

# AN ONLOOKER'S VERSION OF LAWRENCE'S STRIKE

## The Vivid Account That One Catholic Priest Wrote of What He Saw.

### THE RIOTING DESCRIBED

#### Leader Eitor—Politics as a Factor—An Anti-Socialist Idea of This Industrial Struggle.

The following version of the Lawrence strike was printed in the *Tablet*, the official Catholic weekly of the Brooklyn diocese. It was prepared, the editor of the *Tablet* states, under the direction of a Catholic priest in Lawrence.

LAWRENCE, March 6.—The average citizen of this typical Massachusetts industrial city doesn't really know whether to get mad at the average citizen of all the other American cities or laugh at him for the absurd conceptions he has formed of Lawrence during the past six weeks. It is after all something more than a laughing matter for Lawrence, as it is almost certainly something that concerns not only Lawrence and Massachusetts but every American city.

Consider what really happened in Lawrence and then consider what the great American public was made to believe happened there and is still being made to believe is happening there.

The morning after January 12 of this year the good people of Lawrence woke up, that is, those of them who had kept informed of what had been going on in certain cities of France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Russia during the last decade, to the fact that a syndicalist strike had been started in their city.

#### THE EARLY VIOLENCE.

It started with all the usual accompaniments of a full fledged syndicalist strike. There was the sudden desertion of their work by several hundred employees of the Washington Mill early on the morning of January 12 and the immediate cutting of the belts that connected the various pieces of machinery with the power plant, the breaking of machinery, the flourishing of knives and revolvers with threats to kill the overseers if they interfered and the ordering of common and civil to join in the strike under penalty of immediate wounding and killing, all strictly syndicalistic.

This disruption of the employees in one of the departments resulted in practically all the help in that department rushing out of the mill, some because they had planned a strike, and many others through a panic fear that the wild actions of the leaders and the sight of drawn stiletos and revolvers inspired.

When outside the Washington the strikers rushed across the river to the Wood mill, pushed aside the gate man and hurled, yelling madly and still flourishing daggers and revolvers, through the rooms of this mill, calling upon all to join a strike that up to that moment few of those at work in that mill had the slightest inkling of. Here too belts were cut, valuable warps of yarn destroyed and motors attached to boms put out of commission. An attempt was also made here to reach and wreck the great power plant of this big mill, which was on that day giving employment to 6,000 persons.

In some of the rooms reached by this mob from the other mill the overseers, seeing what unreasonable and dangerously excited people they had to deal with and to prevent their being assaulted, suggested to their employees that they stop work and quietly leave the mill. This was done, with the result that thousands were soon out in the street that met between the Wood and Ayer mills. The leaders of the strike then turned their attention to the Ayer mill. They forced a massive gate off its hinges and managed to get into some of the rooms of that mill, creating the same sort of panic as in the other mills visited. Some joined them from this mill, but not many.

They soon came out of it and headed back to the north side of the river, where they had started from. When they reached the Duck mill—the other three mills visited belong to the American Woolen Company—the mob, then about 1,200 strong, tried to break in through the big gates of that mill. But the gates withstood their efforts. Here a small force of police made a determined stand.

#### A BATTLE AT A MILL'S GATES.

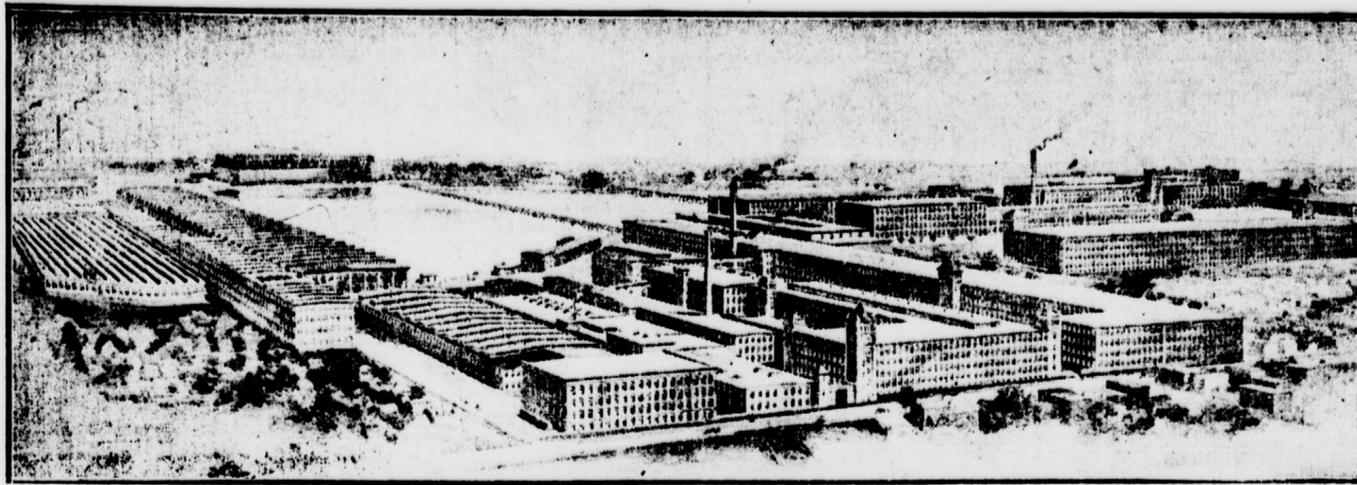
This force of police bravely faced all these strikers, who were now worked up to a dangerous pitch by the leaders of the movement, many of whom did not work in any mill but had been waiting for just such an outbreak to join it.

Loose snowballs, sticks of wood and any kind of missile that came to hand were hurled through the windows of this mill at the operatives, who could be seen at work. After keeping up this sort of thing for half an hour or so, taunting the policemen, who only numbered a round dozen, a rush was made at the little band of representatives of law and order. They withstood it bravely and laying about vigorously with their clubs drove this big mob of men, many of them armed with knives, stiletos and revolvers, up the street and into their own quarter of the city.

All this happened during the forenoon of January 12. It was so sudden, no notice of any kind from the regular organization of workers having been given to the mill owners of any intention to strike, that even after this ominous raising of the head of sabotage or "giving the boot," as the French syndicalists say in defining the strike of a revolutionary, anarchistic and destructive kind, few in Lawrence thought it would amount to much more than ordinary strikes of the past, wherein an organized body of workers present in an orderly manner their demands, and then representatives from both sides, upon a settlement satisfactory to both sides.

Sunday came and with it a meeting in the city hall at which Joseph Eitor, agent from Brooklyn, was present. He made a fiery address, in the course of which the city government, the State Government and the national government were denounced as enemies of the workingmen, fit only to be wiped out of existence, along with capitalism, religion of all kinds, authority of all kinds.

In a word he avowed himself an advocate of the doctrine of "direct action," of violence, a believer in the philosophy of force, for he proclaimed time and again, apparently trying to drill it into the brain fibre of his hearers, that "the law has force on his side but the law on the side" also advocated destroying the machinery of employers who



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did not grant all the demands of the strikers.

#### EITOR, THE LEADER.

This is the man who took charge of the strike in Lawrence the third day after its inception. He had a personality that was winning in its way. He spoke English and Italian fluently. He soon had all the active spirits in the strike believing in him absolutely and ready to do his slightest bidding.

From his entrance upon the scene terrorism of an undefined, widespread, all pervasive kind spread throughout the city. In a few days more than 20,000 operatives were out of work, most of them through sheer fear of the knives and revolvers flourished by so many of the strikers and that inspired by the sinister reports industriously circulated of what happened to "scabs."

As a large proportion of the mill operatives in Lawrence, as in all textile cities, are girls from 15 years of age up and women it is easy to understand how effective such a reign of terror would be in keeping them out of the mills.

Picket lines were stretched all around the mill district by the strikers and every one that passed had to bear the brunt of scowling looks, opprobrious epithets and the threats, "I will kill you."

In the course of the second week hundreds of windows were broken in the mills and thousands of dollars worth of valuable calico printing plates were ruined by drawing files across the etched copper rolls.

The situation became so threatening with a great mob of 5,000 or more non-English speaking people parading where they pleased around the city that the local companies of the State militia were called out to help the police to preserve order.

#### THE WORST RIOTING OF ALL.

The Monday morning beginning the third week of the strike the most serious rioting occurred. Every street car in the city that was bearing workers to the mills was stoned, the windows broken, the passengers driven out, their lunch boxes taken away from them and their

clothes torn from their backs. Fully 5,000 persons were concerned in the attack on the street cars all over the city; it was evidently a concerted move, one deliberately planned to add to the terror of the inhabitants of the city and to be looked upon as a step toward even more serious breaches of the liberties of the peaceable inhabitants unless the demands of the strike leaders were granted.

The governor's representative was in the city and saw what occurred. When he returned to the State House in Boston his advice was the same as that of the strike leaders: a large additional force of militia was needed in Lawrence at once.

It was hurried here that very night, and by noon of the next day there were nearly 2,200 militiamen in Lawrence, including two troops of the State Cavalry.

Quiet reigned in Lawrence thenceforth. With the exception of a woman shot by a rioter who aimed at a policeman and a young Syrian who was accidentally bayoneted by a militiaman, there were no deaths as a result of the strike, which at its height kept 25,000 persons out of work, many of whom could not understand a word of English and to most of whom English was not the language of their native land.

This meagre death list must look startlingly small to the readers of the sensational press, even to the readers of the fairly conservative daily press outside Lawrence.

The papers were so monopolized day after day, especially around New England and New York, with great headlines blazoning forth some supposedly sensational fact regarding the great strike in Lawrence that unconsciously most of the readers of the daily press outside of Lawrence imbibed the idea that it was a city whose streets had been bathed in the blood of hundreds of strikers slaughtered by a ruthless capital controlled militia. The very name of Lawrence conjured up in their minds a vision of a beleaguered city, ringed round by the gleaming bayonets of soldiers, one in which death stalked every minute and where gaunt skeletons of men, women and children strikers besieged soup kitchens for the scanty dole of sympathizing contributors to their cause.

Among the main reasons for hitting up the Lawrence strike in a sensational way is the common one of politics, the bene of the country on so many occasions, it is a Presidential year and the tariff could

be hammered!

But historical newspapers were not the main cause of the widespread, persistent and diabolically clever way in which the Lawrence strike was kept before the public all over the country and in a manner calculated to prejudice the public not only against the mill owners and city authorities of Lawrence but against our State and national governments and against any government or any regularly instituted authority.

That was done and made possible by the fact that the "direct action" syndicalists, the believers like Eitor and Haywood in the doctrine of force, the syndicalists, are able to exert an overwhelming directing force on the Socialist party as it exists to-day in the country.

#### AN ANTI-SOCIALIST VIEW.

They have hoodwinked the older, theorizing, peace loving socialists. They put the wires now. Therefore every move they made in Lawrence calculated to advance the cause of opposition to the present form of society, calculated to lead to its overthrow, was heralded in every city in the Union where they control the scablike societies as a great step taken toward breaking the "slave's chains" that, according to them, still bind the American workingman. Simultaneously various socialistic and anarchistic societies in Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco and dozens of smaller cities could send resolutions to the leading officials in their cities and States and their representatives in Congress and to the newspapers, calling attention to some now alleged article committed in Lawrence by the police or the militia or capitalists and demanding immediate action, either in the way of denunciation or an investigation by Congress.

In the same way newspapers all over the country received letters demanding that Eitor and Haywood be indorsed, that the Lawrence mill owners be denounced and something done toward dividing up the property of the country among the "proletariat," the favorite word of the socialists. The strikers in the Lawrence mills who had only been in the country six months or less were among the most ardent advocates of Eitor's ideas regarding a division of the wealth of the country.

But in all the great sea of ink spread over the miles of paper printed about the Lawrence strike in the midst of all the vast volume of fakes or panegyrics of Eitor, Haywood and other leaders front out of the city, there was seldom a word of sym-

pathy for the numbers of workers who were marching gallantly to work morning after morning in the face of threats, assaults, curses, tearing of clothes, throwing of pepper in their eyes, stoning of their homes when they happened to live in any sparsely settled portion of the city.

If it had not been for the militia they would not have dared to go to work, for they certainly would have been murdered, if the temper shown by the rioters before the militia was strengthened was given free rein by the opportunity a lack of police and militia would have afforded.

Yes, one will search the papers of the big cities that gave a large amount of space to the Lawrence strike in vain for any kindly reference to these workers, who returned in increasing numbers to their work every day when it was shown that the murderous mob spirit was held in leash by the display of military and police force.

#### SYMPATHY FOR THE OBJECT OF THE STRIKE.

It should be understood, though, that Lawrence people as a whole, clergymen, business men, professional men, in fact all classes, were heartily in sympathy with the attempts of the mill workers to get an increase in wages. They were in fact solidly with them until they saw the dangerously destructive and subversive nature of the society that had assumed charge of the strike.

They would have nothing to do with it any more than any men in any city will have anything to do with it if they believe in the opposite to anarchy. But they did not desert the cause of the mill operatives. When those outside of Massachusetts understand that the mills of this State, under a law passed last year, may work only fifty-four hours a week, while the same kind of mills in New Hampshire and other States may work fifty-eight hours a week, and in New York and some other States sixty hours a week, running exactly the same kind of machinery, the handicap upon Massachusetts mills labor under when there is no national labor law may be easily understood.

Not only is Lawrence not a blood-soaked city or a dynamite riddled city but it is not a bankrupt city and not a city of working people without bank accounts.

A United States Senator-Pondexter, in discussing Lawrence in the national capital the other day said he could not see how the people of Lawrence could have any bank accounts on an average wage of six dollars a week. Well, they do not have bank accounts on six dollars a week, which he said was the average wages paid in the mills in Lawrence.

Their average pay is much higher, being for all the mill workers, including women and minors and excluding the salaried men in the mills, \$9.29 week. The average yearly income of the workingmen in the country over is, according to Congressman Berger, Socialist, \$476. The average yearly income of the mill operatives of Lawrence, according to the United States census of 1910, is \$478.40, so that it is slightly higher than the average wages the country over.

#### WORKERS WHO ARE NOT BADLY OFF.

In the savings banks of Lawrence, which are mainly patronized by the mill operatives, there is \$2,000,000 on deposit. The cooperative savings banks have several millions more.

One quarter of the real estate of Lawrence is owned by mill operatives or former mill operatives, and the valuation of the real estate of Lawrence is well beyond the \$3,000,000 mark.

There is no brighter looking, more up-to-date looking industrial city in the country than Lawrence with its 85,000 people. In the last ten year period it made a 37 per cent gain in population. Perhaps it gained too rapidly. Perhaps there wasn't time for a proper assimilation of the newcomers from Europe. Perhaps the mills are to blame for encouraging too rapid an influx of people from parts of Europe and Asia Minor where there has been no chance to acquire skill that will be helpful in the textile industries, with the consequent result that the labor market is glutted with unskilled and consequently poorly paid labor.

But perhaps the steamship companies have done more than they credit in slowing immigration. In either case the immigration bureau should take notice.

But Lawrence was as prosperous, progressive and contented as any manufacturing city in the United States until the syndicalists tried to give birth to a new social era by a catayonism to be started in Lawrence. Its churches and schools, its clergymen and professional men, its business men and workmen, were doing as good work as in any other city of its kind and are now as ready and eager to go ahead and do more and better work.

It should also be remembered that the many races now in Lawrence are just as capable of furnishing good material for American citizenship as the many different races in any American city in the country. Those of them who fell for the seducement of the syndicalists are simply the victims of misplaced confidence. They can be taught better.

### THE HERDER'S RISKS.

#### We No Longer Find Unlimited Range—One Storm May Bring Rain.

In the great sheep States of the Far West the business of sheep raising and wool growing has emerged from chaos in a system. Conditions are changing rapidly and sheep men recognize that these changes are inevitable. It is no longer possible for a flockmaster to find unlimited free range. Ranchers have taken up most of the water and a great deal of the grazing land is converted into "dry" farms. In the national forests, which are utilized chiefly as summer ranges, as are the mountains, the sheep man must pay tribute for the privilege of grazing on Uncle Sam's land.

These conditions being recognized, the sheep man has reached the conclusion that they must do more winter feeding and depend less on the kindness of nature to bring them through a hard winter with any sort of a profit. Much alfalfa is being raised on the mountain slopes and the sheep are fed on it during the months when drought holds sway upon the ranges. One of the best examples of the march of progress in the wool industry is in the matter of shearing, which formerly was done in a slipshod fashion. Now there are shearing stations in the communities where sheep raising is an important industry. At shearing time the sheep are moved to these stations, which are long sheds supplied with machinery. A score or more of workers, skilled men armed with machine driven knives, strip the fleeces from the sheep in much less time than could be done by the old method. These sheep shearers are generally paid by the fleece and a skilled worker can make \$8 or \$10 a day. These shearing crews begin in Arizona and New Mexico in the early spring and work northward, finishing their work in Wyoming or Montana in May. Many of them even go beyond and enter Canada before the season's work is completed.

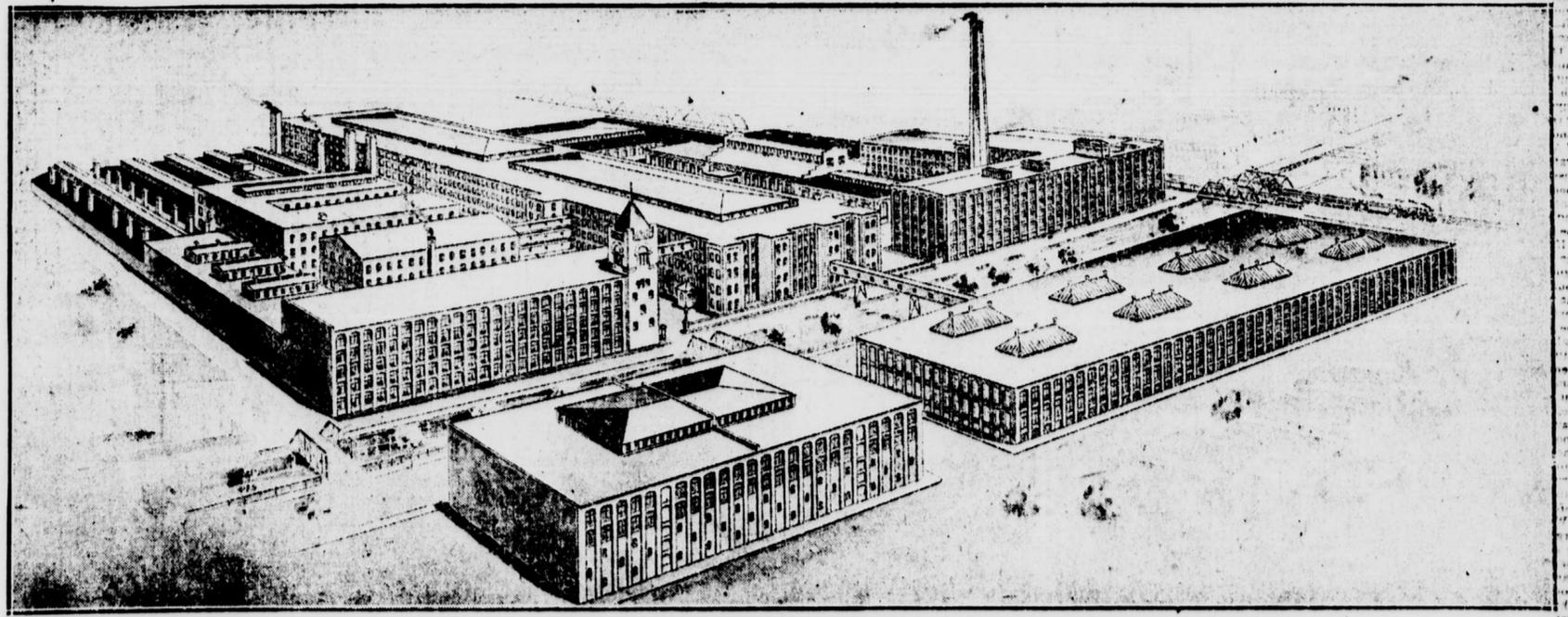
With changing conditions comes the passing of the old time nomadic sheep herder, who once went from range to range unmolested. This man, who is gradually passing, is being succeeded by a class of men who have the handling of sheep down to a scientific point. The old time idea of the sheep herder no longer holds. The modern herder must be a skilled man. He commands high wages and many of them save enough to start a flock of their own. Many of the present day sheep kings spent their apprenticeship days as herders. The old time custom of placing one man in charge of a flock has changed. This has been absorbed by law in many States. In Wyoming a flockmaster must have two herders to a flock. This law was passed because so many accidents happened to lone sheep herders, accidents that might have been avoided had an assistant been on the ground.

The sheep man is still the prey of the storm in winter. Despite all precautions he is apt to wake up some morning and find that a blizzard has wiped out his entire flock. Perhaps his herders have delayed a day or so too long in bringing down the sheep from the summer ranges in the mountains. Much of the summer grazing is above the timber line on the very summits of the main peaks of the Rockies. These peaks are generally covered with a short thick grass and afford excellent pasture. But the season is short and the snows are not gone until June and are often heavy. The sheep are generally covered with a heavy coat of wool and are not able to shed it until after September 1 is running a risk, often a great risk. Yet this is often done, for the sheep have done well on the high grass, and it is natural for the herder to wish to take full advantage of the summer range. But perhaps the best storm of the season descends on the mountain tops and trails are deep with snow. The sheep struggle vainly down the mountain side. Some of them fall into a chasm in the rocks, but most perish in the deep snow.

When sheep bring from \$3.50 to \$4.25 a piece the loss of a single flock numbering one or two thousand in such a fashion is likely to bring ruin to the owner. As high as 50 per cent of the flocks on the Red Desert in Wyoming have been wiped out during the course of a hard winter. Gray-wooly one storm late in the season does the work. The sheep may have wintered well and April find the owner with a vision of a neat profit. But a blizzard hammers along and stalls the sheep far out on the range.

#### V. M. C. A. in Southern Mill Towns.

The growth of the V. M. C. A. movement in Southern mill towns has been a feature of the last year. In connection with many cotton mills successful associations are in operation and their number and scope are constantly increasing. An absence of paternalism is a feature of this work, the condition of the various bodies being chiefly in charge of the members who are operatives in the mills.



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