pin down due to the weakness of the central organization, and willingness by organizers to adapt rhetoric and tactics to fit their situation. The organization also suffered numerous splits. A 1905 convention of labor activists in Chicago established the IWW. By 1908 the faction favoring political action had split and formed a rump organization commonly referred to as the Detroit IWW. The next conflict in the organization was between what have been termed centralizers and decentralizers. The former desired a disciplined, centrally controlled union while the latter wanted each local to make its own decisions. Politically the IWW proved highly inconsistent. Grover Perry in *The Revolutionary IWW* describes the union's program as follows:

> By, organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old." That is the crux of the I. W. W. position. We are not satisfied with a fair day's wages for a fair day's work. Such a thing is impossible. Labor produces all wealth. Labor is therefore entitled to all wealth. We are going to do away with capitalism by taking possession of

[11] Melvyn Dubofsky, *The State & Labor in Modern America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969); Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967); Francis Shor, "Masculine Power and Virile Syndicalism: A Gendered Analysis of the IWW in Australia," *Labour History*, no. 63 (1992).

> the land and the machinery of production. We don't intend to buy them; either…The Industrial Workers of the World are laying the foundation of a new government. This government will have for its legislative halls the mills, the workshops and factories. Its legislators will be the men in the mills, the workshops and factories. Its legislative enactments will be those pertaining to the welfare of the workers.[12]

Some pamphlets argued along similar courses, while others made no mention of any long-term program aside from improving the lives of workers. IWW members, even those few who stayed with the organization long-term, held a variety of political affiliations.[13]

This study focuses on the positioning of labor in American history, society, and culture between 1912 and 1914. At this point in time organized labor comprised groups promoting syndicalism, anarchism, producerism, and labor republicanism. The Knights of Labor was in eclipse and the AFL just emerging. During this time groups like the UMWA and IWW took the lead in addressing the place of labor. The three chapters are concerned with the Paterson Pageant, the Ludlow Massacre, and the Tarrytown Free Speech Fight. The Paterson Pageant was an attempt by IWW organized strikers to create a bottom up working class history, to forge a narrative that would get their message out. In the chapter concerning the Ludlow Massacre the focus is not upon the deed itself, but upon the framing of the event by various labor groups. The final chapter details the

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[12] Grover Perry, *The Revolutionary IWW* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1913).
[13] Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969); Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967); Francis Shor, "Masculine Power and Virile Syndicalism: A Gendered Analysis of the IWW in Australia," *Labour History*, no. 63 (1992); Grover Perry, *The Revolutionary IWW* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1913); William Trautman, *One Big Union: An Outline of a Possible Industrial Organization of the Working Class, with Chart* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co, 1912); Joseph Ettor, *Industrial Unionism: The Road to Freedom* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1913); William Haywood, *IWW One Big Union of All the Workers: The Greatest On Earth* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1919).

Tarrytown Free Speech Fight (a protest regarding Ludlow) focusing on the competing narratives between the townspeople and the protesters, and what its failure meant in terms of labor narrative. All of these events are linked by the active creation of working-class narrative, and working-class history. These were attempts by labor to convey its own history

CHAPTER 1

LABOR'S PAGEANT: PATERSON STRIKE PAGEANT 1913

On June 7, 1913 New Yorkers found that an ongoing strike of silk workers in Paterson, New Jersey had been transplanted into the heart of their city. Over one thousand strikers marched up Fifth Avenue, with red banners waving. They intended to present their struggle to the world after months of being on strike, and to raise the funds that would enable them to win.[1] Leading this procession was Margaret Sanger a, noted and controversial, feminist and birth control advocate with ties to many labor and anarchist groups. The marchers' destination, Madison Square Garden, was lit up in red with the initials of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) glowing in the skyline for all to see.

At Madison Square Garden the striking workers and their supporters presented a pageant encapsulating and memorializing the Paterson strike, as well as the larger labor struggle. The climax of the pageant came with the reenactment of the funeral of a man murdered by strike breakers, Valentino Modestino. Each striker passed the coffin and dropped a red carnation onto it; a symbol of spilled blood and sacrifice.[2] What became known as the "Paterson Strike Pageant" was not only an act of protest, but an innovative piece of performance art, one that subverted the form of pageantry away from the its

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[1] Elizabeth Flynn "The Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914.
[2] Big Bill Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; the Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929) 264.

typical conservative, traditional ends and put it in the service of the labor movement. The *New York Tribune* summarized the results:

> The very effective appeal to public interest made by the spectacle at the Garden stamps the IWW leaders as agitators of large resources and original talent. Lesser geniuses might have hired a hall and exhibited moving pictures of the Paterson strike. Saturday night's pageant transported the strike itself bodily to New York City.[3]

The Paterson Strike Pageant of 1913 was an extraordinary event, combining many currents of thought and events which defined this point in the Progressive Era. While the Paterson strike was in many ways a pivotal and unique event it was just one of many labor conflicts of the era. What the pageant reveals is that labor conflicts were waged not just on the picket line or with clubs and bullets, but with theatrics and rhetoric before the public. In West Virginia the Coal Field Wars were beginning, a strike of textile workers in Lawrence, the timber war in Louisiana and Texas, and most infamously the Ludlow Massacre in the coalfields of Colorado, all occurred during this tumultuous period.[4] Extreme violence between capital and labor characterized this era, yet what distinguishes the Paterson strike among all of these was the pageant.

Popular from the turn of the century through the 1920's pageants represented a form of mass theatre, involving very large casts of performers, with a strong community element. Pageant literature presents the art form as most commonly used to advance a moralistic and harmonious historical narrative for assimilationist ends. The goal of many pageants was to educate citizens on the history of the United States and to convey

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[3] "The Pageant as a Form of Propaganda" *Current Opinion*, June 1913.
[4] Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969) 114-168.

carefully selected interpretations of American history and values to immigrants. This meant that pageants were typically affairs that focused on creating a picture of unity and harmony within both the communities that presented them and the country as a whole. Pageants typically portrayed narratives of progress, often portraying an advance from savagery to civilization. Pageants reflected a mixture of historical narrative, mass media, and avant-garde art. Paterson strikers under the IWW subverted this art form by taking the power of mass performances created by pageants and channeling them to their own ends.[5] One of the sponsors of the Paterson Pageant was Mabel Dodge Luhan, well known as New York City's main patron of the modern arts. It was Luhan who allegedly came up with the idea and assisted in much of the organization. It was through these channels that the Paterson Pageant came into being.[6]

There is a substantial historiography concerning the Paterson strike. The pageant is generally treated as a central feature of the strike, due to the amount of attention it received from the organizers. Most of this attention is devoted to the pageant's lack of success as a fundraiser, and whether or not it crippled the strike as some such as Elizabeth Flynn later asserted. The primary general histories of the strike are *The Fragile Bridge* by Steve Golin, and Anne Tripp's *The IWW and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913*, each of these takes a different view of the pageant with Tripp viewing it as a failure, while Golin characterizes it as a success. Melvyn Dubofsky devoted a full chapter of his

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[5] Glassberg Percy Mackaye, *The Civic Theater In Relation to the Redemption of Leisure* (Kennerley, New York: Mitchell, 1912) 66-68; Esther Willard Bates, *Pageants and Pageantry* (Ginn & Company, 1912) 5-26; Ralph Davol, *American Pageantry* (Taunton, Massachusetts: Davol Publishing Country, 1914) 12-17.
[6] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 187-190.

general history of the IWW *We Shall be All* to the Paterson strike. It mostly concerns with how the strike fits into the larger organizational history of the IWW.

Other works have covered the Paterson Strike Pageant not in it relationship to the strike but as a piece of art. *The Paterson Pageant (1913): The Birth of Docudrama as Weapon in the Class Struggle* by Leslie Fishbein focuses on how the techniques of the pageant influenced later labor struggles in framing their own versions of history. Martin Green's *New York 1913: The Armory Show and the Paterson Strike Pageant* analyzes the Pageant and the Armory Show (a modernist art exhibition). A literary scholar and art historian, Green asserts that both represented a confluence of avant garde art and "radical" politics that were further linked by the participation of members of New York City's social elite.

The most important work on American pageantry in this era is David Glassberg's *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early 20th Century.* According to Glassberg pageants were built around the idea that by using the past a transformation could be brought about in values that would lead to a more moral form of entertainment. Pageants presented history as progress, technological, political and moral. The strike pageant was intimately tied to the idea of memory, and was tied to how Americans express and think about memory. The most prominent work on this subject is Michael Kammen's *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in*

American Culture. This work examines the factors that determine which traditions, and which version of history is dominant within American society.[7]

The Paterson Strike Pageant was one of the most innovative protest strategies employed during the industrial conflicts of the progressive era. In these conflicts many methods were used to engage and contest entrenched interests while mobilizing workers. Memory, identity, and tradition were at the heart of many of these struggles. Capital and labor made efforts to convey their own histories, and ensure the dominance of their narrative of the past and tradition in public discourse. For labor, every clash created its own heroes, martyrs, and villains; the intensity of industrial conflict and the value of controlling the narrative meant that activists rapidly attempted to memorialize events, and shape public thinking about these events. The pageant genre was largely created to shape public memory, and the strikers recognized its effectiveness seized upon it, using the art form for their own ends. The pageant acted as a workers' version of history, although it dealt with Paterson virtually any worker could see themselves reflected within it. It also created sympathy for the strikers and workers in general among other attendees. The strike pageant needs to be examined as an example of public history, used to build a historic narrative. The pageant will be analyzed not on its effectiveness as a fundraising

[7] Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969); Leslie Fishbein, "The Birth of Docudrama as Weapon in the Class Struggle," *New York History*, April 1991; David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Martin Green, *New York 1913: The Armory Show and the Paterson Strike Pageant* (New York: Scribner, 1988); Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991); Anne Huber Tripp, *The I.W.W. and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

instrument, but instead based upon its use of memory, along with the attempt to establish a workers' history.

The strike on which the pageant was based on was itself rife with theatrical elements. Located about 15 miles from New York City, Paterson, New Jersey in 1913 was a major site for the production of silk in the United States. The city had a large immigrant population consisting mostly of Italians who did much of the unskilled work in the silk industry, while English-speaking workers performed the skilled labor. The silk industry was not dominated by large trusts. Instead there were many shops in Paterson ranging in size from fewer than a dozen employees to ones employing hundreds.[8] The city had a history of labor unrest dating as far back as 1835. More recently, there had been an attempt at a strike led by the Detroit IWW in 1912.[9] Paterson and the conditions its workers lived in were described by Elizabeth Gurly Flynn, one of the IWW strike organizers: "The city was a typical textile town with the same poor shabby firetrap wooden houses for the workers, dreary old mills built along the canal. The people were poorly dressed, pale, and undernourished."[10] It was not these squalid conditions but rather technologically driven change to established working patterns that created the immediate spark for the Paterson Strike of 1913.

The immediate cause of the strike was the introduction of the four-loom system into Paterson. This system required a single worker to operate four looms instead of the

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[8] William Haywood "The Rip in the Silk Industry" *International Socialist Review*, May 12, 1913.
[9] Steve Golin, *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike, 1913* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988) 8-12.
[10] Elizabeth Gurley. Flynn, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life (1906-1926)* (New York: International Publishers, 1973) 156.

traditional two at no significant wage increase. What concerned the workers was not merely wages; it was the potential for unemployment created by this system. It was feared that once the system was in place half of the weavers would be out of work, which would create more competition for the remaining weaving jobs. This industry technique, known as the speed-up, would ultimately result in a smaller labor force, worse working conditions, higher unemployment, and decreased wages. In addition to these problems operating the additional looms proved more stressful for the workers. Once the strike began in February it quickly escalated. In May it was reported that 50,000 workers were out on strike. The most interesting of the workers' demands was the reinstatement of the 1894 wage scale.[11] This indicated how far wages had fallen. There were additional demands regarding measures against child labor in the mills.

The IWW was intimately involved with the strike from the beginning. The IWW was founded in 1905, at a convention in Chicago. Represented at this convention were trade unionists as well as anarchists, Marxists, syndicalists, and others. Critical to the formation of the IWW was the Western Federation of Miners, which also gave the IWW one of its most famous organizers, William "Big Bill" Haywood. The IWW eventually settled upon a very loose organizational structure, which gave great leeway to individual organizers, and local organizations. This structure allowed the union to quickly take advantage of local opportunities at the expense of sustained organization. This gave the organization a boom-and-bust character; workers were organized in a time of crisis, but with no sustained commitment to the organization following the termination of any given

[11] William Haywood "The Rip in the Silk Industry" *International Socialist Review,* May 12, 1913.

strike. The IWW saw its greatest success in the American West; among miners, lumberjacks, and agricultural workers. While strong in the West the IWW was never able to create a large, sustained following among Eastern factory workers.

Foremost among the IWW organizers in Paterson were Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Gurly Flynn, and Carlo Tresca. Although these individuals were involved in organizing the strike, making speeches and strategizing they by no means controlled the strike. An elected strike committee managed the affairs of the strike, including relief to the neediest families.[12] According to Flynn the IWW created the strike while the workers managed it. The advantage that the IWW had in the initial stages was that its organizers and leaders could speak about organizing and striking without fear of being put on the blacklist; this was a major contribution in the early days of the strike. Due to the presence of the IWW, some of Paterson's factory owners attempted to slander the strike as being caused entirely by outside agitators. These charges never convincingly stuck.[13]

The IWW organizers also fulfilled a media role, using various IWW and other pro-labor publications to publicize the strike. In addition to supporting the strikers these articles often struck at industry practices in the hope of bring an indignant public onto the side of the strikers. In "A Rip in the Silk Industry" Bill Haywood described a process called 'dynamiting' in which silks were adulterated with a variety of chemicals in order to increase their weight, at the cost of decreasing their lifespan. A similar technique had

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[12] Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969) 270-272.
[13] Elizabeth Flynn "Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914.

earlier been employed in the service of labor by Upton Sinclair in his 1906 novel *The Jungle.*[14]

During the conflict mill owners attempted to break the strike by appealing to the patriotism of workers. On Flag Day, March 17, 1913 all the mills were covered in American flags, and the owners insisted that returning to work was a patriotic duty. The appeal of nationalism was countered with the appeal to class solidarity, the Stars and Stripes was met with the red flag. The mill owners claimed that the red flags used by the IWW stood for blood, murder, and anarchy. During a meeting Elizabeth Flynn was explaining the meaning of the red flag when a worker stood up and shouted "Here is the red flag" holding his right hand aloft, it was stained a permanent shade of crimson from his work in the dye room. This was potent connection between what the IWW organizers said and the actual experience of the workers. Following Flag Day many workers took to wearing pins that read "We wove under the flag, we dyed the flag, we live under the flag, but we won't scab under the flag."[15] This connected patriotism with the working class by challenging the meanings associated with the flag, through the illumination of the suffering of those who made it.

The strike was initially noted by many for its relative lack of violence. Though arrests and clubbings occurred throughout the strike, police themselves never employed violence on a large scale, or in a sustained manner. Steve Golin claims that this was due to the domination of the silk industry within the city; virtually every member of the

[14] William Haywood "The Rip in the Silk Industry" *International Socialist Review,* May 12, 1913.
[15]*Solidarity*, July 19, 1913.

police department had some connection to the strikers.[16] The strike quickly settled into a pattern of picketing and arrests during the days followed by speeches, and mass meetings at night. Every Sunday the strikers would go to the town of Haledon. There, the town's socialist mayor would host mass outdoor meetings. It was vital to keep everyone engaged in the strike and to fill their time with it as much as possible, particularly on the weekends. This had two purposes. The first was to create solidarity among a diverse mass of workers. On this subject, IWW organizer William Haywood had this to say:

> …nearly every nationality on earth is represented in the strike. The Italians and Germans are the most numerous, with thousands of Russians, Poles, Hungarians, and Armenians besides. Shoulder to shoulder they have stood with a spirit and loyalty that nothing could break or weaken.[17]

The second purpose was to keep the strikers' spirits up with events like the Haledon meetings. As Elizabeth Flynn put it:

> you let those people stay at home, sit around the stove without any fire in it, sit down at the table where there isn't very much food, see the feet of the children with shoes getting thin, and the bodies of the children where the clothes are getting ragged they begin to think in terms of 'myself' and lose that spirit of the mass.[18]

The climactic event of the strike and the one that was commemorated in the pageant was the death of Valentino Modestino. On April 17, 1913 a private security guard hired by a mill owner shot Modestino. Police had been escorting a group of scabs

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[16] Steve Golin, *The Fragile Bridge: Paterson Silk Strike, 1913* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).
[17] William Haywood "The Rip in the Silk Industry" *International Socialist Review,* May 12, 1913.
[18] Elizabeth Flynn "Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914.

through the picket line, once the scabs were in the mill the situation turned violent. Reportedly, in a display of excessive force the police charged the picket line. According to their accounts, they were subjected to an incessant torrent of insults hurled upon them by strikers. During this scuffle a private guard fired the shot that killed Modestino. Modestino was not a striker. He had been a bystander, sitting on his porch with his children when the fatal shot was fired. Modestino became the martyr of the strike, and his funeral (which was reenacted during the pageant) became an emotionally charged event. During the funeral thousands of strikers passed his casket each one dropping a single red flower.[19] This symbolized the blood shed by the workers in Paterson, as well as the sacrifices of those martyred in the cause of labor writ large. It was a clear and poignant display of symbolism. For strike organizers Modestino's lack of participation did not matter. He was an immigrant worker who had been killed by an armed hireling of the mill owners.

The most vexing issue throughout the strike and one that led to the pageant was the persistent lack of funding. When the strike had been launched the total funds available stood at between $60,000 and $72,000. This money would need to support at least 25,000 workers in addition to their families. The resulting privations led to efforts at increasing the publicity of the strike, along with creative ways to get families through the conflict. The first effort to publicize the strike involved sending away hundreds of children to live with families in nearby communities, primarily New York City. This

[19] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 187; John Reed "War in Paterson" *The Masses*, June 1913; New York Times, April 18, 1913.

effort was led by Margaret Sanger and was meant to draw attention to the plight of the strikers, while at the same time reducing the expense on families.[20]

The desire for publicity found its ultimate expression in the pageant. This idea did not originate in Paterson with the strikers, but rather in the salon of wealthy socialite Mabel Dodge Luhan. Luhan's involvement highlighted the role of the avant-garde intelligentsia in the labor movement. The New York City socialite and patron of the avant-garde art scene had met Haywood through a mutual friend and invited him to one of her salon evenings. There guests would discuss art, politics, current events and other subjects. On this night the topic of discussion was the Paterson strike. During the evening, Haywood complained that there was no way to tell the workers of New York City about the strike because of a lack of newspaper coverage. Luhan suggested that the strike could be brought to New York. There a hall could be rented and the key scenes of the strike reenacted. Another member of the avant-garde, journalist John Reed, volunteered to put on a pageant, thrilled at the prospect of conducting the first strike pageant.[21] Haywood presented the pageant idea to the strike committee. The members approved it and set in motion one of the greatest examples of labor theater and propaganda of the era.[22]

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[20] *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography* (New York, 1955), 165-166. "Paterson Prepares For a Long Strike." *New York Times*, April 19, 1913.
[21] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 187-190.
[22] Big Bill Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; the Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929) 263.

During this time the United States was undergoing a pageant craze which led to an explosion of pageant literature, professional organizations and local productions.[23] Pageant literature, in addition to providing practical advice, blended strands of patriotic nationalism and ideas of progress with the desire to reshape or reform society. It was this reform impulse that fit pageantry so well into the progressive era. Pageants were mass historical productions involving very large casts running into the hundreds and even thousands, typically none of whom were professional actors. Although some pageants focused on history at the national level, the majority seem to have concerned themselves primarily with local history. Further there seems to have been a focus upon colonial history, and particularly Puritan history. Pageant enthusiasts believed that they were creating an art form that perfectly encapsulated democracy through mass participation, one for which the United States would always be known.[24] In 1912 Esther Willard Bates describes the purpose of pageantry as follows:

> American pageantry will be so ordered as to possess a constructive influence on the people. There will be entertainment with splendid effects in color, form, and music to both please and improve the popular taste; the spectacle will stimulate pride in town, state and nation; a broad sympathy for all lands and peoples will underlie and dominate the scenes and finally there will be a definite educational aim to make real the great deeds of fathers and to quicken the aspirations of the sons for right living and for devotion to country. In this last appeal the need of our immigrant population will be kept fully in mind.[25]

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[23] Ralph Davol, *American Pageantry* (Taunton, Massachusetts: Davol Publishing Country, 1914) 11.
[24] Percy Mackaye, *The Civic Theater In Relation to the Redemption of Leisure* (Kennerley, New York: Mitchell, 1912) 15, 63-80.
[25] Esther Willard Bates, *Pageants and Pageantry* (Ginn & Company, 1912) 18.

Pageant masters wanted to use history, to unite the disparate groups that made up the United States and also to move the country in what they viewed as a positive moral direction.

The dramatist Percy Mackaye believed that pageantry would free the country from what he saw as the "depraved" conditions of its entertainment. He further tied this into eugenics arguing that pageantry by increasing the moral fiber of Americans would lead to the creation of a purer race.[26] In trying to create a unifying national history pageants downplayed any elements that didn't advance the theme of one united country, of class collaboration in service to greater ideals. Societal conflict and especially labor conflict were ignored in pageantry; instead what was presented was a whitewashed idealized version of the past, commemorating great men. This presented a highly utopian version of America, and its history. In many ways pageants reinforced traditional hierarchies by their very organization, pageant handbooks often recommend that only the descendants of important personages should be selected to portray those individuals. Pageants thus functioned as a form of public history, constructing an image of the past for the average American.

The creators of the Paterson Pageant took this outline and twisted it, although pageants were intended by many of their proponents to portray a moralist, patriotic version of history, the lessons, style, and power of the genre were conducive to present any history. Pageantry as public history created a version of history that excluded many

[26]Percy Mackaye, *The Civic Theater In Relation to the Redemption of Leisure* (Kennerley, New York: Mitchell, 1912) 66-68 .

based upon race, class, and other social factors. Reed introduced labor into the form of pageantry. Much of the language concerning how to build patriotism within a pageant is equally conducive to a labor message instead of building a national conscience the strikers worked to build class consciousness, rather than celebrate an existing pantheon of national heroes they memorialized their own. They were able to improve upon the genre by adding additional immediacy to their pageant through their choice of actors. Unlike most pageants, in which the actors conducted unfamiliar activities in the way something was thought to have happened, those in the strike pageant reenacted scenes from their own lives. This had the effect of conveying a greater emotional immediacy to the audience. Reed also reused speeches from earlier in the strike. This allowed the use of ideology in a highly sympathetic and emotionally charged atmosphere, with the strikers supplying the emotional basis for audience reactions by breaking down the barrier between the two. In this way the organizers of the strike pageant used the power of mass theatre to serve the working class. While the pageant was targeted at workers the narrative that emerged of common people struggling against the powerful drew support across class lines from the audience, and proved itself as a powerful narrative.

Reed began researching for the pageant by journeying to Paterson to view the strike first hand and while there he also wrote an article for *The Masses* titled "War in Paterson." Reed described the conditions in Paterson, particularly the political and institutional power of the mill owners:

> 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.[27]

Upon his arrival Reed made his way to the mill district to watch the picketing, and confrontations with the police firsthand. Following an altercation between police escorting a scab worker and the strikers, Reed was arrested for refusing the leave the area when ordered to do so by the police. While in jail he once again met Big Bill Haywood who told the jailed strikers to answer all of Reed's questions. There he gathered information relating to the conflicts on the picket lines, the ethnicity of the strikers, and other useful materials.[28]

Common people fighting against this type of absolute power proved a powerful narrative, one that had a long history in the United States. This narrative's use by the Paterson strikers was but one more occurrence in a lengthy history. This narrative appeared as early as the revolution framing that struggle as one between a despotic king and common Americans. In the lead-up to the War of 1812 it proved easy to frame the conflict as one between the powerful British Royal Navy and common American sailors facing impressment. The colonization of the American West saw the Indians portrayed as hordes of savages attacking ordinary homesteaders upon the Great Plains. This same narrative was used to entice Americans to fight Spain in 1898. The struggle was framed as one between ordinary Cuban peasants and a despotic Spanish government. Americans

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[27] John Reed "War in Paterson" *The Masses,* June 1913.
[28] John Reed "War in Paterson" The Masses, June 1913.

have long romanticized the common working man, particularly when facing power or tyranny. In choosing this frame of reference the pageant organizers attempted to maximize the impact of their work.

Reed used the information he gathered to compose a series of scenes for the pageant, much of the planning was done at Margaret Sanger's home. In addition to writing scenes he also created much of the music for the pageant. Some of the music was based upon Harvard University Football cheers from his university days. The remaining music consisted of well-known labor songs, such as *The Internationale*. The best picketers were selected for the pageant (a later source of criticism). This was due to a desire to have the most energetic, and committed strikers upon the stage to further sway the crowd. In all just over a thousand strikers were chosen for the pageant. Those selected practiced for several weeks under the direction of Reed.[29] According to Flynn the willingness of the strikers to participate in the pageant was demonstrative of the progress that had been made over the course of the strike in instilling class spirit. Initially workers had been afraid of being too publicly visible during the strike for fear of being blacklisted. Yet by the time of the pageant they were willing to convey their strike experience to a crowd of thousands. In the words of Elizabeth Flynn:

> From that day when the strikers were afraid to have their pictures taken for fear that they might be spotted to the day when a thousand of them came to New York to take part in a pageant, with a friendly rivalry among themselves as to which one would get their picture in the paper was a long

[29] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 187-204.

> process of stimulation, a long process of creating in them class spirit, class respect, class consciousness.[30]

The pageant was intended to blur the line between life and art, to present the starkness and hardships of not only the strike but the lives of the working class as a whole. Michael Denning in *The Cultural Front* shows that a similar style became popular in the 1930's through a similar combination of social activists and artists. The pageant was an attempt to present a peoples history, one that presented American society from the bottom up. What is more it was made by those who had lived this history. Rather than ignore the realities of social conflict the Paterson Strike Pageant vividly embraced ideas of conflict. It was an assertion of the identity of the working class and a view into their America, the reality of working conditions and industrial conflict. The pageant allowed those not normally exposed to this side of American life to view it for themselves through the eyes of those who lived it. This proved to be a powerful experience for the audience, regardless of background. This style fit well in the Progressive Era; it presented a problem in the control of silk manufacturers, and the solution in the form of union activism.

These strikers were largely immigrants or the children of immigrants. They were presenting what American history had been to them, the history of their America. The pageant was their opportunity to show another version of history; that of the working class and the immigrant experience. Rather than drawing into the more distant past for heroes, the pageant organizers memorialized those who were still living, or had been living in recent memory. They confronted an old staid history with one that was still

[30] Elizabeth Flynn "Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914.

fraught with emotion. They wove their own myths and used them as a weapon in the labor struggle. This was an opportunity to define themselves, and what history meant to them.

The venue selected for the pageant was Madison Square Garden. This allowed the pageant to be presented to the largest audience possible. Reed and Dodge used their influence to achieve this feat. Financially it still took the donation of $600 by the silk workers of New York City to successfully secure the location.[31] When the day of the pageant on June 7, 1913 arrived the strikers were carried to New York aboard a special fourteen-car train commissioned for the purpose. Once in New York they paraded down Fifth Avenue toward Madison Square Garden. The theater itself was lit by a massive electric IWW sign, blazing in red letters 10 feet high across all four sides of the building. Due to the controversy of the IWW this aspect of preparation had to be kept secret to prevent any interference. The building itself was covered in IWW signs and flags both inside and out. Meanwhile vendors waited outside the building to sell IWW literature to patrons of the show. The absence of the American flag among the décor, as well as the slogans sewn upon some flags caused a stir. At least one flag was removed at the behest of the police, due to the slogans emblazoned upon it.

The audience was estimated at 15,000, a teeming mass that contained representatives of all classes in the city. The boxes were filled by the upper and middle classes. The other sections of the theater filled according to price. A large portion of the crowd was working class through the design of the organizers. One section was reserved,

[31] Elizabeth Flynn "Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914.

exclusively for the workers of New York and made available at low or no cost. The impetus for the pageant was a comment by Haywood "But there's no way to tell our comrades here in New York about it (Paterson Strike). The newspapers have determined to keep it from the workers of New York."[32] All they had to do was say they were a member of the IWW, and show their red card. The crowd proved so great that the police had to intervene to prevent overcrowding, and the show had to be delayed by a full hour.[33]

The pageant consisted of six scenes. The pageant program detailed and explained these scenes to audience members, thus providing additional context. They were arranged as follows: The Mills Alive – The Workers Dead, The Mills Dead – The Workers Alive, The Funeral of Modestino, Mass Meeting at Haledon, Sending the Children Away/ May Day, and Strike Meeting in Turner Hall. Each episode was accompanied by a brief description. The lens used by the pageant, and the messages that they were conveyed are revealed by the opening paragraph of the program:

> The Pageant represents a battle between the working class and the capitalist class conducted by the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), making use of the General Strike as the chief weapon. It is a conflict between two social forces—the force of labor and the force of capital.
>
> While the workers are clubbed and shot by detectives and policemen, the mills remain dead.
>
> While the workers are sent to jail by hundreds, the mills remain dead. While organizers are persecuted, the strike continues, and still the mills

[32] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 188.
[33]"Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913; Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 186-190, 200-205.

> are dead. While the pulpit thunders denunciation and the press screams lies, the mills remain dead. No violence can make the mills alive—no legal process can resurrect them from the dead. Bayonets and clubs, injunctions and court orders are equally futile.
>
> Only the return of the workers to the mills can give the dead things life. The mills remain dead throughout the enactment of the following episodes.[34]

By declaring the pageant to be a battle between two classes, the pageant made it clear that this was but one piece of a larger conflict between the two forces. While the events were drawn from Paterson, the experiences of the strike can be universalized to fit any number of strikes at the time or before, a history of class relations. The spectacle was meant to be a pageant of the worker, and of the common man, one that presented their America, and illustrates the means by which they could change it. It portrayed the life of American workers as they lived under capitalism, as a problem that needed to be overcome, not just in Paterson but everywhere. The program further emphasized the power of workers acting collectively. It made the explicit point that when they stuck together they could not be beaten; and when they ceased working economic activity grinded to a halt. The pageant was intended to present the lives that immigrant and native workers had lived in America to this point. It offered a path to change that of class warfare. The pageant aimed to make visible the power of the working class.[35]

When the curtain rose and the lights went out the audience was greeted with the single backdrop used throughout the pageant, an imposing mill complex. It was painted by an artist friend of Reed's and backlit by electrical lighting to maintain the illusion of a

[34] "Program of the Paterson Strike Pageant" (The Success Press 1913).
[35] "Program of the Paterson Strike Pageant" (The Success Press 1913).

factory.[36] This perspective was critical to the way the pageant engaged the audience. It meant that the aisles of the theatre became streets, which created greater engagement on the part of the audience. Making the mill the center of attention for the audience was almost certainly intended to bring them onto the side of the workers, to make them part of the strike. Rather than looking upon the workers fronts, in many scenes the audience was looking upon their backs as though they too were a part of the strike. This worked especially well in the scenes that depicted rallies, as the audience of cast members merged into the actual audience. Using space to engage the audience was necessary due to the lack of scripted dialogue in the pageant. Most of the narrative was conveyed by pantomime. By blurring the line between audience and performers the strike pageant further set itself apart from contemporary pageantry not only in its message, but also in terms of artistic experimentation by taking audience participation further than other pageants.

The opening scene powerfully incorporated this, the cast moved through the audience as workers on their way to start their morning shifts. This scene would have particularly grabbed audience members who performed this daily ritual themselves. It may have brought them further into the performance building a connection between themselves and the strikers. Bill Haywood gave a description of the opening scene in his autobiography:

> Lights shone through hundreds of windows. The workers with spirits dead, walked down the street – the center of the great auditorium – in groups, singly and by twos, - an occasional one glancing at a newspaper,

[36] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 203.

> another humming a song, some talking, all with small baskets, buckets, or packages of lunch in their hands, or under their arms. All were at work. The mill whistles blew. The thump, chug, rattle, and buzz of machinery was heard. Then the wide aisle – the street – was deserted. Two hours were supposed to elapse, when the voices inside the mill were heard shouting "Strike! Strike!" The workers came rushing out pell-mell, laughing, shouting, jostling each other. They burst into glorious song – the International – joined by the audience.[37]

A writer for *New York Times* raised another pertinent point regarding the workers in the opening scene: "They walked as if they were ill fed." The first portion of this scene was clearly constructed to elicit sympathy for the workers by showing the spiritual and physical effects of their labor upon them. The description of workers 'with spirits dead' along with the name of the scene 'Mills Alive – Workers Dead' implied that the drudgery of their jobs had crushed their spirits. In addition to that they portrayed an image of physical exhaustion due to hunger. This implied that not only were their jobs difficult and spiritually numbing, mill jobs did not even allow workers to sustain themselves. This scene was not meant to portray an extraordinary event or morning but the daily routine of these workers. This was one of the most striking examples of the pageant portraying the lives of workers on the bottom rungs of American society. By presenting this viewpoint the pageant pioneered social history. The scene presented a problem and gave a call to action. All of this culminated in a celebration following the beginning of the strike.[38]

According to Phillips Russell the moment the strike began was one of great emotion for the audience:

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[37] Big Bill Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; the Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929) 262-264.
[38] "Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913.

> Who could sit quietly in his seat when that mill, wonderfully portrayed on canvas in the first scene, suddenly ceased its grinding and shot from its belly that mess of eddying, struggling humanity being loudly chorusing their exultant war songs as they proclaimed themselves on strike… Nowhere was there a suggestion of 'acting' of going through a part. The people on stage had long ago forgotten the audience. The audience had long ago forgotten itself. It had become a part of the scene. All simply lived their battles over again."[39]

This last line is telling, given the substantial labor presence within the audience. This implies that many members of the audience had experienced a strike, making the scene particularly powerful for them. This would have further increased the bond between the cast and the working class audience members. Each had undergone similar experiences, and in the process of viewing the pageant many had their own battles with employers brought back to memory. This reinforces the idea that what was created on stage was an encapsulation of recent labor history, one that was confirmed in the memories of the working class audience members. This also partially explains the ample audience participation that was reported.[40]

What emerged from the interplay between working-class audience and the striker is what the IWW would refer to as solidarity. It also can be understood as a common labor identity. Though the workers came from varied backgrounds they could still see their experiences reflected in each other. While most pageants connected with their audiences based upon a national identity built upon patriotism and the values of the past, here was a pageant that connected with its audience on the basis of class struggle and

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[39] Phillips Russell "World Greatest Labor Play" *International Socialist Review* VOL XIV July 1913.
[40] "The Pageant as a Form of Propaganda" *Current Opinion*, June 1913; Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913; Pageant of the Paterson Strike, *Survey*, June 1913.

identity. In addition to connecting with working class audience members through these experiences, this section of the pageant allowed the middle and upper-class audience members to experience the life of a worker. Thus the pageant built upon class in a way that few other forms of propaganda could succeed in doing.

The second scene concerned the day-to-day business of the strike; picketing the factory gates. It is in this scene that the audience was meant to see the bravery of the workers contrasted with the cruelty of their opponents. The latter was displayed through the death of Modestino. The scene opened with a line of workers picketing outside of the now shut-down mill (indicated by the lack of lighting in the windows). A scab worker approached under police escort. He was booed across the stage by both the audience and the cast. After the police moved the scab through the picket line the strikers booed and insulted the police captain. The police captain, grew tired of the insults, and then ordered his men to charge the strikers. This charge resulted in a scuffle that ended with forty workers under arrest. These forty arrestees were marched off stage through the audience accompanied by hundreds of booing strikers. The scene continued with strike songs and slogans, and ended with the shooting of Modestino.[41]

The third scene consisted of a reenactment of the Modestino funeral. It featured the actual orations performed by the same speakers as at the actual funeral. A coffin draped in the IWW flag was carried through the central row of Madison Square Garden and placed upon the stage. Once the casket was opened each worker passed it and

[41] "The Pageant as a Form of Propaganda" *Current Opinion*, June 1913; Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913; Pageant of the Paterson Strike, *Survey*, June 1913.

dropped a single red flower. The result of this was a mountain of red flowers lying upon the casket, acting as a vibrant symbol of blood shed for the cause of labor. The audience watched in complete silence. The only sound came from the wife of Modestino. She had been conspicuously placed in a box seat overlooking the stage she was seized by tears and cried throughout the scene adding emotional potency and personal tragedy.[42] Again the solemnity and potent symbolism served to join the audience, and strikers as one. The unity of emotion created by this spectacle was capitalized upon in the funeral orations, which made Modestino a martyr of the working class and portrayed his death as the inevitable result of capitalism. Haywood's speech focused upon all economic exploitation and the need to overthrow the capitalist system. The socialite Mabel Dodge Luhan described the funeral and its effect in her memoirs:

> The funeral procession marched right through it (audience), so that for a few electric moments there was a terrible unity between all those people. They were one: the workers who had come to show their comrades what was happening across the river, and the workers who had come to see it. I have never felt such a high pulsing vibration in any gathering before or since.[43]

Awriter for *New York Times* disliked aspects of the ceremony particularly the placement of an IWW flag on the coffin in lieu of an American one.[44] The decision made complete sense in the context of the pageant; Modestino was being memorialized as a hero of labor. This was one of the main points of the Paterson strike, particularly the

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[42] "The Pageant as a Form of Propaganda" *Current Opinion*, June 1913; Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913; Pageant of the Paterson Strike, *Survey*, June 1913; Big Bill Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; the Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929) 262-265.
[43] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 204.
[44]Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913.

Flag Day incident. Why should the workers feel attachment to a country in which they were treated poorly? Prominent IWW members viewed Modestino's funeral as a memorial to labor struggle in general and not restricted to Paterson. The flowers covering the coffin were a "crimson symbol of the worker's blood". This encouraged the working-class members of the audience to reflect upon their own struggles, and place them in a larger labor context. The pageant was once again working to create a common memory for workers; Modestino was the representative of the sacrifices of the labor movement, just as every other scene had its own larger parallels to many labor battles. To further indict the perpetrators the scene included not only a solemn funeral by the workers, but the placement of Mrs. Modestino to emphasize the personal tragedy of this event. Finally the funeral speeches tied together and made explicit these connections by indicting capitalism as a whole.

The fourth episode of the strike pageant portrayed the strike meetings at Haledon. This scene included many speeches, pledges of solidarity, and the waving of labor flags. The scene's tone was lighthearted. It contained many labor songs which the audience was invited to join in singing. This episode showcased the diversity of the strikers along with the variety of their ethnic backgrounds. This served to strengthen the argument of class solidarity by demonstrating it triumphing over ethnicity. Reed showcased diversity through the inclusion of songs in native languages. Many of the strike songs were composed to the tunes of ethnic folk songs.[45] Labor conflict contributed to the making of

[45] Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913; Elizabeth Gurley. Flynn, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life (1906-1926)* (New York: International Publishers, 1973) 168-169) "Program of the Paterson Strike Pageant" (The Success Press 1913).

Americans by bringing immigrants and natives together behind a common cause, this was in evidence at Paterson, and Ludlow as well. The level of unity on display appears to have surprised at least some of those at the performance, including one writer for the magazine *Survey*:

> Perhaps the thing that struck the observer most forcibly was the sort of people the strikers seemed to be and the absence of race prejudice. A large proportion were substantial, wholesome appearing German-Americans who seemed utterly to lack the hot-headed emotionalism which most people think characterizes the IWW adherents. One German striker, when asked how those of his nationality got along with the Italians, said, "We're all brothers and sisters" – and it certainly seemed so, for the Italian singer was reinforced by a hearty chorus of German women.[46]

This passage is interesting both for what it reveals about the strikers, along with what it revealed about the audience's expectations of who was involved with the strike and the IWW. *Survey's* writer clearly did not expect the presence of some groups, and even questioned how the German and the Italians could cooperate. This scene effectively showed the breadth of the labor movement. It allowed audience members to see their own reflection upon the stage. It effectively removed the strike from negative racial connotations, by demonstrating the breadth of participation. The scene thus functioned similarly to a common pageant trope of including a great variety of people in traditional ethnic costumes to emphasize coming together in a newfound American patriotism. In the Paterson pageant these ethnicities come together in a way that preserved their heritage while binding them together in a class identity. In the words of one of the songs "Italian, French, and Germans/ Hungarians, Jews, and Poles/ Wi'll (sic) make all together/ One

[46] Pageant of the Paterson Strike, *Survey,* June 1913.

nationality".[47] The cause was one that could cross national lines and unite all of these peoples behind one common cause.

The fifth episode of the pageant encompassed two events: the May Day parade, and the sending-away of the children. The first was a typical portrayal of a labor event, one that undoubtedly connected with that section of the audience. The sending-away of the children was highly emotional, capable of generating the sympathy needed to gain donations and connect with the full breadth of the audience. Hundreds of the children were gathered on stage, each wearing either a red hat or a sash. They tearfully embraced their parents and walked across the stage to waiting strike mothers. Haywood described the moment: "A pathetic scene of filial devotion portraying the human reason for the strike – it was for the children". [48] Elizabeth Flynn made a speech to the mothers, reminding them (and thus the audience) of the purpose for the strike and the necessity of this sacrifice.

The use of children of course had a propaganda value. By sending away their children the strikers simultaneously showed how desperate their situation was as well as the importance of their fight. If they were willing to make this sacrifice then it followed that they had a worthy cause. No doubt this scene tugged on the heart strings of parents in the audience. It is also worth noting that the Paterson strikers took this tactic from the Lawrence Textile Strike of 1912, which shared many of the same IWW organizers.

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[47] Phillips Russell "World Greatest Labor Play" *International Socialist Review* VOL XIV July 1913.
[48] Big Bill Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; the Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929) 265.

The final scene was a recreation of a meeting at Helvetia Hall, in which the strikers would gather to hear speeches, debate the strike, and sing labor songs. The scene was intended to serve as a final direct address to the audience. Again it did so through the device of including them in the meeting, through placement of cast and scenery. Haywood and the strikers arrived to the "meeting" by walking down one of the aisles. Haywood spoke facing the audience while the strikers gathered around him with their backs to the audience. This had the visual effect of making the audience part of the meeting. Haywood lectured upon the history of the strike and what the Paterson workers were fighting for. Implicit was the idea that the demands of the Paterson strikers should be those of all Americans. If the practices in Paterson were unjust and were representative of labor practices and conditions elsewhere than those practices too were unjust. Therefore the demands of the Paterson strikers, including the eight-hour day, should be those of all workers. The first five episodes attempted to bring workers together in a common identity through a display of history through their eyes, one that was commensurate with their experience. In this final episode Haywood appealed to class identity, calling upon the audience to aid their fellow workers. In the final act of unity between strikers and crowd nearly the entire room rose to sing the "Internationale". In this final act the middle class audience members became one with the working class.[49]

There was no real ending to the Paterson Strike Pageant. Instead it closed with a speech rallying the strikers (and audience) to greater efforts in support of the strike. This

[49] Paterson Strikers Now Become Actors" *New York Times* June 8 1913; Big Bill Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; the Autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929).

was due to the ongoing nature of the strike along with the need for fundraising. If the pageant ended with a projected victory, this would have damaged attempts to raise funds, which were badly needed for the continuation of the strike. This call also carried the larger message that the future was for the working class to determine based on their solidarity and commitment. The course of the pageant encapsulated working class history and attempted to bring the audience together with the strikers. The presentation of vignettes from Paterson representing common struggle, and a common history reinforced identity. The final scene reinforced this by reiterating the problems faced by all workers, what they should be striving for. It reminded them that they needed to come together to achieve this. The pageant was a reminder of their past, and rallying cry for the future, to continue the fight.

The response to the pageant as piece of art, and as a show was nearly universally positive. Even those, like the writers and editors of *New York Times* who were inclined to dislike it due to the labor themes and the influence of the IWW, or those who later blamed it for the failure of the strike, still acknowledged it as a brilliant piece of theatre. A writer for *New York Times* acknowledged that in terms of sheer spectacle and cast size it was the greatest show New York had ever seen. Some believed that they had witnessed the birth of an entirely new form of labor struggle, a new form of protest that would sweep through the labor movement.[50] Mabel Luhan was one who expressed this belief:

> Its chief accomplishment is in having established a legitimate form of 'demonstration' before which all others must pale. That such living drama

[50] Elizabeth Flynn "Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914; Phillips Russell "World Greatest Labor Play" *International Socialist Review* VOL XIV July 1913.

> offers superb opportunities for workingmen to get their grievances lawfully and effectively before the public must be plain to everyone. In the future we may well find strikers spending their best efforts to get their cause staged…[51]

All of this speaks to the skill of the performers, and organizers in creating such a powerful performance, along with the power of the pageant genre and its effectiveness in connecting to audiences.

What struck many observers, particularly those sympathetic to labor was the realism of the scenes, the deliberate attempt not to embellish lived experiences into a melodrama. The realism enhanced by the strikers themselves reenacting their battles, dramatically enhanced the performance. By reenacting scenes from their recent history, they were also replicating the memories that other workers carried with them. Not only did this realism convey to the broader public the hardships and sacrifices of a labor battle, it stirred the emotions of those who had participated in their own labor battles and could recognize the similarities. Phillips Russell described this in *International Socialist Review:*

> The Paterson Pageant will be remembered for the sweeping emotions it shot through the atmosphere if for no other reason. Waves of almost painful emotion over that great audience as the summer wind converts a placid field of wheat into billowing waves. It was all real, living, and vital to them. There were veterans of many an industrial battle in that audience…[52]

Many in the audience were able to see themselves upon that stage. They saw people of a similar age and profession who lived under the same daily struggles. Even those who

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[51]Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 206.
[52] Phillips Russell "World Greatest Labor Play" *International Socialist Review* VOL XIV July 1913.

hadn't undergone this experience could see themselves in the strikers and understand that they weren't dissimilar. This is the stuff that identity is made of; the emotion that swept through the theater was felt due to deep understanding and connections, a common identity built by similar struggles. This emotional wave spread beyond the working class members of the audience and created a greater sense of sympathy for the cause of labor. This was apparent in the enthusiastic response of the crowd. Yet in the end many saw the pageant as a failure.

Despite reports of a substantial profit the pageant only succeeded in raising a small amount of money. After the failure of the strike, this led many to place the blame entirely upon the pageant. Flynn insisted that it took the best of the strikers off of the picket line and allowed scab workers to get into the plants. Others suggested that this was the last fundraising hope for the strike, and that its failure caused the collapse. Still others suggested that socialist leaders undermined the IWW in order to cause the end of the strike.[53] However, the pageant had little to do with the success or failure of the strike. The mill owners, many of whom had silk factories in Pennsylvania, had the resources to wait out the strikers. The strike broke down into a shop by shop settlement as strikers steadily drifted back to work.[54]

Remembering the strike solely in the context of its effect on Paterson is to minimize what its organizers set out to achieve. The pageant was first and foremost an astounding artistic achievement, which was universally praised for the emotional depth it

[53] Elizabeth Flynn "Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914.
[54] Anne Huber Tripp, *The I.W.W. and the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987) 164-172.

conveyed. It was a wholly new attempt to take a popular art form and use its strengths to aid the labor struggle. It succeeded on artistic terms. It also succeeded in raising awareness of the strike. Had the art form not been tarred by association with a failed strike, pageantry could have become a tool in the arsenal of the labor movement just as other movements used it for their own ends.[55] Not only did the organizers subvert the art form, they improved upon it, even while they kept intact all the key elements. They used a mass cast, from which the pageant drew much of its power, both in terms of drawing in the audience and awing them. It presented a history through a series of episodes, though in this case a much more recent history, one that was still being written. Most importantly it promoted an identity, and endeavored to teach a moral lesson. In the case of the Paterson pageant that lesson was working class solidarity. The pageant aided in spreading this message beyond an exclusively labor audience by moving that message beyond insular labor gatherings and publications.

In common with other pageants the Paterson Strike Pageant used memory and a shared history told through a series of vignettes to promote loyalty to an identity. What differentiated the Paterson Pageant was the more intimate nature of it, the use of the events of Paterson to tell a broader story about the working class. The most important element was the participation of the actual strikers. This gave the performance a greater sense of realism; it ensured that the actors gave meaning to their scenes and that they knew their part. They didn't need to play at emotions, they conveyed their own. This also helped them to connect to the audience, which contained many with similar

[55] Elizabeth Flynn "Truth about the Paterson Strike" Jan 31, 1914.

experiences. The events of Paterson had played out elsewhere, the scenes were common to workers, and told vital parts of their history. The audience was able to connect their own struggles to what was happening on stage, able to place themselves in the strike because the performers were similar to themselves. This contained more power than a standard pageant because of the immediacy, the audience was close to the subject matter, and felt themselves to be a part of it. Historical pageantry focused overwhelmingly on early American history which many people, especially recent immigrants, had no connection to. Though pageant organizers occasionally recognized the ethnic diversity this was in the context of a melting pot. The Paterson Pageant on the other hand celebrated diversity and put it on display through foreign language songs. No one was asked to give up part of their identity, only to recognize a common interest.

CHAPTER 2

MINEWORKERS AND THE CREATION OF THE LUDLOW MASSACRE

On the morning of April 20, 1914 following a verbal altercation between a National Guard officer and a union leader the shooting began. Machine gun fire scythed across the white tents of the colony, as miners took up positions to defend their ad hoc homes. The families hid in dugouts beneath the tents in an effort to escape the streams of machine gun fire. As the inhabitants fled and night approached the militia began setting the tent colony ablaze. As the tents burned women and children beneath them suffocated, as the fire consumed the oxygen in their hiding places. This led to the "Ludlow death pit" a hole in which two women and eleven children perished as their tent burned above them, at least thirteen others in the camp died similarly violent deaths. According to the United Mine Workers of America, Director of Publicity for the area Walter Fink, many refugees from the colony (particularly women) were forced to spend the night shivering on the plains, while others found their way into towns and farmhouses. It was this slaughter of women and children that so catalyzed the nation, and the labor movement.[1]

This attack upon strikers' families at Ludlow marshalled the labor movement in outrage, and labor activists quickly moved to frame it as a massacre. Across the country a rallying cry went out to all workers, calling for aid and solidarity. Protesters in Denver issued the following call to action:

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[1] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) 178-180; Walter Fink, *The Ludlow Massacre: Revealing the Horrors of Rule By Hired Assassins of industry and Telling as well of the Thirty Years War Waged by Colorado Coal Miners Against Corporation-Owned State & County Officials to Secure an Enforcement of the Laws*, 2nd ed. (Denver, CO: United Mine Workers of America, 1914 10-15.

> All those to whom patriotism means more than profits, and in whom humanity still burns, are urged to attend and breathe their passion into the dead body of murdered Justice. Betrayed by those elected to protect, and butchered by brutal mercenaries, the only hope of the toiling class now lies in common counsel and concerted action. The money masters, realizing that we will not surrender as long as life lasts are resolved upon a campaign of utter annihilation… If Ludlow shall go unanswered it will be the death knell of human hope and human aspiration. Let the blood of those martyred men, women and babes wash away all lines of difference and division, permitting brotherhood to stand forth free again and whole. Come.[2]

What became known as the Ludlow Massacre was an affront to the entire labor movement, an affront that required a response. Across the spectrum of the labor movement, from the relatively conservative UMWA (United Mine Workers of America) to the anarchists of New York City, labor writers struggled with how to interpret, contextualize, and respond to the events in Colorado. While some saw a continuation of decades of anti-union violence others saw the start of what could become a second American Civil War. All agreed that labor should seek to understand and respond to these events.[3] In responding, labor groups acted again as historians. They not only related what had happened, but attempted to place their struggle within history. In this role they succeeded in branding Ludlow as a massacre in the minds of the American public

The Ludlow Massacre occurred as the result of a strike pitting the United Mine Workers of America, against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company a Rockefeller owned coal mining concern. In the preceding years, miners had struck many times in the

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[2] Fink, *Ludlow*, 58.
[3] Hippolyte Havel, "The Civil War in Colorado," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 3 (May 1914); Eugene Debs, "Homestead and Ludlow," *International Socialist Review* XV, no. 2 (August 1914); Vincent St. John, "The Lesson of Ludlow," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914).

Southern Colorado coal fields. The 1913-1914 strike continued these earlier conflicts. The strikers possessed a litany of grievances, including receiving pay in company scrip, improper weighing of coal carts (resulting in miners being underpaid), poor conditions in mine towns, and systematic political corruption wrought by mining company officials.[4] Upon declaration of the strike the company forced miners and their families out of company housing. Often mine guards simply threw possessions into piles in the streets. The miners moved into tent colonies for the duration of the strike. The UMWA sent the tents following the conclusion of a strike in West Virginia.[5] Due to persistent incidents of violence by both sides during the strike the Colorado National Guard was called in. Though initially welcomed by strikers, the Colorado Guard enlisted numerous mine guards and company officials. This led to the Guard favoring the policies of the mine owners.[6]

Due to Ludlow's significance to the labor movement it has generated a significant body of historiography. In his book *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West,* Scott Martelle takes a traditional view of the strike, treating it as a conflict of ideology and class. He fails to provide much context on labor struggles, instead focusing on rendering a highly detailed account of the entire strike and its aftermath. In *Killing For Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War,* Thomas Andrews places the strike and massacre in an environmental history context, with particular

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[4] Fink, *Ludlow* , 71-72.
[5] Priscilla Long, "The 1913-1914 Colorado Fuel and Iron Strike, With Reflections on the Causes of Coal Strike Violence," in *The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity?*, ed. John Laslett (PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 345-350.
[6] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) 121-128.

attention to the history of coal mining in Colorado. Andrews argues that interpreting Ludlow as a massacre divorces the event from the rest of its context. *The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity* provides a history of the UMWA, discusses the lives of coal miners, the role of ethnicity in the union, and provides accounts of many strikes including the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company strike which led to Ludlow. Priscilla Long addresses the causes of the strike, placing most of the blame upon company towns, and the political corruption on behalf of the mining companies. Howard Zinn takes a similar view in his essay *Colorado Coal Strike 1913-1914,* which is included in *Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century*. Elizabeth Burt in *Shocking Atrocities in Colorado: Newspapers' Responses to the Ludlow Massacre* takes the same tack as Zinn, offering a sympathetic account of the massacre victims.

By and large, these historians have failed to examine how the labor movement addressed Ludlow in the months following the massacre. This chapter will examine the reactions of several groups within the broader labor movement; the Anarchists through their most famous publication of the period *Mother Earth,* the UMWA through a one-hundred page pamphlet titled *The Ludlow Massacre,* which promised to reveal "The horrors of rule by hired assassins of industry", and published by the UMWA publicity department, and a Socialist perspective through articles which appeared in *International Socialist Review*. An examination of these sources reveals that across the labor movement each group appealed to patriotism or American tradition when calling for action in response to Ludlow. They cast the mining camp as a miniature America, and

the circumstances of its creation and destruction as emblematic of America's problems. Much of what the strikers wanted was already written into Colorado law. In this sense the government and law failed them. According to the strikers they were attacked by supposed protectors in the pay of wealthy industrialists. Across the labor movement the miners were portrayed as standing up for American values. This lent itself to an oligarchs vs. the people narrative, one rooted in the American tradition. The implication was that real Americans would never stand for such acts committed by wealthy robber barons. This powerful mobilizing narrative found itself muddled by a more divisive class warfare narrative that ran through many of the same works. Understanding their narrative requires a closer look at the events that sparked Ludlow.

On September 23 1913 the United Mine Workers of America began their strike against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CFI), owned by John D. Rockefeller Jr. It was the latest in a series of strikes launched by the UMWA in order to organize the coal miners of Colorado. Simultaneous strikes occurred in other areas of Colorado against other companies; however the main target of the strike was the CFI. The union considered the abuses of the CFI to be the most egregious of any company due to its active anti-union stance and flagrant violations of Colorado labor law. The strike proved difficult to organize. CFI fired any workers suspected of pro-union tendencies. The UMWA infiltrated its organizers into the mines in two-man teams. One man would agitate for a strike and organize the workers while the other would present himself as an

anti-union spy to the mine bosses and feed them false information. This resulted in the firing of many workers who supported anti-union policies.[7]

The workers had a great many grievances. They sought the enforcement of Colorado laws against paying workers in company scrip, and the enforcement of the 8-hour day law. The miners wanted compensation for digging coal based on standard two-thousand pound tons, rather than two thousand two-hundred pound "long tons" that prevailed in the mines. They also demanded that men elected by the miners check the work of the company weightmen, to ensure that miners were being compensated at the appropriate rate. Those who demanded that the company follow the law were routinely discharged.

Important to the safety of the miners was the demand to be paid for what was known as "dead work". Dead work was the necessary work that needed to be done by miners to ensure both their safety and the functioning of the mine, but that did not bring any profit to the company. This included laying track for mining carts and constructing the supports needed to prevent a mine collapse. This along with lax enforcement of safety laws contributed to a high death rate in Colorado's mines. This rate stood at more than double the national average (7.055 per 1000 vs 3.15 per thousand). Many demands concerned life in company towns, including the freedom to shop at any store, choose one's own place of residence, and the right to see a doctor who did not work for the company. The miners desired an end to endemic political and legal corruption driven by

[7] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007 57-65.

the mining companies. The demand that was most unacceptable for the company however was union recognition. Throughout the strike CFI officials refused to meet face to face to negotiate because this would have implied union recognition. Meanwhile, union leaders refused to accept any agreement that did not recognize their right to exist.[8]

Company towns and their management contributed to the outbreak of strikes and violence in numerous incidences and are vital to understanding the lives of miners. Mining company towns sprang into existence for many practical reasons. Foremost among these reasons is location. Veins of coal are not often located near population centers. Companies would buy the land and build worker housing, shops, and other infrastructure to ease recruitment of workers. In many cases company towns became instruments of control, giving the mining companies a monopoly on the flow of information. Mine guards prevented agitators from entering the town, and the company could fire and evict any employees who were pro-union. Institutions such as churches and schools were either run by or at least approved by the company. Companies used their control over towns to prevent unionization by bringing in numerous ethnic groups and settling each in its own area of town to prevent solidarity among workers. The point was to create ethnic rivalry. The prospect of losing one's home with their job also served

[8] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) 26-32; Walter Fink, *The Ludlow Massacre*, 2nd ed. (Denver, CO: United Mine Workers of America, 1914) 71-74.

to keep workers in line.[9] The effect of this was to create a corporate totalitarianism through absolute control over the lives of employees.

This level of control generated increased levels of resentment on the part of employees, giving them numerous additional grievances. This concentration of power led to a concentration of worker grievances companies. A company town meant that most problems could be blamed upon the company. This situation led to grievances which related not just to work but to the price of rent, price of goods in the company store, the quality of schools, the quality of doctors and numerous other complaints. The workers striking against CFI cited many of these. But most important to the miners was the criminal behavior of the mine guards, the company security agents who patrolled the town. Miners asserted that certain guards raped or sexually assaulted the families of miners, and further that any complaint about this resulted in losing one's home. The guards always won the court cases due to company political influence. The problems of company towns and the prospect of losing one's home during a strike provided additional fuel for strike violence, and led to greater desperation on the part of the workers.[10]

As soon as the miners began their strike they found themselves forced out of the company towns by mine guards, their possessions thrown into the streets in the midst of a driving rain. Many single miners simply left the area to seek work in other mines, and

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[9] Mildred Beik, "The UMWA and New Immigrant Miners in Pennsylvania Bituminous: The Case of Windber," in *The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity?*, ed. John Laslett (PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 320-344; Price Fishback, "The Miner's Work Environment: Safety and Company Towns in the Early 1900's," in *The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity?*, ed. John Laslett (PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

[10] Ibid; Priscilla Long, "The 1913-1914 Colorado Fuel and Iron Strike, With Reflections on the Causes of Coal Strike Violence," in *The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity?*, ed. John Laslett (PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 345-350.

large numbers of foreign miners returned to their home countries. The remaining miners and their families lived in tent colonies, occupying tents on rental pastureland both of which had been provided by the UMWA. Ludlow became the largest of these tent colonies, with two hundred tents and 1200 people. The UMWA also gave assistance to the miners and their families out of a strike fund, with the level of assistance dependent upon the size of the family.

CFI steeled itself for the strike by augmenting its force of mine guards and hiring agents from the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. Using company political control, large numbers of mine guards and Baldwin-Felts employees were sworn in as deputy sheriffs, giving company actions a veneer of legal legitimacy.[11] The Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, like many involved in strikebreaking, possessed a history of violence during coal strikes. Its agents had recently been hired for the duration of the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek Strike which had lasted from April of 1912 to July of 1913, and resulted in the deaths of at least fifty strikers. They would later play a central role in the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1920. Both these incidents also involved the UMWA.[12] Once the tent colonies were established CFI surrounded them with high-powered search lights which scanned the colony all night, preventing sleep and sowing fear of attacks.

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[11] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007 57-76; Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008) 246-248.

[12] Mildred Beik, "The UMWA and New Immigrant Miners in Pennsylvania Bituminous: The Case of Windber," in *The United Mine Workers of America: A Model of Industrial Solidarity?*, ed. John Laslett (PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996) 320-344.

When CFI brought in scab workers the miners retaliated with attacks upon the scabs. These attacks often took the form of firing upon the scabs as they went to the mines, as well as firing upon or even dynamiting their housing when it was vacant. According to historians Scott Martelle and Thomas Andrews these attacks were not intended to kill, but instead to terrify the scabs and deter them from working. The union leadership stood staunchly against these attacks, fearing the violence would result in the governor calling out the state militia to end the strike. During these battles there were deaths among both the strikers and the mine guards. Throughout the early phases of the strike the violence steadily escalated. Mine guards launched their own attacks throughout the strike, often firing into the tent colonies at night. These attacks led the strikers to dig pits beneath their tents to protect their families from the gunfire.

The most infamous act of violence prior to the massacre was the attack upon the Forbes tent colony by the "Death Special". The Baldwin-Felts detectives purchased a large touring car and modified it in a CFI shop, adding armor plating, a searchlight, and a mounted machine gun. In addition to the machine gunner the car could carry up to seven additional gunmen. On the night of October 23 the Death Special fired into the tent colony. Horse-mounted mine guards added to the volume of fire ripping through the tents. The attack killed one miner and injured several children, including one boy who was shot nine times in the leg. Colorado Governor Elias Ammons responded to the incessant gun battles by ordering the Colorado National Guard under the command of General John Chase into the strike zone. The use of searchlights and the Death Special showed a greater degree of organization and intent in the violence perpetrated by the

mining companies. While striker leadership cannot be directly implicated in striker violence, the use of company facilities to construct the Death Special demonstrates at least acquiescence if not support for violence directed against the strikers.[13]

Initially the miners welcomed the National Guard due to an agreement that prohibited the importation of additional strikebreakers into the area. Yet the National Guard's status as a neutral bystander became corrupted over time. Many of the officers were sympathetic to the mine owners and began enlisting mine guards and Baldwin-Fett's detectives. This blurred the lines between the military and the CFI. Furthermore, the National Guard began to aid in the importation of strikebreakers, violating the initial agreement.[14] The Guard arrested numerous strike leaders. It held them for days at a time, preventing them from communicating with the other strikers. The miners claimed that the National Guard looted homes, trashed businesses, launched unprovoked attacks, and tortured imprisoned strike leaders by keeping them awake for days at time.[15]

The treatment of Mother Jones, a 77-year-old labor agitator known for her fiery language by the Colorado National Guard became a rallying cry among the miners. Mother Jones arrived in Colorado from a copper strike in Michigan. She immediately rallied the strikers, encouraging them to stay the course. When Governor Ammons visited Trinidad (the town nearest the strike zone) he refused to see Mother Jones. She

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[13] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) 121-128.
[14] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) 121-128.
[15] Walter Fink, *The Ludlow Massacre*, 2nd ed. (Denver, CO: United Mine Workers of America, 1914) 80-91.

responded by leading a crowd of women and children into his hotel and knocking on his door. She then left the strike zone to lobby Congress to launch an inquiry into the strike. On her return she was deported and forced to slip back in secretly. When she again returned following an investigation into the source of the scabs, she was once again deported. This time she was taken and kept incommunicado in a hospital, leading to mounting calls for an explanation. The militia attacked a crowd of women and children who arrived with the intent of freeing Jones, creating further bad publicity. Upon her release she refused to leave the strike zone and was again arrested, this time kept in a basement jail cell for twenty-six days with no charges. Upon her release she went to Washington D.C. to testify before Congress regarding the strike, taking the stand just days before the massacre. As a result, Mother Jones became a symbol for the strikers. She was a valuable source of publicity due to the inability of Governor Ammons to explain why the National Guard was imprisoning an elderly woman without any charges.[16]

Mother Jones with her passionate speeches, marches, and frequent arrests served as part of the theatrics of the labor movement. Born in Ireland as Mary Harris Jones she arrived in the United States from Canada at age 23. She lived a relatively normal life until the loss of her family during a yellow fever epidemic in 1867. She became involved in the labor movement following the Chicago Fire of 1871. She joined the Knights of Labor, and took part in the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. In her labor agitation she

[16] Dale Fetherling, *Mother Jones the Miners' Angel: A Portrait* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974) 112-133.

adopted a matronly character, referring to male workers as “her boys” and casting herself as a defender of women and children. The adoption of the Mother Jones mantle made her a well-known figure in the labor movement. Using a motherly tone with workers motivated them with her fiery speeches. She garnered sympathy based upon her age using this as a tool in her role as a labor agitator. She used all of these cultural skills during her career as an organizer, and became a key part of labor movement optics; organizing women’s and children’s marches.[17]

By April the National Guard troops had largely withdrawn due to the massive expense of keeping them mobilized. The mine management believed their mission had largely been accomplished. Meanwhile, the successful importation of strikebreakers cast doubt upon the success of the strike. By the date of the massacre, April 20, 1914 only a single company of National Guard remained in the region. It consisted primarily of mine guards and others with ties to CFI. This company was led by a man named Karl Linderfelt. It was Linderfelt who received much of the blame for the Ludlow Massacre. On the morning of April 20, three national guardsmen arrived at the Ludlow tent colony and demanded that the strikers produce a man they were looking for. The leader of the camp, Louis Tikas, said that the man was not in the colony and that he did not recognize their authority due to the National Guard’s ordered withdrawal. Still he agreed to meet with an officer later in the day to discuss the matter. A series of three explosions rang out, before this meeting could occur. Following the explosions the National Guard began

[17]Mary Jones, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1925); Dale Fetherling, *Mother Jones the Miners' Angel: A Portrait* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974).

machine gunning the tent colony from a nearby ridge. These explosions remain largely unexplained: the miners claimed that it was a signaling system used to begin the attack; The National Guard claimed the explosions were accidental.[18]

Many of the miners occupied rifle pits dug around the perimeter of the tent colony and returned fire. Throughout the battle mine guards and scabs rushed to reinforce the National Guard. All day machine gun fire swept across the tents as families sought cover in their dugouts. A break in the machinegun fire, caused by a train which stopped in the line of fire, allowed the women and children to escape into the hills. By 7 PM the National Guard, mine guards, and a number of scabs entered the tent colony looting and burning their way through it. The fire caused most of the casualties, as the tents burned above them the remaining women and children suffocated in their dugouts. In one hole two women and eleven children suffocated. At least six others died in the camp, while the National Guard lost four dead and an unknown number of injured. Historians believe that somewhere between nineteen and twenty-six were killed in total. Miners claimed that it was upwards of fifty. They also believed that the true purpose of the fire was to cover-up evidence of an even larger massacre. Fink elaborated upon this in *The Ludlow Massacre*:

> When they had completed their search… they poured oil on them and then burned the bodies. There are more than fifty women and children missing and it is believed that all traces of their murder were obliterated by the militia on the huge funeral pyre[19]

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[18]Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) 160-176.
[19] Fink, *Ludlow,* 16.

John Lawson, the head of the strike also accused the gunmen of destroying bodies to hide the extent of the massacre: "Some of these Baldwin gunmen" he wrote, "have even used dynamite to destroy the charred remains of innocent women and children, so that the world will never know the awful truth of the horrible murders."[20]The National Guard was further criticized for not allowing Red Cross workers in or allowing the bodies to be moved for forty-eight-hours. The delay lent further credence to claims of a conspiracy.[21] During the fighting Louis Tikas was captured and killed by a blow to the back of the head by Karl Linderfelt.

The killing of so many of their families enraged the miners who immediately organized a counterattack. The UMWA issued "A Call to Arms" in Denver two days after the massacre:

> Organize the men in your community in companies or volunteers to protect workers of Colorado against the murder and cremation of men, women, and children by armed assassins in the employ of coal corporations, serving under the guise of state militiamen. Gather together for defensive purposes all arms and ammunition legally available… The state is furnishing us no protection and we must protect ourselves, our wives and children, from these murderous assassins. We seek no quarrel with the state and expect to break no law; we intend to exercise our lawful right as citizens, to defend our homes and our constitutional rights.[22]

The strikers spread throughout the strike area, launching retaliatory attack on mines, and company towns. Armed strikers from other areas moved to reinforce the Ludlow strikers cutting telegraph, and telephone wires as they moved. Miners took several mines, capturing mine guards and their families. They destroyed tunnels, mine buildings,

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[20] Fink, *Ludlow*, 25.
[21] Fink, *Ludlow*, 18-19.
[22] Fink, *Ludlow*, 19-20.

railroad bridges, and secured additional arms and ammunition through raids on company stores. In the ten days of fighting the miners captured a 100-square-mile area. According to some reports, they killed 30 mine guards and national guardsmen.[23] Many National Guardsmen refused to redeploy to the strike area due to the massacre. An entire company mutinied and jeered other units which left for the strike zone. President Wilson sent in federal troops to disarm both sides, and the fighting came to an end. In December the strike ended after UMWA strike fund ran out. Twenty-two National Guardsmen were court-martialed of whom only Linderfelt was found guilty. He was given a light sentence.[24]

News of the events at Ludlow shocked the nation. Newspapers were filled with lurid descriptions of the carnage. The *Rocky Mountain News*, a small pro-labor Denver newspaper, became the first to use the term "massacre". Many large papers held pro-business views and choose to bury their coverage of Ludlow deep within their publications. What the papers reported was made worse by the lack of solid information regarding the extent of what occurred. Labor groups raced to add their voices to the growing chorus of publications reporting on Colorado. While many papers across the country sympathized with the miners, some such as the *New York Times* blamed the violence wholly upon the miners.[25] One reporter put the issue bluntly:

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[23] Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008) 276-278.
[24] Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion: The Ludlow Massacre and Class War in the American West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007) 197-210.
[25] Elizabeth Burt, "Shocking Atrocities in Colorado: Newspapers' Responses to the Ludlow Massacre," *American Journalism* 28, no. 3 (Summer 2011).

> Pointing to Ludlow, they will justify the legalizing of any act of usurpation. Their doctrine is to deny the right of any man to work for whom he pleases, and they have sought to undermine the law that protects every citizen in rights equal for all. They are now nerved to take this citadel by storm. The right to work becomes in their eyes the right to prevent others from working. In defense of that right they have used bombs, firearms, even artillery, and against sleeping enemies of any sex or age. But when a sovereign state employs such horrible means, what may not be expected from the anarchy that ensues?[26]

Labor groups had to counter this narrative, and get their own story out, both to influence the public and to rally labor as a whole to the defense of the Colorado miners.

Not surprisingly, what became one of the definitive accounts of the massacre was published by the UMWA. Shortly after the events a one-hundred page pamphlet appeared in Denver: *Ludlow Massacre: Revealing the Horrors of Rule By Hired Assassins of industry and Telling as well of the Thirty Years War Waged by Colorado Coal Miners Against Corporation-Owned State & County Officials to Secure an Enforcement of the Laws.* The writer was Walter Fink, the UMWA Director of Publicity. The pamphlet captured not only the massacre itself, but provided a narrative of the strike, including earlier acts of cruelty by the militia. Fink also wove in eyewitness testimonies of the massacre many written by non-strikers, petitions by other groups, newspaper articles, and most powerfully numerous photos. These photos captured the destruction at Ludlow with before and after shots of the camp, the "death hole", and funerals for the slain children. All together this pamphlet provided a powerful indictment of the CFI and the conditions that led to the strike. The conflict at Ludlow had been transformed into a massacre committed by CFI and John Rockefeller.

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[26] "The Ludlow Camp Horror." *New York Times,* April 23, 1914.

In *Ludlow Massacre* Fink framed the events to the benefit of labor, through crafting his own history of events relying not only upon union members but upon other groups and publications. The very fact that Ludlow is known as a massacre rather than a battle, and that it is even known at all is a tribute to Fink's success. The final paragraph of Fink's introduction summarized the argument of the pamphlet. Though he touched on the tragedy of the massacre, the real problem cited was corruption of American values by the coal companies. He accused them of subverting the democratic process, ignoring laws, and controlling the government while oppressing the American worker. The pamphlet established the coal miners as much like the victims of the Boston Massacre standing up for their rights as Americans. According to Fink, companies and their allies in government trampled upon these rights. He created a narrative of everyday, patriotic Americans standing up to an oligarch (Rockefeller) who massacred women and children and stood against democracy. Reinforcing this point was the fact that most of what the miners demanded was enshrined in law, yet unenforced. Fink put the issue in blatant terms:

> It seems impossible here in supposedly free America, men, women, and children must be slaughtered, mothers with babes in their arms must be ridden down and maimed by a man like Adjutant General Chase, a pliant lickspittle of the operators; that the motherhood of the nation must submit to robbery, abuse and fiendish outrages' that men and women must forego their right of trial by jury and other injustices that they may force the capitalist owned state and county executives to enforce the laws and re-establish constitutional government. But the fact remains that the Colorado miners have suffered all of these things that they might secure an enforcement of state laws.[27]

[27] Fink, *Ludlow*, 5.

The killing of women and children allowed Fink to frame Ludlow as a massacre; without that piece of the narrative it would have been a battle, and less moving to the public. Historians Teresa Anne Murphy and Nancy Cott have both addressed the issue of women's perceived moral superiority during this time period. Viviana Zelizer explores this same issue as it applies to children. Without the additional value placed upon the lives of women and children the story of Ludlow would have been much less sensational. While men died at Ludlow Fink built his massacre narrative around the women and children, and when he mentioned men's deaths he framed them as protecting women and children.[28]

As might be expected the UMWA presented the massacre in evocative language, language that made it difficult to do anything but sympathize with the strikers, and filled the audience with loathing for the Colorado National Guard and the coal operators. The point was to tug on the heartstrings of the audience. Fink filled his pamphlet with moving accounts of the effect of the violence on mothers and infants, leaving little doubt that the event was a "massacre":

> Tents were riddled with bullets until they looked like so many fishing nets. Using machineguns like garden hose, the gunmen cut down everything that rose in their path of death as they swerved from one end of the colony to the other and back again. Women driven almost insane, ran like frightened rabbits into the caves dug for their safety, their babes clutching frantically at their breasts, their older children tearing at their skirts while around them fell the explosive bullets of the gunmen-militia.[29]

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[28] Teresa Murphy, *Citizenship and the Origins of Women's History in the United States* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton University Press, 1994).
[29] Fink, *Ludlow*, 9.

This last term, "gunmen" is but one of many used to describe the attackers, all of which were meant to emphasize the illegitimacy of their actions. Other terms include "Colorado's uniformed murderers" and "assassins". The last imparts no legitimacy and implies that they were paid to solely to carry out the killing. Here Fink further emphasized that the agents of the state had sold out to the mining companies, that they were trampling the rights of working people.[30] The tragic narrative was interspersed throughout with tales of heroism, of miners who were happy to lay down their lives to defend their families from the assault.[31] Fink forged the brutality of the attack into a weapon to strike at Rockefeller's reputation and label him a hypocrite. It is notable that when Fink wrote about the massacre itself he nearly left the miners out of the story. Instead he focused on the miners' families, the culturally innocent.

> Where the day before 300 children had romped and played and been happy, now lay the distorted roasted bodies of some of them and their mothers… they saw a little girl lying at the side of the roadway… Just as the linemen were about to pick up the little sufferer, one of the brutal, murdering gunmen of Linderfelt's command stepped up to the lineman and told him to leave the little girl where she was. None know what became of the little tot. It is believed that she contributed to the blaze on the funeral pyre erected to John D. Rockefeller Jr., Sunday school teacher and philanthropist.[32]

The treatment of the American flag by the miners and the National Guard was a theme throughout the pamphlet. The narrative is that while they served under the flag as soldiers they never showed this symbol of America any respect. The miners, on the other

[30] Fink, *Ludlow*, 9-11.
[31] Fink, *Ludlow*, 9-30.
[32] Fink, *Ludlow*, 17-18.

hand, revered and died under the American flag. This of course implied that the true patriots were the miners and their families.

> The unionists had three American flags flying to the breeze… But this made no difference to the gunmen who were wearing the state's uniform. Their deadly weapons tore the Stars and Stripes from their masts, just as if they had been so many rags. They were burned when the torch was applied to the canvas homes.[33]

In addition, while the strikers are said to have flown the flag throughout the strike Fink claimed that it was months before the militia flew one above their camp. This was not the only instance of disrespect toward the flag recounted. As Fink wrote in another example: "When the union women of Trinidad took $300 of their saved pennies and bought the Stars and Stripes to fly over a parade they were ridden down by the soldiery, and the national colors trampled in the dust".[34] One of the cartoons in the pamphlet takes up this subject. In it a woman is fleeing with the American flag, chased by a mounted soldier. The soldier rides down the woman, takes the flag and proceeds to drag it through the dirt. The caption reads "Respect Shown American Flag and Women in Colorado". This imagined scene reinforced the point that the miners' enemies were unpatriotic and that women were being victimized.[35] Differing treatment of the flag was only one way the UMWA argued that they were true Americans, while their opponents were unpatriotic hypocrites. It is interesting that Fink and the UMWA chose to play the flag card. Many labor groups, particularly the IWW, thrived on symbols of international labor solidarity

[33]Fink, *Ludlow*, 15-16.
[34] Fink, *Ludlow*, 32-33.
[35] Fink, *Ludlow*, 72.

rather than the nationalism of a single country. Fink crafted this narrative with the intention of reaching beyond a narrow pro-labor audience.

Following the event, the gendered language of the Ludlow Massacre created space for the involvement of women. One group was the Women's Peace Committee who petitioned Governor Ammons for an end to the violence. Fink excerpted their petition in the UMWA pamphlet. This petition it particular attention to the immigrant miners at Ludlow along with the state's failure toward them.

> …we want to point out to you how absolutely the state has failed in its duty to these foreigners who have been brought into our midst for assimilation. There is no question that the coal companies have violated every law on the statute books for the protection of their employees. From the commencement of their residence in the land of the free, these people from other lands have been made the victims of unbearable oppressions. Herded like cattle, cheated on the weight of the coal they produced, the victims of extortion at every turn, and unprotected by proper safety appliances and improvements, they were given small conception of the justice that is the keystone in our national arch. Their sole contact with the spirit of citizenship was during elections, when they were driven to the polls by superintendents and voted like sheep.[36]

The last section reinforced the UMWA's demands during the strike (also in the pamphlet). While writers for *New York Times* accused the miners of lawlessness, here it was the companies that ignored the law, along with the promises of living "in the land of the free". According to Fink, the companies ignored safety and wage laws, and built a system of political corruption. This passage placed the miners' demands outside the material sphere, and into the higher purpose of attaining the legal rights that they were

[36] Fink, *Ludlow*, 31-32.

entitled to but were denied by the coal companies. Following sections featured a litany of complaints including imprisonment without charge, and refusing the right to a lawyer.[37]

The members of the Women's Peace Committee went on to defend the militia, arguing that the massacre was committed entirely by "the mine guards and hired thugs rushed into the militia by the coal companies". In this version of events the companies not only ignored the law, but worked to actively corrupt state institutions and subvert them into their own service. Accordingly the miners were humble, patriotic working people, stripped of rights and dignity by a corrupt oligarchy. Rather than implicate a large group or an entire class the cast of villains was kept small. Rockefeller received most of the blame. By doing this Fink maximized the number of potential allies and avoided a more alienating class warfare narrative. Fink lent credibility to this version of events by excerpting a third party which backed him up.[38]

Fink's *The Ludlow Massacre* contextualized the 1913-1914 strike within the history of labor conflicts in Colorado, framing them as attempts of workers to assert their constitutional rights. The author painted a picture of systematic attempts to deny miners their rights and ruthlessly eliminate any opposition to rule by the coal companies. Seen in this light Ludlow was yet another act designed to ensure Rockefeller control. As Fink put it

> The bloody massacre of twenty-one men, women and children at Ludlow, Colo., April 20, 1914 was the final effort of the coal operators and John D. Rockefeller to wipe out every vestige of the labor movement in Colorado

[37] Fink, *Ludlow*, 33-37.
[38] Fink, *Ludlow*, 27-36.

> and to give warning to any who might demand their constitutional rights that theirs would be a similar fate. For more than thirty years the coal miners of Colorado have been only so many slaves of the operators. Every industrial, political and religious right has been denied them. Legislation in the interests of the workers has availed them nothing, for the coal companies own the courts… The oppressions of the men which led up to the present strike are so foreign to American liberty that they are almost unbelievable to the man who believes that constitutional government does exist everywhere in this supposed land of the free.[39]

When viewed this way the strike appeared as a breakdown of every institution that should have guaranteed each citizen's rights. Fink accused the mine operators of rigging elections by discharging workers who did not vote a certain way. He pointed out that deputy sheriffs doubled as mine guards, and that juries were carefully selected to see to it that no one who served the mining companies received a guilty verdict. In essence the miners were standing up to an illegitimate power. Fink made it very easy to cast the strikers in the mold of the American Revolution, common people fighting for inalienable rights denied by the powerful. Fink portrayed the miners as defenders of both traditional American rights, as well as men defending their families. Combined this made for a powerful narrative, particularly when its ire is focused upon Rockefeller rather than a blanket denunciation of a capitalist class.[40]

The massacre and the conditions leading to the strike were framed as entirely foreign to the United States. General Chase, the National Guard commander, was referred to as "Czar Chase", connecting him with Russian autocracy. The term czar was often used in labor publications as shorthand for despotism.[41] To emphasize the failure

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[39] Fink, *Ludlow*, 72-73.
[40] Fink, *Ludlow*, 75-86.
[41] Fink, *Ludlow*, 61-63.

of "American civilization" in Colorado, Ludlow was compared to the ongoing Mexican Civil War and Rockefeller with its more infamous figures.

> Mexico offers no barbarity so base as that of the murder of defenseless women and children by the mine guards in soldiers' clothing… we boast of American civilization with this infamous thing at our very doors. Huerta murdered Madero, but even Huerta did not shoot an innocent little boy seeking water for his mother who lay ill. Villa is a barbarian, but in his maddest excess Villa has not turned machine guns on imprisoned women and children. Where is the outlaw so far beyond the pale of human kind as to burn the tent over heads of nursing mothers and helpless little babies?[42]

The pamphlet concluded by calling on President Wilson to intervene in Colorado. "His ear heard the wail of the innocent, outraged and dying in Mexico," declared Fink. Cannot the president," he added "give heed to the sufferings of his own people!"[43]

Though the majority of the pamphlet contained details of the massacre, or other acts of violence performed on behalf of the mine owners during the strike, the core argument concerned American rights. Fink placed the strike in the context of legal rights enshrined in state or national law, especially the constitution had been denied to the miners. The miners responded by fighting for their rights. By framing events using this narrative the miners became American heroes, standing up for what Americans believed in. They became like David while Rockefeller and his CFI became a corrupt Goliath. Fink framed the strike as a conflict between common people on one side, and an oligarchy represented by Rockefeller on the other. The pamphlet made it clear whose

[42] Fink, *Ludlow*, 89.
[43] Fink, *Ludlow*, 90.

side the American people were expected to stand on. Other labor publications followed the same tactic of linking labor's cause with history.

The *International Socialist Review* was a monthly publication with a general leftist and pro-labor editorial policy. It combined theoretical articles on socialism with labor news. Writers for the publication included figures such as Eugene Debs, the Socialist Party presidential candidate and union head, Upton Sinclair, novelist reformer and William "Big Bill" Haywood (IWW labor organizer, and former head of the Western Federation of Miners). The coverage *International Socialist Review* gave to Ludlow was authored by many writers. Several themes were immediately apparent in this coverage. The first was of course vivid descriptions of the act itself; there was also an effort to contextualize Ludlow not as an isolated act but as part of a trend within American history, as yet another battle between labor and capital. Writers presented the Colorado Coalfield War as an inevitable uprising by the oppressed to seize their legal rights, which had been denied to them. As one of writer for the *Review* put it:

> The Battle of Ludlow was inevitable for seven months the southern coal fields of Colorado have been divided into two hostile camps… The main issue is the right of the miners to organize. The Colorado Statutes are very clear on this subject and the miners have the legal right of way, but, the "law is a dead letter in the section of Colorado 100 miles square," or wherever the Operators own the land. On September 23, 1913, the union miners went on strike to enforce their constitutional rights[44]

As in the UMWA pamphlet, one of the first assertions was that the workers fought for rights guaranteed not only by the state of Colorado, but by the constitution

[44] Leslie Marley, "The Class War in Colorado," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914) 709.

itself. *The International Socialist Review* attempted to combine a language of class warfare with that of patriotism. The message is that American's rights were being subverted by the wealthy in a quest for profit. Again the implication was that the public must stand with the workers. To side with Rockefeller, according to *International Socialist Review* writer Leslie Marley was to stand with one who trampled the freedom of the vulnerable:

> Now the Coal Capitalists not only owned the land and the coal, as far down as hell, but they also owned the churches, schools, saloons and shacks or twentieth century cabins, where the miners were allowed to live, at so much per month. The first move on the Operators' part was to break up these free American homes.[45]

What followed this section were transcripts from the congressional inquiry reinforcing the point that by their very nature company towns were un-American. So much power in the hands of an employer limited the freedoms of workers, particularly when that concentration of power trampled or subverted government authority.

This account gave the militiamen a sympathetic treatment and emphasized their connections to the strikers. It is asserted that the militia was corrupted by a minority of mining company thugs within its ranks, and it was not the uniformly malicious force it appeared to be in other accounts.

> It was not long before the majority of the gunmen were wearing militia uniforms, which further complicated matters, as the majority of the militia were in sympathy with the coal miners. Many of them visited Mother Jones during her six months illegal imprisonment and they told her that never again would they wear the uniform. It also develops that 584

[45] Leslie Marley, "The Class War in Colorado," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914) 711.

> deputies were sworn in as far back as August and yet no salaries had been demanded from the state. They were on the pay-roll of the *owners of the state*- the Coal Operators Association.[46]

This continued the portrayal of Rockefeller's company as having hollowed out the state so that it served corporate interests. While most of the militia remained true, the actions of a few at the behest of the coal companies caused the tragedy. In this portrayal the common militia soldier was yet another victim.

At the same time, *The Class War in Colorado* included another aspect of American patriotism: a tendency toward racism and xenophobia. The account portrayed the miners not just as Americans, but as *white* Americans. One of the CFI's responses to the strike is said to have been bringing in "Japs and Negroes to work in the mines."[47] The article framed non-whites as the villains taking the jobs of strikers so that operations could continue. It ignored the presence of these groups, as well as Mexicans among the strikers despite their participation in the strike being confirmed in another *International Socialist Review* article.[48] A *Rocky Mountain News* article excerpted in *International Socialist Review* compared Ludlow to events of the Mexican Civil War as well as "the days when pitiless red men wreaked vengeance".[49] Fink expounded upon this in his pamphlet though not quite as explicitly. This built sympathy for the predominately

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[46] Leslie Marley, "The Class War in Colorado," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914) 712.
[47] Leslie Marley, "The Class War in Colorado," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914) 710.
[48] Clara Nozzor, "Ludlow," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914).
[49] Leslie Marley, "The Class War in Colorado," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914) 716.

southern European miners who struggled, much like the Irish, to be considered part of the white working class.[50]

The diversity of the strikers became a common refrain in the Ludlow coverage. Much of the coverage specified the number of ethnic groups or languages represented by the strikers. Clara Nozzer in her article *Ludlow* likened this mixture of nationalities to the melting pot analogy of America, representing the tent colony as a miniature America. "Eight American flags waved gladly in the air over its tents. Here was going on the making of Americans in this great western melting pot in the southern coal fields of Colorado"[51]. As in the UMWA pamphlet the flying of American flags was recognized as a symbol of patriotism (though here the number is eight rather than the three the UMWA claimed). The remainder of the article is an account of the brutalities inflicted upon the inhabitants of Ludlow. The accounts of abuses by mining companies when juxtaposed with the image of Ludlow as the American melting pot presented capital and especially Rockefeller as the enemies of all Americans. This argument echoed that of the Labor Republicans, one of the earliest American labor movements which viewed society in terms of producers and parasites, with producers cast as those best representing America.[52]

> Waste and ruin, death and misery were the harvest of this war that was waged on helpless people. The ruthlessness of the steady fusillade of

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[50] Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991).
[51] Leslie Marley, "The Class War in Colorado," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914) 722.
[52] Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984)157-194.

> bullets from the machine guns turned against these people by the terrific force of capital in the human form of inhuman octopus John D. Rockefeller wiped out whole families, separated husbands and wives, mothers and babies and sent into the beyond little ones whose day of life was but a short time off.[53]

Eugene Debs linked Ludlow to other major fights in labor history. He connected the Homestead Strike and Ludlow, linking them as two battles in an ongoing class war. Debs claimed that both had similar instigators in Carnegie and Rockefeller whom he characterized as being both philanthropists and murderers who used detective agencies to wage war upon workers. Debs labeled both events as acts of "triumphant and despotic capitalism".[54] Vincent St. John, one of the founders of the IWW, contextualized Ludlow within the long history of mining violence, and the control of company towns. He concluded that workers had no rights that employers would respect; the state would always become the lackey of the wealthy. The purpose of the article was to arouse worker solidarity, not just in response to Ludlow but an enduring solidarity that would make future Ludlow Massacres impossible.

The class warfare narrative that the writers of the *International Socialist Review* chose muddled the American tradition narrative and also undermined the massacre narrative. Rather than using Rockefeller as a robber baron archetype, a narrative that already had considerable support; they weakened their own message by diluting it with one that consistently failed to catch on in the United States. They attempted to stretch an oligarch into an entire class. Historian Eric Foner has accused American socialists of being too ideological to take more practical courses. Those who propagated the class

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[53] Clara Nozzor, "Ludlow," *International Socialist Review* XIV, no. 12 (June 1914) 721.
[54] Eugene Debs, "Homestead and Ludlow," *International Socialist Review* XV, no. 2 (August 1914).

warfare narrative also failed to note that the "gunmen" were working class, that in essence a class war would be workers fighting other workers.

The IWW in Seattle created one of the most interesting linkages between Ludlow and patriotism using the event to call for a Labor Memorial Day. This event honored those who fought for the cause of labor which in the case of Ludlow had been characterized as fighting for legal and constitutional rights. This made their sacrifice similar to that of soldiers. Katie Sadler, an *International Socialist Review* writer wrote:

> Yes, Labor determined that the time had come to pay loving tribute to its own dead, to commemorate as an HISTORIC EVENT those who have fallen in the TERRIBLE INDUSTRIAL BATTLES, those who have been murdered quickly, and those whose lives have been one long agony of toil. The babe, the youth, the middle aged, and the old, all, all are remembered as witnesseth the evergreen float entitled, "Lest We Forget".[55]

The event featured one float representing Ludlow and another Calumet. Calumet referred to the Italian Hall Disaster in which seventy-three people were killed, fifty-nine of whom were children, after someone alleged to have been an anti-union activist shouted "fire" in a crowded hall leading to stampede. This occurred during a copper strike in Michigan on Christmas Eve, 1913. Labor Memorial Day was not exclusively a labor event. Members of the Grand Army of the Republic participated, Sadler wrote: "Many Grand Army comrades were among us, proud of their bronze button".[56] Including veterans in this labor event linked the sacrifices of those who died in war with those who died in labor actions. This was not an attempt to overshadow but a linking of two groups who fought

[55] Kate Sadler, "Lest We Forget," *International Socialist Review* XV, no. 1 (July 1914) 30-31.
[56] Kate Sadler, "Lest We Forget," *International Socialist Review* XV, no. 1 (July 1914) 31.

for freedoms. The link between the Civil War and slavery with the contemporary fight against wage slavery by the IWW was clear to all.

In its limited coverage of Ludlow the anarchist journal *Mother Earth* took a decidedly more hawkish tone one much more premised upon class warfare. Nonetheless themes such as the foreign nature of Rockefeller and of the Ludlow Massacre were repeated. *Mother Earth* articles contained repeated calls for labor to respond in kind to the violence. In the opening "Observations and Comments" Rockefeller was compared to the Tsar of Russia.

> The brutalities of the Rockefeller clique and its hired thugs – in and out of uniform- transcend the worst atrocities of the Tsar. Machine guns trained upon the striking miners, their women and children burned alive in their tents previously soaked by the militia with oil, - such is the answer to the miners' plea for better conditions… This is no time for theorizing, for fine-spun argument and phrases. With machine guns trained upon the strikers, the best answer is – dynamite.[57]

Similar to the Labor Republicans of the nineteenth century, the anarchists associated the interests of the country with those of the producers or workers. The forces of capital on the other hand are compared to a foreign despot. The author makes it clear that the miners stood on the side of freedom against "capitalist despotism".[58]

The government-business connection proved an important theme in Anarchist coverage. Anarchist writers argued that elected officials had proven too weak to stand against the interests of capital. In the words of Hippolyte Havel, "Capitalism has proven once again that it is the supreme law, and that it recognizes nothing else but its own

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[57] "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 4 (June 1914).
[58] "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 4 (June 1914).

might. And what a sight! The president of the mightiest republic begging for concessions in Wall Street." [59] This continued the themes expounded upon by other pro-labor groups of the wealthy hijacking the American system. Though the anarchists used fewer overt patriotic arguments they still proved quick to point out the shame of politicians being controlled by money. Hippolyte Havel had much to say on this subject: "It is the irony of fate that such conditions should prevail in a state where laws for the protection of labor abound… Colorado has on its statute books a number of laws especially designed to prevent just such situations as have arisen in that plutocratic commonwealth." This plutocracy ruled through "the thin guise of law, an armed force consisting of deputy sheriffs… who are used not only to violate all the laws, but to maltreat anyone who attempts in any way to assert his rights as a citizen." [60] According to the anarchists, workers fought for their rights as citizens. Labor activists were not radicals but people who prized their constitutional rights in the face of a burgeoning plutocracy.

Havel among other anarchists called for a violent solution: "we have one duty: to destroy the parasites, exterminate the bloodsuckers, and their hirelings"[61] Violence certainly does lie not outside of the American tradition. The accusations that the mining companies had denied citizens their rights, and subverted the legal system in their favor strengthened the calls for violent action. While anarchists proved more extreme in their pronouncements they still made an effort to place their interpretation within a framework

[59]Hippolyte Havel, "The Civil War in Colorado," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 3 (May 1914).
[60] Hippolyte Havel, "The Civil War in Colorado," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 3 (May 1914).
[61] Hippolyte Havel, "The Civil War in Colorado," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 3 (May 1914).

of American traditions and rights. Their solutions were not framed as a break with tradition but a restoration of a previous tradition that had been corrupted at the hands of the wealthy. What the anarchists attacked: corruption, failure of just laws, killing of women and children are all things that Americans could be expected to stand against. There is clearly a struggle to establish a narrative here on one hand the use of the term "Rockefeller clique" and plutocracy implied a people vs oligarchs narratives. This narrative was anchored by familiar American themes. This narrative had to struggle for a place alongside the class warfare interpretation favored by the anarchists.

In these differing interpretations of events there is one issue that remains: the massacre or battle question. Questions such as this are best analyzed through an examination of the motives, and potential benefits to the constituents.[62] The UMWA came down clearly on the side of massacre, even calling their publication the *Ludlow Massacre*. The writers of *International Socialist Review*, and *Mother Earth* on the other hand proved much more favorable towards the battle interpretation. This interpretation reinforced the class warfare narrative used by those publications. The UMWA had a much more narrow interest in the strike than the other two groups. They needed to achieve a favorable deal for their workers and end the strike as quickly as possible due to its expense. In their case the massacre narrative combined with the oligarchy narrative had the potential to provide enough public support to secure a deal. Socialists and anarchists had more to gain through a battle interpretation. By using Ludlow to build

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[62] Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

solidarity across the Labor movement and using it to provide momentum for broader action they could appeal to the public while energizing their own respective bases. In this way they could hope to make progress on a broader labor front. In contrast, the UMWA concerned itself primarily with its own constituency of miners. It was the narrative carried forward by the UMWA and Walter Fink which proved the more influential in defining the Ludlow Massacre.

Pro-labor groups across the entire movement used arguments related to patriotism and what it means to be American to frame their responses to Ludlow. Using ideas of the American tradition created sympathy for the workers. On the other hand, the portrayal of attacking a camp flying the American flag drew opprobrium towards the militia and Rockefeller. Labor writers portrayed miners fighting for rights which were already guaranteed in law but denied by the mining companies. In fighting for these rights the miners were also fighting for and asserting constitutional rights in ways that contravened mining company control. Labor writers castigated mining company control of both workers lives and politics as un-American. Even the massacre itself was characterized as something foreign that had been brought to America more akin to the Mexican Civil War or the actions of the Tsar than something American. Throughout workers are framed as the true Americans fighting to assert rights taken from them by the rich and powerful. This lent itself to the oligarchy narrative as opposed to a more divisive class warfare approach. Although each labor group interpreted the meaning of the massacre differently they all used similar arguments when it came to describing the workers. The workers fit into an American tradition of fighting for one's rights. Labor activists acted as historians

to quickly frame Ludlow to the benefit of labor and present it to a mass audience. This occurred both in publications as well as protests, and events such as the “Labor Memorial Day”.

CHAPTER 3

AN IGNORANT, GODLESS CLASS OF PEOPLE: THE TARRYTOWN FREE SPEECH FIGHT

On June 22, 1914 a large group consisting of Anarchists and members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) marched through the streets of Tarrytown, New York. They had united to fight for their right to speak in the small New York community against industrialist John D. Rockefeller Jr. Although their receptions by the townspeople had never been friendly, on that day it was to be far worse. As the demonstrators tried to speak, Tarrytowners used their car horns while the police used sirens to drown out the speeches of the protesters. Following the initial reception the demonstrators were pelted by a deluge of rotting eggs, produce, bricks, and clumps of dirt. Finally, a mob pursued the demonstrators into a train station and forced them onto trains to take them back to New York City.

The following day a *New York Times* writer defended the violent actions of the citizens and police, comparing the vigilantes of Tarrytown to "the minutemen of 76".[1] The *Times* position characterized newspaper coverage of the Tarrytown Free Speech Fight as well as the events leading up to it. Free speech in the case of Tarrytown meant the right to unpopular speech, and to denounce Rockefeller in Tarrytown a community in which he wielded enormous power. As can be expected the Anarchists were vitriolic in

[1] Anarchists Egged in Tarrytown Riot," *New York Times*, June 23, 1914.

their response to the attacks. A writer for the Anarchist journal *Mother Earth* responded with a flurry of attacks:

> The authorities with baboonlike (sic) stupidity, declared that Saint John Rockefeller should not be attacked in their village, no by gosh if it took the entire police and fire departments to prevent it. A mere trifle like the constitution had no terrors for a village like Tarrytown.[2]

This editorial exemplified the intense rhetoric used by the protesters, to characterize the Tarrytown Free Speech Fight and their views of capitalist society in general. The free speech fighters frequently framed themselves as defenders of constitutional liberties, and their opponents as the enemies of American rights.

Those protesting Rockefeller came from many left-wing and labor groups. The coalition included anarchists, IWW members, and socialists. They were drawn to Tarrytown to protest John D. Rockefeller, Jr. who lived on a large estate a few miles from town. The protests concerned Rockefeller's perceived involvement in the Ludlow Massacre. The massacre horrified the entire labor movement. Labor activists in New York City took it upon themselves to organize a coalition and marched upon the Rockefeller estate.

The anarchists present at Tarrytown were primarily (though not entirely) anarcho-communists. They believed that government was inherently oppressive, that it should be abolished, and replaced by local communes. These communes would be based upon principles of mutual aid with all property held in common.[3] Throughout the free speech

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[2] Observations and Comments." *Mother Earth* IX, no. 4 June (1914) 97-104.
[3] Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (New York: B. Blom, [1892] 1968) 17-23.

fight they were represented by their journal *Mother Earth*, to which several of the protest leaders regularly contributed. Along with the IWW they eschewed politics in favor of direct action such as strikes and protests. The lines between these groups were fluid; many who were active in anarchist circles joined the IWW.[4] At the same time, mainstream media typically only referred to one group or the other in their coverage. This further muddled the lines between the anarchists and the IWW.

Many works on the IWW concern themselves with the free speech fights, as they occurred in a place or region, and examine how each side used their resources to affect the outcome[5]. The most critical work on free speech fights is David Rabban's *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years*. Rabban's argument is that the free speech fights weakened the labor organizations involved, despite gaining sympathy from broader sections of society. This interpretation is shared by other works. This weakening is attributed to the free speech fights serving as distractions from organizing workers, or activities that would materially benefit workers.[6] The free speech fights that have been given the most attention by historians are those that occurred in San Diego.[7] The historiography on

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[4] Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995) 80,142, 215.

[5] Denniss Hoffman, and Vincent Webb. "Police Response to Labor Radicalism in Portland and Seattle 1913-1919." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (1986): 341-66.; Richard Rajala, "A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies: Pacific Northwest Loggers and the Industrial Workers of the World, 1900–1930." *Labor History* 47, no. 2 (1996): 205-34.

[6] David Rabban, *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Matthew May, *Soapbox Rebellion: The Hobo Orator Union and the Free Speech Fights of the Industrial Workers of the World, 1909-1916* (University of Alabama Press, 2013).; Mel Van Elteren, "Worker Control and the Struggles Against 'Wage Slavery' in the Gilded Age and After." *The Journal of American Culture* 26, no. 2 (2003): 188-203.

[7] Glen J. Broyles, "The Spokane Free Speech Fight, 1909–1910: A Study in IWW Tactics," *Labor History* 19, no. 2 (1978); Grace L. Miller, "The I.W.W. Free Speech Fight: San Diego, 1912," *Southern California Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (1972).

Anarchism tends to address the movement in terms of ethnic groups, or a handful of prominent individuals, free speech fights are either ignored or treated as tangential.[8] In effect, the Tarrytown free speech fight has been largely ignored, and only the most superficial treatment given to free speech fights on the East Coast. Much of this ignores that free speech fights were often about organizing workers, and that it was speech that aimed at doing so that was being restricted or targeted.

The progressive era was a time in which many ideologies flourished, and numerous social issues were brought to the fore in the United States. This was true for ideas concerning workers, the labor movement, and capitalist society. One of the principal ways that these ideas and the groups that supported them clashed with society as a whole was through a type of protest called free speech fights. These conflicts essentially acted as tests of whether a given community would respect the right of free speech. Free speech fights generally began as a result of protests or union organizing. The local government would create laws to end street speaking by union organizers and others, while protecting what were considered more acceptable groups, such as the Salvation Army. The groups being targeted would respond with civil disobedience, inaugurating a free speech fight.[9] The ferocity of the defense put up by the people of Tarrytown raises the question of why they felt threatened to such a degree that they

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[8] Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).; Meyer, Gerald. "Italian Anarchism in America: Its Accomplishments, Its Limitations." *Science & Society* 79, no. 2 (2015): 176-95; Bill Lynsky, "I Shall Speak in Philadelphia: Emma Goldman and the Free Speech League." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography* 133, no. 2 (2009): 167-202; Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2015); Tom Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880-1914* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

[9] David Rabban, *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

responded with mass violence, to groups which claimed to represent their common interests.

The only other free speech fight to see this type of community violence was the San Diego Free Speech Fight. However, the violence in that instance was of a more extreme nature.[10] An essential question is why the people of Tarrytown acted out as a mob against the protesters. Both anarchists and the IWW had received unfavorable media treatment with anarchists in particular acting as a boogeyman. The newspaper coverage of the protests prior to the violence was consistently negative, creating a narrative of radical invaders who sought to attack a small community. To respond to this the protesters had only a handful of publications in which to respond to their detractors. The most important factor in the outbreak of violence was the economic dependence that the community had upon not only Rockefeller but upon numerous other magnates who owned estates in the area. Townspeople worked on these estates as staff and also served to build or expand them. To these employees the protesters were a threat to local prosperity.

For the instigators of the protests the Ludlow Massacre acted as a confirmation of everything they believed about Rockefeller and capitalism. They clearly saw an opportunity to showcase the injustice of the capitalist system and create a call to action. *The New York Caller*, the most prominent Socialist newspaper in New York used the opportunity to compare Rockefeller to Victoriano Huerta, a general in the then ongoing

[10] Matthew May, *Soapbox Rebellion: The Hobo Orator Union and the Free Speech Fights of the Industrial Workers of the World, 1909-1916* (University of Alabama Press, 2013) 63-80.

Mexican Civil War who later became president of Mexico[11]. The article's writer declared "Huerta in one respect at least is superior to the young Rockefeller; he shoots Americans, it is true… but he does not shoot those whom he employs, who soldier for him, mine for him, and slave for him."[12] Another observer for the anarchist journal *Mother Earth* saw the massacre as a "challenge to the whole working class", comparing Rockefeller to the Tsar of Russia in his brutality. The writer concluded that "The capitalist banditti have gone the limit: They have declared war upon labor, ruthless, and merciless, a war of extermination against their dissatisfied slaves."[13] This framed Rockefeller and his role in Ludlow as the actions of a foreign autocrat rather than an American.

Workers who associated with the IWW or anarchists viewed themselves as the harbingers of a more just and equitable society. Their opinions varied as to the exact form that this future society would take. To this end they viewed the socio-economic structure of the day, and all who supported and enabled it as enemies to be dealt with by direct action. Unlike the Socialists, they spurned politics as unable to accomplish anything due to what they viewed as the inherently corrupt and violent nature of the system. The ideological materials used and distributed by both groups took a strong view of what they saw as natural rights that all were entitled to but were denied by existing power

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[11] Laton McCartney, *The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country*. New York: Random House, 2008. 78-80.
[12] "Huerta Or Rockefeller: Which Most Insults The Flag," *New York Call*, May 10, 1914.
[13] "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 4 May (1914).

structures. Foremost among these was the right of free speech.[14] Free speech had practical as well as ideological value. Without it they had no way of spreading their message or guaranteeing that they would not be suppressed. Instead of representing their tactics as labor organizing, they portrayed it as free speech thus linking themselves to the constitution and American tradition. This created a powerful narrative that could be used to mobilize public support.

Due to their differences in beliefs each group formed their own community. The Ferrer Center in New York City acted as the social hub of the anarchists. It provided education, food, and conversation. The primary difference between the anarchists and the IWW was the level of accepted violence. Though IWW members were often brash and favored direct action they were on the whole non-violent. Many anarchists believed in what they referred to as "propaganda of the deed". This was the idea that the revolutionary actions of one would inspire others to action. This belief was often expressed through violence. The most well-known examples of propaganda of the deed were the assassinations of various heads of state and government officials such as King Umberto I of Italy in 1900. Propaganda of the deed was supported by anarchist theorists such as Peter Kropotkin:

> Those who at the beginning never so much as asked what the "madmen" wanted, are compelled to think about them, to discuss their ideas, to take sides for or against. By actions which compel general attention, the new

[14] Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, and Sam Dolgoff. *Bakunin on Anarchy* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1972) 107.

> idea seeps into people's minds and wins converts. One such act may, in a few days, make more propaganda than thousands of pamphlets"[15]

Most theorists, including Kropotkin, abandoned the idea. Yet it still made its influence felt. And it provided a ready source of material for critics including the *New York Times.* Violent actions led to anarchists being tarred as synonymous with terrorists. Further, there was a tendency to see an anarchist influence even where there was none present or the connections were tenuous at best.[16] Though many anarchists were non-violent, journals such as *Mother Earth* and *The Blast* served to create a culture that glorified revolutionary violence.[17] One example of this bombast came from *Mother Earth* in defense of an anarchist who was arrested for forcing her way into Rockefeller's New York office to threaten him:

> Some Obscure Dogberry in New York has railroaded Marie Ganz to two months imprisonment for her courageous remark that she would shoot Rockefeller like a dog. Marie is too generous and kind hearted. An adequate punishment for this Sunday School Scoundrel would be to put him and his brats into a tent and then let his militia repeat the act of Ludlow[18]

Although contemporaries portrayed propaganda of the deed as radical, and un-American this argument did not necessarily follow. The Boston Tea Party involved destruction of commercial property, and could be considered a form of propaganda of the deed. Indeed the Independence movement, particularly the armed conflict, was quite

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[15] Peter Kropotkin, "The Spirit of Revolt 1880," in *The Essential Kropotkin,* ed. Emile Capouya, and Keitha Tompkins (New York: Liveright, 1975).
[16] Bakunin, "Letter to a Frenchman" in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, translated Sam Dolgoff, New York: A.A. Knopf, [1870] 1972; Jensen, Richard Bach, *The Battle against Anarchist Terrorism an International History, 1878-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 1-36.
[17] Nafe, Gertrude. "Colorado." *Mother Earth*, June 1, 1914; Havel, Hippolyte. "The Civil War in Colorado," *Mother Earth*, May 1, 1914; "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 4 June(1914).
[18] "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth*, June 1, 1914.

radical. This undermines the notion that radicalism is necessarily un-American. Despite the accusations of anarchism being the result of foreign influence which resulted in the Anarchist Exclusion Acts, historians such as Kenyon Zimmer and Tom Goyens have shown that most American anarchists embraced the ideology after emigrating to the United States. Nonetheless, anarchists were easily tarred as foreign and radical which limited their ability to influence anyone outside of labor circles.

Two years earlier the San Diego free speech fight had taken place, accompanied by brutality and vigilante violence.[19] In this instance the writers and editors of the *New York Times* supported the vigilantes. They asserted that under the circumstances the vigilantes did what was necessary. A writer for the *New York Times* portrayed the IWW as planning to assault the city "It is asserted that there are 1,000 Industrial Workers on their way to the coast… they are travelling in small groups to escape the notice of the authorities, and that as soon as they arrive a concerted move will be made against the southern city." The same article gave a statement by San Diego's Commissioner De Lacour describing the IWW: "The Industrial Workers are an ignorant, godless, class of people who don't believe in the American government."[20] The people of Tarrytown were characterized as patriots defending their community from radicals, just as the vigilantes of San Diego were.

A writer for *New York Times* put it bluntly, "The uprising of plain citizens anywhere, however, against the forces of anarchy and destruction is an encouraging

[19] "Vigilantes Demand Troops at San Diego," *New York Times*, May 22, 1912.
[20] "Vigilantes Demand Troops at San Diego," *New York Times*, May 22, 1912.

sign".[21] They had to portray themselves as plain citizens, common people defending against outsiders. In reality, vigilantism was perpetrated by the most prosperous community members in San Diego. Favorable coverage of mob violence against labor groups, and the persistent associations of anarchists with terrorism emboldened future acts of violence including those in Tarrytown. A narrative of both groups as radical and dangerous had successfully been planted in broad sections of the public.

Aside from media interpretations of a seething anarchist threat, there was another key factor in stimulating the violent action of the Tarrytowners. This was their economic prosperity. According to his 1937 obituary Rockefeller employed 350 people on his Pocantico estate.[22] This was an extraordinary number given the size of Tarrytown at the time. When taken together Tarrytown and North Tarrytown (located 1 mile further north) had a combined population of just over 10,000, according to the 1910 census.[23] This made Rockefeller family's contribution to the local economy nothing short of spectacular. Virtually everyone in Tarrytown would have some connection to a person working on the Rockefeller estate. Rockefeller was far from the only wealthy person in the vicinity of Tarrytown who had the need for a staff. According to an 1896 *New York Times* article, at that date Tarrytown had already become a Mecca for New York's wealthy:

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[21] "The San Diego Uprising" *New York Times*, May 25, 1912.
[22] "Financier's Fortune in Oil Amassed in Industrial Era of 'Rugged Individualism'," *New York Times*, May 24, 1937.
[23] U.S. Census Bureau, Thirteenth Census of the United States, "New York Table 1 – Population of Minor Civil Divisions 1910, 1900, and 1890", 194.

> "…general desirability as a residential place having attracted a large number of wealthy business men to its hills and vales. The millionaires living here and for about five miles south have been counted, and there is reported to be sixty-three of them, and some are the possessors of fifty and a hundred millions each."[24]

Though that article is from twenty years prior to the Tarrytown Free Speech Fight there is evidence to show that the concentration of wealth had not dissipated by that time. First, most of these estates even if no longer actively inhabited would still have required a caretaker staff. There is also the matter of the Sleepy Hollow Country Club, which is in the vicinity of North Tarrytown (North Tarrytown is called Sleepy Hollow today). The country club was established in 1913. Its board of directors included Frank Vanderlip, the president of the National City Bank of New York, John Astor IV, Cornelius Vanderbilt III, Edward Berwind (a coal magnate with his own union conflicts throughout the era), and of course John Rockefeller Sr., among others. This suggests that the affluence surrounding Tarrytown had not diminished. It is also worth noting that the country club would also have required a staff. This staff had reason to feel animosity toward the protesters, viewing them as a threat to their livelihoods.[25] While the people of Tarrytown were characterized as patriots in the tradition of the American Revolution this is difficult to square with the economic realities of the situation. They were not fighting for rights, liberties, or another noble cause but were instead defending wealthy oligarchs out of economic necessity. Tarrytown reveals a new type of populism – an oligarchical populism characterized by common Americans defending a wealthy elite whom they were dependent upon. Despite claims to represent workers and the interests of the

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[24] "Where Millionaire's Rest," *New York Time,* March 22, 1896.
[25] John Foreman and Robbe Pierce. Stimson, *The Vanderbilts and the Gilded Age: Architectural Aspirations, 1879-1901* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991) 160-163.

common man, of representing American rights such as free speech, and possessing moral high ground due to Ludlow the protesters were unsuccessful. They were unable to craft an effective counter-narrative, nor use their own effectively.

On May 4, the first wave of protesters approached the Rockefeller estate of Pocantico just outside of Tarrytown following a train journey from New York (roughly 20 miles distant). They were led by Arthur Caron who played a key role at every stage of the protest. When they arrived they found all gates chained and guarded, and Rockefeller Sr. himself being chauffeured about the estate personally supervising the placement of his guards. Upon seeing the size of the estate the protesters conferred, and sought enough reinforcements to cover all entrances the following day. While this occurred another group picketed the Rockefeller residence in New York City. Already at this early stage the coalition was beginning to break down. IWW affiliates were alleged to be shouting threats over the gates, and the socialists condemned these actions as counterproductive. During the initial day of protests *New York Times* highlighted the police records of the protesters as well as some of their associates, implying that they were not legitimate protesters.[26]

In Tarrytown the police threatened arrests if the protests continued.[27] When the protests resumed, on the May 11, the number of protesters had nearly tripled from the original six, to sixteen. The protesters arrived dressed in black funeral clothing to act out a symbolic funeral for Ludlow. At least one protester compared their fight to that of the

[26] "IWW Pickets Pen Rockefellers," *New York Times*, May 4, 1914.
[27] "Intruders Seek Rockefeller," *New York Times*, May 10, 1914.

abolition fight saying to a guard, "You negroes had to be freed and our people are going to be free too." The protesters viewed themselves as operating within a progressive historic narrative. This date saw the first turn towards violence when a guard threatened to shoot a female protester who had climbed a tree whose branches extended over the security wall.[28] Despite claims as to his nonchalance regarding the events, Rockefeller during this time doubled his guards, and installed a new bedside alarm system.[29]

Free speech fights gave protesters the opportunity to cast themselves in the role of defenders of American rights and values. Tarrytown protesters -especially the anarchists- wanted to see all government brought to an end, believing any form of government to be inherently oppressive. During the free speech fight, however, they portrayed themselves as defenders of the constitution, and their opponents as trampling liberty.[30] This tactic had proven valuable in the free speech movement used to create sympathy in the broader public; during the Tacoma free speech fight this led to numerous donations from outside the IWW's usual network of supporters.[31] The Tarrytown protesters proved keen to link themselves to the abolitionist movement, as another group fighting against oppression and injustice. All of this linked them to an American tradition of resistance to oppression and tyranny.[32] In a speech given in Tarrytown, prior to a police clash Alexander Berkman, a well-known anarchist, linked the Rockefeller protest to free speech and the

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[28] "Threatens to Shoot Girl," *New York Times*, May 11, 1914.
[29] "Rockefeller Signal Set," *New York Times*, May 19, 1914. "Mourners appear in Tarrytown, NY." *Indiana Evening Gazette*, May 4, 1914.
[30] "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth*, June 1, 1914.
[31] Union David Rabban, *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 83-100.
[32] "Threatens to Shoot Girl," *New York Times*, May 11, 1914.

constitution with an appeal to the citizens of Tarrytown: “Fellow citizens, I know you all admire a man who is fighting for his rights. We are fighting for free speech which the constitution gives us. I care not what the police say. John D. Rockefeller may own this town, but he can’t stop free speech.” Articles in *Mother Earth* continued to link Rockefeller’s actions to those of foreign despots.[33] The narrative the protesters used was one of true Americans fight for constitutional rights. Tarrytown represented a fight carried out against an exploitative oligarch who had more in common with foreign dictators than he did with the American people.

The free speech fight itself was inaugurated on June 1, when the Rockefeller demonstrators first went to Tarrytown in order to make speeches there denouncing Rockefeller. Previously Leonard Abbott, a leader within the anarchist movement and president of the Free Speech League had requested permission from city officials and police. In the first case he was promised a reply which was never received, and in the second he never heard anything. This led to a free speech test to see if the protesters would be allowed to speak in Tarrytown. This decision led to clashes with the police in which fifteen protesters were arrested and sent to jail. According to a writer for *New York Times* the townspeople used ‘football tactics’ which involved pushing and jostling the demonstrators, not allowing them to stay in an area long enough to make a speech.

In a mass display of vigilantism hundreds of Tarrytown citizens took to the streets to attack the demonstrators and prevent any speechmaking from occurring. The clashes took place in both Tarrytown and North Tarrytown owing to the short distance between

[33] "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 4 May (1914)

them. The number of citizens said to have participated is 500. This is a shocking claim since this would represent roughly ten% of the population of Tarrytown at the time suggesting that this could be an exaggeration.[34] This entire episode was characterized as an invasion through the use of militaristic terminology within the press such as “force”, “rout”, “squad” etc.[35] The protesters embraced these allusions to military conflict and declared “free speech warfare” and began referring to Tarrytown as “the seat of war”.[36]

During the days immediately following the initial clashes Tarrytown made an all-out effort to fortify itself against further incursions by the Anarchists and IWW. Many of these preparations would not have looked out of place in a military camp. The fire department was instructed to pre-position hoses at the fire hydrants in key areas where it was thought that the free speech fighters would attempt to commence their soapbox demonstrations.[37] Roadblocks were set-up to monitor the approaches to town, and were watched by either Tarrytown citizens or the police department. Additionally watches were stationed at public transit stations, and turned around anyone who was deemed to be suspicious. Finally, fresh tar was spread on Fountain Square the site of much of the fighting on June 1. In addition to these defenses it was claimed that 500 men of Tarrytown were prepared to repel further attempts at speechmaking by driving the

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[34] Census U.S. Census Bureau, “Census of Housing and Population, 1910” 588
[35] “Tarrytown Police Rout IWW Forces,” *New York Times*.” June 1 1914; “Agitators Keep Cops of Tarrytown Busy,” *Greenville Evening Record*, June 2, 1914. “Club IWW Talkers.” *Washington Post*, June 1, 1914"IWW May Commence Free Speech Riot," *Canton Daily News*, June 1, 1914.
[36] Leonard Abbott “The Fight for Free Speech in Tarrytown,” *Mother Earth*. June 1914.
[37] "Tarrytown to Turn Hose On the IWW." *New York Times*, June 2, 1914.

protesters into the nearby Hudson River.[38] Meanwhile Rockefeller's estate saw the hiring of even more guards and sheriff's deputies. The language used by *New York Times* attempted to connect the actions of the vigilantes in Tarrytown to American tradition and identity through comparisons with the minutemen of the Revolutionary War.[39] This framed them as true Americans, placing them as stout-hearted defenders of their community from radical outsiders.

It was during this period that a peace party began to take shape within Tarrytown. The consensus among this group was that that it was wiser to let the demonstrators make speeches, rather than incur the high costs of preventing them from speaking. The use of the fire department appeared to be a catalyst for these sentiments. The use of firefighters for law enforcement was outside the realm of what many considered decent. To them this was bordering on the same lawlessness that they felt to be embodied by the protesters.[40] One priest went so far as to offer his church as a free speech forum. This idea was quickly abandoned through the intervention of the rest of the local clergy who were against the plan.[41] According to a writer for *New York Times*, Reverend Arthur Brooks the pastor of the church Rockefeller attended was quite outspoken in his support of the townspeople and condemnation of the protesters:

> He defended the course of the Rockefellers in Colorado and urged that the IWW did not deserve a hearing because its members did not represent

[38] "500 Wait to Duck IWW Men in River," *New York Times*, June 4, 1914. ; "All Highways to Tarrytown Guarded," *Waterloo Evening Courier*, June 4, 1914.
[39] Anarchists Egged in Tarrytown Riot," *New York Times*, June 23, 1914.
[40] "Tarrytown and the IWW," *New York Times*, June 3, 1914.
[41] "Armed Squad Joins Rockefeller Guard," *New York Times*, June 8, 1914; IWW Can't Use Hall in Tarrytown" *Scarsdale Inquirer*, June 14, 1914.

> labor or the welfare of laborers. "Every one of the 5,000 inhabitants of this village believes these men should be suppressed. They're riff-raff and numskulls."[42]

The village president Frank Pierson was another who sought some measure of accommodation. He decided to hold a city council meeting that representatives of the protesters attended. There was discussion in the direction of renting a hall; these plans however never came to fruition due to an extreme public backlash. Justice Morehouse, the stridently anti-anarchist judge presiding over the trials of the protesters declared that if there were any accommodation he would summarily release all of the prisoners.[43] Pierson's attempt at peace met with calls for his resignation by the public. Finally his offer of a hall was undermined since all proprietors categorically refused to host the demonstrators. Due to this unexpected negative response, Pierson was forced to quickly backtrack and rescinded his offer.[44]

This impasse was finally resolved with the intervention of Mrs. C.J. Gould, a suffragette organizer, who offered the private theater on her estate for meetings. While there were still minor clashes at these meetings violence was reduced or at least contained during this period.[45] This was also when Upton Sinclair, author and socialist, along with others took their leave of the protests claiming that the goal of denouncing Rockefeller where he lived had been accomplished and that there was no need for further conflict.[46] The intervention of the wealthy Mrs. Gould mirrors the participation of wealthy socialite

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[42] "Armed Squad Joins Rockefeller Guard," *New York Times*, June 8, 1914.
[43] Ibid; "Mrs. C. J. Gould Aids Free Speech Fight," *New York Times*, June 14, 1914.
[44] "IWW Can't Use Hall in Tarrytown," *Scarsdale Inquirer*, June 14, 1914.
[45] "Singer Averts Riot At Agitators' Rally," *New York Times*, June 15, 1914; "Says Government Must Seize Mines." *New York Times*, June 22, 1914.
[46] "Says Government Must Seize Mines," *New York Times*, June 22 1914.

Mabel Luhan Dodge in the Paterson strike pageant.[47] This once again demonstrates some degree of avant-garde upper-class support for the labor movement.

June 22 saw the most fearsome violence of the entire Tarrytown Free Speech fight. Alexander Berkman, a prominent anarchist due in part to his attempted assassination of Henry Frick (an associate of Andrew Carnegie), arrived in Tarrytown leading a group of IWW members and anarchists. Their intention was to once again make speeches on public property. After exiting their train they marched to the home of the village president, Pierson, and demanded the right to speak freely. His response was that they could use the field near the aqueduct provided they had permission from the New York City authorities who managed the aqueduct. It was during the march to the aqueduct that a crowd began following the protesters. The purpose of this march was to show that Rockefeller could be defied in "his hometown".[48] The town responded with mass action against those making speeches. According to a *New York Times* writer: "Like the minutemen of '76 Tarrytown's harassed villagers went forth to repel the foe."

As the first speakers mounted the soapbox a mob of Tarrytowners, on foot and in automobiles, gathered around them. Those in cars began honking their horns in order to drown out the speakers; they were aided in this effort by the police and their sirens. As this occurred others began to launch volleys of rotten eggs and vegetables into the ranks of the protesters. When these sources of ammunition were depleted, they resorted to

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[47] Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985) 187-190.
[48] "Anarchists Egged in Tarrytown Riot," *New York Times*, June 23, 1914; "IWW To Continue Free Speech Warfare," *Xenia Daily Gazette*, June 23, 1914; "Going to Speak in Tarrytown," *Evening Chronicle*, June 23, 1914.

digging up clumps of dirt and throwing those. This bombardment caused numerous wounds among the demonstrators. While the police didn't initially join in the violence they allowed it happen.[49]

The police called in reinforcements from neighboring communities and began hauling speakers off of their soapbox.[50] At this point official policy was to make no arrests and thus prevent the use of the stratagem of packing the jails which had been used with success in previous free speech fights.[51] This strategy involved filling a community's jails, and stretching the limit of their resources, and willpower. Jail-packing also served to draw media attention to the free speech fights. The free speech demonstrators were set upon by the police and the crowd who pursued them to the train station with the intention of forcing them aboard a train back to New York City. During the harrowing chase to the train station, one young anarchist leaped aboard a trolley to escape the mob. His effort was unsuccessful however; the crowd managed to tear down the trolley pole and come aboard. A private railroad detective drew his gun to defend the man but lost his weapon in the scuffle. He had to resort to his club to force the crowd back.[52]

Despite being one of the smaller free speech fights Tarrytown has the distinction of being one of the most violent. What is more interesting is that most of this violence was perpetrated by townspeople as opposed to the police. This crowd vs. government

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[49] "Anarchists Egged in Tarrytown Riot," *New York Times*, June 23, 1914.
[50] "Anarchists Egged in Tarrytown Riot," *New York Times*, June 23, 1914.
[51] Hoffman, Denniss, and Vincent Webb. "Police Response to Labor Radicalism in Portland and Seattle 1913-1919." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (1986): 341-66.
[52] "Anarchists Egged in Tarrytown Riot,"*New York Times*, June 23, 1914.

reaction is further seen in the dichotomy between the reactions of the government and of community members. In the preceding narrative the president of the village, Frank Pierson, consistently sought some accommodation. He wanted to allow the protesters a place to speak. He just tried to avoid having them demonstrate in a public square or street. This moderate approach was wholly rejected and led to calls for his resignation. A journalist for the *Scarsdale Inquirer* wrote:

> If President Frank R. Pierson, of Tarrytown, wants to make good on his agreement with the Free Speech League to hire a hall in which they may present their view to the Tarrytown public, he will have to go outside the village of Tarrytown to obtain a suitable meeting place. Tarrytown's four halls are emphatically closed to all gatherings of free speechers, anarchists, or I. W. W. So incensed, furthermore, are the citizens of Tarrytown over the action of the trustees in agreeing to give the agitators a hearing that they are preparing a petition calling for the immediate resignation of every trustee who voted in favor of free speech.[53]

The police played a somewhat similar role; while they certainly weren't friendly to the protesters they weren't as hostile as the townspeople. During the worst of the violence they were bystanders not instigators. The police commissioner was among those who backed the plan of using city funds to hire a hall so that the demonstrators could say their piece.[54]

What could explain this relatively generous attitude on the part of the authorities? One potential reason is that they may have thought taking a more conciliatory tack would prove more effective in the long term. If they could find a way to quietly dissipate the protests by allowing the free speech fighters to claim a small victory they could get on

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[53] "IWW Can't Use Hall in Tarrytown," *Scarsdale Inquirer*, June 14, 1914.
[54] "IWW Can't Use Hall in Tarrytown," *Scarsdale Inquirer*, June 14, 1914.

with business as usual. This strategy would also prevent the escalation of the protests and perhaps remove the media attention that had been thrown upon Tarrytown. Another possibility is that leadership of Tarrytown was not as beholden to Rockefeller as the townspeople. While Rockefeller had a large powerbase in the area his property was all part of North Tarrytown, to which he paid his local taxes.[55] This may have given the Tarrytown leadership a bit more leeway in their methods.

It has already been stated that Rockefeller held a preponderance of economic power over the area through his role as a large employer. At the time of his death twenty-years later he employed 350 persons on his Pocantico estate, and if the number at the time of the free speech fight were even half as great he would still be a very significant employer in the community.[56] Throughout the free speech fight Tarrytown was referred to as being owned by Rockefeller. This theme was expounded upon by protester Upton Sinclair in a letter to the village president, and board of trustees, "the statement in your local paper that the people of Tarrytown are united against us because John D. Rockefeller has a payroll of $30,000 a month".[57]

This economic motive becomes even more clear-cut when considering the numerous other millionaires who had estates in the area. The protests had forced the Rockefellers to stay within the confines of their estate. If this were allowed to continue it could have set a precedent that would have been very dangerous for the local economy.

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[55] "North Tarrytown Assessment," *New York Times*, May 29, 1898.
[56] "Financier's Fortune in Oil Amassed in Industrial Era of 'Rugged Individualism'," *New York Times*, May 24, 1937.
[57] Leonard Abbott "The Fight for Free Speech in Tarrytown," *Mother Earth*. June 1914.

There was a risk to the jobs of those on not just the Rockefeller estate but those who serviced the estates of other industrialists. With New York City, a hotbed of labor activism since before American Revolution, so close there was the real risk that labor activists in New York would continue these solidarity actions in Tarrytown if they were found to be effective.[58] This created a clear threat to the interests of the townspeople. They reacted out of fear of losing their means of support. This fear manifested itself during the crisis in layoffs on the Rockefeller estate. Non-essential staff members were laid off for the duration and construction was halted on a nineteen-room addition to John Rockefeller Jr.'s home. This made the potential economic impact very real to the people of Tarrytown.[59]

What passed following the mass brawl of June 22 were a couple weeks of relative calm. This calm ended with the explosion that ended the free speech fight as a whole. At 9:16am on the Fourth of July 1914, an explosion ripped through a tenement, located at 1626 Lexington Avenue, gutting the upper three floors and killing four while injuring nineteen others. The apartment was occupied by Arthur Caron. Killed alongside him were three other free speech fighters. Given these circumstances along with weapons and material found at the scene the police immediately suspected a bomb. They surmised the device had been intended for members of the Rockefeller family or at the very least their Pocantico estate. A single survivor escaped from the area of the explosion, Mike

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[58] Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).
[59] "Reds In Legal Trap How Hire an Attorney," *New York Times*, June 6, 1914.

Murphy, who immediately called Berkman and fled town, never to be captured.[60] There is still much uncertainty regarding the construction of the bomb and its intended target.

The sources disagree on exactly who was in charge of the bombing plan or how it came to fruition. What most agree on is that Alexander Berkman had been involved in organizing, but not the actual work due to his probation. There is general agreement that the bomb was intended for use in Tarrytown most likely upon a vacant building, not against Rockefeller's estate.[61] If this supposition is correct, it shows a complete turnaround in the protest movement. Having become so involved in the free speech fight they had lost sight of why it had begun. This became a common criticism of the free speech fights by dissenting members of organizations which took part in them. The groups lost sight of long-term objectives. The debate centered on whether or not the publicity gained was worth the time and manpower required as well as the distraction from other labor issues.[62]

This incident had immediate repercussions. The remaining Socialist support immediately dwindled, and even the IWW made efforts to distance themselves from what had happened. A spokesman for the IWW claimed that Caron had never been a member due to his being unemployed. In fact he had been a member of a chapter whose mission was to organize unemployed workers.[63] This led to fierce anarchist criticism of the

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[60] "Exploded in Apartment Occupied by Tarrytown Disturbs," *New York Times*, July 5, 1914.
[61] Avrich, Paul. *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995. 202, 206, 213, 217-219, 222.
[62]David Rabban, *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 82-83, 93-94.
[63]"The Lexington Explosion," *Mother Earth*, July 1, 1914.

IWW, and J.J. Ettor who had issued the repudiation. Carlo Tresca as quoted in *Mother Earth* said:

> I want to stamp Ettor's statement as false, entirely uncalled for and cowardly… So far as I know Caron lately called himself and anarchist but, that did not preclude his also being a member of the IWW, because the latter organization accepts every working man, irrespective of color, creed, or political affiliation. It was stupid of Ettor to say that Caron was refused membership in the IWW because he was not working. The Unemployed Local was organized especially for unemployed working men. Besides, Ettor himself is out of work at present. Does he also cease to be a member of the IWW.[64]

The anarchists were the only group who neither distanced themselves, nor announced a decision to quit the fight. Abbott announced that not only would the deaths of Caron and the others not end the fight, but that their deaths highlighted the dangers of denying free speech. He also claimed that the whole incident may have been an inside job by Rockefeller to discredit the free speech fighters.[65]

This marked the beginning of the anarchists' effort to turn the dead into martyrs for their cause and to indict society as a whole for creating the conditions that created them. According to the leader of the Church of the Social Revolution (a Christian Socialist group): "Bomb makers reflect oppression of the poor by the wealthy, and reflect on society, not individuals". This portrayal was an attempt to elevate their status as both heroes and victims of capitalism to the Anarchist movement. This clearly indicted Tarrytown for creating the conditions that allegedly led these men to turn to violence;

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[64] "Repudiation of Our Dead Comrades by the I.W.W," Mother Earth July 1, 1914.
[65] "Caron's Death Won't End It," *New York Times*, July 5, 1914.

these accusations were repeated across both Socialist and Anarchist publications.[66] *Mother Earth* lacked a consistent message on the subject of the bombing, insisting that the bomb had been a plant by either the police or Rockefeller, while at the same time saying that if Caron had been involved then he was a hero who refused to be oppressed without fighting back.[67] The advantage of this stance is that regardless of what caused the deaths Caron still possessed the moral high ground. In accordance with their new found status a mass funeral was planned by Berkman.[68] In his speech at the funeral Berkman exemplified the dual hero/victim attitude:

> What are the circumstances under which our three comrades met their tragic deaths? Two possibilities there are. One of them is that our friends were directly murdered by the enemy, perhaps by agents of the Rockefellers I should not in the least be surprised if that is so, because the Rockefellers have committed many murders; they would not stop at anything to add a few more coldblooded crimes to the long list of which they are guilty. And if our comrades have died as a result of the hatred of the capitalist class, then I say that they were indeed martyrs to the cause of labor… There is another possibility, and that is that our friends had themselves prepared the infernal machine, bomb, or whatever it was. And of course if that is the case then I am quite sure that they did so with the intention of using it upon the enemy. The facts so far do not prove either the one supposition or the other; but if the latter be correct, then their death… lies at the door of that iniquitous social system of capitalism which had brought our comrades to the point where persecution, tyranny, and oppression drove them to the climax of resisting by the might of dynamite.[69]

Despite opposition by the New York City government a public funeral was held. The funeral included eulogies that glorified the deeds of the dead in addition to

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66 "Would You Call This a Good Way to Make Anarchists?" *New York Call*, July 12, 1914.; "Blows of Policeman's Club Made of Arthur Caron An Uncompromising Agitator," *New York Call*, July 5, 1914; "Observations and Comments," *Mother Earth* IX, no. 4 July, 1914.

67 "The Lexington Explosion," *Mother Earth*, July 1, 1914. 130-133

68 "Find Berg's Body in Bomb Wreckage," *New York Times*, July 6, 1914.

69 "Berkman's Opening Address," *Mother Earth*. July 1914.

denouncing capitalism in general and Rockefeller. It was estimated that 5000 people gathered to attend the ceremony, watched by 800 police officers expecting violence. Among this vast crowd the anarchists identified themselves with red roses upon their lapels and banners in the air featuring slogans such as, "You want to do away with violence, then do away with capitalism and government. They provoke and breed violence."[70] In addition to the funeral ceremony itself the anarchist dead were honored with a memorial in the offices of *Mother Earth*. The ashes were put into an inscribed urn that was placed upon a pedestal with the intention of reminding all those who entered of the sacrifice made. The urn consisted of a pyramidal base, representing social hierarchy, surmounted by a clenched fist to represent resistance. A writer for *Mother Earth* claimed that thousands came to visit the memorial urn. The anarchists' project of memorializing those who died in the course of labor agitation accelerated into the planning of a full-fledged memorial. This memorial, when finished, would have been called "The Pantheon of the Social Revolution", it was intended to contain the ashes of labor martyrs. Though never completed the existence of the project speaks to the seriousness with which labor activists approached the memorialization of their dead and their place in history.[71]

The funeral ceremony marked the last great denunciation of Tarrytown's policies towards free speech. Although the trials would continue until late July, demonstrations and speech making ended. This likely occurred for two reasons. The first being the fear of the type of response that would be received, and the turn towards focusing on anti-

[70] "5000 At Memorial to Anarchist Dead," *New York Times*, July 12, 1914.
[71] "The Pantheon of the Social Revolution," *Mother Earth*, July 1, 1914

militarism due to the beating drums of war in Europe. This topic quickly came to dominate *Mother Earth.* The funeral oration by Alexander Berkman (reprinted in *Mother Earth*) summed up the anarchist attitude laying claim to the title of radical while at the same time grasping onto American heritage, and portraying his movement as part of an American tradition of struggle against tyranny. Berkman even went so far as to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson:

> I want to go on record here to-day as saying that I prefer to believe that our comrades were not victims, in the sense of having been killed as the result of a conspiracy of the enemy. Why do I say this? Because I believe, and firmly believe, that the oppression of labor in this country, the persecution of radical elements especially has reached a point where nothing but determined resistance will do any good and I believe in my heart in resistance to tyranny on every and all occasions. It was a great American who said that the tree of liberty must be watered now and then by the blood of Tyrants. That holds good to-day as it did a hundred years ago. When workers are shot down for demanding better conditions of living, when their women and children are slaughtered and burned alive, then I say it is time for free labor to quit talking and begin to act.[72]

Anarchists saw themselves as soldiers of the working class; they believed they fought a war on behalf of the workers against the excesses of capitalism and the government that enabled the excesses of capitalism to occur.[73] They saw the Ludlow Massacre as a way catalyze the public and awaken the working class to their struggle and ideas. The Tarrytown Free speech fight was a fine act of propaganda and, it offered the chance to challenge one of the most powerful industrialists. The inauguration of the free speech fight may have shifted the focus but it still provided an opportunity for publicity

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[72] Berkman, Alexander. "Alexander Berkman's Opening Address," *Mother Earth*, July 1, 1914, 137-40.
[73] Berkman, Alexander. "Alexander Berkman's Opening Address," *Mother Earth*, July 1, 1914, 137-40.

in a cause that clearly placed labor in the right. Although violence was always an undercurrent in their work the events in Tarrytown seem to have pushed Caron to believe that violence was the way to drive the message home especially in light of the violence inflicted on him and his comrades.[74]

The Tarrytown Free Speech Fight was not strictly successful, in that the right to speak in Tarrytown was never won. However, it drew a great deal of publicity to the protesters, which in itself can make a protest successful by raising the consciousness of others. Papers all across the US carried stories from Tarrytown. Regardless of the editorial slant of the paper in question the story still carried weight. Working class people had come to Rockefeller's doorstep to denounce him. Moreover he was confined to his estate for much of the struggle, and was forced to hire numerous guards. By any measure this makes it an effective demonstration of working class and labor power. The Free Speech Fight even gained some international attention, with *Mother Earth* publishing a section of a letter delivered to the Tarrytown Trustees on behalf of Danish critic Georg Brandes:

> To the Trustees of Tarrytown: I have visited your land of liberty and seen your beautiful statue in the haven of New York. I hope that in this crisis your action will be such as not to injure the reputation of your country as the "sweet land of liberty." Freedom of speech seems to me to be one of the most precious rights of humanity. I must ask your pardon that I, a stranger, dare to meddle in your affairs.[75]

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[74] Avrich, Paul. *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995. 210-213, 222.

[75] Leonard Abbott "The Fight for Free Speech in Tarrytown" *Mother Earth*. June 1914.

The protests clearly had a long reach, and allowed a number of criticisms to be levelled against Rockefeller. First the free speech fight had the effect of further publicizing the Ludlow massacre through its association with the Free Speech fight. Secondly the protesters could cast themselves as defenders of the right of free speech. Thirdly they used the opportunity to expose hypocrisy; this took the form of contrasting the Ludlow Massacre with Rockefeller's teaching of a Sunday school class.[76]

From the protests through the funerals the anarchists did a remarkable job of creating a narrative. They placed themselves in a historical, progressive tradition of the common man standing up for and asserting their rights. Thanks to the Ludlow Massacre they had a ready-made villain in the form of Rockefeller. The Tarrytown Free Speech Fight revealed a struggle over who were the true Americans. The funeral itself was turned into an event in which to memorialize the dead as heroes. Berkman offered a dual version of them as victims and heroes. Despite all of these efforts their attempt to frame their struggle as part of a historical American tradition failed. The response of the people of Tarrytown is proof of Labor's failure to harness an effective narrative even in the wake of Ludlow. One potential reason is the muddled nature of their narrative. While it included elements of the American tradition they continuously used the concept of class warfare. The reputation of Anarchists was another issue. Their reputation acted as a barrier to their role as messengers. There were few who were willing to hear out their message due to their perceived radicalism.

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[76] "Observations and Comments" *Mother Earth*, June 1, 1914; "The Lexington Explosion." *Mother Earth*, July 1, 1914 130-133.

Although Tarrytowners denied the Rockefeller connection, and village officials disavowed it one cannot dismiss the role of Rockefeller's wealth in the community. The denials of this claim focused on Rockefeller not owning taxable property in the municipality. This left out other sources of economic power.[77] Motivated by fear for their economic well-being citizens of Tarrytown lashed out at the protesters. The violence undoubtedly played some role in the bomb plot. The use of violence in many ways played into the hands of the protesters. Intentionally or not by concentrating their wealth in one area and creating a level of economic dependence upon it the millionaires of Tarrytown had created a community that would fight for their interests, and afforded them a level of protection. If Rockefeller and the wealthy were no longer safe the town's economy would be imperiled. This when combined with the threat that the anarchists had been built up as in the media created the conditions for the violent suppression of a peaceful protest. In the face of all of this the IWW and Anarchists were unable effectively use the American tradition narrative that had been used so effectively following Ludlow. Their positions of the anarchists and the stereotypes people held of them allowed their opponents to cast them as radicals. This limited their level of support and the number of people willing to actually address their message.

[77] "Tarrytown Objects to Rockefeller Brand," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 10, 1914; "IWW Can't Use Hall in Tarrytown," *Scarsdale Inquirer*, June 14, 1914.

CONCLUSION

Labor activists acted as historians, using history, memory, and tradition to frame and advance their struggle. They did not merely report or publicize labor conflict. Instead they actively created a narrative around their struggle and placed it within a larger history. Labor writers worked to create histories of events that they could use to influence both labor and non-labor audiences. They worked to influence public memory of people as well as events. Fallen strikers or laborers were memorialized as both heroes and martyrs to the cause. Tradition became a key component of the narrative woven by labor's ersatz historians. They portrayed workers as standing up for the rights of all Americans in a fight against despots. Laborers were connected to the constitution and cast as defenders of women and children. Labor activists worked assiduously to present labor history to the public in a way that would raise support for the labor movement and the struggles of workers. Although in some cases, such as Ludlow, labor successfully made their history the accepted history this was not always the case. As Tarrytown demonstrated labor's use of history and tradition was not always successful, and these same arguments could also be used against labor.

The Paterson strike pageant was an example of using public history to influence an audience. Rather than confine themselves to writing, activists sought innovative ways to present their version of events to the public. The Paterson pageant was effectively a reenactment of the strike itself as seen through the eyes of the strikers. Pageantry had already proven popular in the United States to educate and influence using particular

historical narratives. The organizers of the strike pageant used the genre to present a people's history of their cause performed by strikers themselves. This created a greater emotional immediacy than actors or reenactors. It is clear from the accounts that the pageant succeeded in both rallying the working class and reaching beyond them to the broader public. The organizers of the strike utilized the public history methods of their day to articulate their cause. It was this use of history upon the stage that ensured the place of Paterson in history. Beyond this the strike itself was relatively unremarkable. Nevertheless, it now plays a large role in labor history. The pageant acted not only as a history of the Paterson strike, but as a history of industrial conflict in general. The episodes of the strike, the diversity of workers, the violence, and other aspects of the pageant were applicable to other labor conflicts.

The labor response to the Ludlow Massacre demonstrated the heights of what labor leaders could accomplish when acting as historians. Walter Fink in particular played a key role in creating the massacre narrative at Ludlow. Given that strikers defended the camp and the attacks launched by strikers afterward Ludlow could very easily have been framed as a battle. Fink used accounts by strikers, townspeople, newspapers, and other sources to create and led credence to his version of events. By emphasizing the presence of the women and children he made Ludlow into a massacre. Labor's response to Ludlow also demonstrated the importance of tradition, and patriotism in framing events. The strikers were consistently portrayed as patriotic Americans fighting for their constitutional rights in the face of overwhelming violence directed by corrupt oligarchs. The parallels with the American Revolution were clear. By creating

their own history of Ludlow, activists were able to decisively impact public memory of the event. Labor created the Ludlow Massacre in historical memory, without the role of people like Fink it is doubtful it would be considered a seminal strike today.

The response by Tarrytowners to the free speech fight demonstrated a failure of the messengers. Due to their portrayal as radicals, anarchists were unable to effectively carry a narrative based upon tradition and connections to history. Those who fought most vociferously against the protesters were those who should have been their supporters. Rather than rally against Rockefeller the townspeople gathered in his defense. Not only did labor's narrative fail to be effective in this instance but elements of it were used against the protesters. Both sides struggled to be identified with American history and tradition. The protesters characterized themselves as defenders of the constitution and as standing within a progressive American tradition. The townspeople were characterized by the *New York Times* as patriots defending their community from radical outsiders. This same counter-narrative was used in other free speech fights as well. Although labor benefitted from using history in their struggle it was not enough to carry them to victory.

Labor activists achieved a measure of success in their role as historians. The Paterson pageant and the framing of Ludlow both demonstrated effective use of history and narrative. Labor never achieved its goals during this time, and groups like the anarchists and IWW were persecuted shortly afterward during the First Red Scare. Far from being seen as defenders of American rights they were characterized as dangerous and many were deported. It is noteworthy that organizers of both the Tarrytown free

speech fight and the Paterson pageant were deported to the Soviet Union. "Big Bill" Haywood and John Reed are two of the three Americans entombed in the Kremlin memorial wall. Part of the problem was the dominant narrative. Labor activists clung to the class warfare narrative which served to alienate potential middle class supporters. The more promising people vs. oligarchs narrative was never fully pursued or was muddled with class warfare rhetoric.

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