

# Book exam



## Bread and Roses; Mills, Migrants and the Struggle for the American Dream

The mill workers from Lawrence suffered from dire financial and employment situation. They fed themselves with bread and molasses, to the less fortunate, only bread. Their working state in the factory, where their jobs are repetitive and dangerous, and not to mention, they hired mostly women and child laborers from various cultural groups. To make the condition worse, a law was mandated to reduce the maximum number of hours from fifty-six to fifty-four every week, thus reducing their wages to a significant amount. This resulted to a massive uproar from the mill workers. A union was created and demands were drawn. For instance, since the law stated a fifty-four hour work week, they posed a fifteen percent increase in their wages. With all of these happening, the employers insisted on not granting the demands of the laborers since they are gearing up to cost reduction.

I should say that the strike was brought about by a number of reasons. As mentioned earlier, their work states are meager. Then, they don't receive support from their employers when it comes to their labor rights, in fact; they received deprivation and discrimination from them. Even their own local official responded callously to their demands, sending militia units instead of negotiating in a civil manner to them. They applied force to the workers, even to women and children. The upheaval caught the attention of several states that expressed apparent aversion to the employers' treatment of the mill workers of Lawrence.

Honesty in wealth acquisition is somehow unlikely, especially when they get a hold of it quickly. It is improbable to obtain affluence without hurting people, physically or emotionally and tweaking rules, thus resulting to corruption. Allegedly, this happens to officials sitting in power, since their

influence is immense and sad to say, some of them are even rule makers. On Father James O'Reilly's account on the strike that it is not about the wages instead it is a war against authority, religion and home and themselves, I'd say that the people were not Anti-American in a sense that most of them, to start with, is not born and raised in America. Most of them were immigrants counting on the thought that they will be treated fairly and lawfully. Another point is that they are performing the strike to improve the work conditions of the people, not only the ones working on the factory, but the entire working community. They have expressed their will to eliminate discrimination in the work place.

Their participation in the " God and Country" parade, on the other hand, is not contrary to what they have performed months before that. This clearly expressed that they want to let bygones be bygones as soon as they were satisfied with the result of the strike that they have executed.

#### Works Cited

Watson, Bruce. Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream. [New York]: Viking, 2005. Print