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The Reimagined Community: The Making and Unmaking of a Local Working Class in Jay/Livermore Falls, Maine 1900-1988

by

August Carbonella

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Chair of Examining Committee

Sept. 15 1998
Date

Executive Officer

Dr. Jane Schneider

Dr. Michael L. Blim

Dr. Don Kalb, University of Utrecht

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

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By

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Adviser: Professor Gerald M. Sider

This study explores the shifting political and cultural contexts for working class action in the paper making community of Jay/Livermore Falls, Maine over the course of the 20th century. Specifically, it looks at the ways in which the defeat of a regionally organized labor culture during a protracted strike in 1921 set the groundwork for the construction of a localist culture dominated by the management of International Paper Company, the major employer in the community. For the next sixty years, localism became both an expression and structuring force of the fundamental relationships and orientations of local paper workers and their families. In the course of another protracted strike in 1987-1988, however, the paper makers transgressed the boundaries of the localist culture through the enactment of political and cultural practices that temporarily inscribed a new supra-local political community and transgressed the jurisdictional boundaries of contemporary unionism.

The central argument of this study is that the emphasis on a homologous relationship between class and community found in much of the social history and historical anthropology literature on class formation is misleading. Based on the evidence of the shifting temporal and spatial matrices of working class culture presented here, I argue that the study of working class formation should take into account the historically contingent relationship of both local and supra-local aspects of class belonging in order to adequately understand historical change.

Acknowledgements

The research for this study was generously supported by a doctoral research grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, a research grant from the Robert F. Wagner Sr. Institute for Urban Public Policy, and an Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Dissertation Award from the Graduate School of the City University of New York.

I have also incurred a number of personal debts during the periods of conception, research, and writing that resulted in this dissertation. Members of my Qualifying Exam Committee, Louise Lennihan, June Nash, and Eric Wolf, helped me shape my ideas for this study during the seemingly endless period of proposal writing. Sharryn Kasmir provided equal amounts of friendship, collegiality and criticism during the research and early writing stages. I hope that they all can see their profound influence in the finished project.

Scholars who claim that collegiality is dead do not know the members of my Dissertation Supervisory Committee. Michael Blim courageously stepped in at the last minute, offering enormous insight, enthusiasm, and sharp criticism. Don Kalb has seen this project grow from an inchoate idea to completion. His friendship, support and encouragement have been unfailing, and were especially evident in his role as "outside" reader for the dissertation. Jane Schneider has carefully and patiently read several drafts of the work at various stages. Her insights, scholarly generosity, and probing questions have improved it immensely. Gerald Sider has been there from the beginning, all the way back to my days as an undergraduate anthropology student when his passions for anthropology and history proved contagious. He has been a mentor, friend, and sparring partner for all this time. As my dissertation advisor, he valued my own particular contributions and interpretations, even when they veered off the course he would have preferred.

Without exception, the residents of Jay and Livermore Falls, Maine warmly received me during the year I lived among them. I thank them all for their patience and hospitality. A few require special thanks. Ray and Denise Pineau were warm hosts who always made me feel at home. From them, I learned a lot about struggle, sacrifice, and commitment. Bill Merserve, Local 14 president, answered my questions, opened up his files to me, and just generally facilitated my research. Norman Ouelette was the ideal neighbor, both generous host and dynamic storyteller. His knowledge of the 'old days' was a rich, scholarly resource. Eli Dugay opened his home, allowing me to sit for hours pouring through his immense store of historical photographs and written materials, while offering informed commentary on what I was seeing and reading. And Roland Samson continually steered me in the right direction.

It is only fitting that Peter Kellman gets the first word in the dissertation. Without his friendship, help and support, this work would not exist. It would be impossible to list all the ways in which he helped the research and writing. I need to name a few, though. Besides supplying crucial details about the 1987-88 paper workers strike, he has been a constant sounding board for my ideas and the argument that eventually made its way into this dissertation. He generously shared his collection of strike materials, and archival union documents. He has also commented on various versions of the work at different stages, helping to shape the argument and pointing out factual errors.

My children, Justin, Travis, and Claire have given me much to smile and laugh about during the research and writing of this work. I hope their pride in my accomplishment makes up in some small way for the time they have had to give up with their dad.

I have reserved the last paragraph for my best friend and partner, Patricia Musante. The fact that her name is not on the title page perpetuates a fraud. She has read every word that I've written, offered endless critiques, keen anthropological insight, and constant encouragement. She has also graciously taken on a disproportionate share of household and childcare responsibilities so that I could go "up to my room and write." I hope I can repay the debt.

Contents

Introduction: "Placing" the Working Class in History

"The strike won't be won here. It can certainly be lost here. But it can be won only by expanding to the state and national levels." When labor organizer and strategist Peter Kellman made this statement during the 1987-88 paper workers' strike in Jay, Maine, he was expressing an all too obvious but painful truth. Kellman's point was, simply, that the seizure of power in one locality provided insufficient leverage against the transnational power of International Paper Company (IP). Two months into a strike that would last another sixteen, Local 14 of the United Paperworkers' International Union (UPIU) had established a powerful presence in the Jay / Livermore Falls area. The "mass" meetings in Jay's "Labor Temple" drew as many as 2,000 people a week. From its origins as a forum for union business, the mass meeting became a central site for imagining and enacting an oppositional community among strikers and their supporters. Performances of labor songs and modern dance interspersed with strike updates, personal testimonies, and discussions of cultural and political issues in the community that ranged from Little League Baseball to electoral campaigns. These activities and discussions created and sustained a sphere of contestation that enhanced cohesion

within the strike community. The mass meeting was, thus, central to Local 14's strategy to command local political power. And, their strategy worked well. The mass meeting literally changed the shape and scope of local politics in Jay and Livermore Falls. It gave working class residents a collective voice in local affairs, as evidenced by Local 14's successful sponsorship of labor candidates for all five seats on Jay's town council and a seat in the Maine House of Representatives.[1]

Despite Local 14's local political cohesion and support, it found itself politically isolated from other union locals and unable to bring IP to the bargaining table. Initially, their isolation was difficult to understand. After all, Local 14 members had walked off their jobs as part of UPIU's national strategy to protest IP's massive restructuring plans, which would have eliminated up to fifty percent of all union jobs. Behind UPIU's official encouragement to protest IP's agenda, Local 14 discovered that high ranking union officials were unwilling to seriously confront the corporation by coordinating the action of their geographically dispersed locals. In fact, some UPIU regional representatives actively discouraged informal communication between the locals. Similarly, high ranking union officials did little, if anything, to secure the cooperation of the other twenty international unions with members in the larger IP system.

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[1] This study is based on 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork and archival research in the neighboring towns of Jay and Livermore Falls, Maine and in regional archives during 1990 and 1991.

In the face of UPIU stumbling leadership in the strike, Local 14 heeded Kellman's warning and steadily established a series of initiatives to overcome their political and geographical isolation. Caravans of strikers traveled throughout New England and even across the U.S. to elicit support and organize secondary boycotts of corporations linked to IP at the directorate level. Moreover, Local 14 launched a grass roots initiative to bring the geographically dispersed locals of UPIU into a common bargaining and strike pool, which would be overseen by a workers' council comprised of representatives from all twenty unions. This last initiative met with intense resistance from regional representatives of UPIU, whose local power was based on maintaining the U.S. structure of decentralized labor relations. Indeed, many of these union representatives had built-up what amounted to regional fiefdoms. A couple of them even manipulated a loop-hole in NLRB to allow the renewal of contracts in their regions, despite the official UPIU policy of non-renewal.[2] Local 14's strike pool initiative ultimately could not overcome the serious hurdles created by UPIU nor the considerable pressure that IP brought to bear during the course of the strike. It was an idea, though, that would not die easily. The pool concept actually gathered increased momentum once the strike was over, causing IP to

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[2] This is explained in some detail in chapter 3.

challenge its legality in 1990. A year later, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) decided in favor of IP, declaring that the establishment of a common bargaining and strike pool went against the grain of collective bargaining procedures and was indeed illegal.[3]

Local 14's isolation raises some immediate questions. What mechanisms secured and maintained the isolation of this local working class? Why were the communication and organizational links between localities so underdeveloped? And what role did/does the state play in limiting the span of working class action? These answers to these questions require an historical framework that examines the intersection of class and community formation over time.

This study examines the intricate and often antagonistic connections of class and community in the adjacent towns of Jay and Livermore Falls, Maine throughout the 20th century. The towns are located in south-western Maine, along the Androscoggin River. Jay and Livermore Falls have, in fact, constituted a single community since IP's founder, Hugh Chisholm, built his first mill in 1888 on a stretch of land along the river that straddled the towns' borders. Although the Androscoggin Mill in Jay is IP's sole surviving Maine mill, the Androscoggin River region, encompassing western Maine and eastern New Hampshire, was long considered the center of the company's paper

[3] Labor Notes, *#159 (June, 1992)*

empire. The region was also the scene of many battles to establish industrial unionism in the paper industry during the first decades of the 20th century. The historical geography of the rise and fall of a regional labor movement is central to an understanding of the localism and isolation that Local 14 members struggled to overcome during the 1987-88 strike, and is detailed in the first two chapters. Before embarking on this historical journey, however, some development of a useful analytical framework for understanding the notions of both community and class is required here.

Localism and Isolation: The Construction of a Fordist Geography

> All the rush and change of reality would bear in, necessarily, on what had been temporarily isolated as a particular action, a particular truth. To be there and to be telling it was a local moment, a significant moment, but the immense process continued and there was no available identity outside it; only the process itself, which could never be properly told in any single dimension or any single place. There was only, now, the deep need to connect and the practical impossibility . . . of making the connections, even the known connections. Yet, then, all the time, within this impossibility, were the inevitable commitments, the necessary commitments, the choosing of sides. . .
>
> Raymond Williams, *Volunteers.*

The transformations of territory and tradition that sustained and naturalized Fordist social relations in the U.S. may serve as a brief introduction to this topic. It is within this context that the 1987-88 paperworkers' strike becomes emblematic of wider struggles within the

U.S. working class for security and equity during the so-called "post-Fordist" transition. Certainly Local 14's multifaceted strategy to coordinate locally based actions with those that operated at the regional and national levels was a creative attempt to confront the socially constructed spatial and temporal discontinuities of working class history. As the focus of the 1987-88 strike moved beyond the spatial boundaries of the locality, strike activists were implicitly challenging an enforced isolation that began in the 1920s, when IP forcefully eliminated autonomous unions from its mills for over 17 years. As we will see in chapter 1, the destruction of geographical linkages between localities provided by labor organizations isolated local working classes in the dispersed IP localities. Localist discourses and cultural programs aimed at promoting cooperation between IP and its workers at the community level reinforced this enforced isolation.

The construction of localist cultural forms to counteract the growing geographical span of working class action was not associated with IP alone. Rather, as we shall see shortly, IP acted in concert with a powerful cohort of monopoly corporations in the 1920s intent on transforming class relations in the United States.[4] The initiatives of these

[4] See David Montgomery (1987:353-356) for a discussion of the events leading to the 1916 formation of the National Industrial Conference Board (NIB), an association of corporations and manufacturing associations representing over fifteen thousand manufacturing

industrialists were eventually consolidated by New Deal labor legislation. The Wagner Act of 1935, in particular, institutionalized a codified system of decentralized labor relations, which tied the procedures of collective bargaining and union representation to local level negotiations and elections.[5] This legislation dramatically undermined the ability of unions to coordinate the action of their members across space, as evidenced by the NLRB's ruling against UPIU.

This project by industrialists and the state to transform territory and tradition raises questions about our frameworks for understanding community, especially those that have emerged from the now nearly half century-long engagement of anthropology and history. Despite a diversity of projects emanating from this interdisciplinary engagement, the meaning of community as a "warmly persuasive word to describe a set of relationships... or alternate set of relationships" has remained fairly consistent.[6] The ethnographic turn in much recent social history, for example, has generated considerable interest in unearthing popular sociabilities and cultural forms within particular localities -- or communities. In a mode of inquiry reminiscent of Boas' salvage

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employers, and its various spin-offs that, in effect, constituted a 'secret government.'

[5] Gordon L. Clark (1989); Mike Davis (1986); and Christopher L. Tomlins (1985)

[6] Raymond Williams (1983: 76)

anthropology,[7] social historians and historical anthropologists set out to discover authentic working class or subaltern traditions operating below the surface of the incorporative pressures of bourgeois culture, political parties, and formal organizations.[8] The conventions of social history thus direct us to a culture of opposition strongly identified with and rooted in a particular place: a factory, neighborhood, or, especially, a community. The identification of this simple one-to-one relationship between "community" and an "alternate set of relations" makes it difficult to even formulate questions about the wider spatial components of class belonging. Alternately, it renders opaque the processes of class deformation and transformation. Certainly, this neat homology of class

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[7] Franz Boas, heavily influenced by Toennies dichotomous Gemeinschaft/Gesellshaft model, conducted field work among North-West coast Indians in an attempt to uncover native traditions unspoiled by the corrupting influence of the capitalist market at the turn of the 20th century.. Suffice to say, he systematically marginalized evidence of North-West Coast Indians engaged in trade, working in canneries, and participating in labor mobilizations.

[8] I am thinking here primarily of the moral economy approach in Britain and the U.S. and the Alltagsgeschicte school in Germany. For the former, see the foundational historical studies of Herbert Gutman (1977) and E.P. Thompson (1966) and the anthropological studies of Allan Pred and Michael John Watts (1992) and James Scott (1985). For the latter see the Alf Ludke's edited volume (1995), *The History of Everyday Life* and Geoff Ely's (1989) summary account, "Labor History, Social History, Alltagsgeschichte: Experience, Culture, and the Politics of the Everyday." Taking its inspiration equally from Foucault and Geertz, the "new cultural history" recreates the same problems in its search for micros-sites of resistance. See Lynn Hunt's (1989) edited volume, *The New Cultural History.*

and community does not get us any closer to understanding the processes whereby certain working class cultural forms become articulated to national-popular cultural discourses.[9]

A more appropriate analytical starting point would view the community as a claim advanced to solidify and structure highly disparate processes within a single field of dominance.[10] Claims to community are almost always tied to wider sources of political, moral, and organizational power. It is in the connections between and among these relational fields that we find an adequate focus of analysis for a historicized anthropology and social history, not in some pre-determined, bounded territorial unit.

Eric Wolf, who, throughout his career, has steadfastly resisted the temptation to either draw artificial boundaries around communities or fix them as cases for taxonomic comparison, has developed the perspective advanced here most significantly.[11] This was clear even in

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[9] The concept of "articulation" has been both a theory and method within British cultural studies, especially as elaborated by Stuart Hall and Ernest Laclau, to move away from essentialist understandings of culture and ideology. See Stuart Hall (1988: 35-57), and Ernest Laclau (1977).

[10] The notion of community as claim draws on two sources of inspiration: 1. Eric Wolf's use of the concept of society as a claim (see Wolf, 1988: 757); and 2. Derek Sayer's parallel use of the concept of the state as a claim (Sayer, 1994: 371). See, also, Ashraf Ghani's (1995) useful discussion of Eric Wolf's conceptual framework for analyzing power relations.

[11] I have taken this point from William Roseberry's (1995) comprehensive overview of the corpus of Wolf's ideas and concepts.

his earliest attempts to elaborate a comparative typology of peasant communities. In numerous comments on closed corporate peasant communities, Wolf argued that they were historically constructed in the struggle between the colonial states' demands for labor power and the locally specific ways those demands were negotiated, accommodated, or refused.[12] Central to his argument was the understanding that communal cultural traditions and institutions operated within multiple relational fields. To take a well-known example, communal institutions of reciprocal exchange in Mesoamerica were explored in terms of their embeddedness in religious fiestas that were revitalized, if not reinvented, by colonial states. These fiestas were the principal means of demonstrating membership in the community, and thus served to heighten localist affinities and identities. This cultural localism bolstered the geographical isolation of villagers forcefully settled into nucleated communities. At the same time, the exchange and redistribution of labor and services that took place during the fiestas contributed to indebtedness for some members of the community and enhanced wealth and prestige for others. Wolf linked this social differentiation to a spiral of dependence and authority through which tribute payments and seasonal labor for colonial mining and agricultural enterprises were secured. For

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[12] Eric R. Wolf (1955; 1957;1986).

Wolf, then, traditions in the closed corporate communities were a major locus of contradiction, serving both as mechanisms of incorporation into wider political and economic fields and as the forcing ground of a shared sense of "communitas."

Even more, Wolf proposed that the resilience of communal traditions was only partly explained by the way they both sustained and masked relations of power. He also contextualized and understood communal traditions within a particular geography of colonialism, as illustrated by his analytical interweaving of localism and isolation. Localist sentiments and affinities characteristic of the closed corporate community provided a mythic alter image to their enforced isolation. Isolation, in turn, reinforced villagers' subjection and dependence on the state by channeling and circumscribing their participation in wider commodity and labor markets. This constructed geography of colonialism, then , both expressed and structured the fundamental social relationships and orientation of community members.

The production of a social geography and the making of history are, here, inextricably linked. While this linkage ultimately undermined Wolf's own search for taxonomic comparison because each community was formed and transformed within uniquely configured fields,[13] he did not retreat into a particularistic anthropology that treats communities as

[13] This point was first made by Roseberry (ibid).

isolated microcosms. In a remarkably coherent body of work spanning forty years, Wolf scrutinizes the wider webs of connection and power that shape a community's involvement with various forms of capital, state, or political organization.[14]

Wolf's analytical framework is enormously suggestive for studies of working class culture and formation. While it may be argued that the localized studies of class common to much social history and historical anthropology enable a 'birds-eye' view of class formation, our historical understanding will be greatly diminished if these studies are not tied to a more nuanced examination of the power-laden processes that produced these working class communities in the first place. Communities are mapped in constant relation to wider hegemonic projects and/or counter-hegemonic movements. The ties between individuals and classes both within and across communities are thus directly tied to their integration into these wider systems of power and influence.

The relevance of this framework can best be demonstrated by examining the hegemonic project that successfully established Americanism and Fordism in the 1920s and 1930s in some greater detail. As Antonio Gramsci perceptively argued over sixty years ago, the

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[14] The papers by Jane Schneider and Ashraf Ghani in the recent tribute to the work of Eric Wolf nicely trace the continuities of his conceptual approach. See, Jane Schneider and Rayna Rapp, eds. (1995).

hegemony of Americanism and Fordism was established "by a skillful combination of force (destruction of working-class trade unionism on a territorial basis) and persuasion (high wages, various social benefits, and extremely subtle ideological and political propaganda)".[15] Significant here -- but habitually overlooked in the literature -- is Gramsci's identification of *force* with the construction of a particular geography of power. Most social scientists tend to attribute the rise of a new culture of Fordism to the internalization of consumer values by the working class.[16] This argument short-circuits the historical struggles that were necessarily involved in establishing the integration of mass production, mass consumption, and the high wage economy.[17] An anthropologically richer understanding of the transformation of working class culture during the rise of Fordism is suggested by Gramsci's emphasis on the production of a new social geography. Gramsci's rather elliptical remarks can be expanded and deepened through a reading of some recent studies of the

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[15] Antonio Gramsci (1971: 285) in 'Americanism and Fordism'.

[16] This argument spans different theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. See, Ronald Edsforth (1987); Stuart Ewen (1976); and Robert S. Lynd and Helen Lynd (1929).

[17] The linkage of these three elements is considered the foundation of Fordism. In addition to Antonio Gramsci (1971), see Michal Aglietta (1979), Mike Davis (1986), and David Harvey (1989) for informative analyses of the political economy of Fordism.

territorialization of power essential to the reconfiguration of "community" as a Fordist relation of production.[18]

The battle to install Americanism and Fordism opened with a series of strikes through the country that were provoked by industrialists in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Workers walked off their jobs *en masse* to protest the implementation by monopoly capitalist firms of the "American Plan," which was a series of fairly coordinated strategies to weaken or destroy autonomous unions.[19] The "American Plan" was highly successful. First, the open shop drive solidified corporate control over the labor process and eliminated the lines of communication and organization that linked dispersed working class communities. As will become evident in chapters 1 and 2, the destruction of these geographical linkages isolated working class communities and left workers with few resources to protest the increasing regulation of work, family, and social life.[20]

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[18] For present purposes, I have found Daniel Nugent's framing of community relations particularly apt. To quote: "The emergence and transformation...of affinities and identities oriented to a specific locale and related to organization of the labor process underline the way a community may figure as a relation of production (Nugent, 1993:150).

[19] For summary accounts of the American Plan, see Rhonda F. Levine (1988); and David Montgomery (1987).

[20] I also elaborate this point in greater detail in an earlier paper: Carbonella (1992).

Second, the elaboration of localist ideologies and the idealization of 'traditional American' community values by corporations and the mass media reinforced the isolation of working class communities.[21] This 'ideological persuasion' aimed to sublimate the recent history and memory of class warfare in many localities and to de-legitimize the notion of class in popular discourse. At stake was capital's ability to control the absenteeism, 'blue Mondays', wildcat strikes, high rates of labor mobility and other disruptive labor practices characteristic of the earliest stages of mass production. Although these forms of protest may have seemed like the result of a spontaneous anarchy to unsympathetic observers, they were in fact made possible by both the formal and informal networks and movements of laborers.[22] Despite their radically different philosophies, mixed locals of the International Workers of the World (IWW) and AFL regional networks of labor councils coordinated the movements of a mobile working class and helped create a distinct

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[21] There is a growing anthropological literature on this topic. See, in particular, Mike Davis (1991); Randall McQuire (1991); June Nash (1989), and Liston Pope (1942).

[22] Paul Buhle (1995)notes that the articulation of economic, political, and cultural struggles characteristic of the 1910s produced the most singular expression of a revolutionary modernism in the 20th century. It was during this decade that, as Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) notes, the manifold forms of particularistic power inscribed in space were shattered largely by the forceful entry of the working class onto the global political stage.

working class political culture.[23] Although divisions and marginalizations certainly did occur within working class communities and between regions, the political culture that united them posed major difficulties for corporate and state hegemony. The destruction of these institutional networks and supports was, therefore, crucial to monopoly capital's effort to make, in Gramsci's well known phrase, "the whole life of the nation revolve around production."[24]

While the American Plan represented a remarkable attempt to give unity and coherence to monopoly capitalists' varied strategies of labor control, it took on regionally specific textures and appearances as corporate managers and local media mythologized aspects of regional landscapes and history to consolidate their hold over particular communities. As Mike Davis discovered in his historical geography of Los Angeles, a brutal and long lasting campaign to destroy unionism by a cohort of the city's leading industrialists and businessmen was complimented by the elaboration of a romantic myth in which the city was represented as an enormous (Mediterraneanized New England) village devoid of racial and class tensions. Davis argues compellingly that

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[23] The role of labor councils in working class culture during the 1910s is more fully elaborated in chapter 1. Useful discussions of these networked mixed locals or labor councils are provided by Howard Kimeldorf (1989); Salvatore Salerno (1898); and Charles A. Scontras (1985).

[24] Antonio Gramsci (1971: 285)

this idealized utopia entered the "material landscape as a design for speculation and domination."[25] The design of working class housing and the pattern of land use, for instance, reflected the powerful influence of this myth. This formula for inserting a "middle-class" sensibility into the most habitual experiences of everyday life captured the imagination of cultural critics across the political spectrum. Writers, journalists, and publicists that Davis associates with boosterism saw in the new Los Angeles a materialist pedagogy of democracy. On the other hand, Los Angeles' landscape has also proved an enduring source of leftist pessimism, prophetically framed by Horkeimer and Adorno as they surveyed with horror the bungalow-filled landscape in the 1940s, positing it as proof that the proletariat's 'world historic mission' was now absorbed into a family-based consumerism.[26]

The mythic elaboration of the New England village provides another example of the unique configuring of communities during the implementation of the American Plan. As Margaret Crawford shows in *Building the Workingman's Paradise,* some North East industrialists collaborated with urban designers to build simulacrums of picturesque New England villages as part of a wider-effort to mythologize supposedly pre-industrial cultural values, such as individualism, industry, thrift, and

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[25] Mike Davis (1991: 23)

[26] Mike Davis (1991: 48)

petty-bourgeois familialism. Inscribing middle class values into the social landscape simultaneously repressed working class cultural and political forms, particularly the "un-American" collectivist practices and discourses associated with newly arrived immigrants and an emergent industrial unionism.[27] Nowhere in these new "garden cities" was there any space for union halls or labor-sponsored working class gatherings. Even more, the picturesque New England village became a central symbol of "American" values in manifold expressions of a new, mass-mediated national-popular culture.[28]

Similarly, absentee-owned mining and lumber companies in Appalachia were instrumental in constructing a folk myth that tied 'traditional' mountain culture to craft production and 'hillbilly' music. David Whisnant, in his wonderfully provocative *All That is Native and Fine,,* usefully contrasts an example of the corporate-sponsored construction of a 'mountain folk' with forms of working-class cultural production that were forcefully suppressed.

> Instead of filling a "folk" museum with old-timey things from an era long since mostly disappeared (Emma Dusenberry's spinning wheel, for example), Commonwealth established a "museum of social change," to be filled with such things as lynch ropes, photographs of the idle rich at Atlantic City, strike relics, and a *'plush [Episcopalian] collection bag with gilt pole' promised by H.L.*

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[27] Margaret Crawford (1995: 112)

[28] Orvar Lofgren (1995); D.W. Mening (1979)

> Menchen. Instead of the Victorian Christmas play produced at the folk school each year, playwright Lee Hays (a later organizer of the politically radical Almanac Singers) formed the Commonwealth Players to produce labor-oriented plays such as One Bread, One Body (1937). Meanwhile, Campbell Folk School students were writing and producing short "folk" plays. Get Up and Bar the Door (1935) was set in a one-room mountain cabin and featured Sal and Hickory Perkins ("By cracky, Sal, we had better roll the punkins under the bed, for they'll shore freeze in the hen-roost afore mornin'").[29]

As Whisnant's comparison suggests, all these mythologized traditions and landscapes omit a violent history of labor struggles, like the West Virginia "Coal Wars" of 1921 -- to take an Appalachian example -- that ended with the killing of a few score miners by the U.S. Army and state militia and charges of treason for some 350 surviving miners.[30] Indeed, an elaborate reworking of the past was central to the shaping of these disparate localisms, which, in turn, had a dramatic impact on class relations. They stifled class based expressions of culture within specific localities and reinforced the cultural differences of workers from different regions.

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[29] David E. Whisnant (1983: 177). Commonwealth refers to Commonwealth College in Polk County, Arkansas, an experimental educational learning environment for working class students that forged a close link with many southern and national groups such as labor unions, radical student and political alliances, cooperatives, and agricultural reform organizations. The state of Arkansas charged the school's administrators with sedition and closed the school in 1940.

[30] Jeremy Brecher (1972: 101-143). Denise Giardina's (1987) novelized account of "the battle of Blair Mountain" provides rich ethnographic insight into the coal wars.

The effort to transform working class culture and politics did not end with the elaboration of these regionally specific localisms. Public space within communities was more tightly controlled, as corporate managers, social reformers, and police sought to make the streets and public meeting places safe for "respectable pursuits" and "rational recreations."[31] In many communities, corporations or local governments colonized the educational, cooperative, and leisure activities that had been run by unions and workers. In a similar fashion, the private spaces of home and family life were increasingly the targets of corporate rationality. Corporate sociology departments, like that found in Ford's Highland Park factory, sent social workers and nurses to instruct workers and their families on the more 'rational' way of conducting social and family life that was demanded in modern industrial society.[32] This instruction tied corporate notions of rationality to the core values of Americanism. In yearly 'citizenship' competitions held in many localities, for example, citizens' committees that were frequently headed or sponsored by corporate managers rated the cleanliness and neatness of

[31] The transformations of public space are detailed in August Carbonella (1992), John Clarke (1991), and Kathleen Pries (1986).

[32] David Gartman (1986: 206-209)

homes and yards.[33] The linkage of home ownership, "rational" family life, and good citizenship became a favorite theme of both the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations.[34] Family, community, and patriotism were, therefore, elevated as the touchstones of a new corporate culture at the same time that alternative moralities, practices, and understandings were forcefully marginalized.[35]

As mentioned above, New Deal labor legislation ultimately provided the political and judicial framework for the consolidation of the Fordist social system. This is well illustrated by the way the "family" was institutionalized as the key nexus of Fordist social relations.[36] The 1935

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[33] Citizens' committees were representative of a growing alliance between corporate managers and local middle classes. This is detailed further in ch. 2 of the present work.

[34] Gary Cross (1993: 169)

[35] June Nash (1989) examines the historical processes in which these key terms came to express the values of a new corporate hegemony in Pittsfield, MA.

[36] As we shall see in Chapter 2, the central place given to the nuclear family in most understandings of Fordism needs to be reconsidered. For example, Regulation School theorists, such as Michal Aglietta, have identified the nuclear family as a central institution of the Fordist mode of regulation. This is essentially an ahistorical argument, which confuses historical outcome with structural identity. The petty-bourgeois nuclear family was, and is, an important ideological referent and model for hegemonic notions of propriety and morality. Yet, except for a brief moment in the post-war period when the state's social wages supplemented family incomes, the "family-wage" was never enough to support an entire family. Consequently, working class reproduction, even for core workers, necessarily involved a more historically contingent nuclear family/extended family structure. Given that, it is

Wagner Act effectively socialized the wage contract for workers in the core mass production industries by linking wage gains to increases in social productivity. The elimination of arbitrary wage competition reduced the deflationary pressures on wages and gradually integrated the core working class into the culture of mass consumption.[37] Consequently "family wage" payments, although for many years more ideological than actual, situated the socially and politically reconstructed family at the center of Fordism as the integrating link of production and consumption.[38]

More significantly perhaps, the Wagner Act created a codified system of decentralized labor relations, which solidified the political and geographical isolation of different sectors of the working class. This potential was made clear in the debates that preceded the final drafting of the bill. Congressman Gildea, the democratic representative from

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still possible to understand the importance of family to Fordist regulation, but the significant feature is the reconstruction of patriarchal authority within the family not the family form itself.. For studies that posit a key link between the nuclear family and Fordism, see, among others, Michal Aglietta (1979); .Stuart Ewen (1976); Marten Lee (1993). Paul Wills (1979) provides a useful discussion of the relationship between patriarchy and the family wage.

[37] Mike Davis (1986: 112-113) provides a useful discussion of the articulated effect of New Deal legislation and Fordist collective bargaining procedures.

[38] John Clarke (1991: 96)

Pennsylvania, succinctly captured the mood of many opponents of Wagner's initial proposals:

> The amendment (Wagner-Coonery disputes bill) strikes a damaging blow against unions which labor through its own efforts has created and degenerates into an extension of the Government-*union idea, one union for each plant.*[39]

Even conservative labor leaders seemed keenly aware of the dangers of the government sponsored legislation. William Green, AFL president, stated his objection early in 1934:

> Elections in individual plants supported by the National Labor Board should not be confused with real collective bargaining. We must recognize that over and above the National Industrial Recovery Act and The National Labor Board, there is a need for organizations of workers on a basis at least as wide as the organization of employers in trade associations for code making and code enforcement. In the long run we must look to independent organizations of workers on a national or international basis for real collective bargaining.[40]

Despite these objections, the Wagner Act's passage created the legal infrastructure for the decentralization of labor relations by industry and community. The procedures of collective bargaining and union representation were all tied to local level negotiations and elections. At the economic level, monopoly firms manipulated this system to play one locality off another in their attempts to secure higher productivity and control, if not lower wages. At the political level, a primary effect of decentralization was the often profound indifference of workers in one

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[39] Quoted in the epigraph to Gordon L. Clarke (1989)

[40] Quoted in Christopher Tomlins (1985: 124-125)

location to the plight of workers in other localities. The homogenizing tendencies inherent in the socialization of the wage contract, at least for core workers, thus had the ironic effect of increasing territorial divisions and antagonisms.

The articulation of new state sanctioned forms of labor organization with corporate cultural campaigns produced a rather distinctive geography, which continues to limit the span of working class action to this day. Indeed, the impact of the political and geographical isolation of the working class produced during the reign of Fordism is now increasingly apparent as capital investment is moved from one location to another, at often dizzying speeds, by firms looking for the most advantageous business and labor-management environments. Organized labor's inability to link its members in coordinated action beyond the local level limits its response to these new and increasingly unified strategies of capital accumulation.[41] Yet, our prevailing theoretical models of class formation render opaque the historical and social construction of this landscape of power. Ira Katznelson's ambiguous attempt to link spatial analysis to the history of class formation, for instance, sadly reifies both space and class through his

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[41] During the 1980s, for example, local chapters of UAW were forced into vigorous wage and benefit cutting competitions in an effort to save jobs. See, Eric Mann (1987).

identification of a homologous connection between the 19th century class-segregated city and working class politics.[42] Even Frederic Jameson's otherwise innovative interpretation of "post-modernism" suggests that working class organizational and political forms are inextricably linked to the city form itself.[43] These analyses inadvertently naturalize what has arguably been the central mode of political incorporation during the modern age: the construction of identities tied explicitly to a particular locality. Identities, to put it differently, that deny the idea of a *class belonging* across several places and identities.[44] A more flexible approach is therefore required to move us beyond the bounded geography of communities to the multiple, connected spatialities of class.

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[42] Ira Katznelson (1993)

[43] Frederic Jameson (1991: 414)

[44] Jacques Ranciere (1994) brilliantly deconstructs the reified spatial logic underlying much social science and historical writing.

Beyond the Limits of the Visible World: Toward a Historical Geography of Class Formation

When you go into the street, history begins. The headlines tie your hands and put you against the wall; or they arm you with little bottles of blue vitriol and tell you when to throw. Civil war in China. Starvation in Puerto Rico. Third Day of the longshore strike. You are beyond the limits of the visible world now.

Thomas McGrath, *This Coffin Has No Handles*

As we have seen, the construction of a Fordist spatiality channeled and circumscribed the actions of organized labor, thereby increasing the opportunities for capital accumulation. This power-laden geography centered on the enforced isolation of dispersed working class communities, which involved the elimination of a whole chain of communicative and organizational networks within and between localities. Continued reproduction of a Fordist social system and of a Fordist working class depended crucially on this command of space.[45] Monopoly capital's success in limiting the spatial perspective of the U.S. working class thus provides an important lesson in the historical and geographical contingency of class formation.

Enforced isolation of the working class has not been unique to the United States. Rather, as Goran Therborn reminds us in his comparative

[45] This section draws on David Harvey's manifold elaborations of a spatialized politics See, in particular, Harvey (1989). See also Henri Lefebvre (1991), Neil Smith (1990), and Edward Soja (1989).

study of class in different national contexts, it is a central hegemonic process.[46] Therborn's evidence suggests that the study of class formation should include an analysis of the political and cultural power brought to bear in securing the isolation of different working populations. It may be fair to say, though, that historical anthropologists and social historians are generally less interested in how power works than in detailing resistance to it.[47] As we shall see directly, many contemporary studies of class simply bracket out the mechanisms involved in installing and maintaining hegemonic projects. Consequently, isolation is often mistaken for autonomy and posited as the basis of working class resistance and militancy.

Kerr and Siegel first theorized the relationship between isolation and militancy in the early 1950s. Working within the paradigm of

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[46] Goran Therborn (1983)

[47] Exceptions do, of course, exist. Eric Wolf's entire corpus of work has been dedicated, as Ashraf Ghani (1995) suggests, to "writing the history of power.." Sidney Mintz' (1985) *Sweetness and Power,* Peter Linebaugh's (1991) *The London Hanged,* and William Roseberry's (1989) *Anthropologies and Histories* meticulously detail manifold articulations of global and local power and their effect on local working classes. The historical anthropologist Gerald Sider's (1996a, 1996b) spirited deconstruction of the political project of social history is concerned with uncovering the variety of ways power infiltrates workers' daily lives and drawing political lessons from that process of discovery. And, Don Kalb's (1997) *Expanding Class* examines the variety of ways that "Philipsism" -- a Dutch version of Fordism -- shaped the experience of the North Brabant working class.

modernization theory, they developed the concept of the "isolated mass worker" to explain the persistent militancy in certain working class communities, particularly those inhabited my miners, loggers, and longshoremen. They viewed militant workers as not fully modern, by which they meant not sufficiently "middle-class." According to Kerr and Siegel, the continued isolation of workers in communities with their own cultural codes, myths, and forms of association accounts for this incomplete socialization. Isolation simultaneously insulated these communities from middle class institutions and ideological pressures, and facilitated a vigorous culture of opposition to 'colonial-like' authorities and employers. This perspective raises many questions. Can longshoremen working in the busy international port of San Francisco realistically be seen as isolated from dominant social institutions? Even more, can the concept of an 'isolated mass worker" best explain the geographically discontinuous and historically variable relationship between local working class communities and what Raymond Williams has called "the high working class tradition, leading to democracy, solidarity in the unions, socialism."[48] I will deal with these questions more adequately below. For the moment, I want simply to emphasize the rather striking correspondence between this classic use of modernization

[48] Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams (1960: 28) -- quoted in Colin Sparks (1996: 99)

theory and the moral economy approach so prevalent in contemporary social history and anthropology.

Similarities between the theory of the "isolated mass worker" and moral economy arguments are most apparent in James Scott's ethnography of plantation workers in Malaysia.[49] Indeed, the language is almost identical. Scott argues that the plantation workers often live outside the cities where the "agencies of hegemony" are located, enabling the creation of cultural practices and narratives that sustain resistance to the dominant culture. Like Kerr and Siegel, Scott equates geographical isolation with cultural and discursive insulation and, by extension, the potential for militancy. Moral economy arguments are not limited to such peripheral settings, however. Notions of cultural insularity and isolation are frequently used to explain the experience of urban, industrial workers. In this case, it is the residual rural traditions of newly proletarianized workers that are posited as the basis of resistance to capitalism. Herbert Gutman, one of the most eloquent proponents of this viewpoint, argued that the "pre-modern" cultural values and communal loyalties of immigrant workers served as the basis of resistance to

[49] James C. Scott (1985:321). Scott also condenses a wide range of historically and geographically differentiated agricultural workers into the single historical category of "peasant", thereby further clouding the issue of historical change.

exploitation and the harsh conditions of industrial labor.[50] Roy Rosenzweig, in an influential study of working class leisure practices in a New England industrial community, similarly maintained that local immigrant groups drew upon a coherent ethnic consciousness and culture to keep an emergent consumer culture at arm's length.[51]

There is much to admire in the often nuanced analyses of moral economists, their essentialist views of ethnicity and culture notwithstanding. Scholars working within this tradition frequently provide detailed accounts of the local subaltern traditions and customs (kinship structures, neighborhood associations and mutual aid networks). Yet, there are a couple of criticisms that can be advanced here. First, moral economy interpretations of the thickness and mulitplicity of ties within working class communities are often tied to the premodern/modern oppositional couplet. Where modernization theorists equated the premodern with "backwardness", moral economists frequently equate it with resistance. In both instances, culture is reduced to a bounded, static possession of a particular group, who remain always outside of the hierarchically organized forms of modern culture and ideology. Not surprisingly, neither paradigm has been able to adequately

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[50] *Herbert G. Gutman (1977:1-78)*

[51] Roy Rosenzweig (1983)

explain historical change.[52] Second, moral economy's focus on the social ties of community frequently comes at the expense of an investigation of their shifting relationship to "that high working class tradition" that Raymond Williams has identified as crucial to an understanding of the working class. The point here is not to privilege supra-local forms of class affiliation over local class cultures, but to argue that local working classes necessarily exist in state of continuing tension (relationship, influence, and possibly antagonism) with larger class formations. It is this "tension" between the local and supra-local that is frequently targeted for attack or exploited by new hegemonic projects. It thus provides a window into the larger fields of force that shapes and transforms working class cultural forms.

Eric Hobsbawm's attempt to map the spatial/temporal matrices of English working class formation provides an opening for a more relational and processual historical anthropology.[53] Hobsbawm's engagement with E.P. Thompson's classic work, The Making of the English Working Class (arguably the definitive moral economy text), inserts the issue of territorialization into a cultural Marxism concerned

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[52] Gareth Stedman Jones (1983:76-89) usefully explores the tendency of both modernization theorists and the new historians to fall back on ideas of biological or psychological breakdown when explaining historical change.

[53] Eric Hobsbawm (1984:194-213)

almost exclusively with historical processes and metaphors.[54] Although Hobsbawm's formulations cannot be appropriated for the U.S. context without some revision and expansion, his exploration of the historical geography of class is of great theoretical consequence. Specifically, it allows the study of class to be placed within a wider framework of hegemonic power.

Simply stated, Hobsbawm argues that the modern English working class was "made" after 1870, not in the first decades of the 19th century, as E.P. Thompson would have it. More is at stake here than a disagreement over periodization. A brief review of Thompson's argument is, therefore, necessary to contextualize Hobsbawm's critique. Thompson stressed the residual but active presence of artisanal and agrarian community values and traditions in the shaping of an emergent working class' experience and consciousness. He argued that these cultural traditions enabled emergent working classes to critically evaluate their new conditions and to struggle against them. It was within this process of evaluation and struggle that the working class "made" itself, to use Thompson's richly evocative phrasing. Tradition is, in Thompson's usage, an active force in the shaping of class consciousness. This reworking of the notion of tradition, from a passively inherited cultural trait to an active social force, has been enormously useful both for anthropologists concerned with

[54] E.P. Thompson (1966)

historicizing their discipline and historians looking to uncover the cultural dynamics of class formation. However, Thompson's formulation of tradition and, by extension, class consciousness as the lived experience of community points to a major methodological shortcoming. Although Thompson's own historical evidence suggests the tentative emergence of a sense of class belonging across several places and identities, his implicit assumption that a single community is a small replica of a class and can be studied in isolation marginalizes forms of supra-local affiliation and association.[55]

This is the point of entry for Hobsbawm's critique. Hobsbawm argues that the study of class formation should be concerned to show how workers in discrete communities are able (or not) to overcome their isolation or provincialism, as he prefers, and form themselves into a class. This, he claims, was not possible during the early 19th century. For Hobsbawm, the world of early 19th century labor was constituted by a

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[55] Evidence for an emergent sense of class belonging across several localities and identities surfaces in the inaugural scene of "The Making." The first sentence of chapter 1 begins, in fact, with the "first of the leading *rules" of the newly chartered London Corresponding Society:* "That the Number of our Members be unlimited." This immediately identifies class as a community of the present and the absent, in Jacques Ranciere's (1994:92) phrasing. The tension between this expanded sense of class and the idea of class consciousness being rooted in the lived experience of community is never resolved, perhaps explaining the frequently noted difficulty in recouping useable theory from Thompson's historical masterpiece. On this point, see Richard Johnson (1979: 216).

collection of largely isolated and self-contained "microcosms" that were unable to transform themselves into a national phenomenon. The transformation of segmented working populations into a national class became possible only at the end of the 19th century, as a result of the growing concentration of both capital and labor, the rise of an interventionist state, and the corresponding widening of mass politics and trade unionism.

While Thompson captures brilliantly the historicity of class, Hobsbawm contextualizes the "making of class" within both time and space. The English working classes of the early 19th century certainly experienced the effects of capitalist exploitation, and they elaborated their demands for a more just society in the language of communal and artisanal traditions. But, according to Hobsbawm, class formation -- the making of *a* working class -- became possible only later, with the growing geographical linkages of trade unions and the Labor Party in the last quarter of the century. Hobsbawm's emphasis on the webs of connection among and between localities directs our attention to two intersecting components of class: a *local dimension*, manifest in particular working class cultures; and a *wider-spatial dimension*, manifest in supra-local lines of affiliation and association.[56] This immediately forces to think

[56] Jerry Lembcke (1991: 83-98) provides the most coherent and thorough interrogation of class formation from this perspective that I have seen.

about the historically specific ways that these two dimensions of class become articulated or disarticulated.

Hobsbawm, himself, does not explore this question. Although he identifies the relationship between the growth of national labor organizations and the transformation of working class culture, he does not further interrogate how this connection may be broken or mediated by capital and state. Nonetheless, his identification of this articulation provides a historical perspective capable of posing such questions. It enables us to think about class as a continual process of formation and reformation -- centered on the construction and destruction of class cultures -- within a web of constraint and possibility.

Two ethnographic studies may serve to expand and deepen this point, while picking up the thread of the earlier discussion of localism and isolation. David Cohen's *The Production of History* and William Pilcher's *The Portland Longshoremen* offer sharply divergent perspectives on the politics of historical memory and forgetting in two working class communities.[57] Yet taken together, they suggest the importance of the wider-spatial dimension of class in shaping discrete working class cultures.

Cohen's study is a wide ranging discussion of historical memory and forgetting in the textile city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. Cohen's

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[57] *David Cohen (1994); William Pilcher (1972)*

reconstruction centers on the family history of Camella Teoli, who, at the age of thirteen, was scalped while tending a cotton thread-making machine, causing her to be hospitalized for several months. Shortly after Camella returned home, a city wide strike closed down Lawrence's textile mills for two months. The 1912 Textile Strike, as it was called, immediately captured national public attention. The arrests of IWW organizer-poet Arturo Giovannitti and his partner Joe Ettor on false murder charges provoked massive support demonstrations in many cities. Traveling "wobbly" lecturers toured the country, spreading news of the strike through their talks on the "labor council circuit."[58] Press coverage of the strike was also constant. Mass-mediated images of the city's children being shipped out of town on trains to safer havens, and the rough interventions of the police in this mass juvenile exodus, fostered intense national interest and discussion of the strike. Concentrated scrutiny of the treatment of children in the city's mills followed. All eyes, it seemed, turned to 13 year old Camella. She was summoned to testify before congress on the abuses of the child labor in the city. As a result of her appearance before congress, Camella immediately became a media sensation; her picture and story were

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[58] In Maine, attendance at talks by these "wobbly lecturers" overflowed well beyond the capacity of local labor council halls. See Charles Scontras (1985:129).

featured in national newspapers and magazines. Camella's ensuing notoriety is the leitmotif that anchors Cohen's story of historical forgetting, a story that is at once enormously suggestive and false. Suggestive, because it foregrounds the pressures and privations to which working class memory is subject. False, because Cohen mistakes enigmatic and reticent responses with actual forgetting.[59]

Cohen's story actually begins in the 1970s with the arrival of noted Village Voice journalist, Paul Cowan, in Lawrence to gather material for an article on working class electoral politics. Cowan's interest was piqued by George Wallace's apparent success among descendants of the 1912 textile strike. Cowan was well known for his ability to create expansive, historical metaphors from the experiences of a single person, family, or neighborhood.[60] Cowan's search for a fitting metaphor to frame the story of Lawrence led him to Camella or, rather, her daughter, Josephine, since Camella died a number of years before. To his professed shock, Josephine supposedly informed Cowan that she knew nothing of her mother's congressional testimony nor of her injury, for that matter. This, despite

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[59] Gerald Sider (1996:48-83) brilliantly deconstructs what he calls the mythic history that has grown up around the 1912 textile strike, including Cohen's.

[60] I remember a story in the Village Voice during the 1970s, for example, that concentrated on the experience of a small group of hasidic Jews in Manhattan's lower east side, who came to represent, in his telling, the Jewish experience in America.

the fact that Josephine supposedly combed her mother's hair into a bun to cover the scar and bald spot every morning until she died. This ritualized, and possibly invented, interaction between mother and daughter supplied the perfect metaphor for the story Cowan wanted to tell about the erasure of the past.

In recasting Cowan's story, Cohen sets out to interrogate the relationship between private memory and public representation, and its implication for the transmission of working class experience and memory from one generation to the next. These are crucially important questions. But Cohen -- like Cowan before him -- starts with a purely psychologistic notion of memory or, in this case, forgetting. In this reading, the historical memory of the 1912 textile strike as well as Camella's injury, congressional testimony, and notoriety were lost to a psychological repression occurring within her family as much as within the dominant society. This familial repression is viewed largely as a reaction to an ascendant discourse of Americanism and the subsequent shame felt by descendants of immigrants in their 'own' culture. Underlying this reading is a celebratory, if qualified, invocation of the historian as a redeemer of a pristine historical memory, a memory which lead eventually to a "popular uprising" of history production.

But Cohen's own evidence supports another interpretation, one that gets at the stultification of political energies following the textile

strike of 1912. First, the IWW, which organized the strike and provided its chief spokespersons, left no institutional presence in Lawrence once the strike ended. Although the reasons for this are not clear, the subsequent organizational vacuum was quickly filled by a cohort of catholic priests, local industrialists, and politicians, who constructed a repressive localist discourse and culture. In the weeks and months following the strike, the dominant cohort organized public demonstrations against the radical and "atheistic" leaders of the strike. Cohen approvingly quotes Cowan's interpretation of these demonstrations:

> . . . most of the strike organizers and most of the journalists had left town. Local people, abandoned by the outsiders, were forced to choose between the IWW and God, between being regarded as patriots or as un-Americans. And suddenly, the insurgents, not the conditions in the mills, were the main issue in Lawrence.[61]

Cohen's whole analysis is based on the assumption that working class residents of Lawrence ultimately accepted this choice. Though, it is not at all clear why the city's undoubtedly large concentration of Italian anti-clericals, to take an obvious example, would accept this interpretation. What can be assumed from this very public process of defining communal "insiders" and "outsiders", however, is the active

[61] David Cohen (1994): I worked from a typescript version of Cohen's study that was distributed to the Fifth International Roundtable in Anthropology and History meeting in Paris, July 2-5, 1986. Therefore the page numbers for the published version are not available.

marginalization and suppression of the means, forms, and outlets for workers to construct and sustain an alternative social vision. Without an alternative discursive framework, the memories of the 1912 strike were no doubt subject to extreme pressures and privations. This does not mean that they were forgotten, but that there was no working class institutional space in which they could be made culturally and politically available. Josephine's reticence to talk about her mother's accident and notoriety to Cowan -- a stranger -- is, thus, readily understandable. She had not *forgotten* her history, as Cohen suggests. A number of remarks Josephine made to Cowan indicate that she was painfully aware of it. Rather, she had no way to *talk* about it; that is, no way to proudly claim it.

William Pilcher's ethnography, *The Portland Longshoremen: A dispersed urban community,* demonstrates how essential a vibrant political culture, sustained and reproduced by its organizational ties to working classes in other port cities, was to the social production of memory among the city's dockworkers. Working within the framework of the community studies tradition in anthropology, Pilcher's main concern is with the institutional mechanisms of social cohesion. Nonetheless, he offers a persuasive account of the intimate relationship between history, geography and politics among Portland's dock workers in the 1970s. According to Pilcher, the key institution of this 'dispersed community' was the local union of the International Longshoreman's

and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). The cohesive capabilities of the union were given by its control of hiring and work practices on the docks, and by its role as the political and cultural center of the community. Union control over hiring, for instance, enabled jobs to be handed down from father, to son, to grandson. The union was, thus, deeply implicated in what Pilcher called "widely ramified kinship networks," that served to reinforce a sense of collective identity.

The connections between union and generational history were tied together through frequent repititions of origin myths and legends and in a yearly commemoration of the longshoremen killed on 'Bloody Thursday' during the wildcat strike of 1934, in which dock workers protested both employer abuses and the conservatism of their union. The strike of '34' had a profound effect on its participants, according to Pilcher, providing them with the sense of having 'made' history. But that history was not *"lost,"* as it was for Camella's children and other working class people of Lawrence. Instead, their 'sense of history' -- their 'past' -- was continually restated and reworked into a collective history in the 'present.' Stories of the heroic deeds of the 1934 strikers, especially the 'flying squads' who battled up and down the west coast to reclaim the docks from police and company guards, were recounted daily in hiring halls and lunchrooms. Through these stories, the values of unionism and collectivism were, thus, rehearsed every day.

The 'Bloody Thursday' commemoration elevated these stories to the level of public spectacle in a yearly remembrance of one of the strike's key battles. On July 5th, 1934, an employer drive to reopen the west coast docks was countered by a series of pitched raids mounted by the flying squads. Their rapid movement from one dock to another posed an acute control problem for the police and private militias, who ultimately started shooting at the strikers. Several strikers were killed and many more wounded in cities along the Pacific coast. In a massive show of support that helped turn the tide of public opinion, tens of thousands of dock workers and their supporters marched through the various port cities the next day to protest the killings. The employers conceded defeat, as did the conservative leaders of the union. Out of this struggle emerged the most radical union in the U.S., whose lasting power rested on its ability to coordinate the actions of its members all along the west coast, and its control of hiring and work practices in various pot cities.

The union's ability to command space was ritually demonstrated every year on July 5th, when all the ports from Washington to California were shut down, as dockworkers took part in the commemorative parades and memorial services. The union's 'bloody' origins were thereby ritualized and committed to collective memory. These legends and rituals were not simply the mechanisms through which historical memory was transmitted from generation to generation, however. They

were also dramatic demonstrations of a working class movement's assertion of power through the command of space. They were rituals, then, not just of local history, but of a class in formation. As the massive yearly shut down of Pacific coast docks demonstrates, these class dramas were possible because of the union's strong organizational links between communities.

The importance of localism and isolation to hegemonic projects should now be clear. They are the twin axis around which certain claims to community, history, morality are advanced and sustained over others. They are the forcing ground of a collective misrepresentation in which partial truths become totalizing and certain possibilities are denied. This is evident from the very different political legacies of Portland, Oregon and Lawrence, Massachusetts. Therefore, anthropologists and social historians should not reproduce this misrepresentation in their investigative methods or through their analytical frameworks. If we return to Wolf's analytical framework, we discover a focus for anthropology that directs us to the webs of connection between particular social units and actors, and to the networks of power and influence that shape discrete historical outcomes. It is an approach that forces us to reconstruct the influence of multiple relational fields in our efforts to tell a 'single' story.

The Ethnographic Setting in Space and Time

It is not my past that I mourn -- *that* I could never lose . . . -- No, but the past of this place and the place itself and what Was: the Possible; that is: the future that never arrived

Thomas McGrath, *Letter to an Imaginary Friend*

Motorists crossing the Kittery Bridge from New Hampshire into Maine are greeted by a sign declaring that the landscape, culture, and people of the state represent the "way life should be." The state government's decade-long campaign to market Maine as a rural paradise -- with unspoiled wilderness, a fishing/crafts economy, and colorful, pre-modern folk -- is but the latest in a succession of attempts since the late 19th century to lure beleaguered urban dwellers to the state. In contrast to earlier campaigns, however, the Maine Office of Tourism has now dotted the imaginary landscape with an invented folk and their quaint customs. Whereas turn-of-the-century elite vacationers traveled by rail to enjoy Maine's spas and wilderness resorts and escape the encroachment of the 'uncultured' working masses upon urban life, today's vacationers drive their cars to Maine largely to spend time among a 'simple folk' uncorrupted by modern culture.[62]

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[62] Market researchers supported by the Maine Office of Tourism found that vacationers traveling to Maine wanted to spend some time in an 'authentic' – meaning unchanged – culture that was strikingly different than their own rather homogenized consumer based culture. This has

The 'living heritage' presented to tourists is, of course, quite selective. As tourists travel along scenic Route 1 north of Portland, they can stop for a while at L.L. Bean's in Freeport to watch a "traditional" Maine craftsman sew moccasins by hand. They can also buy tomahawks and totem poles at the Center for Native Art in Woolwich. And, once they arrive at the coast, they can ride on a lobster boat while the 'authentic' lobstermen check their traps.[63] In this coastal theme park, one would be hard-pressed to find any mention of that rather important bit of Maine's heritage called the paper industry. Curious travelers who venture off the scenic route and proceed north and west along Interstate 95, however, would soon find ample evidence of the paper industry's heritage. The landscape of this 'other' Maine is filled with counter-pastoral images of rural poverty and towns dominated by sprawling pulp and paper mills. The toxic fumes and noxious odors emanating from the pulp mills might, in fact, cause the unsuspecting traveler a great deal of discomfort.

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resulted in numerous attempts to "sell the folk," as author Brett Jenks (1990: 45-57) suggests. A whole "culture" industry has grown up around this campaign. The anthropologist Harald Prins (quoted in Jenks, ibid), who has done extensive research among the Penobscot, points to the transformative impact of this search for the "authentic:" "Romantic city dwellers go to Maine to find true wilderness, to find the true lobsterman, to find the true whatever. They also go here for the true Indian. Now the Indian begins to respond to their expectation of what it is to be an Indian." See also Holly Dominie (1989: 91-106).

[63] I am indebted here to Brett Jenks' article "Selling the Folk" (ibid.).

Neither the pastoral nor the counter-pastoral images of Maine are evidence of different temporalities of development. Rather, they are mirror images of the paper industry's century-long colonization and underdevelopment of the state's economy.

Out-of-state investors established Maine's first monopoly paper companies in the last decades of the 19th century, and quickly set upon establishing an integrated regional economy.[64] Their large capital reserves allowed them to take advantage of the recent invention of a chemical wood pulping process to shift the locus of paper production away from its base in lower New England. Wood pulp was far less expensive to produce than rag-pulp and, as it was based on a relatively abundant raw material, unlocked the paper industry's potential for mass-producing paper. The search for ways to make paper cheaper and faster was spurred on by a record demand for newspapers and 'dime' novels. But the techno-scientific transformation of pulp production led to sweeping changes in the paper industry itself. Although the cost of pulp

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[64] See David C. Smith (1970: 246-261). Among the earliest and most influential of the out-of-state investment groups were the team of Hugh Chisholm and Garrett Schenck (who founded International Paper Company in 1898) and the Manufacturer's Investment Group of New Jersey (which laid the ground work for the Great Northern Paper Company). The latter group was composed of such notables as Pierpont Morgan, Grover Cleveland, and former Secretary of the Navy, H.C. Whitney. Schenck broke away from Chisholm to join Joseph Pultizer, among others, in the takeover of Great Northern in 1899. Between them, IP and Great Northern immediately established a virtual monopoly on newsprint production in the east.

production was substantially reduced, the overall cost of producing paper rose significantly. Harvesting, transporting, and preparing lumber for pulp involved vast amounts of labor and technology. The potential for enormous profits, however, soon attracted large investment groups with enough capital to initiate a relentless movement toward vertical integration within the industry. These investment groups, who were at the forefront of the development of monopoly capitalism, systematically asserted their control over all aspects of paper production. This was no where more evident than in Maine. During the 1890s, Maine's first cohort of out-of-state investors started buying up the state's vast reserves of woodland, building hydroelectric dams on the rivers, and laying hundreds of miles of railroad track, all to furnish power and raw materials to their heavily capitalized pulp and paper mills.[65] The monopoly paper cartel's steadily increasing control of the state's vast natural resources throughout the 20th century has transformed Maine into an expansive 'paper plantation', as a number of critics have observed.[66]

At the same time, the monopoly paper companies' spacious reserves of timberland have come to symbolize a nostalgic "green"

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[65] David C. Smith (1970:189-218; 1972:247-261); Robert H. Zieger (1983: 3-14)

[66] William Osborn (1974) first identified Maine as a paper plantation in a scathing report. Others have more recently echoed Osborn's conclusion. See, especially, David J. Vail (1987).

landscape for generations of nature tourists. At the turn of the 20th century, elite tourists from New York and Boston traveled the rails laid by the paper companies to meditate and frolic in Maine's 'unspoiled wilderness'. From the 1940s, at least, auto-mobility brought newer generations of middle-class campers, fishers, and swimmers to Maine's still 'unspoiled' "vacation land," to use the parlance of a previous tourist campaign.[67] Notwithstanding the sheer size of the paper monopolies' seven million plus acres of timberland (an area larger than Massachusetts and Rhode Island combined), Maine is far from an unspoiled paradise. Instead, the state's timberlands are better characterized as a mammoth "pulp-wood factory," to use William Osborn's poignant phrasing.[68] A nature tourist's illusions of finding a brief respite from industrial society would, in fact, soon be shattered by the whir of clear-cutting machines, chain saws, and skidders.

The paper cartel's increasing colonization of land and resources facilitates a remarkable degree of control over labor markets and prices.[69] Poverty has been one of the chief consequences of their control. For much

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[67] Brett Jenks (ibid.); Holly Dominie (ibid.)

[68] William C. Osborn (1974: 181-208)

[69] The paper cartel's control of labor markets is greatly facilitated by its ostensive position as Maine's 'third governing body.' Paper industry lobbyists frequently write and help pass-through congress legislation favorable to the industry. See William Osborn (1974: 227-258).

of the 20th century, a large percentage of Maine's population habitually fell below the poverty line, while the unemployment rate remained one of the highest in the nation.[70] Although unemployment rates fell and average incomes rose in the 1980s, poverty remained a tenacious problem.[71] Indeed, Carolyn Chute's tragic-comic autobiographical novels of Maine's woods-working, rural 'underclass' published during the 1980s revealed a persistent desperateness that stood in stark contrast to the Reaganite ideology of national prosperity.[72]

The low incomes of woods workers can be contrasted to the relatively high wages paid to paper and pulp mill workers. The rather stark pay differentials between woods workers and mill workers operate, in practice, as a key mechanism of labor control. From the 1940s to the early 1980s, mill workers increasingly acquiesced to the discipline of the factory clock, to autocratic managerial authority, and to a steady acceleration in the pace of work – not to mention foul air and polluted rivers -- in exchange for regular and increasingly remunerative wage packets. This acquiescence was intimately linked to a renovation of

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[70] William C. Osborn (1974: 3)

[71] See Holly Dominie (1990: 91-106). The increase in average incomes and decrease in the rate of unemployment probably had much to do with the spurious development that took place largely in lower Maine during the 1980s as a result of the deregulation of the Savings and Loan industry.

[72] See, especially, Chute (1985) *The Beans of Egypt, Maine.*

morals, as well. Maine's mill workers came to accept the 'work ethic' as a foundational moral value. It is taught in their homes; it is the cornerstone of a person's respectability within the community. And, it has long been perceived it as a mark of their superiority to the perpetually precarious woods workers.

These histories and cultures are etched in the social landscape of Maine. Its distinctive social and spatial meanings come alive as one travels north through the western part of the state. A hypothetical motor trip along Route 4, as it approaches and cuts through Livermore Falls and Jay from the south, will help bring this historical geography into focus. Starting at approximately 10 miles south of Livermore Falls, Route 4 is lined intermittently with poorly maintained houses, whose inhabitants frequently place a variety of junked bicycles, washing machines, refrigerators, and furniture for sale along the road. Collecting, repairing and selling junked items is common practice for woods workers and others who barely eke out a livelihood in Maine's 'paper plantation.' Heading north, Route 4 passes through some of the region's last apple orchards before crossing the Androscoggin River into Livermore Falls. Entry into the town is just north of what remains of its once thriving downtown section, now limited to a couple of blocks, lined with a number of vacant stores.

Traveling further north along Route 4, International Paper's official historiography of constant social and industrial progress in Jay and Livermore Falls appears, at first glance, to be frozen into the built environment.[73] Approximately a half-mile from downtown, spanning the border of Livermore Falls and Jay, lies the old Otis Mill, the first paper mill complex built during the 1880s and 1890s by the founders of the International Paper Company, Hugh Chisholm and Garrett Schenck. The mill is still active today, but has changed ownership twice since IP sold it in 1977.[74]

Looking down on the complex from the hilltop to the east, one can easily imagine everyday life in Jay/Livermore Falls during the first half of the 20th century. From this perspective, all roads seem to lead to the mill. Squinting, one can almost see local children converging on the mill, bringing hot food baskets to their fathers, or exhausted mill workers wearily making their way back up the hill after a long shift. One can visualize as well, wives and mothers making a seemingly endless series

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[73] International Paper (nd) *Otis Division;* Reginald H. Sturtevant (1970) "A History of Livermore," *The Scroll* (Androscoggin Mill Newsletter, IP); and International Paper (1990)*On the Banks of the Androscoggin,* special supplement to the Livermore Falls Advertiser (december).

[74] The mill was first bought by James River Corporation in 1977. It was sold again to Otis Specialty Papers in 1991. The mill now employs roughly 300 workers and specializes in small batch, specialty paper production. See, Lewiston Sun Journal (5/2/91) and Livermore Falls Advertiser (6/13/91).

of meals for their kin working on different shifts at the mill and children still too young to work or marry. Scanning the different neighborhoods below, one can still 'read' an internal hierarchy of the local working class from the landscape. In fact, the wooden tenement buildings and multifamily dwellings in the Chisholm section of Jay, directly across from the mill, housed the coterie of unskilled, largely French-Canadian workers and their families. Just south, across the border in Livermore Falls, a number of rather quaint and variegated single family cottages still stand, once the homes of skilled, primarily Irish-American workers and their families. The stark differences between the built environment of these ethnic neighborhoods contributed symbolic support for socially constructed notions of respectability and depravity at different moments of political and cultural conflict characterized this period.

Continuing north into Jay, the landscape reflects the fruits of the long period of capital/labor accord associated with Fordism. Starting in the immediate post-war period, workers moved increasingly into suburban-style tract houses located throughout Jay and Livermore Falls. This movement was initially fueled both by increasing automobility and affordable mortgages for veterans. But its momentum grew after IP opened its mammoth, high tech mill close to the geographic center of Jay in 1964. Its opening marked the beginning of a 20-year period of high wages and good benefits for paper workers. Although wage rates for all

paper workers in the area had increased steadily since the 1940s, a direct benefit of the new state-mediated collective bargaining structure, it was not until the new mill opened that they were fully equivalent to the wages of auto and steel workers. This relative prosperity propelled a mini-building boom, which dramatically transformed the built environment of Jay and Livermore Falls.

In fact, tourists traveling along Route 4 could easily mistake Jay for a typical suburban bedroom community. One sees tree-lined neighborhoods filled with small, comfortable ranch houses, sporadic hair stylist shops, schools, and a strip mall, bracketed by a large supermarket and a discount department store. Missing from view, however, is any sign of a town center. Nor are there more than a handful of restaurants and gathering places. This absence of a well-defined public arena gives Jay the appearance of a sleepy bedroom community. But the steady stream of trucks carrying four foot pulp logs along Route 4 and the seemingly ever present pulp mill odors rapidly dispel that notion.

Indeed, the apparent sleepiness of the town is explained by the grueling production and shift schedules of IP's Androscoggin Mill. This sprawling complex (located approximately 4 miles up river and on the opposite bank from the old Otis mill) is one of IP's largest mills. It produces, at peak capacity, 1500 tons of paper daily, consuming some five

thousand tons of wood in the process.[75] To achieve this prodigious output, the mill's five paper machines (each as long as a football field and roughly 3 stories high) are run constantly. This incessant production is extraordinarily taxing for workers who staff the machines, pulp mills, and timber yards. The inconstant rhythm of a revolving tour system compels them to work one week on the dayshift, the following week on the overnight shift, and the next on the afternoon shift. In addition, they are often expected to work double and even triple shifts on those days when their replacements do not arrive. The impact on workers' lives is immense. Mill workers complain that they are constantly "off balance." They sleep and eat at odd and always shifting times. They often need to sleep through an entire weekend to fully recuperate. And, family members often protest the "grumpiness" and irritability of perpetually exhausted mill workers. Under this tour system, workers' lives have been routinized into a seemingly endless round of working, eating, and sleeping that leaves precious little time for social interaction in a public arena.

While living in Jay during 1990 and 1991, I often walked through its quiet neighborhoods trying to read the community's past from the landscape and to imagine its future. It was a futile effort. Jay appears on the surface to be almost a nonplace; a "community without propinquity,"

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[75] International Paper Company (1990: 6-7)

in Melvin Webber's cogent phrasing.[76] This perceived absence of the thickness and multiplicity of ties that animate descriptions of 19th and early 20th century working class communities gives Jay the appearance of a place outside of history; a place, that is, without traditions that transcend the enclosures of corporate culture and hegemony. Certainly, this is the interpretation given in IP's local publications. According to this official historiography, constant social and industrial rationalizations have eliminated the class and cultural antagonisms that plagued the first two decades of the 20th century, bringing uninterrupted progress to the community.[77] But these claims of progress have been sustained, no matter how feebly, through the active misrepresentation and partial displacement of an alternative past.

The view from the ruins of this alternate past, however, permits us to see the present more clearly. A useful point of entry is the now dismantled passenger train station that stood near the border of Jay and Livermore Falls. Standing on the platform at different points during the 1910s, an observer would have become well acquainted with the comings and goings associated with the then powerful regional labor culture. This station witnessed the arrival of workers from the nearby towns of

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[76] Melvin Webber (1963)

[77] See the citations in note 63, above.

Rumford, Maine, Berlin, New Hampshire and well beyond to participate in yearly Labor Day parades, baseball games, dances, and political events sponsored by the Central Labor Council. Local residents left from here to attend talks by traveling AFL, IWW and socialist speakers in labor council halls throughout Maine and parts of eastern New Hampshire. Local union representatives also left from here to attend meetings of the two existing labor organizations in the pulp and paper industry. And, this station also served as the main point of entry and departure for workers looking for or leaving work, however temporarily, in IP's Otis Division.

These trips and meetings reveal something of the active political unity of the regional working class. As we shall see in Chapter 1, this active unity developed in the midst of significant, intersecting local, regional, and supra-regional struggles to organize workers across skill and ethnic lines. In the process, a regional network of labor councils emerged as the primary anchors of vibrant working class publics within different localities. This emergent working class public presence was bolstered significantly by the pulp and paper unions' control of hiring. The union's role as employment broker helped sustain a highly circular migration pattern among unskilled workers, allowing them to alternate stints in paper and pulp mills with work in lumber mills or camps. More skilled workers frequently changed employers as well, but usually stayed within the paper industry. Union coordination of workers' movements within

the wider region helped create an intimate sense of class belonging across "several localities and identities."[78]

Labor turnover and mobility, together with the counter-movement of the regional labor culture, energized fears of chaos and fantasies of social order among paper industrialists, who linked the refusal of industrial discipline to the flaunting of family responsibility and 'barbaric' behavior.[79] Hence, by 1921, Maine's paper cartel (led by IP) initiated a coordinated series of actions to restore 'social order' and renovate worker morality. At stake was the cartel's ability to orient paper workers to family and community "standards of conduct" that were more rational for capital accumulation.[80] Their campaign centered on the destruction of unionism (and, by extension, the regional network of labor councils) and the construction of localist cultures. By the middle of the decade, the active dismantling of the working class public sphere of social interaction and continuing self-formation took a heavy toll.[81] Without the means, forms and outlets to sustain a collective public presence, working class life became increasingly insular.

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[78] *Jacques Ranciere (1994: 94)*

[79] International Paper (nd: section 1920)

[80] See International Paper (ibid.).

[81] I draw here on Bruce Robbins (1993: xvii) discussion of Negt and Kluge's concept of a working class public sphere.

The destruction of the working class public sphere is the shadow-history of Fordism in this region. It set the historical context in which the local working class gradually acquiesced to a steadily increasing pace of work in exchange for relatively high wages. It established the terrain in which mill workers became increasingly indifferent to the worsening conditions of woods workers. And it delimited the social field in which corporate notions of respectability became acceptable and even desirable.

Tourists traveling through Jay and Livermore Falls today will find no physical evidence of the vanquished labor movement. The central labor council building is no longer standing. The passenger railway station was dismantled in the 1930s. Even its history is silenced by triumphal proclamations of progress. But if they know how to look, the extreme quietude of this relatively prosperous mill community, nestled in a sea of rural poverty, might tell them something of a future that did not arrive.

Plan of the Study

In this study, I examine the sustained impact of localism and isolation on workers' lives in Jay / Livermore Falls, Maine. My study is framed by two protracted labor struggles: the five-year long "Strike of 1921" which marked the beginning of IP's "Fordist" compact with its workers; and the 1987-88 "Paperworkers' Strike" that marked its end. As

we shall see, these strikes were the central moments in the making and unmaking of the powerful localism that sustained IP's cultural and political hegemony. I trace this historical geography in three chronological chapters.

Chapter One reveals the political and cultural pressure brought to bear in securing the *isolation* of the Jay/Livermore Falls working class. Within the context of the "Strike of 1921", I examine the rise and fall of a regional labor movement that sustained a vibrant working class public in Jay/Livermore Falls in the 1910s. The destruction of this union movement during the strike left workers in Jay/Livermore Falls politically isolated, and established the conditions in which IP could begin its long colonization of all aspects of social life.

Chapter Two centers on the construction of a *localist discourse and culture* that sustained IP's hegemony. If there were not such an overabundance of *isms* currently circulating within the social science literature, I might be tempted to call this localist culture *IP-ism* in an effort to capture its importance in sustaining Fordist-like employment relations. Localism was central to IP's strategies of labor control and regulation between the 1920s and 1980s, even though employment relations changed considerable over this period. I examine this shift in the two main sections of this chapter. In the first section, I explore the construction of personalistic authority relations both within the mill and

the community that maintained a "flexibly deployable labor force" between the 1920s and 1940s.[82] During this two decade period that I refer to as "early Fordism," IP's overt and subterranian efforts to revitalize ethnic antagonisms were central to its reassertion of hegemonic control. In the second section, I explore the development of a more "rationalized" forms of labor regulation through the 1980s, characterized by the state mediated system of collective bargaining. Collective bargaining procedures in this period of "high Fordism" socialized the wage relationship and greatly undermined IP's despotic authority structure. IP adapted to the requirements of new labor laws through the introduction of structured forms of mobility that, nonetheless, facilitated new forms of labor/management cooperation at the local level. Despite these differences, the maintenance of localist affinities and identities remained centrally important to the advancement of both "Fordist" moralities and strategies of labor control throughout this entire period.

Chapter Three traces the end of both the Fordist compact between IP and its employees and the localist culture that sustained it. In the context of the 1987-88 Paperworkers' strike, IP's spatial explication of community was jettisoned as the strikers' imagined community became increasingly insribed by the idea of class allegiance, an idea condensed in

[82] Don Kalb (1997) developed the concept of a flexibly deployable labor force in his study of "Phillipsism" in Einhoven, Netherlands.

the strike's keyword 'solidarity', which became both a rally cry and an end-in-itself. The strikers' struggles to develop cultural and organizational forms to mobilize new political identities necessarily confronted the central enucleating containments of Fordism: corporate localism and the system of decentralized labor relations.[83] Unfortunately, their struggles demonstrate the lingering, ghost-like ability of these modes of political incorporation to stultify political energies even after the Fordist bargain has been dismantled.

In the Conclusion, I suggest the importance of this case study for our understanding of working class formation and culture. The cultural localism and political isolation that shaped and informed working class life in Jay / Livermore Falls for over sixty years challenges prevailing assumptions of a homologous relationship between class formation and locale, an assumption that can be traced back, at least, to Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class In England.*[84] Through a recasting of the central political moments in the making and unmaking of a localist culture, I advance some suggestions for a more nuanced approach to the study of the working class.

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[83] Antonio Negri's (1994:53-102) discussion of the modern state's constitutionalization of labor touches on the process of enucleation.

[84] Frederic Engels (1969 [1892])

Chapter One

Territorializing Power: The "Making" of a Local Working Class

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Americanism and Corporate Hegemony

The creation of localist affinities and identities during the 1920s was centrally important to the advancement of both Fordist moralities and strategies of labor regulation. Working- class communities were re-imagined and re-mapped during a massive, decade-long effort to rearticulate their patterns of loyalty and allegiance to a new political/cultural configuration dominated by capital. A broad repertoire of powers was employed towards this end. They produced a general deterrent effect on the power and effectiveness of working class organization which greatly facilitated the processes of cultural regulation. One line of attack, in particular, proved to be very powerful. The "American Plan", an extremely aggressive anti-union campaign, virtually eliminated the lines of communication and organization that had linked dispersed working class communities and, therefore, suppressed the main avenues of supra-local solidarity. The consequent enforced isolationism bolstered localism and left workers with little means to oppose the growing hegemony of Fordist organizational and interpretive frameworks of everyday life.

Capital and the state employed an array of powers to suppress the radical possibilities of emergent proletarian cultural institutions in the

public sphere. The main targets of their attacks were the clubs, associations, and unions tied to immigrant proletarians. The attacks on immigrant proletarian cultural organizations were central to the more general organization of consent and containment because cross-ethnic and cross-skill forms of cooperation had grown steadily during the 1910s. Attempts to circumscribe working class activity crystallized in a series of repressive government actions, euphemistically referred to as the Red Scare of 1919-1920. For example, Secretary of War, Newton Baker, sent federal troops into the Steel Strike of 1919 to route out the "Bolsheviki and radicals counseling violence and... social revolution."[1] And, Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, orchestrated a succession of "red raids" on a range of immigrant organizations between 1919 and 1920 that culminated in the arrests of somewhere between five and ten thousand "aliens" and the mass deportation of over 250 "undesirables."[2] In 1920, the well-publicized arrests of the immigrant working class syndicalists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, on what many considered to be false charges sent numerous other radicals into hiding.[3] Perhaps the

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[1] Quoted in Alan Dawley (1991: 248)

[2] See, Rhonda Levine (1988: 39); Cary Nelson (1989: 148).

[3] The Saco and Vanzetti arrests and subsequent death centers were a flash point of radical sympathies and anger in the 1920s. Their case was the inspiration of numerous books, poems, and stories, most notably John Dos Passos U.S.A. Triloy, which was started just one day after he was arrested during a Massachusetts protest demonstration for for clemency. See, Barbara Foley (1993: 434-435); Cary Nelson (1989: 148).

most insidious action during the 1919-1920 Red Square, however, was that taken by Military Intelligence which listed all southern and eastern Europeans, Jews, and African-Americans as enemies of the state. This action enabled the full flowering of a surveillance state.[4]

The "Red Scare" drew upon and reinforced an emergent language of national unity. This discourse of "Americanism" was energized by a powerfully evocative series of oppositional sets: Americanism/Bolshevism; average American citizen/radical immigrant worker; democratic community/working class internationalism. These oppositional sets evoked purified images of American life set against the contaminations of "foreign" ideologies and "alien" groups. This nation-making discourse frequently referenced the material landscape of the United States such as the picturesque New England community. The idealization of this community came to symbolize so-called traditional American morality. In sharp contrast, the overcrowded factory town and its prevalent industrial conflict came to represent the supposed amoral customs of immigrant groups.[5]

Corporate claims to community were an important aspect of this manifold effort to "hammer" and "machine" the working class into

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[4] Alan Dawley (1991: 249).

[5] There is a growing literature on the "ideological effect" of the social landscape. See, especially, Margaret Crawford (1995); Mike Davis (1991); Orvar Lofgren (1995); Donald W. Meinig (1979); Douglas Wishnant (1983).

acceptable relations.[6] The ideal and language of "the average American" that figured so prominently in the re-imagined communities of the late 1910s and early 1920s denied class differences and antagonisms. Corporate America promoted the notion of communities as collectives of individual citizens with similar aspirations, habits, and standards of normality.[7] Disparate local histories and geographies were telescoped through these reimagined communities until they appeared to come together as natural constellations.[8]

Fordist localism was, thus, an important countervailing cultural force to the growing power of the emergent industrial union movement in the 1910s. Industrial unionism had ranged from the Wobblies idea of "One Big Union" to the somewhat less formal cooperative agreements between the unions of skilled and unskilled workers within a single industry. Nevertheless, it had begun to build an active unity of a working class divided both organizationally and ethnically. Its ability to overcome the entrenched skill hierarchies and ethnic differences depended on an ensemble of cultural and political institutions created within the public

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[6] The phrase "hammer and machine" belongs to Phillip Corrigan and Derek Sayer (1985: 115). In addition, I have drawn much inspiration from their study of "state formation as cultural revolution."

[7] Ovar Lofgren (1995: 270).

[8] Walter Benjamin's magnum opus, *The Passagen-Werk*, is filled with insight about the materialist pedagogy of the capitalist landscape. Benjamin's fragmented and partially lost masterwork has been brillantly "recreated" and "reimaged" by Susan Buck-Morss (1991).

sphere to facilitate and sustain patterns of cooperation and alliance. Unions of various political stripes had sponsored consumer cooperatives, educational networks, lecture series, sports events and leagues, and various other forms of recreation. [9] The success of industrial unionism during this period largely rested on its concerted efforts to nurture working-class culture and continuing self-formation through these spheres of interaction.[10] Corporate localism, on the other hand, was a power-laden attempt to construct a public sphere better suited, or more functional, to capital accumulation.

The implementation of the "American Plan" at International Paper Company (IP) was both inspired and strengthened by this nation-wide political project to remold and remodel the social conditions of working-class life. However, IP did not limit its efforts to a one-dimensional drive to install an open shop, as the American Plan is usually understood.[11] Instead, IP deployed a double movement of force and, importantly, cultural regulation in its determined effort to reshape and re-moralize the work, family, and community relations of its employees. IP devised four overlapping and multi-stranded components

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[9] *See Paul M. Buhle (1995); Dana Frank (1991); Salvatore Salerno (1989);* and Charles A. Scontras (1985).

[10] I have drawn here on Frederic Jameson's (1993) discussion of Oskar Negt and Alexandar Kluge's notion of a "Proletarian Public Sphere" and Geoff Ely's (1990) idea of a "Working Class Public."

[11] See the discussions of the American Plan in Rhonda Levine (1988) and David Montgomery (1987).

to achieve its goal of regulating labor. First, and paramount, was the destruction of union-affiliated political and cultural institutions that linked many of the industry's localities and nurtured labor's collectivized moral order. Second was the deepening of status differentials between workers that divided them along ethnic and skill lines. Third was the transformation of the family / wage relation to reconstitute patriarchal authority relations. Fourth was the development of a mixed-class cultural sphere that backgrounded class differences. The company deployed their tactical forces during "the greatest strike that ever took place within the paper industry", a five-year-long endeavor that began on March 1, 1921.[12]

The Paperworkers' Strike of 1921 and the Defeat of Unionism

The 1921-1926 general strike by workers at IP was a momentous endeavor led by the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers (UBPM) and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers (IBPSPMW) to defeat IP's moves to install an open shop and implement new labor control strategies. It began as a mass strike within the newsprint sector of the paper industry against a contract proposal by a paper industry consortium comprised of two groups: IP with its subsidiary Continental Bag Company and the "Carlisle group" of five major

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[12] James A. Gross (1964: 192).

companies named in honor of its bargaining leader and president of the St.Regis Paper Company, Frank Carlisle. The consortium's offer proposed a reversal of wage and hour demands won during the 1910 strike; a nine hour day was to replace the eight hour day, overtime pay was to be eliminated, and workers were to sustain a thirty percent wage reduction. Moreover, the consortium's proposal would effectively divide the union movement; it stipulated both the elimination of outside "common labor" from the collective bargaining agreement and the payment of "locality" wages to this newly created "common labor". "Locality" wages were sure to be even lower than the proposed thirty percent wage decrease. Not surprisingly, the IBPM and IBPSPMW roundly and unanimously rejected the consortium's proposal.[13]

In the face of massive opposition by well-organized workers, IP alone -- its consortium partners agreed to arbitration after only a few weeks -- was powerful enough to push its agenda of creating an open shop. It was empowered by both the shifting national political landscape and the expanding geography of paper production. State repression during the Red Scare demonstrated official sanctioning of violence to suppress an emergent industrial unionism. In addition, recent political and technological changes in the paper industry served to heighten capital mobility and enable its significant expansion. First, protective

[13] For discussions of the 1921 paperworkers strike at IP see, Stephen Rea Cernek (1978), James A. Gross (1964), Robert H. Zieger (1983).

tariffs were removed in 1913, which eased the movement of newsprint across the U.S./Canadian border. At the outset of the 1921 strike, IP already had plans to shift newsprint production to Canada. Second, the invention in 1921 of a new sulphate pulping process made soft pine a viable substitute for spruce and fir in paper production. Soft pine was found in abundance in the southeastern United States, an area long known for its harsh, anti-union laws and policies. Suddenly, the paper industry could take advantage of a whole new region with relatively cheap labor. By the end of the strike, IP had opened half a dozen mills in the south.[14]

These political and technological changes offered IP secure ground to demand a restructuring of the technical relations of production in its mills. By the end of the strike's first month, IP proposed a massive reclassification downward of a majority of its workforce accompanied by a lowered wage schedule. Even more, the company threatened to implement its proposal with a replacement labor force if the unions refused. In brief, the proposal reclassified most of the workforce as "common labor"; "common labor" rose from 47 to 68 percent. Those classified as skilled were reduced from 20 to 15 percent, while those classified as semi-skilled were reduced from 33 to 17 percent.[15] The wages

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[14] International Paper Company (1948), *International Paper After Fifty Years.*

[15] Stephen Rea Cernek (1978: 122); Robert H. Zieger (1983: 25).

of skilled and semi-skilled labor were to decline by 10 and 20 percent respectively. Those of "common labor" would plummet at least 30 percent.[16] Not surprisingly, the unions again rejected IP's "offer". Within two months, IP began sending trains filled with strikebreakers to its various locations in an attempt to reopen its mills.

Tensions mounted as the company's dispersed mills began to import strikebreakers. The IBPM and IBPSPMW marshaled their tactical forces to confront IP's "take it or leave it" stance. Within the strike's first months, violent confrontations and riots became commonplace in company towns along a sixty mile stretch of the Androscoggin River. In Berlin, New Hampshire, trains carrying strikebreakers were met by armed paperworkers determined to halt their entry into town. One strikebreaker was shot and the crowd stormed the mill, smashing windows and stoning guards when the train did not immediately leave town. Peace was restored only when Berlin's socialist mayor ordered the strikebreakers out of town. In Rumford, Maine, newly arrived strikebreakers were chased through the streets by angry crowds, causing many to flee for their lives. In Jay/Livermore Falls, Maine, striking paperworkers armed with clubs met every train rumored to be carrying strikebreakers. Those few local strikers who broke rank at this early stage were assaulted on their way to or from work by their angry co-workers and neighbors. Some were

[16] *Stephen Rea Cernek (1978: 122).*

simply ridiculed and shamed. Others were knocked down, beaten, and stoned.[17]

In addition to the military-like force of its rank and file, the IBPM and IBPSPMW called on the support of elected local officials and business leaders. In July, 1921, the Livermore Falls selectmen and Chamber of Commerce declared their strong opposition to IP's use of strikebreakers in a letter to the local mill's general manager, William Murray.[18] Another letter by a sub-committee of Selectmen and Chamber of Commerce representatives to IP's president, P.T. Dodge, warned that strikebreakers would be extremely unwelcome. Dodge's blistering reply relied heavily on the discourse of "Americanism", equating what he interpreted as the pro-labor sympathies of the local business men with "bolshevism."[19] Next, the selectmen and the Chamber of Commerce sponsored a "citizens' mass meeting" to increase awareness of the issues in the strike. They invited both the labor organizations and IP to present their opposing views.[20] Rather than legitimate the event by sending a representative, IP used the local press and strategically placed flyers to reaffirm its position

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[17] *Stories of strike violence, not just in the Androscoggin River Region* but throughout the IP system, were carried almost daily or weekly in local, Maine newspapers, especially the Lewiston Evening Journal and the Livermore Falls Advertiser, during the summer of 1921.

[18] Lewsiton Evening Journal, 7/22/1921

[19] Lewiston Evening Journal, 7/22/1921

[20] Lewiston Evening Journal, 7/26/1921; Livermore Falls Advertiser, 7/27/1921

that all contract proposals were non-negotiable and that it would open its mills with "competent new employees."[21] IP's intransigence fueled much speculation and deep anger in Jay/Livermore Falls which only heightened attendance at the "citizens' mass meeting". The public "debate" between the unions and absent IP turned into a giant labor rally. One by one, union officials refuted published company assertions of the industry's downward spiral caused by "foreign" competition and falling prices. To counter the company's proposed deskilling and discourse of "Americanism", the speeches by union officials relied on a class and labor discourse that projected the failure of IP's tactic to replace strikers with untrained "scabs", largely because papermaking skill resided with the striking workers. In hindsight, these predictions evidence more than a little optimism, even naiveté. However, the class discourse and solidarity expressed at the meeting effectively buoyed the strikers' resolve and help to consolidate a broad base of local support for labor's position.[22]

IP drew upon the considerable state-sanctioned force of the "American Plan" to overcome the mounting, organized opposition to its attempt to regulate its workforce. Crucially, the company created a local, semi-private police state. During the first week of August, the company evicted over 20 workers and their families from company housing and

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[21] Livermore Falls Advertiser, 7/27/1921

[22] Evidence of this support is provided by the joint decision of most merchants in town to extend credit to strikers for basic necessities.

posted fifty "gunmen" on the mills roofs to "protect its property." That week, IP opened the Otis mill, straddling the Jay/ Livermore Falls boundary, with a force of imported strikebreakers. It also set in motion plans to close the Continental Bag mill only 20 miles up-river in Rumford to symbolize its refusal to operate in a labor town.[23] IP also took advantage of the legal system to break the unions. In September, IP petitioned the courts to issue injunctions that, in essence, would treat the fact of a strike as sufficient evidence of a crime. Over 50 years later, a local paper worker could vividly remember the intensity of this prosecutory climate:

> Well the thing to watch during that time was, ah, about every week there was a list of injunctions served by the court. You couldn't even walk the streets, you see. It was a violation of court order, and all you had to do was have somebody accuse you of violating the order and bang, you were in for thirty days.[24]

Armed with these injunctions, sheriffs randomly stopped motorists and pedestrians, intimidated and arrested pickets, and attempted to stop non-resident union organizers and officials from entering town.[25] A regional labor organizer, who was issued injunctions by sheriffs in Berlin, Rumford, and Jay/Livermore Falls, hinted at the damage caused by the

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[23] Livermore Falls Advertiser, 8/19/21

[24] Wilfred Gonya, 1971 interview. Tape 600, Maine State Federation of Labor Collection, Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History, University of Maine, Orono.

[25] Livermore Falls Advertiser, 10/5/1921.

injunctions to the strike's organization in a correspondence to John Burke, the president-secretary of the IBPSPMW:

> ...it seems so as if we all [are] going to be arrested, at least a large number so we will not be able to secure bonds.[26]

The legalized repression of union organizers and the state-sanctioned intimidation of strikers and their supporters in the company towns heightened the political discourse surrounding the strike. IBPM's president, James Carey, deemed the political system enabling IP's belligerence "industrial slavery" at a local labor rally.[27] The strike's local publicity committee elaborated upon Carey's pronunciations on "industrial slavery" and called for worker emancipation and the construction of "true" democracy:

> No great objective has ever been gained without sacrifice and in comparing this we would refer back to the wars of "76"... 1812, 1865, and the Spanish American War, then last but not least the great World War. Something was gained from all these sacrifices and now part of those who shared sacrifices to "make the world safe for democracy" are yet struggling to maintain that democracy that is yet to be established. What we mean is to come face to face with injunctions that restrain us from doing things we would and could not legally do even were the injunctions not granted. Then we have the injunctions that restrain us from doing things that the blood-stained, battle scarred Constitution of this country grants us the perfectly legal right to perform. This is but an echo of a bad political system and some day people are going to rise enmasse and demand that judges be elected by the people to prevent this encroachment of their rights.[28]

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[26] Correspondence of PSPMW organizer Jacob Stephans to John Burke, dated 11/8/1921.

[27] Livermore Falls Advertiser, 8/15/1921

[28] Livermore Falls Advertiser, 1/11/1922

This creation of a semi-private police state was but one component of a multi-stranded effort to construct a regulated set of social forms, not just in the workplace but in the home and community as well. At stake initially was the suppression of a vibrant regional labor culture, with its own institutions, forms of cultural production, and languages of class. This labor culture was not `all of a piece.' It represented instead the `active unity' of a heterogeneous working population; a somewhat fragile unity, built up through cultural invention, negotiation, and political practice.[29] As a result, skilled and unskilled laborers of varying ethnicities not only gained some degree of control over production but significantly redefined power in the region. The radical possibilities of this regional labor culture are indicated by the intensity and diversity of powers -- ranging from military-like violence to moral regulation -- used to suppress it. At this point, then, it will be useful to examine the inventions and practices of this labor culture in order to understand more fully IP's regulatory efforts.

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[29] "Active unity" is a concept employed by Geoff Ely (1990) in his discussion of the development of an English Working Class Public. Richard Johnson (1979) develops a useful historical analysis of the same process.

Constructing a Regional Labor Culture

The regional labor culture was a central component of a developing industrial union movement within the paper industry. The industry's two dominant unions, the IBPM and the IBPSPMW, created an effective alliance to organize workers across skill and ethnic lines. They adopted the "one big union" idea, though not the organizational form, of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In essence, the two unions agreed to compromise on jurisdictional matters and, more significantly, to negotiate and strike together, if necessary. Although the dual union form was a major political weakness that paper companies would later exploit, this alliance exemplified the cooperative spirit of the "new unionism". The collaboration of the two unions within the industrial sphere created significant momentum for a broader based collaboration within the public sphere as well. The creation or expansion of working class institutions within the public sphere dramatically altered the political and cultural landscape within the paper mill towns in Maine and New Hampshire. The creation of this working class public is what I refer to as a labor culture.

"New unionism", as Andre Trocin called it in 1914, was a term applied to the widely disparate attempts to organize workers as part of the

working class rather than as part of a particular skill or craft group.[30] The new unionism ranged from broad based industrial unions, like the IWW, to less formal forms of cooperation across skill and ethnic lines, like that constructed in the paper industry. An emergent industrial unionism created a powerful working class pole in the political arena.[31] Although the preferred methods of asserting this new working class power were the subject of protracted public debates, especially between the IWW and the Debsian Socialists, growing working class demands for the creation of a "true democracy" significantly altered the political landscape.[32]

The regional labor culture was intimately linked to this emergent industrial union movement during the 1910s. In many respects, interest in both formal and informal cooperation between so-called skilled and unskilled workers grew out of an intensifying "technological assault" and

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[30] Andre Trocin, American-based correspondent for La Bataille Syndicalist, quoted in David Montgomery (1979: 91).

[31] Industrial unionism was a response to the growing concentration of capital in the first twenty years of the 20th century. Both syndicalists and socialists promoted the vision of industrial solidarity, albeit from very different political perspectives. In practice, however, industrial unionism often resembled a bricolage of available forms, much like that put together by the paper unions. For discussions of industrial unionism and its growing world wide significance in the 1910s, see Paul Buhle (1995), Eric Hohsbawm (1984b), David Roediger & Philip Foner (1989), Salvatore Salerno (1989), and Gwyn Williams (1975).

[32] Paul Buhle (1995) provides a useful discussion of the direct action versus political action philosophies of the IWW and the Debsian Socialists, respectively.

a series of managerial rationalizations since the turn of the century.[33] Consequently, workers across all skill levels found employment in IP's mills increasingly dangerous, alienating, and precarious.[34] "Technological assault" was central to IP's competitive strategy, and centered on the continual reinvestment in faster, wider machines. This strategy was not without significant drawbacks, however. The constantly increasing capital/labor ratio resulted not only in a declining profit margin, but in recurring problems of overproduction. Mills were periodically shut down and large quantities of paper sat in storage. IP frequently used the stores of surplus paper as a weapon to force strikes. Forced work-stoppages were simultaneously a way to reduce surpluses and an opportunity to increase what Marx called absolute surplus value by pushing workers to accept an extended work day and reduced wages as the terms of a settlement.[35] At the same time, craft control over various production processes was undermined by a vigorous standardization program and the sub-division and fragmentation of jobs.[36] Between 1900 and 1910 the mills of IP's Otis Division in Jay/Livermore Falls nearly doubled their production capacity

[33] *David C. Smith (1970: 189-218; 593-661); Hugh Chisholm (1906: 161-169),* 20th Annual Report of the Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics)

[34] James Gross (1964)

[35] Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1908

[36] David C. Smith (1970: 189-218)

while reducing the workforce by almost forty percent.[37] Meanwhile, wages for skilled paper makers appear to have entered a significant downward spiral over the same period of time.[38]

These cold facts tell us little of the human consequences, however. For this, we are better served by worker humor and folklore. Through an exuberant combination of fact and fancy, the occupational tall tales of paper workers show the growing precariousness of life and limb that resulted from the rapidly increasing speed of the machines.[39] One suggestive tall tale collected in the 1920s involves Nosey Hill, a mythical figure embodying hyper-masculine ideals of craft knowledge and fortitude:

> It used to be said that one would never be a good machine tender until his fingers had been nipped in the calenders. However true this may be, "Nosey" had little sympathy for his backtenders when they were nipped in this manner. When asked if he had ever been nipped, "Nosey" promptly answered: "Sure, but I never made a fuss about it. Why I had my arm drawn into a calender up to the elbow once, but I just took it calmly and when the rolls started jumping I jerked my arm out and went about my business."[40]

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[37] *Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1899 and 1910*

[38] Maine Public Documents, Reports of the Department of Labor and Industry, 1902, 1903, 1906; Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1908, 1910

[39] B.A. Botkin (1944: 493). Botkin's analysis and collections of industial folklore are a great scholarly resource for students of the anthropology of work and labor.

[40] Quoted in Judith A. McGaw (1987: 323).

There is much in this brief text to suggest the casual brutality attending the extant craft distinctions in the first decade of the 20th century. As we will see below, hostility between differently classified workers significantly delayed the development of industrial unionism. For the moment, however, I simply want to draw attention to the tall tale's mythical recuperation of a primitive corporeality. In their everyday working lives, paper mill workers could not simply pull their arm out of a paper machine's rollers. Maine newspapers and union publications for this period carried weekly and monthly reports of mangled limbs, not just fingertips, and deaths in the paper mills.[41] Indeed, it was in the large monopoly paper mills that Frederick Taylor's theoretical fragmentation of worker's bodies found its most telling and tragic material expression.[42]

Despite worsening conditions of employment, a rigid "industrial caste system" hampered the development of an effective, organized, and collective response.[43] Labor regulation at IP's Otis Division revolved around this caste system of overlapping ethnic and skill hierarchies.[44]

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[41] The Livermore Falls Advertiser and The Lewiston Evening Sun, as well as the Paper Makers Journal frequently carried stories of accidents in the paper and pulp mills during the first decade of the 20th century. See also, Robert Zeiger (1983: 27): "Accident rates [in the mills] surpassed all-industry averages. Indeed, some departments regularly reported rates 200 and even 400 percent above norms."

[42] Frederick Taylor is recognized as the "father" of scientific management or Taylorism, which concieved of workers as sets of limbs without brains.

[43] Mike Davis (1986:43) uses the phrase "industrial caste system'.

[44] International Paper Company (1948a)

Although the directive role of skilled machine tenders and pulp engineers was made increasingly vestigial by the machine-driven pace of production and a new managerial mode of coordination, IP took great pains to maintain the status differentials that these and other skilled workers had enjoyed in the pre-monopoly paper industry.[45] A carefully orchestrated workplace and residential segmentation of Irish-American/"skilled" and French-Canadian/"unskilled" avoided what Mike Davis elsewhere calls "an explosive homogenization of status."[46] IP initiated this strategy of labor regulation in the 1890s, when it and other monopoly paper companies began their colonization of Maine's economy. A cohort of Irish-American paper workers were lured from the older paper making regions of Massachusetts and New York with the promise of relatively high wages, profit-sharing plans, and decent housing. At the same time, a much larger group of French-Canadian immigrants were recruited from Quebec, St. John's Valley, and Maine logging camps, textile mills, and farms with a promise of steady work. In the mills, Irish paper makers and beater engineers had the power to hire and fire their crews, and were noted for verbal and even physical abuse of

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[45] David C. Smith (1970: 189-218)

[46] Edwin Riley, the first general manager of IP in Jay/Livermore Falls organized skilled Irish-American workers in patriotic associations that facilitated their socialization and identification with the town's petty-bourgeoisie. *Livermore Falls Advertiser*, 4/20/1908. Mike Davis (1986:42)

workers.[47] Meanwhile, French-Canadian workers were blocked from advancing beyond the status of semi-skilled labor. These status differences were inscribed in the built environment as well. A neighborhood of tenement and multiple family housing for unskilled workers in the Chisholm section of Jay bordered the more picturesque "village" of Livermore Falls where skilled workers lived in charming single family cottages.[48]

Despite the managerial rationalizations and wage cuts that obscured craft distinctions during the next decade, deep cultural and political divisions between the two groups forestalled their cooperation. Again, this was partially due to IP's continued reliance on a rigid caste system to regulate labor. Although skilled workers wages' declined dramatically, they still hired and fired crews, received stock options, and lived quite differently than unskilled workers.[49] Perhaps even more significantly, a protracted struggle over appropriate forms of union organization and leadership sustained a bitter rivalry.[50]

The local union hall of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers (IBPM) was the center of social life for skilled workers in Livermore Falls. The IBPM started as a fraternal order in Holyoke,

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[47] *International Paper Company (1948)*

[48] Reginald Surtevant (1970); James Paul Allen (1971)

[49] David C. Smith (1970:593-661)

[50] Harry Edward Graham (1970); James Gross (1964); Robert Zeiger (1983)

Massachusetts in the 1890s, just as monopoly firms were transforming social relations in the paper industry. Eagle Lodge, the name of this first local, emphasized craft solidarity, mutual aid, and male camaraderie. Secret initiation rites and rituals of sociability formed the raw materials for an ideology of craft integrity.[51] The fraternal order, then, provided a social context for the reinvention and recreation of craft traditions and ideals that were increasingly marginalized at the point of production. Skilled papermakers in Livermore Falls maintained this fraternal tradition throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. Frequent meetings, parades, "smokers", and dinners as well as the use of a ritualized discourse of worker respectability, dignity and fraternity integrated and sustained the craftsmen community.[52]

The fraternal solidarity of craftsmen did not extend to the newer immigrant groups, however. In fact, the IBPM adopted a protectionist posture, and refused at first to accept unskilled workers as members. When the so-called unskilled workers began to form independent local unions, as they did in Jay as early as 1902, the "Brotherhood" pressured the AFL to deny charters to these upstart organizations. The IBPM then

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[51] Harry Edward Graham (1970); Robert Zeiger (1983)

[52] The IBPM's local activities were regularly reported in the Livermore Falls Advertiser between 1900 and 1910, much like any other fraternal organization in the town. I have also learned much about the masculinist rituals of fraternal organizations from reading Mary Jane Clawson's (1989) *Constructing Brotherhood.*

assumed jurisdiction for all workers in the industry but, not surprisingly, restricted leadership to skilled workers. A virulent anti-foreign ideology reinforced these exclusionary tendencies. `Nativist' sentiments were based on the perception that craft traditions and power were being undermined by the rapid influx of unskilled, immigrant workers. To state the obvious, social contact between the two groups was kept to a bare minimum.[53]

An open rebellion in the ranks of the IBPM in 1906 produced a rival union organized on an industrial rather than a craft basis. Founders of the new International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers (IBPSPMY) were clearly influenced by industrial union model of the year-old IWW, an organization that James Fitzgerald, IBPSPMW president, expected would soon rival the conservative AFL.[54] Like other emergent industrial unions of the period, the IBPSPMW attempted to unify and represent a sharply divided industrial work force as part of a larger political project to widen the scope of democracy on and off the job.[55] Fitzgerald's subsequent efforts to secure an AFL charter for the IBPSPMW was purely a strategic decision to wrest some control away

[53] International Paper Company (1948); Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, *1910* report; James Gross (*1964: 182-208*); Harry Edward Graham (1970)

[54] James Fitzgerald correspondence to IBPSPMW Executive Board, cited in Keith Emery Voelker (1969: 44).

[55] James Gross (ibid)

from the IBPM on the latter's home turf.[56] But as he expected, the AFL denied a charter to the new national union. Nonetheless, the now independent union rapidly developed a strong social base despite the AFL's stance of non-recognition, and workers in Jay immediately organized one of its first locals.[57] Skilled workers who emphasized craft identity above class cooperation were not likely to align with this attempt to transcend their privilege. And, the members of IBPM did not disappoint. A bitter rivalry ensued, reaching a critical point when IBPSPMW members broke a strike called by the IBPM against IP in 1908. The ability of the IBPSPMW members to staff and run the paper mills during the strike underscored the actual leveling of skills that had occurred despite the existence of the industrial caste system and the concurrent ideology of craft. Consequently, the IBPM was weakened considerably, and it was forced to negotiate jurisdiction with the upstart organization. The two unions reached an accord in 1909, which conceded the majority of paper workers to the IBPSPMW, with the important exception of the machine tenders, beater engineers and their immediate crews.[58]

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[56] Keith Emery Voelker (1969:44)

[57] Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1906 report; for a wider perspective on the IBPSPMW's social base see Robert Zeiger (1983).

[58] Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1910 report; Robert Zeiger (1983: 25); Harry Edward Graham (1970: 4-5)

Nonetheless, full-blown cooperation across skill and ethnic lines did not emerge until another major strike called by the IBPM in 1910 to protest the punitive conditions that existed at IP since the 1908 strike. Briefly, returning strikers were required to sign a non-union pledge as a condition of employment. Additionally, they were compelled to work overtime at straight pay, while non-strikers received the standard overtime rate of time-and-a-half. Most irksome, though, was the installation of a "spy system". Company spies were placed in every department of the mill in an elaborate attempt to route out union activity. Surveillance was maintained outside the mill as well, as spies attended union meetings and informal gatherings. The scope of this company intelligence unit was revealed when a small cohort of workers who attended a secret union meeting found "blue cards" in place of time cards the following morning.[59] The one hundred members of the IBPM in Livermore Falls walked out in protest. But, more general conditions -- tours of 11 and 13 hours, seven days a week, for barely subsistence wages -- brought out the 400 members of the IBPSPMW in sympathy.[60] Even before the 1910 strike, however, a mood of conciliation between the two unions was apparent. The previously conservative Paper Makers Journal began carrying political cartoons from the socialist *New York Call*, a paper that frequently called for the reorientation of the socialist party toward the

[59] *Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1910 report*

[60] Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1910 report

mass of immigrant proletarians.[61] One suggestive political cartoon portrayed a brutish personification of the "paper trust" beating back the proletarian "slaves" with the twin clubs of "oppression" and "wage cuts."[62] The incipient cooperation symbolized by this cartoon eventuated in a stunning victory for members of both unions in the 1910 strike. The two unions negotiated with IP as one entity for a contract that instituted the eight hour day, a five percent immediate wage increase -- leading to twenty percent over five years, and the establishment of grievance committees for all workers.[63]

Cooperation of this sort required an institutional anchor. In the papermaking regions of Maine and New Hampshire, at least, that anchor was found in the regional network of Central Labor Unions (CLU). Although formally associated with the Maine and New Hampshire Federations of Labor, the CLU's were becoming a bastion of socialist influence in the region. One result of this rising socialist influence was the CLU's coordination of a vigorous regional program of working class cultural activity across industry, skill, and ethnic lines.[64] Two telling forms of cooperation in Jay / Livermore Falls after the 1910 strike were

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[61] See Paul Buhle (1995: 68).

[62] Paper Makers Journal, June, 1908

[63] Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics, 1910 report

[64] Charles Scontras (1985: 120)

reported in the Paper Makers Journal. The first was a play sponsored by the CLU that featured members of both unions, who referred to each other as "brothers." (Before the show, a regional representative of the Shoe Workers' Union made a presentation on the benefits to the working class of supporting the union label). The second was a benefit dance held in the CLU for striking paper workers in the mid-west.[65] These activities indicate the increasingly central role of the CLU in cultural performance and production. In them, we see the emergence of a vibrant working class public in the increasingly singular community of Jay / Livermore Falls as well as a wider, regional labor culture, both of which were nurtured and sustained by the network of central labor unions. This regional network of labor institutions linked political practice and cultural invention throughout the decade. For example, socialists and wobblies, as well as moderate labor leaders, were frequent attractions on this CLU circuit. Like the Chartist "institution of the traveling lecturer" in 19th century England,[66] Wobbly speakers toured Maine and New Hampshire CLUs in 1912 and urged support of the Textile Strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts to wildly enthusiastic crowds.[67] The oral history

[65] Paper Makers Journal, February, 1911

[66] Richard Johnson (1979: 79-80) identifies the "institution of traveling lecturer" as one of the key forms for a distributed working class knowledge, sustained by and sustaining of the Chartist and Owenite movements.

[67] Charles Scontras (1985: 128-129)

of a local paperworker exposes the positive reception given to a wide variety of labor lecturers and organizers:

> ...there was a hall packed and people were standing on the stairs trying to listen (to) what was going on and even overflowing out on the streets.[68]

In Jay/Livermore Falls, an ensemble of cultural inventions and institutions constituted a working class public, a sphere of cooperation and continuing self-formation. They included political meetings, union meetings, weekly dances, lectures, a consumer cooperative, and baseball leagues.[69] The sports competitions, in particular, served as an important means to ritualize and, ultimately, negotiate tensions between Irish-Americans and French-Canadians. The games were frequently followed by heavily attended drinking parties and dances. An indication of the greatly reduced ethnic hostilities is revealed in workers' memories of a proclivity for inter-ethnic marriage during this period.[70] Other forms of cultural invention were equally important for class formation. These included union journals that published worker poetry and fiction, as well as news of labor conditions throughout the industry. One poem, in particular, reveals the language of labor that developed within this regional labor culture:

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[68] W.E. Gonya, a Jay resident and member of the IBPSPMW. Tape 600, Maine State Federation of Labor Oral History Collection

[69] W.E. Gonya (ibid); Dossithee Gossilin, 1991 interview

[70] Reported numerous times by elderly informants

> As I sat one night on the third press/ step, I gradually fell asleep,/ And I dreamt a dream, a sweet, sweet dream/ And its memory I long to keep./ I dreamed of the different mills where/ I've worked/ And the different places I've been/ In the different parts of the world of ours/ And the faces that I have seen/ But the one face of all which impressed/ me most/ Was the face of Old Red Tom/ And some of his pals of Livermore Falls/ Some who are dead and gone/ [sic] As they passed in my vision, the crowd/ I viewed/ While Red passed around his famed/ home-brewed/ I fancied I heard Old Red Tom say/ "Hey, der youse fellows, stand further away/ From dat keg o' beer, or I'm a son of gun/ I won't give a drink to no not one"/ Red he started to make a speech, and as he addressed the crowd/ Said brudders, h'im a Union man, and of dat by gad h'im proud/ I used to tink de Union at one time sure was gone/ But we're stronger now den h'ever/ You'se take dat from old Red Tom.[71]

This poem suggests that informal cultural productions, as much as formal cultural inventions, were constituted by and constituting of a language of labor structured by such key terms as work, brotherhood, and union. In these manifold expressions, the regional labor culture provided workers the means, forms, and outlets to think about and *name* common anxieties and aspirations, and to transform them into a collective -- or class -- sense of purpose.

Another regional labor practice -- union control of hiring -- greatly enhanced this labor culture. This control facilitated the circulation of workers in and around the region, and gave them a measure of informal

[71] Paper Makers Journal, February 1911

control over their working lives. They were now able to take short "vacations" from the increasingly dangerous working conditions of the mill, to find temporary work in area saw mills or logging camps, even to test out the conditions in another paper company. This aspect of labor practice was specific to the region. It is not mentioned at all in the historiography of the national unions.[72] It does, however, turn up in the oral histories and reflections of local and regional paperworkers, who recall that initial hiring and continued employment was contingent upon union approval.[73] IP's official history of the Otis Division in Jay/Livermore Falls also refers to a continual rehiring of workers who "went off on a lark" as well as the high rates of quits and truancies during the 1910s.[74] This migratory practice significantly built up a network of intimate relations throughout the region and even beyond. Workers in other towns and mills were no longer an abstraction, but former work mates, drinking buddies, and confidantes, as indicated by the "Red Tom" poem above, even kin.[75] This expanded spatial perspective created an

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[72] See, particularly, Robert Zeiger (1983); Harry Edward Graham (1970); James Gross (1964)

[73] Dossithee Gossilin, former secretary of Local 8, Pulp/Sulphite Union in 1919 - 1925, interview 1991; Joseph White, tape 672, Maine State Federation of Labor Oral History Collection

[74] International Paper Company (1948)

[75] An exchange of marriage partners within the paper mill towns of Jay/Livermore Falls, Rumford, and Berlin, New Hampsire appeared to be a fairly regular occurrence, as indicated by the recollections of elderly informants and by the weekly listings in the Livermore Falls Advertiser

intimate sense of class belonging and consciousness, a perspective both sustained by and sustaining of the regional labor culture.[76]

IP's Strategy of Containment

IP's project to reassert control of its unruly labor force during the 1921 strike can now be shown in sufficient relief. Importantly, IP's proposed massive reclassification of labor, with its attendant wage reductions, was a central component of its project to reinvigorate the industrial caste system, which simultaneously undermined class solidarities and reoriented social life around ethnic identities and affinities. This reinvention of ethnicity secured IP's dominance in three crucial ways: it facilitated the destruction of unionism and a labor movement that sustained the 'active unity' of a regional working class; it was central to the reconstitution of authority relations within the workplace; and, it was pivotal to the construction of an "IP" public, which colonized, distorted, and significantly remade local cultural practices and forms of association. All of these issues will be developed in the context of a discussion of an emergent localist discourse and culture in the following chapter. Here, we can briefly examine the success of IP's strategy of containment in limiting the spatial perspective of workers and reorienting them to a

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during the 1920s of local residents en-route or returning from visiting kin in the wider region.

[76] Eric Hobsbawm (1964) talks about the importance of the "tramping artisan" for the development of a 19th century English labor culture.

family and community life that was more functional for expanded capital accumulation.

The Destruction of Unionism

IP's reinvention of stark craft distinctions was a central aspect of its project to dismantle the active unity of its workforce. But, in many ways, newly refurbished craft distinctions were only the tip of the iceberg in IP's efforts to dismantle local working class public and the regional labor culture. In its revised May 24th 'proposal,' IP unilaterally declared that the now expanded category of "common labor" would be henceforth excluded from the union bargaining unit, since they would be paid only locality wages. The company maintained, however, that it would continue to negotiate with representatives of its "skilled" employees. This obvious attempt to drive a wedge between the IBPM and the IBPSPMW coincided with more subterranean efforts to rejuvenate earlier forms of ethnic antagonism that had hindered cross-skill and cross-ethnic cooperation.

In July, 1921, the company directed a back-to-work campaign at Irish-American machine tenders and beater engineers, holding out the promise of permanent jobs, expanded responsibilities, and even supervisory positions.[77] At first, the campaign was only moderately

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[77] This was a growing concern all through the strike. John Burke, president/secretary of the IBPSPMW, appeared worried about the

successful. But, by the late fall, a significant cohort of skilled Irish-American workers had returned to work. Their defection created an immediate domino effect. The correspondence of labor organizers chronicled the Irish-American workers' rush back to work, as well as their efforts to convince more adamant strikers in distant towns that "the strike was lost." [78] Although a number of French-Canadian skilled workers also returned to work, they were reassigned to less responsible positions than their Irish-American peers. Not all French-Canadian skilled workers were willing to accept this reversal of fortune, however. Shortly after the campaign began to have effect, Joseph Poulin, a French-Canadian machine tender and head of the Maine State Federation of Labor, signaled his disgust with IP's tactics and his peers by announcing his permanent departure form the town, the labor movement, and the paper industry. Despite these betrayals and dissertions, the majority of French-Canadian workers, now classified as "common labor," remained determined, as one local labor organizer noted, "to see the strike through to the end," an end, as it turns out, that would not be officially declared for another five years.[79] For all intents and purposes, however, the

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company's practice of getting "as many men on salary. . . and out of the union" in a letter to a local organizer. See John Burke correspondence to Jacob Stephan (7/21/21). Papers of the IBPSPMW

[78] Correspondences of Jacob Stephan and George Brooks (IBPSPMW organizers in Maine and New Hampshire) to John Burke, Fall, 1921, Papers of the IBPSPMW

[79] Correspondence of Jacob Stephan. Papers of the IBPSPMW

'skilled workers' return to work in the fall of 1921 marked the end of the strike. Consequently, local French-Canadians began a slow return to work.

IP's favoritism toward Irish Americans had the desired impact. Despite the fact that a significant number of French-Canadian skilled workers broke ranks and returned to work, it was the perceived eagerness of Irish-American workers in accepting this favoritism that provoked the greatest ire. This perception had enormous cultural significance. As we will see in greater detail in the next chapter, French-Canadians grew intensely insular as the strike progressed, and long after it ended, in response to this Irish-American betrayal. After this, ethnic affiliation rather than class solidarity rapidly became the key axis of social life.

The Reconstitution of Authority Relations in the Workplace

Ethnic antagonisms were perpetuated by IP's reinstitution of the industrial caste system. IP gave "boss" machine tenders, foremen, and department bosses a great deal of responsibility to hire and fire workers. Bosses increasingly hired on the basis of favoritism, assigned work on a whim, and demanded favors from their subordinates. The ethnic overtones of this favoritism had a lasting impact. As one French-Canadian recalled about his experience with IP in the 1930s: "Irishmen made all the hiring decisions. Of course, their friends and family got jobs

on the paper machines first. We (French Canadians) might wind up in the wood yard." Moreover, this new hiring policy served to keep "radical unionists" out of the mills. IP blacklisted a number of active unionists during the strike.[80] Even more, local workers recall that these discriminatory hiring practices frequently extended to members of the radicals' extended families. These practices cast a ghost-like, chilling effect on local social life for a very long time, and significantly contributed to the reinscription of IP's corporate hegemony.

The Reinvention of Social Life

With the destruction by 1923 of the radical possibilities embedded in industrial unionism and the labor culture and the reconstitution of authority relations, IP undertook a long and difficult process of creating a communal sphere of inter-class sociability and cooperation, or, better, a "localist" culture. The company began a systematic program to simultaneously colonize and marginalize the educational, cooperative and leisure activities that sustained the working class public. This was part of IP's Americanization project that gradually replaced the collectivizing labor morality with an individualist ethos. More importantly, the tangible symbols and practices of Americanism and the 'American Dream' taught the re-categorized and ethnically-ordered local residents both their place in the communal and (American) hierarchy

[80] *Livermore Falls Advertisor*, 9/27/22

and the approved path to full inclusion in the community. William Murray, local superintendent of mills, personally supported yearly Americanization events, and was often the key note speaker. These were week long "celebrations," featuring classes on American citizenship and civic responsibility. Labor Day was also transformed into a major celebration of Americanism. Labor Day had been a central holiday of the labor culture, one that witnessed huge regionally organized parades, dances, political speeches and general frolicking. In a post-strike display of arrogance, however, the company decided to hold its annual "IP Family" picnics on Labor Day. Under the company's tutelage, the parades became "firemen's musters," a "traditional American" cultural form that had been absent from local celebrations for over thirty years. Speeches were now given by Murray and local clergy who praised God and country. And, significantly, alcohol was banned from the celebrations. Worker sobriety was part of the company's larger project of making streets and meeting places safe for "respectable pursuits" and "rational recreations." Of course, IP's project was aided significantly by the earlier installation of a semi-private police state.

The private spaces of home and family life also became targets of IP's Americanist program to make all aspects of social life more functional for its accumulation. In novel, corporate-sponsored yearly "citizenship" competitions, citizens' committees, headed by Murray, rated the cleanliness and neatness of workers' homes and yards. Similarly, IP's

newly opened "health department" sent nurses to instruct workers and their families on modern health practices, like diet, abstinence, and sanitary practices. This linkage of home ownership, rational family life, and good citizenship became the corner-stones of the new corporate culture.

IP's colonization of local culture was still more pervasive. The company "took over" the baseball leagues that played such an important role in the labor culture, and gradually started bringing in semi-professional players who were also provided with "comfortable" jobs in the mill. IP also built Murray Hall, named after William Murray, to replace the CLU as the center of local social and cultural life. The role of Murray Hall in the building of a localist culture will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter. For now, suffice to say that it promoted a petty-bourgeois culture and identity through the reinvention of the craft/fraternal rituals, the promotion of 'fiscal responsibility,' and the invigoration of nationalist sentiments. The cultural offerings were abundant. Boxing matches, movies, and variety shows featuring Scottish and Irish songs and stories were recurring events, as were discussions of financial planning and insurance programs, commodity displays, and a lecture series that emphasized individual achievement and improvement.

Murray Hall invited interaction between ethnic groups while simultaneously controlling the extent and duration of those interactions.

Increasingly, these competing social groups only came together as part of the IP family, which, in turn, became the spatial and conceptual locus of the community. In many ways, though, IP's colonization of the labor culture was merely the surface expression of a wider effort to regulate and control labor at the local level. And, it is to that regulatory effort that we now turn.

Chapter Two

Mapping the Kingdom of Freedom: Localism in Jay/Livermore Falls

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> A society can proclaim the Kingdom of Freedom is at hand when compulsion passes for spontaneity and adaptation no longer exists either in word or concept.
>
> Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*

> The machines waited for me. Waited for me to be born and grow young/For the totem-poles of my personality to be carved, and the slow pyramid of days/To rise around me, to be robbed and forgotten/They waited where I would come to be, a point on earth. For me they waited, patiently, the machines, all the time in the world.
>
> Antler, *Factory*

When I first began my field research in Jay/Livermore Falls, I asked local workers how or why they decided to work for IP. Most simply scowled at my ignorance. Those who took pity on me answered in one of two ways. The first focused on geography: "If you're going to live around here, you work for the IP." The second focused on family and history: "It's what my father did, my grandfather too; basically, that's all there's ever been around here." Over the course of my fieldwork, I came to understand the scowls. My question was naively posed with an assumption of (free) choice. In contrast, workers' responses to my questions revealed a tightly constructed structure of circulation, articulating and defining a terrain of work, family, and community.

Workers identities, aspirations, and values were shaped and defined on this terrain; their movements constrained within it as well.

Their responses also revealed a silent, if unwitting, testimony to the success of a hegemonic project begun by IP in the 1920s. Since that time, a constructed localism and an enforced isolation were the twin axes around which IP's claims to community, history, and morality were advanced and sustained. The genealogies and mental maps of local workers expressed the taken-for-grantedness of this invented social geography and history. But other understandings of territory and tradition were potentially available. During the 1910s, as we have seen, a regional labor culture fostered and sustained very different spatial perspectives and traditions. How did local workers learn to forget this other geography and history? To understand this, it is necessary to examine the processes through which working class significations and traditions were literally deterritorialized by IP's profound reorganization of daily life since the 1920s.

IP's strategies of labor control and regulation did not remain constant between the 1920s and the 1980s, a period in which its corporate hegemony went virtually unchallenged. Two distinct phases of corporate hegemony can be identified that roughly correspond to what Storper and Walker have called early Fordism and high Fordism.[1] Early Fordism (1920s to 1940s) was characterized by a system of personalistic authority

[1] Micheal Storper and Richard Walker (1989)

relations, resembling a transhistorical bricolage of seigniorial patronage and the capitalist wage relation. In the absence or weakness of state forms of labor regulation, personalistic authority relations maintained a stable, yet flexibly deployable, labor force.[2] High Fordism (1940s to early 1980s) was characterized by a state-mediated system of collective bargaining, which socialized the wage relation and greatly undermined the corporation's despotic authority structure. IP adapted to new labor laws by introducing structured forms of internal job mobility that facilitated management/labor cooperation at the local level. Despite these differences between early and late Fordism, there were some regulatory commonalties. A family/wage relation was crucial to IP's strategies of labor discipline throughout the entire Fordist period. Moreover, localizing the capital/labor relationship greatly facilitated the increasing rationalization of work, family, and social life.

Early Fordism: The Industrial Plantation and the Construction of Working Class Dependence

Between the 1920s and 1940s, IP's hegemony rested on a system of despotic authority relations. This recomposition of authority relations greatly facilitated the reorientation of community life to the organization of production. In fact, the hierarchical chain of command of mill

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[2] Don Kalb (1998) developed the concept of a flexibly deployable labor force in his study of Phillipsism.

superintendent, foremen, skilled workers and unskilled laborers could be read in the physical landscape of the community. Unskilled workers were restricted to the tenement clustered section of Jay, named Chisholm after the founder of IP; skilled workers and foremen settled into the more picturesque, adjacent neighborhood in Livermore Falls, which evoked images of a quaint New England village; while the mill superindentent's mansion was strategically placed on a hill overlooking Livermore Falls, giving him a panoptic view of the entire area. The boundaries separating the neighborhoods were symbolic as well as physical. Chisholm represented immigrant, mostly French-Canadian, culture and morality, while the adjacent village of Livermore Falls, inhabited mostly by Irish-Americans and Yankees, signified stability, domesticity, and `traditional' American values. The superintendent's mansion, on the other hand, symbolized aristocratic taste and privilege. The panoptic, spatial presence of the mill superintendent indicated his control of the junctions and disjunctions between elements of community life. This spatial arrangement made visible the centrality of control and hierarchy in community life, literally and figuratively "placing" people within that hierarchy.

Corporate restructuring during the 1930s sustained this structure of despotic authority. IP decentralized its operations, empowering local mill superintendents to make the production decisions formerly reserved for

national corporate heads. According to the company's official history, the decentralization of managerial responsibility was undertaken to ensure heightened cooperation between management and labor at the local level, and to develop local "initiative, efficiency, and a strong corps of leadership."[3] Perhaps, more accurately, the prolonged strike of 1921 convinced corporate executives of the necessity of shaping the community as a relation of production; that is, of the importance of community institutions for labor control and regulation. And, corporate executives likely concluded that only an extremely "strong corps of local leadership" could oversee the construction of a localism powerful enough to forestall the reemergence of a labor culture. This was, indeed, borne out in practice, as the local superintendent exerted a great deal of control not only over production but over all aspects of his employees lives. His supervisory gaze extended from the shop floor, to the interiors of workers' homes, to the confessional in the Catholic Church. His powers of coordination ranged from the maintenance of an ethnic skill hierarchy to the organization of rituals for transcending class and ethnic divisions in the public arena.

Localizing the capital/labor relationship was not restricted to IP or even to the paper industry. Rather, it was part of a broader movement of corporate restructuring in the United States. In an early and astute commentary, Adolf Berle and Gardner Means defined this new mode of

[3] International Paper Company (1948: 19)

corporate organization as industrial feudalism, centered around a system of personalistic relations between management and labor.[4] While Berle and Means captured an essential aspect of the restructured corporation, the somewhat unlikely concept of an industrial plantation may better serve our purpose. This is not to quibble over terminology. Both concepts offer their own truths and distortions. But the plantation concept has three distinct advantages. First, it captures an increasingly common local perception of Maine as "a paper plantation."[5] Second, it affords a broader anthropological understanding of the regional configuration of constraints on labor mobility. Drawing upon the work of Eric Wolf, a plantation can be defined as a particular configuration of labor, community and representational structures, whose axis is a carefully constructed relationship of authority and dependence between owners and workers.[6] This definition certainly fits, at least in broad outline, the distinctive regulatory milieu installed and maintained by IP between the 1920s and 1940s.[7] Finally, the very symbolism of the

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[4] Adolf Berle and Gardner Means (1932); quoted in Alan Dawley (1991:297)

[5] William Osborn's (1974) book *The Paper Plantation* explores the various ways that paper companies have colonized Maine's economy. This book became a virtual bible during the paperworkers strike of 1987-88, and the title became something of a strikers' slogan.

[6] Eric Wolf (1959)

[7] Mike Davis' (1990) study of Kaiserism in L.A., June Nash's (1989) ethnography of Bolwarism in Pittsfield, MA, and Don Kalb's social history of Phillipsism in Eindoven, Netherlands make similar points. Each of

plantation concept suggests the relations of force that ultimately guaranteed IP's hegemony. Here it is useful to remember, as local residents did for decades, that IP's armed guards in the 1921 strike represented nothing so much as the disarming of other possibilities of social organization.

The growing power of the local mill superintendent to rearrange communal institutions and discourses into a relatively coherent system of labor regulation can be introduced by analyzing a commonly told story that was central to the construction of a localist discourse. The main lines of the story go something like this: After the stock market crash of 1929, the future of the local mill looked grim. Strong, committed leadership was necessary to save the mills from almost certain failure. T.G. Magnan, the local superintendent of mills, stepped ably into this role. IP's official historiography elevates Magnan to a conquering "hero":

> The problems facing the local organization as a result of the critical business conditions required a dynamic leadership and this leadership was available with T.G., who has been compared to George Patton who saw a job needed to be done and who set about doing it. Faced with the problem of preparing the mill for the rough seas ahead, he immediately set upon the task of reorganizing the Division. Trench warfare literally sailed out the window as an organization reminiscent of a Panzer Division gradually evolved. Through his efforts and emphasis on training, his dogged vigilance over unnecessary waste, and his pursuit of skilled men, more people began to know their jobs and responsibilities than ever before. As a result of his efforts

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these studies "excavates" the particularistic forms of corporate cultural and political control in ways that move us beyond decontextualized understandings of Fordism.

> not only did the Otis Division come through the depression with flying colors but it may be added that employees and the community at large suffered far less than the vast majority of communities in the State and possibly in the entire nation.[8]

Other company publications of the same period widen the scope of this heroism a bit, referring to the collaborative efforts of "alert management" and "skilled workers" in saving the mill.[9]

But similar accounts by local workers and historians are staples of local folklore and history, as well.[10] Magnan maintains center stage in all of the versions: He fought for funds to rebuild the mill after the devastating flood of 1936, over the apparent objections of IP's board of directors; he struggled mightily to maintain production capacity during World War II in spite of a critical shortage of labor and raw materials; he chaired the committee to rebuild St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church when it was completely gutted by fire in 1948, diverting both funds from IP's

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[8] International Paper Company (1948a: no pages)

[9] International Paper Company (1948b: 29)

[10] Local historians range from Reginal Sturtevant, a local banking executive who published with his own funds a history of Livermore Falls, in which his family figures prominently, to local workers who have massive archives of photographs, newspaper articles, and company journals stored in their basements, as well as stores of stories committed to memory.

budget and building supplies from its warehouse for this purpose, despite the fact that he was a Protestant.[11]

The "in spite ofs" and "despites" are key to an initial understanding of the construction of a localist discourse that served to regulate labor. In the figure of Magnan, they demonstrate the local mill superintendent's supposed "unselfish" commitment to the community's welfare. This personalistic authority figure places the community above individual belief, ethnic and religious identity, and even corporate profits. Within this emergent discourse, the oppositonal sets of authority/dependence and management/labor are linked in an apparent unity. The message is clear; it is in the cooperation of all social classes, ethnic, and religious groups within the community that the vagaries of life and the capitalist market are best withstood, even overcome. Nonetheless, the hierarchical implications of the proposed community are readily apparent. The sharply divided and ethnically fragmented working class is now reunited around the figure of the powerful paternal benefactor. But the rejoined community is vulnerable to division and even catastrophe without his protection. As in Jacques Ranciere's analysis of early Christian communities, the law of communal coexistence defined in this story is simultaneously a law of hierarchical

[11] Reginal Sturtevant (1970); variants of this story were frequently mentioned by local workers during interviews with the author about the history of the town.

subordination.[12] Even critical reflections grudgingly concede Magnan's authority; comments about his being a tough or mean bastard are always followed by the hook, " but he kept us going during the depression."

In one very important sense, this localist discourse represents a new social grammar of authority which "coercively encouraged" certain forms of masculine respectability and responsibility. Magnan functions in both the formal and informal variants as a figure in dominance around which a whole structure of evaluation was organized.[13] The main points of this social grammar can be briefly outlined here. Men were evaluated on their willingness to sacrifice for their family and kin, to work hard and do whatever was necessary to protect them, to follow rules, and to get along with their neighbors no matter what their class, religion or ethnicity. Of course, this structure of evaluation also served to naturalize women's domestic roles that centered on family reproduction and the maintenance of kin-relations. At stake in this rearticulation of cultural semantics was the active silencing of a discourse of class which had provided, if only for a brief moment, a compass for another understanding of society and one's place and choices within it.

It is important to stress the context in which this new social grammar of authority acquired significance. During the depression, it

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[12] Jacques Ranciere (1995: 69)

[13] This paragraph draws on the interpretative insights of Philip Corrigan (1990).

provided a seemingly coherent interpretation of the crisis, an interpretation that simultaneously promised a secure future built on sacrifice and cross-class cooperation. Still, the acceptance or even grudging recognition of this social grammar of authority can only be understood in the context of a crisis. Writing in the midst of the depression, and after the disastrous defeat of the Italian factory council movement by the Fascists, Antonio Gramsci developed a useful analysis of the politics of crisis that resonates here. "It may be ruled out," he wrote, "that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historical events; they can simply create a terrain more favorable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life".[14] In Jay/Livermore Falls, the potential for an alternative interpretation to be elaborated and disseminated had pretty much been eliminated with the vigorous dismantling of the regional labor movement during and after the 1921 strike. Yet, only in the destabilized and precarious context of the 1930s was it possible for IP to construct an image of a common future that was accepted, however tentatively, as the basis of a reclaimed political and moral authority within the community.

A fuller understanding of the power of this social grammar of authority to inform and shape workers' expectations requires an examination of its institutional elaboration and expression. An adequate

[14] *Antonio Gramsci (1971:184)*

analysis of IP's emergent system of labor control and regulation should take into account the varied and somewhat contradictory processes of reconstituting authority relations within multiple social domains and institutions. This analysis is essential even though the disjunctions of institutional forms were never fully bridged, leaving open the potential for oppositional forms to develop. In the end, though, these disjunctions served to reinforce the prevailing relations of domination and subordination by affording expression to discursive and cultural forms seemingly outside the capital/labor relation.

The Drive System: Foremen's Petty Despotism and the Revitalization of the Industrial Caste System

As noted in the previous chapter's discussion of the reconstitution of authority relations, a rancorous split developed between Irish-American and French-Canadian workers. This ethnic antagonism was caused by the breaking of the 1921 strike by a cohort of skilled workers, seduced back to work with promises of expanded control and even -- in some cases -- permanent supervisory positions. But it was perpetuated by reinstituting the 'drive system' to control labor.[15] The localized version of the `drive' system was based on the petty despotic power of mostly Irish-American foremen and department supervisors, who hired, fired,

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[15] Mike Davis (1986: 102-153) provides a useful discussion of the drive system.

and assigned work on the basis of ethnicity and favoritism. Once hired, chances for advancement were limited by the massive reclassification of labor implemented during the 1921 strike. With fewer semi-skilled job categories, it was increasingly difficult for "common laborers" to move up the tightly controlled job ladder. The control of promotions and everyday job assignments by foremen and department supervisors, in fact, created an informal system of patron/clientage, centering on the performance of `favors'. To take a commonly mentioned example, foremen could, and regularly did, demand from workers a steady supply of liquor during a vacation week at their hunting cabins, on their birthdays, for holidays, or just on a whim. Workers who did not comply with these demands were often reassigned to the most odious and backbreaking jobs. Or a worker might simply be summoned out of bed to work an extra shift, since being on call twenty four hours a day was a condition of employment.[16]

Control is never total, of course; workers found many ways to create a little time and space away from supervisory authority on the job. However, the cultural forms and practices used to create distance from authority were overdetermined by the ethnic antagonisms characteristic of the revitalized industrial caste system. One work practice in particular, long associated with French-Canadian loggers, suggests the depth of ethnic conflict on the shop floor. A description of the "jumping

[16] *Workers frequently referred to Doc Allen, whose only job it seemed* was to roust paperworkers from their sleep and bring them back to work.

Frenchmen" by James Pike, a popular chronicler of Northeast logging lore, provides an introduction to this practice.

> A curious phenomenon of nature was the "jumping Frenchman." Every camp had one, sometimes several. This affliction was obviously a functional disorder of some kind... If a jumper was shaving or whittling, or just sitting on a riverbank, and someone came up behind him suddenly and cried, "Jump into the river!", in he'd jump. If someone stepped up behind him and tickled him lightly, he'd jump through the roof. But one had to be careful if the man was holding a lethal weapon, for he would swing it around like old Brian Boro himself. Strangely, the victims of such mean practical jokes never got mad about them.
>
> Many of the jumpers could not help imitating any quick physical action that was made near them. A line of men would be sitting on the deacon seat and a playful lumberjack would swing his arm as if he were going to hit the man next to him. Every jumper on the line, if he saw the motion, would turn and strike at his neighbor.[17]

The thinly veiled threat and the potential for violence embodied in the figure of the "jumping Frenchmen" is immediately apparent. Transplanted to the paper and pulp mills, this figure afforded workers at least a modicum of distance from supervisory authority. Witness the recollections of a retired French-Canadian paperworker:

> When I first started working in the mill in the `30s,' there was a jumpy guy in my department. Maybe it was shell shock from the war, who knows? Well, we'd wait until he had something in his hand, and then we'd make a loud, sudden noise. Jeez whatever he had in his hand would go flying. If he had a canteen, it would shatter against the wall. One time a wrench went sailing across the room, nearly missed hitting the foreman. He (the foreman) was pissed, but he stayed the hell away from us for the rest of the morning.

[17] James Pike (1984:60)

With this practice, there was always the implied threat that `next time', perhaps, the wrench would not miss. This created some space and time free from the impositions of authority, no matter how fleetingly. But, the feigned distance from responsibility of our narrator and, by extension, his work mates concurrently suggests and reinforces the despotic power of the foreman.

This simultaneous accommodation to and willful distancing from authority is remarkably similar to what Alf Luedtke captures in his concept of *eigensinn. Eigensinnig* action, according to Luedtke, is always expressed in the form of a violent physicality.[18] Yet, in the context of the revitalized industrial caste system, violent horseplay took on added depth. It not only won some compensatory time and space from supervisory authority, but symbolically constructed an unknowable `otherness' that forewarned the need for distance and circumspection. This unknowable 'other' thus constituted a permanent threat to authority, even in moments of seeming acquiescence.[19]

This practice also indicates the growing importance of ethnic identity and affiliation in workers' views of the social world. Before going on to explore other manifestations of this ethnic resurgence, then, we should pause here to briefly consider the apparent paradox of the

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[18] *Alf Ludtke (1995; 198-251)*

[19] Paul Willis (1979) and Aiwa Ong (1987) point to the relationship between shop-floor culture and the self-formation of otherness.

company's simultaneous promotion of Americanism and ethnic revivalism. As we have seen, the central point of IP's Americanism project was to dismantle a regional labor culture constituted by alliances that cross-cut lines of ethnicity and skill. But the protracted bolstering of ethnic antagonism also furthered IP's agenda. Specifically, it encouraged the revival of cultural traits that served both to discipline workers' households and orient them to a family life that was functional to IP's accumulation. Nonetheless, Americanism did continue to play an extremely important ideological role. As elsewhere, the tangible symbols and practices of Americanism and the `American Dream' taught ethnically ordered local residents both their place in the communal (and American) hierarchy and the approved path to full inclusion in the community.

The Flexibly Deployable Labor Force: Patriarchal Authority and the Reconstitution of the Expanded Nuclear Family

Both IP's strategies of labor regulation and potentially oppositional cultural perspectives centered on the reconstituted expanded nuclear family. The reconstitution of the expanded family was a multifaceted economic, political, cultural and religious process that evolved over the entire period of `early Fordism.' We can begin with the economic pressures disciplining workers' households. We have already seen in the preceding chapter how the family/wage relation was fundamentally modified by the massive reclassification of labor. This reclassification

hurt French-Canadian workers more than the Irish-Americans, who now controlled most supervisory positions, including "boss machine tender." For the almost three-quarters of the work force reclassified as "common labor", subsistence was rendered exceedingly difficult. During the 1930s, common laborers tended to earn less than twelve dollars a week, a figure that was well below half of what the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics considered necessary to support a family of four.[20] This made subsistence on one wage packet virtually impossible for the French-Canadian families who usually had six, and sometimes as many as ten children. Additionally, the employment opportunities of French-Canadians were severely restricted. These factors dramatically expanded the period of social adolescence. Young, single workers stayed in the parental household well into their twenties, sometimes even into their thirties as the pooling of wages by family members became increasingly important.

In turn, this expanded family structure was central to IP's creation of a flexibly deployable labor force.[21] During slack times, only married men were kept on the payroll; unmarried men were laid off. Given the paper industry's general propensity toward overproduction, frequent shut-downs or slow-downs were common. These selective lay-offs intensified during the depression; unmarried men had to shape-up for

[20] This figure is derived from interviews with elderly French Canadian residents, but finds support in Robert Zeiger (1983: 70)

[21] Don Kalb (1998)

work at the beginning of each shift. The foreman of each department would pick from the assembled group of workers according to need and favoritism. The instability inherent in this system meant that single men could not save enough to get married and start a household; all the wages they were able to earn went to the reproduction of the parental household. Additionally, the expanded nuclear family was the crucial structure that enabled a reserve labor force to wait out the temporary period of under-employment or unemployment. Finally, this "industrial reserve army" served both to suppress wages for all workers and to ensure an adequate labor supply during peak periods.[22]

The expanded family structure was fraught with tensions, requiring a range of regulatory institutions and practices to keep the tension in check. Some of the tensions of this system are revealed in the generational split over the issue of unionism. In the wake of the Wagner Act, the issue of union membership was raised once again. Young, single men who were angry over their low status in the hiring system, lack of autonomy, and inability to start their own families, showed considerable enthusiasm for the idea. One elderly resident recalled how this was talked about in his family:

> My uncles told me that if you were single during a slack period, maybe you'd get offered a job in the woods, that's it. Otherwise, you were on your own. But they held a job for

[22] Frederick Engels (1969 – originally 1844) first analyzed and coined the term industrial reserve army in his prescient urban ethnography, The Condition of the Working Class in England.

> married people regardless. This got a lot of people's dander up. It's the reason why they wanted to organize.

On the other side, older, married men were far less enthusiastic and frequently absolutely opposed to unionism. The reasons for this lack of enthusiasm were complicated. First, the contract that the unions agreed to in 1924 was a galling defeat for those workers who had remained on the strike for the full three years. After the rank and file in Jay/Livermore Falls vigorously rejected the contract, many of them felt that the unions did little more to secure a better deal.[23] Much bitterness and apathy, sentiments that lingered for years, marked the official end of the strike two years later. Second, this older cohort had much stronger memories of the repertoire of powers that IP was able to marshal to destroy autonomous unionism and did not want to risk another defeat. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, open support of unionism could endanger the livelihood of an entire extended family.

A number of contextual clues help us understand the risks associated with the renewed support of unions. First, IP was demonstrably concerned about union resurgence. This was indicated in a number of ways. As the United Mine Workers' District 50 successfully waged union campaigns in nearby paper mill towns during the first six months of 1937, IP gave all workers on permanent payroll three consecutive five percent

[23] See Stephen Rea Cernek (1978), and Robert Zeiger (1983) for discussions of reactions to this contract in the various IP mills.

raises.[24] IP also enlisted the local press in its efforts to forestall union organizational drives.[25] At this time, the Livermore Falls Advertiser became openly hostile to unionism, a hostility evidenced in its unprecedented inauguration of a series of political cartoons depicting CIO organizers as agents of class hatred, communism and totalitarianism. But for our purposes, attempts at intimidation within the mill most clearly registered IP's concern and suggest the extent of risk workers would incur if they supported union organization drives. These threats came primarily through foremen's warnings of family blacklisting. According to some workers, an entire family could be denied work if a particular foreman held a grudge against or simply disliked any single family member. However, this `family employment practice' was most often reserved for the relatives of `militants' and `radicals'. This practice was first implemented in the second year of the 1921 strike when radicals and their immediate kin were blacklisted.[26] Many families had to move out of town as a result of the blacklist. Other blacklisted workers had to wait years to be rehired. When they were rehired, they remained in entry level jobs far longer, even years longer, than anyone else. Consequently, the threat of family blacklisting was extremely palpable to workers'

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[24] Livermore Falls Advertiser, 1/6/37 and 6/937

[25] This was a common tactic in the paper industry. See Robert Zeiger (1983: 42)

[26] Livermore Falls Advertiser, 9/27/22

struggling to make ends meet through a multi-wage strategy. It also pressured fathers, or heads of the family, to discipline potentially non-conforming sons.

This generational split over the issue of unionism offers only a glimpse of the pressures pulling the expanded nuclear family in different directions. But it does hint at both the growing importance of patriarchal authority in corporate strategies of labor regulation and the real instability of that authority. Clearly, economic coercion alone was insufficient to discipline workers' expanded households. Accordingly, IP relied on the predominant cultural and moral institutions in Jay / Livermore Falls to secure the reproduction of patriarchal authority and the expanded family.

St. Rose of Lima, the largely French-Canadian Catholic Church in Chisholm, became the most important institution of moral regulation. It was through St. Rose of Lima, and its pronounced support of French-Canadian cultural nationalism, that the working class expanded nuclear family acquired both moral and cultural significance. Furthermore, the Church helped to rearticulate potentially oppositional cultural signifiers and discourses to the dominant social grammar of authority. Although the links between mill management and the priests at St. Rose of Lima were not as straightforwardly complicitious as those described in Liston Pope's classic ethnographic study of Gastonia, there is ample evidence of

cooperation between these two institutions.[27] Local workers often alluded to rumors that the company made secret donations to the church. Union organizers had also complained about IP's enlistment of the clergy in its campaign to install the open shop.[28] T.G. Magnan's heavy involvement in rebuilding St. Rose of Lima is an important illustration of this cooperation. But, his involvement lasted throughout his entire twenty year reign as general superintendent. And, it was usually more direct and more mundane. Magnan's faithful attendance at Sunday mass, despite the fact that he was a Protestant, was both remarkable and the source of immense commentary. As one retired paper worker explained in 1990: "You always had the feeling that he was counting heads." Magnan's presence excerted a none-too-subtle pressure for abstinence because workers who were too tired or hung-over from a night of drinking were unlikely to show up at mass. His alleged donation of ten dollars every Sunday, the rough equivalent of a week's wage for a "common laborer", also left little doubt about the importance he placed on Church attendance. The most telling evidence of institutional cooperation, though, was Magnan's access to the Church's inter-most sanctuary: the confessional. Local workers still talk about the weekly

[27] Liston Pope (1942) brilliantly analyzed the role churches played in suppressing a radical labor culture during and after the 1929 Gastonia strike.

[28] Correspondence of Jacob Stephan to John Burke, Papers of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Papermill Workers. *See, also, Robert Zeiger* (1983:42)

reports of workers "confessions" that Magnan supposedly received from St. Rose's clergy.

There were sound reasons for Magnan's involvement in the Church. With the collapse of the unions, St. Rose of Lima became the principal institution of social life in the French-Canadian community. Even if the clergy was not simply doing the bidding of mill management, their cooperation at least stemmed from an elective affinity of agendas. As Magnan's heavy involvement with the Church demonstrates, IP management undoubtedly equated church membership with the development of a stable and dependable work force. Priests, on the other hand, likely perceived the maintenance of a stable workforce as vital to community integration and the health of the parish. In any event, the frequent priestly sermons on the importance of sobriety, family responsibility, and pre-marital chastity very likely cheered Magnan considerably as he cast his gaze on the congregation from his pew in the rear.

But there were also compelling reasons for workers' interest and attendance in the Church. The Church became the center of French-Canadian social life after the 1921 strike, which witnessed the rancorous fragmentation of the working class in Jay/Livermore Falls into separate "Irish" and "French-Canadian" enclaves. A major consequence of this acrimonious split was the resurgence of the French-Canadian discourse

and practice of *La Survivance*. This residual nationalism had articulated resistance to British conquest and colonization in Quebec, or New France, since 1763 and was primarily concerned with conserving French-Canadian faith, language and culture.[29] As elsewhere, the French-Canadian clergy of St.Rose of Lima sparked this resurgent religious/ethnic movement, arguing from the pulpit the importance of family obligation, group loyalty, and communal reciprocity to the survival of French-Canadian culture. Working class enthusiasm for *La Survivance* lay elsewhere, however. *La Survivance's* religious/cultural nationalism provided a language for the elaboration of a working class identity and morality in the wake of the unions' defeat and the perceived betrayal of the Irish. This was, in fact, facilitated by the relative correspondence between the languages of unionism and *La Survivance*. Both emphasized the primacy of group solidarity over individual advancement and communal welfare over pecuniary gain. Through the language of *La Survivance*, French-Canadian workers could remain true to the ideals of working class solidarity while simultaneously lodging a protest against perceived class traitors.

In the process of elaborating *La Survivance*, mental maps of the community were sharply redrawn. This is strikingly illustrated in the contrasting descriptions of the "community" that were offered by two

[29] Gary Gerstle (1989: 19-60) provides a useful overview of La Survivance from a different perspective.

retired French-Canadian workers from Chisholm who differed in age by 15 years. The older worker came of age in the 1910s and was active in the 1921 strike.

He stated:

> Oh, this was a strong union town. The union hall was like a club. We used to go down there (the Central Labor Council in Livermore Falls) for entertainment; we had weekly dances there, parties, card games. There wasn't much else to do around here, so we all got together there.

The younger worker came of age in the 1930s. He offered:

> There were no businesses in Jay or Chisholm. We had to shop in Livermore Falls. At one point, we even intermarried with the Irish. We all worked for the IP. But, the people who lived in Livermore Falls were considered lousy Yankees. Even now (1991) the people of Jay and Livermore Falls are enemies, especially in sports. After World War II, when all the returning GIs started having kids all at once, it was suggested that one big school be built for both communities to save money. Do you think us Frenchmen are going to do anything with those goddamn Yankees? Never!

Although only fifteen years separates the youths described by these recollections, the younger workers' heavy emphasis on boundary maintenance and ethnic hostility clearly differentiates his community from the more inclusive one described by his elder. At the same time, this reimagined ethnic community provided an unintended support for dominant social divisions and hierarchies. Specifically, the variety of ways that all local workers came to grips with the key relations of political force during and after the 1921 strike were reduced to arguments of ethnic essentialism. This argument accepted the logic informing the reinstituted

industrial caste system, but it inverted the moral significance usually attached to it. The consequences for historical memory were great; over time, IP's role in this perceived ethnic betrayal was registered only by its gaping absence.

Nonetheless, it should be stated that clerical and working class understandings of *La Survivance* were quite different initially. But the accents that the clergy gave this religio-nationalist discourse were, ultimately, hegemonic; they framed the way people talked about their lives, provided an added layer of meaning to everyday practices, and shaped understandings of social organization. This is not surprising for priests did control ritualized discourse. As Maurice Bloch has noted for formalized religious communication more generally, weekly sermons served to narrow the range of meaning of *La Survivance* by restricting the range of choice of intonation, vocabulary, syntax, and acceptable forms of illustration.[30] Religious symbols of family and patriarchy were most often drawn upon to sketch out a tightly circumscribed universe of roles and responsibilities. Fathers were to work hard to ensure the economic success of the family. They were also chiefly responsible for family discipline that, ultimately, ensured the continued cooperation and loyalty of each family member. Mothers, on the other hand, were primarily responsible for nurturing their children and teaching them the importance of perpetuating French-Canadian Catholicism, language, and

[30] Maurice Bloch (1989: 34)

customs. Their domestic role extended to the maintenance of relations amongst kin and within the parish. The sharp division of labor between men and women was elaborated as central to the continued reproduction of the family, the most important and sacred unit of resurgent French-Canadian culture. The entire parish was expected to participate in this endeavor by cooperating in the social organization of sexuality and maintenance of group loyalties. Specifically, parishioners were entreated to supervise dating by organizing church suppers or Quarrille dances, a French-Canadian square dance, which did not permit any touching by couples. Similarly, parishioners were enjoined to speak only French at home. Children were only allowed to speak English during the afternoon sessions at their French-speaking grammar school.

Within the discourse and practice of *La Survivance,* the family was identified with the very substance of a millenarian "Frenchness".[31] This identity placed enormous pressure on individual family members to stay together. Co-operation between all members and generations in the family was considered a sacred duty. Unmarried sons and daughters who had reached working age were expected to contribute almost their entire salaries to family maintenance. Even married sons and daughters were expected to help their parents, grandparents, and even aunts and uncles,

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[31] Etienne Balibar (1994: 177-189) analyzes the Nazi state's mobilization of people as a community of heroic workers, who simultaneously are assigned the destiny of preserving the German family -- identified as the very substance of millenarian "Germanness."

with household chores. The unquestioned authority of the father was considered necessary to the continued maintenance and reproduction of this extended family unit. But women, especially mothers, turned the genealogies into living documents. They were expected to exert pressures to maintain the integrity of the family. This involved a number of practices, ranging from the preparation of weekly dinners to the not-so-subtle pressure to quell any disagreement amongst kin. Mothers coordinated the cooperation of family members, communicated family news, managed or soothed strained relations, and invoked the authority of the father to ensure compliance.

The correspondence between IP's and the church's social grammars of authority and responsibility is striking. Indeed, the Church's moral reconstitution of patriarchal authority within the family greatly facilitated the reproduction of a flexibly deployable labor force. This is evident in the social organization of sexuality that simultaneously bolstered parental authority and extended the period of adolescence. In the aftermath of the 1921 strike, the clergy elaborated a discourse of threatened femininity. Parental compliance in the suppression of sexuality had an obvious impetus: the restriction of interaction between Irish-Americans and French-Canadians. In fact, French-Canadian parents strictly forbade marriage between Irish-Americans and French-Canadians. The supervision of dating was the most immediate way to preserve ethnic

boundaries. But, the control and supervision of sexuality also served to protect the collective wage strategies of households. For both these reasons, dating became an object of intense surveillance and supervision. Dates were restricted to front parlors or Church affairs, such as Church suppers. Touch dancing was strictly forbidden; only the French-Canadian Quadrille was allowed. These practices served to regulate marriage and stem illegitimate births, thereby adding a measure of stability to the life-cycle changes most threatening to the delicate expanded family arrangement. It is not hard to see, here, the intimate relationship of these strategies of ethnic boundary maintenance and household survival to IP's family employment practice.

This fit between a resurgent ethnicity and IP's mobilization of a flexibly deployable workforce necessitates a rethinking the central place given the burgeois-like nuclear family in most understandings of Fordism, especially those advanced within the Regulation School.[32] Regulation School theorists, such as Michal Aglietta, have identified the

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[32] *The bourgeois nuclear family is a small unit, consisting of parents and* their two-to-three children, which habitually pushes the children toward independence through marriage or career. See, Michel Aglietta (1979), the founding text of the "regulation school. See, also, Stuart Ewen (1976); Richard Sennett (1970) for cultural accounts that stress the nuclear family in "consumer society. Martyn J. Lee's (1993) interesting integration of the regulation school approach with Ewen's emphasis on mass-mediated culture also stresses the importance of the nuclear family in the political economy of Fordism. To my mind, John Clarke's (1991) rethinking of "cultures of consumption" is the most interesting of these texts, yet even Clarke's innovative analyses still takes the bourgeois-like nuclear family/Fordist relationship for granted.

burgeois-like nuclear family as a central institution of the Fordist mode of regulation. This argument is, essentially, ahistorical and ethnocentric. It confuses historical outcome with structural identity. The bourgeois nuclear family was, and remains, an important ideological reference and model for hegemonic notions of propriety and morality. With the brief exception of the twenty-year period following World War II, however, the so-called family wage was never enough actually to support a family. Consequently, working class reproduction, even at the height of Fordism, necessarily involved a more historically contingent expanded nuclear family/extended family structure. Therefore, the importance of the family to Fordist regulation rests not in its form, but in its nurturance and idealization of patriarchal authority.

The continuing ideological importance of the bourgeois nuclear family to dominant standards of decorum and propriety should not be discounted, however. Its elevated ideological importance in Jay/Livermore Falls can be seen in the ways that IP subjected the private spaces of workers' homes and family lives to the corporation's rationalizing gaze. As we have seen, the Livermore Falls "Citizens' Committee," chaired by T.G. Magnan, rated the cleanliness and neatness of homes and yards in yearly "citizenship" competitions. A parallel "French" citizens' committee organized an identical competition in Chisholm. Of course, workers homes were rated according to middle class standards and by middle class judges. In fact, the citizens'

committees represented a deepening alliance between IP's management and the middle class in Jay / Livermore Falls. Prominent members of the local middle class could be seen walking through the towns with Magnan, clipboards in hand, judging the appearance of worker's homes.[33]

The private space of the home was also subjected to the corporate gaze. Nurses from IP's mill "hospital" visited homes to instruct workers and their families on the latest sanitary practices and rational ways of running a household, as well as the health benefits of proper diet and sobriety. IP's intrusiveness did not end with the corporation's deployment of "professional experts". The Church's gaze also seemingly penetrated working class homes. Parents who did not properly supervise the dates of adolescents in their homes, for example, were targeted by clerical admonishments from the pulpit. Together, these community and religious rituals coercively encouraged compliance with dominant standards of family respectability and comportment. Although evidence that IP used these competitions and house "visits" to judge a family's worthiness for employment is lacking, it is easy to see the connection

[33] *The invasive nature of this last practice is permanently registered in* the local working class practice of barring strangers entry into a houses' interior. Strangers are greeted and conversations are restricted to the front stoop. To give a sense of contrast, friends and family members never enter through the front door; they simply "pop in" through the kitchen door, shout a greeting, and sit down to a conversation.

between these forms of social control and a family life that was functional to the accumulation of capital by IP .[34]

IP's Claim to Community:
Murray Hall and the Symbolic Construction of the IP Family

In the middle of the protracted paper workers' strike of 1921, IP formed The Tri-Mill Employees Mutual Benefit Association. IP's stated purpose was to foster "the development of our community along lines of mutual benefit and cooperation," but the association was, essentially, a welfare capitalist alternative to autonomous unions.[35] The Tri-Mill association's primary goal was pedagogical; it hoped to teach employees the steps to success. Initially, the Tri-Mill Association held its meetings in the Dream Land Theater where workers' frequently enjoyed movies or variety shows after listening to lectures on the importance of buying life insurance and stock options in installments, as well as the necessity of thrift and hard work. Frequently, IP enlisted its corps of industrial "experts" to address workers on the `best' way to run the association.[36] IP built a community center in 1926 to house the Tri-Mill Association and its events. The company named the building Murray Hall, after the general superintendent of mills, William Murray. After the lectures in its

[34] It is well known, however, that Henry Ford sent members of his "sociology department" to workers' homes to determine their worthiness for the "five dollar daily wage."

[35] Livermore Falls Advertisor, 7/11/23

[36] Livermore Falls Advertisor, 12/19/23

upstairs auditorium, workers played pool, bowled, watched boxing matches, or basketball games downstairs.

In many ways, Murray Hall became a bastion of Irish-American ethnic revivalism. They were disproportionately represented on its governing board. Most telling, perhaps, is the reinvented craft/fraternal ritual that preceded the monthly boxing matches. These events were preceded by a "smoker," a social fixture from the early days of the skilled paper makers' exclusionary craft union. These "smokers", with free cigars supplied by the company, likely revitalized feelings of faternity and male comraderie among this group. But as in the past, they also likely stimulated a ritualized craft discourse of respectability that depended on the presumed depravity of the unskilled. One other piece of anecdotal evidence points to the growing exclusivity of the Irish-Americans. On the same day that that IP announced the formation of the Tri-Mill Association, the Knights of Columbus, the other bastion of Irish-American ethnicity, declared that they would no longer meet at Union Hall (the Central Labor Council). Instead, they took out a lease on a building that was to become the Knights of Columbus Hall.[37]

The location of Murray Hall was symbolically significant for the community, as well. Livermore Falls, Murray Hall invited interaction between ethnic groups in some contexts while simultaneously

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[37] Livermore Falls Advertisor, 7/11/23

controlling the extent and duration of those interactions. Competing social groups could only come together as part of the IP family, which, in turn, became the spatial and conceptual locus of the community. This interaction inside Murray Hall was clearly structured according to the same hierarchical principles as those operating inside the mill. Lists of Tri-Mill Association officers clearly indicate the control held by Irish-Americans and Yankees. Variety shows put on by the Association also indicate the overwhelming presence of these groups on the entertainment committee; Irish and Scottish melodies were often the highlights of these evenings. French-Canadian names most often turned up as participants in the boxing matches and other sporting events.[38]

The concept of " IP family" was constituted through a number of family events. For example, all ethnic and social groups were invited to bring their children to a host of special events, such as the Association' annual Christmas Party. A 1926 article in the Livermore Falls Advertiser paints a syrupy picture of corporate and community ideological articulation and boosterism at that year's party. After describing in some detail the performances for the 700 children present, the paper goes on to depict events finale: Thus:

> When Santa had done his work, all were ready to give three lusty cheers for Manager Murray of the I.P. Co., three more for Mr. Moulton, manager of the theater, and the last three for the Tri-Mill Chapter. Anyone anxious as to the loyalty of

[38] *Livermore Falls Advertisor reported the activities and participants at* Murray Hall weekly during the late 1920s and 1930s.

> the future Americans should have heard the 700 voices sing, as only children can, our beloved patriotic hymn "America." This closed their part of the program. The community tree was then lit.

The "IP family" was further consolidated through a number of similar events in other seasons. These included the annual IP Family picnic, labor day picnics hosted by IP, corporate-sponsored outdoor dances and carnivals to raise money for the baseball league, and Quarter-Century Society family dinners that honored long-term employees for their continued "loyalty" to the corporation.

Throughout the early Fordist period, IP mixed despotic authoritarianism with company `welfarism' in its effort to incorporate every aspect of the reproduction of labor-power. If the daily reign of terror on the shop floor and the barely subsistence wages dramatically contradicted this symbolic corporate largesse, the company nonetheless was able to significantly reorient the capital/labor relationship to the local level. It successfully asserted its dominance over local affairs and constructed a system of community dependence. This was the basis of corporate hegemony in this period. The significant challenge for IP during the high Fordist period of state mediated labor relations was to maintain the localism it had so successfully constructed to regulate labor.

High Fordism: State Mediated Labor Relations and the Withering of The Industrial Plantation

During the Great Depression, the state attempted to nationalize or socialize the efforts begun by individual corporations to regulate labor. But certain factions in Roosevelt's administration, influenced by John Maynard Keynes, also understood that the contradictions inherent in corporate welfarism threatened to erupt into social anarchy.[39] Consequently, significant labor legislation was enacted to socialize the wage relationship and create a new equilibrium for capitalist society. Of particular importance was the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935, which provided a legislative charter for union organization and legally established the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to oversee capital/labor relations. The passage of this bill inaugurated an explosion of union organizing drives and the emergence of the CIO on the national stage.[40]

The Wagner Act clearly impacted the northern New England paper industry as the independent United Mine Workers' District 50 waged a successful organizing campaignin Maine and New Hampshire.[41] District

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[39] *Antonio Negri's (1994: 23-51) richly cogent analysis of the New Deal's* recomposition of the working class details Keynes' influence.

[40] See, Mike Davis (1986: 102-153), and Antonio Negri (1994: 23-51).

[41] Harry Edward Graham (1970: 19-23)

50's organizing victories in Rumford Maine and Berlin New Hampshire, which were situated to the west of Jay/Livermore Falls on the Andoscoggin River, clearly threatened the carefully constructed, but fragile equilibrium achieved by IP and other paper companies.[42] Initially, however, union organizing drives on the west coast were more significant. Two radical CIO affiliated unions -- the International Woodworkers of American (IWA) and the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen Union (ILWU) -- threatened to organize paper workers in the northwest.[43] In reaction, the paper companies on the northwest coast outflanked the radical unions by quickly signing contracts with the IBPM and the IBPSPMW to forestall the resurgence of radicalism among their workers.[44] The AFL unions' complicity in this corporate `war of maneuver' quickly reversed their sagging fortunes, as one after another west coast paper corporation rushed to sign labor contracts.[45]

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[42] Robert Zeiger (1983: 184). It is instructive to look at the very different political legacies of Jay/Livermore Falls and Berlin New Hampshire, two towns that were vitally important sites for the regional labor culture in the 1910s. *In contrast to Jay/Livermore Falls, however, IP was never able* to break the strike in Berlin, very likely because other large paper companies also existed in the city, and employment was available. In any event, IP subsequently shut-down its mill there. In the 1930s, Berlin still exhibited a vital working class public. Indeed, it was one of the few city's in the U.S. where the Labor Party was victorious in the 1930s. See Eric Leif Davin and Staughton Lynd (1979:118-169)

[43] Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam (1984)

[44] Harry Edward Graham (1970)

[45] Harry Edward Graham (1970)

It is not surprising that IP followed this strategy as well. In 1937, IP held secret negotiations with the two AFL unions, in which they both agreed to help ensure labor peace. IP and the unions signed a labor agreement in October 1937 that reunionized IP's mills without any organizing drives or worker representation.[46] In fact, many local workers in Jay/Livermore Falls first heard about the agreement from their foremen who simply told them to get a union card before they reported for work the next morning. There were many cynical reactions to this news. Workers frequently asserted that the company simply wanted to stick union labels on the paper rolls because, in the aftermath of the Wagner Act, unionized printers were rejecting paper made in non-unionized plants. One former union official told me that Magnan kept the "union labels in the safe. He watched them like they were dollars." But apathy was the most common response. Many veterans of the 1921 strike joined only under protest. Others simply adopted a wait and see attitude towards the unions.

Continued organizing pressure by the CIO unions and District 50, however, pushed the AFL unions towards a more radical bargaining position. And, gradually they began to win worker loyalty. The CIO and

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[46] Harry Edward Graham (1970:31-33). Graham argues that the 1934 Longshore strike (see introduction) had much to do with the paper companies decision to sign with the AFL unions, who now presented themselves as moderate alternatives to the CIO unions. See also, Robert Zeiger (1983: 135-142)

District 50 insisted on across the board flat wage increases in cents per hour during negotiations with employers. This form of wage negotiation favored semi-skilled and unskilled workers and worked to flatten high wage differentials. The IBPSPMW only adopted this negotiating strategy in 1941 in an effort to stave off defections to the CIO and District 50. And, it was done over the vociferous objections of IP and the extreme hesitations of the IBPM.[47] However, sound reasons existed for the surrender of IBPM's traditional wage policy of first establishing rates for highest skilled workers and creating rate differentials downward for semi-skilled job categories. Primarily, new federally-mandated base rates exerted a downward pressure on rates for semi-skilled occupations; it was, thus, increasingly difficult to establish rates in the traditional manner for paper machine workers. New productivity clauses, though, maintained good wage rates for workers on paper machines and provided conditions for expanded capital accumulation. The productivity clauses allowed for upward adjustment of wage rates on faster, wider machines. These changes in wage payments quickly convinced the IBPM to coordinate with the IBPSPMW in its negotiations. Government statistics show a marked leveling of wage differentials for common labor and skilled labor in the fifteen year period after the new wage policies were introduced.[48]

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[47] Robert M. MacDonald (1956:108-128); Robert Zeiger (1983:195-201)

[48] Robert M. MacDonald (1956: 108-128)

The other significant gain associated with unionism was the institution of the seniority system beginning in the 1940s. This again was a reaction to District 50's successful undermining of the personalistic power of foremen by instituting an internal job ladder in the mills within its jurisdiction. The job ladder rationalized job placement and promotion by defining a regular procedure based on seniority. An expansion of job classifications accompanied the seniority system, resulting in a steady decline in both the length of time workers were employed as common laborers and the unskilled/skilled worker ratio.[49] The two AFL unions could not ignore the success of District 50 and the CIO unions in establishing the seniority system, nor could IP, since the threat of radical unions displacing the AFL unions was ever present. In the neighboring town of Rumford, for example, District 50 and the IBPSPMW constantly engaged in open warfare and raids on each others' membership.[50] Once instituted, the seniority system allowed workers greater control over their work lives. Now, job promotions were fundamentally based on skill level and seniority. When skill levels were relatively equal, seniority determined promotions. It also regularized lay-offs; no longer were marital status or family connections the deciding factors.

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[49] George Lambertson, 1991 interview. Lambertson was a long-time organizer for District 50 in the western Maine and New Hampshire region. He later became a regional representative for the IBPSPMW. See, also, Robert MacDonald (1956:124).

[50] Lambertson interview (ibid)

Steadily rising incomes and advancements had a profound social and cultural impact within the community. Ethnic hostilities were significantly reduced in the post-war period. In fact, ethnicity itself played a far smaller part in social organization. And, the expanded nuclear family form faded, as young workers were increasingly able to start their own households in their early twenties, and even in their late teens.

The expansion of semi-skilled jobs and the seniority system was considered a significant victory for workers and helped bolster support for the unions. This may surprise readers familiar with the labor process debate initiated by Harry Braverman's now classic monograph, Labor and Monopoly Capitalism.[51] Braverman identified the expansion of semi-skilled labor with the generalized debasement of work in the 20th century and, particularly, the dilution of workers' power based on craft traditions and unionism. Although Braverman's analysis has been associated with the revival of Marxist inquiry into the labor process, it is fundamentally a conservative position that flies in the face of history. First, as we have seen, skill is essentially a political and cultural designation. And, as some historians of the 19th century have been at pains to point out, its designation depends on the power relations within a wider field of force.[52] Second, it ignores the significant struggles waged by industrial

[51] Harry Braverman (1974). Paul Thompson (1988) provides a comprehensive overview of the labor process debate.

[52] See Royden Harrison and Jonathon Zeitlin (1985)

unions to dismantle craft privilege and exclusivity, which almost always worked to the advantage of management.[53] But the real conservatism of Braverman's argument comes from its nostalgia for a craftsmen's empire that, in fact, may never have existed.[54] Consequently, the more contemporary struggles occurring at the level of the state are completely ignored. Braverman's narrow focus on the labor process, for example, missed the significant contradictions in national labor law that allowed the corporations to steadily narrow the span of working class action and stabilize growing working class power.[55] As we shall see directly, it was the restrictive implications of national labor laws, rather than the dilution of craft traditions that impeded working class political action.

But if the new labor laws eventually benefited capital, they initially posed new problems of labor control. The rationalized production system established through collective bargaining procedures radically transformed the social relations of production. Workers in core Fordist industries gained significant protections from the abuses of the drive system and a substantial degree of control over their working lives. For capital, the question of labor control within this rationalized system was acute. The McCarthyite purging of union radicals --largely on the

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[53] Jerry Lembcke (1988)

[54] Jacques Ranciere (1983:1-16) nicely deconstructs the "myth of the artisan."

[55] Jerry Lembcke (1988) provides an extended critique of Braverman's neglect of the state.

grounds that their wide-ranging political agendas overstepped the boundaries of legitimate union business -- suggests how intensely capital and state sometimes pursued answers to this key question.[56] But, in fact, answers were only found gradually as monopoly capitalists increasingly exploited the contradictions of national labor laws and collective bargaining procedures to their advantage.

IP's heightened search for new mechanism of labor regulation during the high Fordist period demonstrates this process well. Within the framework of collective bargaining procedures, IP successfully re-localized the capital/labor relationship and reinvented patriarchy as a significant form of labor regulation. Yet, localism was now maintained more through economic incentive and compulsion than through cultural intervention. And, patriarchal authority now served to maintain a strict sexual division of labor within bourgeois-like nuclear families, rather than guarantee a flexibly deployable labor force.

We may begin by looking at the process through which IP re-localized the capital/labor relation during the high Fordist period. In a skillful manipulation of collective bargaining procedures, IP played one locality off against another in a process unionists call whipsawing.[57] Whipsawing exploits the system of decentralized labor relations by

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[56] This history is well documented in Jerry Lembcke (1988).

[57] The "whipsawing" process is well documented in Eric Mann's (1987) piercing monograph of a local UAW campaign in Los Angeles.

putting one location in competition with another for jobs, raises, and security. IP entered into a series of localized negotiations that simultaneously expanded the opportunities for capital accumulation and limited the ability of the unions to undertake collective actions of any kind. A long-time union organizer and negotiator captured this dynamic well in his discussion of events leading up to the withdrawal of local unions at the Androscoggin Mill in Jay from a regional bargaining unit:

> We were in the northern division, which bargained together for certain issues like wage rate raises. But the company would bleed that, saying things like: "if you want a raise then we'll have to shut this or that mill down. We won't be able to keep them going." Now all the mills in the northern division were marginal mills until they built the Androscoggin Mill in Jay (1964). That mill was going to town, new machines, new everything. All the other mills could do was hold us back. I was around when other mills got held back because they wanted to help out their brothers in another mill. The members said "let's not take the raise now because if we do they'll close the other mill down." Well, guess what, they closed it down anyway. That's when I started pushing to opt out of the northern division. I didn't want the Jay mill to be stuck in that trap, so I stood up to it. IP wanted us to join the northern division. Then they could start shutting mills down. They shut a lot of them down anyway. Corinth was taken out of the northern division. The company was always playing one local against another. Locals often fought more amongst themselves than with the company. Everybody's out for blood for their local. Local 14 of the IBPSPW was the biggest local and they backed me in pulling out of the northern division. Then Luccarelli (local president of the IBPM) got his guys behind the idea. After that I got four ten percent and two ten-and-a-half percent raises. No one ever talked about going into the northern division again. Then the company started shutting down mills. Everyone said "whew", this is the way it works. No matter what they said, they'd shut down the mills anyway. You can't trust them. But they used the older mills for

> leverage. See, they wouldn't shut them down right away. They learned the game. They'd start pounding on you way ahead of time, saying something like they were going to run a mill five more years. We'd better start using this plug now. They'd say, "hey, if you want that mill to keep running or run better, give us some leeway. We need some money to put into the mill to keep it running. So if you demand the raise, well okay, we'll give it to you, but we're going to have to shut that mill down." Then everybody says, "let's help our brothers out; let's not take the raise." But the company did long range planning. They would run a mill for five more years while they built another and got it going. Then they'd say we (the unions) fought them every inch of the way, and that's why they closed the mill down. But they planned to shut it down right from the get go.
>
> *Once the divisions were broken up, all the locals were* given different expiration dates for their contracts. It's hard to back up another local on strike if your contract still has another year-and-a-half to go.[58]

The increasing isolation evident in this passage dramatically affected the politics of unionism. Paper workers in Jay/Livermore Falls increasingly became indifferent to the plight of their peers in other localities, especially after the new Androscoggin Mill was built in the 1960s. The limited spatial perspectives of workers in Jay/Livermore Falls during this period is illustrated by a common expression of confusion after they were displaced during the 1987 strike: "I always thought we *were the IP.*" I barely knew that IP existed anyplace but here." The homogenizing tendencies inherent in the socialization of the wage contract thus had the ironic effect of increasing territorial divisions and antagonisms within the paper industry.

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[58] George Lambertson, 1991 interview

Political action, in those rare moments when they was any, also suggests the high degree of worker identification with the corporation. In 1972, for example, IP organized a protest against Maine's new Land Use Regulation Commission. Bus loads of paper workers from Jay/Livermore Falls traveled to LURC hearings to protest its attempt to regulate timber harvesting.[59] A few years later, local unionists started a letter writing campaign to protest a settlement by the Indian Lands Claim Commission in Washington that restored 300,000 acres of paper industry controlled land to the Penobscot Indians, a settlement that the paper industry's public relations campaign painted as a threat to the livelihood of paper workers and timber workers. This, even though the paper industry controls over seven million acres of land in Maine. [60]

As the labor negotiator's discussion of whipsawing indicates, high Fordism was a period of tempestuous expansion for IP. All through the post war period, workers agreed to higher levels of technology, faster, wider paper machines, and extensions of the working week in exchange for higher wages and job mobility. Intensified capital investment dramatically increased the capital/labor ratio in the Androscoggin Mill. The ever expanding scale of the operation surprised even long-time paper

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[59] Details of that meeting are found in William C. Osborn (1974:240-247).

[60] Fact sheets and form letters for the mail campaign were given to me by members of Local 14 in 1990 to show how, as they put it, politically naive they were in their unquestioning support of IP. See William C. Osborn (1974) for an expanded discussion of the paper industry's elaborate public relations apparatus in Maine.

workers. Paper machines, which even in the late 19th century symbolized the automatic production process,[61] were now massive monuments to alienated labor. The length of two football fields and two to three stories high, the paper machines established a grueling pace of production that completely consumed workers' physical and mental energies. An anecdotal story may serve to illustrate this point. During fieldwork, I set up a series of interviews with a displaced paper worker. A physically vibrant man in his early forties, "Joe" answered my questions with a great deal of wit and insight. One day he announced that he had been "called back" to the mill as temporary summer help, so the next time we met would have to be after his shift. When he arrived for our next meeting, I barely recognized him. Within a week, he seemed to have aged ten years. Physically and mentally exhausted, he could barely talk and our conversation ended quickly. Since my field work ended before his stint in the mill was up, we never again found a time to resume our meetings.

There are two intimately related points to be made here about the high rates of capital investment. First, the monumentally asymmetrical capital/labor ratio dramatically reduced IP's profit margin. The machines had to be run constantly in order for profit to accrue. Second, workers had

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[61] See Karl Marx's (1976: 503) discussion of the paper industry.

to be always available to staff the machines. IP addressed this dual necessity by reinventing patriarchal authority within nuclear families.

As mentioned earlier, the family structure changed significantly during high Fordism. As the stabilized system of promotions and steady wage increases eliminated the necessity for a multiple wage strategy, the bourgeois-like nuclear family became increasingly important. The post-war boom in house construction also provided significant support and encouragement for smaller families. Houses built in Jay/Livermore Falls after the war were largely single family homes, with two or three bedrooms. Family networks retained their social importance, however. They provided the primary social group for all leisure and mutual aid activities. For example, kitchen doors were never locked so that family members could simply "pop over" for a visit, for dinner, or for a favor. This "pop over" tradition is well captured in a local saying: "If you have to knock, you're not welcome."

But, Maurice Bloch has long argued that we should approach the study of family and kinship from the perspective of the tactical uses they serve -- as tools -- in the transformation of social situations.[62] We can best approach this perspective by exploring how patriarchal authority was significantly reinvented to make it more functional for IP's regime of intense capital accumulation. The implementation of the "Southern Swing," a revolving tour system, in the early 1950s was the primary

[62] *Maurice Bloch (1971: 80), cited in James W. Wessman (1981: 130)*

catalyst for the reinvention of patriarchy. The Southern Swing, so named because it was initiated in the historically anti-union southeast, forced employees to work one week on the day shift, the next on the overnight shift, and the next on the afternoon shift. Another significant feature of this tour system was the requirement that workers had to remain on the job until their replacements arrived. Workers were often required to work double, sometimes triple shifts. This tour system virtually eliminated machine "down" time, therefore accomplishing one of IP's central goals. But, this was not simply a function of having adequate staffing arrangements. It was primarily a function of the Southern Swing's coercive encouragement of a strict sexual division of labor within the family. Wives, who -- with increased automobility -- could now potentially go out to work, were forced to stay home and take care of the children, because there was no predictability in the working week. No family emergency nor event was considered reason enough to refuse a shift. IP employees say they often missed crucial events like a child's graduation because of work demands. Moreover, the whole life of the family revolved around the husband/worker. They slept odd hours, sometimes for whole days to recuperate. They ate meals at odd times, and always shifting times, requiring the preparation of multiple meals for different members of the family. Family life was defined by production schedules and the needs of exhausted mill workers. The comments made

by wives of workers displaced during the 1987-1988 strike give a sense of the impact of the Southern Shift on an entire family. One commented:

> Before the strike, (he) would come home and just sit on the couch. He seemed depressed all the time. I actually thought it caused by his experience in Vietnam. We never really knew what they went through in the mill. The guys never talked about it. Once the strike began, there was a guy I had never seen before living in our house. He was smart, funny, and seemed to have endless energy.

The second wife's comment indicates how this exhaustion impacted the family:

> I never knew my husband had a sense of humor. He was grumpy all the time, We literally walked on egg shells when he was home. He was always yelling at the kids to be quiet so he could sleep. I only got to see his lighter side after he left the mill and began working for the union.

Steadily, workers' lives had become routinized into a seemingly endless round of working, eating, and sleeping. The Southern Swing ensured that this "simple reproduction of labor power" was not interrupted by other demands on workers' time. A working wife, for example, would have created multiple conflicts of interest. Meals would have to be prepared; children shuttled back and forth to school or childcare; and attention paid to the multiple details that are necessary to maintain a household.

Increased mobility within the company and steadily rising wages can only partially explain why workers and their families put up with long days, multiple shifts and the exhausting pace of work. A fuller explanation is given by IP's and other paper companies control over external labor markets. The large paper companies controlled most of the

state's major timber resource and sold access to it in ways that systematically discouraged the development of potential competitors for labor, especially after 1945. Sawmill and lumber industries in Maine were given only short term permits to harvest timber, if they could secure them at all, while Canadian firms were given more favorable considerations. The unreliability of the wood supply has continually discouraged the financing of large sawmills within the state. The ones that do exist are low profit, labor intensive ventures, whose pay and benefit scales are well below those found in the paper industry. For a sense of contrast, we need only look to the northwest coast, where huge lumber mills set wage and benefit standards for the entire timber industry, including the paper industry.[63]

IP's social landscape of power, constructed over the span of sixty years, had an enormous impact on the way workers' life histories came, eventually, to be constructed and understood. Adult life histories were seen as a series of movements from insecure jobs in area saw mills to a more secure position in the paper mill. Or, alternately, as a movement from one position to the next within the paper mill itself: from woodpile worker, to pulp room operative, to machine tender or, perhaps, foremen. Family chronicles were articulated in similar fashion as a movement from poverty and precariousness to relative security. One paper worker

[63] See, William C. Osborn (1974: 129-136), David C. Smith (1972:419-430). For the northwest, see Harry Edward Graham (1970), Jerry Lembcke and William m. Tattam (1984), and Patricia Marchak (1983).

recounted how his father, who worked in area lumber mills and shoe shops all his life, never had much money. He, on the other hand, could regularly afford to buy "meat and good stuff, not just baked beans or macaroni and cheese." As the angry stares of workers' subjected to my naive questions about their career choices suggested, these genealogies and mental maps represented the taken-for-grantedness of IP's reinvented tradition and territory. And, they underscore its success in constructing a structure of circulation that shaped and informed workers' identities, aspirations, and values. But workers in Jay/Livermore Falls soon found that nothing at all could be taken for granted. The 1987-88 paper workers strike to which we now turn marked the violent end to the accommodations between labor and capital that characterized the Fordist period.

Chapter Three

The Peoples Republic of Jay:[1] *Reimagining Class and Community during the 1987-88 Paperworkers' Strike*

> IP has awoken a sleeping giant. This sleeping giant means that all the walls between groups of workers has been broken down.
> Bill Merserve, Local 14 president

During the early 1980s, IP signaled its intention to dismantle the social compact with labor constructed under Fordism by publicly mocking its founding tenet and basis: localism. The corporation radically reversed its policy of decentralized decision-making with the creation of a new Human Relations Department in 1984 to push through sweeping changes in work rules. The Human Relations Department was charged with implementing programs and policies developed at corporate headquarters, a move which, among others, significantly reduced the decision-making responsibilities of the local superintendent of mills. From its very inception, though, the Department held a malign cultural significance. Casey Lavoie, a former "local boy" who made his way into management via a stint as president of Local 14 of the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) in Jay, was transferred from Wisconsin to head this new department. Lavoie's reputation as a "born-

[1] *Nick name bestowed on Jay during the strike*

again" anti-unionist augured sweeping changes in corporate labor relations. But lest the point be lost, Lavoie announced his assigned mission to break the union within three years at a family gathering shortly after his return. If the full significance of the setting of this announcement was not immediately apparent, it became obvious during the paper workers' strike of 1987-88. With Lavoie's appointment, IP was reorienting and restructuring the cultural/ideological terrain on which its corporate hegemony was built. At stake was IP's ability to disalign itself from the notion of community it had so carefully constructed over the entire period of Fordism, and, with this, from the sense of mutual responsibility between capital and labor that this concept then evoked .

In the course of the 1987-88 strike, the key-word of community was imbued with new meaning, transforming it into a powerful mobilizing idea for a nascent labor movement in Jay/Livermore Falls. This process of redefinition was constituted by and constitutive of the social drama of the strike. As the focus of the labor conflict extended beyond the spatial boundaries of the locality, for example, a more inclusive sense of community, a community of the present and the absent,[2] became integral to the mobilization of new political identities. Unlike IP's rigid spatial explication of community during the Fordist period, the strikers' imagined community was increasingly inscribed by the idea of class

[2] The phrase "community of the present and the absent" is taken from *Jacques Ranciere (1994).*

allegiance, an idea condensed in the term 'solidarity,' which became both a rallying cry and an end-in-itself during the strike.

This contest over the key-word of community illuminates what is arguably the central political drama not only of the Fordist period but of the entire period of modernity. A working class comes into being -- is formed -- through the creation of a network of connections among and between localities. This complex process of formation is captured well by Jacques Ranciere's elaboration of a "being together without place or body -- of a being together that is a being between: between several places and several identities".[3] The central mode of political incorporation during the modern age, on the other hand, has centered on the construction of identities tied explicitly to a particular locality; identities, that is, that deny the idea of a class belonging across several places and identities. The chimera of these strictly localist identities is punctured most profoundly during protracted labor strikes. This rupturing of the symbolic and spatial markers of the political order accounts, more than anything else, for the intense scrutiny, even fascination, of extended strikes. Yet, it is precisely this possibility of a class coming into being across defined localities that is lost or ignored in most social histories. As we have seen in the introduction, the conventions of social history direct us to a culture of opposition strongly identified with and rooted in a particular place: a factory, community, or neighborhood. This localization of working class

[3] *Jacques Ranciere* (1994: 94)

culture makes it difficult to even formulate questions about the wider spatial components of class belonging. Certainly, it renders opaque the processes in which workers in discrete localities are able (or not) to overcome their isolation and form themselves into a community of the present and the absent.

A few historical images provide important clues for reconceptualizing class as a phenomena that exists both within localities and across these political boundaries. The figure of the traveling wobbly or socialist lecturer touring labor centers throughout the first twenty years of the 20th century helped to facilitate the creation of forms of working class identification and connection across space and time.[4] Similarly, Douglas Wixson's finely drawn image of antiquated hand-set presses running off the narratives, poems, and autobiographical sketches of a loose-knit and geographically dispersed group of worker-writers in the late 1920s and 1930s provides another important clue to the production of a distinctly working class culture.[5] This emergent proletarian literature, produced by a cohort of midwestern "rebel poets" who knew one another only through correspondence, invented and disseminated the key terms of a language of class that registered and resonated widely, if only for a

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[4] Paul Buhle (1995); and Salvatore Salerno (1989)

[5] Douglas Wixson, (1994)

brief historical moment[6]. The figure of the traveling troubadour, crystallized and condensed in the image of Woody Guthrie circulating through the migrant camps and urban centers during the depression, also helped to popularize and spread this language of class, which, in turn, became an active, shaping force in the social struggles of the period[7]. What these images offer is a way to comprehend the lines of affiliation and association across space which are central to the creation of class cultures and discourses.

As striking Local 14 members discovered, however, the isolating effects of Fordism established significant barriers to the development of these lines of affiliation and association. Labor laws since the New Deal have facilitated the progressive narrowing of working class action. IP, for instance, skillfully manipulated of collective bargaining procedures to re-localize the capital/labor relation. It is significant that the networks of working-class connection evoked by the foregoing historical images all predate the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935. The Wagner Act identified issues of job security, safety, remuneration, hours, and

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[6] *The 1930s generation of worker/writers drew explicitly on the forms of* "rebel poetry" and literature popularized during the heyday of the IWW by figures like Joe Hill, Ralph Chaplin, Arturo Giovannitti, and others. The revitalization of earlier forms of cultural production during the 1930s – and their subsequent repression during the "cold war" – illustrates well the discontinuous nature of working class memory and tradition in the U.S. See, especially, Cary Nelson (1989).

[7] Michael Denning (1996) persuasively links a number of seemingly disparate forms of "proletarian" culture in his important study of "The Cultural Front."

pensions as the "legitimate" concerns of unions. Moreover, it tied the procedures of collective bargaining to local-level negotiations and elections.[8] The implication for working-class political action was immediately apparent, even for leaders of the conservative AFL.[9] The McCarthyite purging of "radicals" from labor unions -- largely on the grounds that their wide-ranging political agendas overstepped the boundaries of legitimate union business -- realized the worst fears of many political activists. The entanglement of conservative union leaders in the McCarthy "purges" is well known, and does not need to be rehearsed here[10]. What remains to be clarified, however, is the impact of the "Fordist" union structure on the geographical span of working class action.[11] One example drawn from the 1987-88 paper workers' strike provides a window into this issue.

As Local 14 activists traveled throughout the U.S. to build support for the strike, they were stunned to find that their strongest opposition came from the majority of regional representatives of the UPIU, a majority which included their own regional Vice President. The

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[8] Gordon L. Clark (1989); Christopher L. Tomlins (1985)

[9] Christopher L. Tomlins (1985: pp. 124-125)

[10] This history is detailed in Jerry Lembcke (1988). See, also, Rhonda F. Levine (1988); and Jerry Lembcke & WilliamTattam (1984).

[11] Reference to "Fordist" unions allows a more precise periodization than the more common concept of "business unionism, which could be applied to AFL unions at the end of the 19th century.

unwillingness of UPIU's national leadership to overcome this opposition and organize support for the strike irreparably damaged the national union's relationship with a number of local unions. Consequently, Local 14 activists launched a grassroots effort to bring the geographically dispersed UPIU locals into a coordinated bargaining and strike pool. Both IP's political strategies and UPIU's lack of support successfully undermined the Local's effort during the strike. However, its momentum grew steadily once the strike ended. IP countered by challenging the legality of coordinated "pooling" in 1990. A year later the NLRB upheld the corporation's challenge, and declared that the establishment of a common bargaining and strike pool went against the grain of established collective bargaining procedures and was indeed illegal.[12]

National labor laws' privileging of the *local* established a union structure that facilitated intense competition among local unions for jobs, raises, and security. Union regional representatives functioned as the gatekeepers of this elaborate structure. As we saw in the preceding chapter, regional representatives skillfully engaged in the "whipsawing"

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[12] The information in this paragraph is based largely on interviews with Local 14 activists conducted by the author during 1990 and 1991. See, also, *Bill Merserve, Local 14 President, letter to membership* (May 14, 1990); Local 14 & 246 Informer (January 13, 1989). Jay Strike Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Maine, Orono. "Solidarity News," IP Union Council's Project Solidarity, April, 1991; and Labor Notes, June 1992.

process to get what they considered to be the best deals for their locality. Their ability to do this rested on the control of relations between union locals. To take one example, all communications between UPIU local unions were channeled through the regional vice-presidents and national headquarters. Direct communications were actively discouraged. This became glaringly obvious during the 1987-88 strike when UPIU national headquarters did little to facilitate communications with the other unions within the "IP system." It is also significant that the offices of UPIU regional representatives -- the regional Vice President and the international representative -- are not elected positions; they are directly appointed by the union president. Consequently, their loyalty is not to the local but to the national union; that is, to maintaining the integrity of the union. During the post-war period, militant reform movements within paper industry unions have specifically challenged the autocratic power of the regional vice presidents, and demanded that a democratic electoral process be instituted. But the system of personal authority prevailed. Some "radicals" were purged from the unions; others were given significant promotions; in one instance, Canadian "radicals" on their way to a union convention in Detroit were stopped at the border under direct orders of Attorney General Robert Kennedy.[13] In

[13] *Harry Edward Graham (1970; 102 and passim). Graham meticulously* details the numerous instances of upheaval and their suppression in the pulp and paper industry unions. A similar process is documented by Lembcke and Tattam (1984) for the wood and timber industry unions.

most cases, though, regional representatives secured and maintained local power bases by pitting their localities off against others in the competitive environment established by the Wagner and Taft-Hartley Acts. The intricacies of union structure and politics, thus, rendered collective action on a national level extremely difficult, if not impossible. Just *how* difficult will become clearer in the following discussion of the 1987-88 strike.

The Road to the Strike

The immediate roots of the strike can be traced to 1976, when IP initiated a planned 12-year program of corporate restructuring.[14] There were three major components to this initiative: First, mills and machinery were to be modernized. This involved both the closing or selling of mills that were considered outdated and investing heavily in automated technology, which was, actually, a policy begun in the late 1960s. Second, any remaining "multiple" bargaining units were to be dismantled. "Multiples", as they were called, were regionally based collective bargaining divisions. As we have seen in Chapter 2, IP had been chipping away at the "mulitples" for years, starting in 1965 when the company successfully offered workers in Jay's newly-built Androscoggin

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The significance of the state's control of the border to the maintenance of authority within unions is well documented in both studies.

[14] David Riker (1990: 45)

mill higher wage rates to leave the "Northern Division."[15] Third, a concerted program to control the work process was reasserted. For example, the 1979 contract negotiations between IP and local unions in Jay stalled over the introduction of "worker participation" programs, which the local unions identified as a control issue and, ultimately, voted down.[16]

IP's continued effort to reassert control over the work process hit Jay workers the hardest. After all, they had "voluntarily" left the Northern Division years earlier. And, automated technologies were introduced when IP first opened the Androscoggin mill, which was long recognized as IP's flagship. But this long transition to automated work had the unintended consequence of transferring a great deal of power to the work force. Workers at the Androscoggin Mill generally oversaw the installation of automated technologies. In practice, this meant they were responsible for maximizing the possibilities and overcoming the limitations of the new technology. This involved a long, collective procedure of interpreting the abundance of differing data, signals, and symbols produced by this technology through the lens of a hard-won set of competencies, judgments, and skills developed through their experience with mechanized papermaking. In other words, "playing

[15] *George Lambertson (former Pulp/Sulphite and UPIU organizer and* Northern Division negotiator) interview, 1991.

[16] Bill Merserve (former Local 14 president) interview, 1991

around" with the installation gave workers a deep knowledge of the technologies that was, in many ways, unavailable to management. In the process, rigid skill hierarchies were somewhat flattened, producing a more cohesive shop-floor culture. This work culture, based on the increasing collectivization of the social relations of production,[17] was targeted for attack during IP's efforts to reassert control of the work process. A very brief, selective description of the basis of this work culture in informal work groups will help contextualize this struggle.

As work on the paper machines became increasingly identified with the creation and manipulation of symbols rather than with physical labor, the strict skill hierarchy of machine tenders (the most skilled paper makers), back tenders, and first, second, and third hands became more flexible. The judgments and tacit knowledges that come with experience were still vitally important to paper production. For example, experienced machine tenders still judged the thickness and evenness of paper by the sound it made as it whirled past on the machine, compensating for the inaccuracies of the automated monitoring system. But collective, creative problem solving became even more important to work out the 'bugs' of the newly installed automated technology. A machine tender captured well the cohesiveness that this process fostered:

> I worked on the start-up of both number 4 and number 5 machines. These big, automated machines were new to the industry. The

[17] Michael Burawoy (1985) developed the concept of the "social relations *in* production" to analytically distinguish different "factory regimes."

> experts didn't know what they could do, the bosses certainly didn't, so we had to learn ourselves. Well, this created cooperation among the crews, a lasting bond. We'd have crew parties, go on fishing trips together. I think the solidarity during the strike grew from this.

This cohesiveness was based on the informal transformation of skill identities. More inclusive skill identities developed as seasoned workers -- protected by seniority and security -- became involved in the cross training of others within their "line of progression." Workers came to know three or four jobs other than their own. A "first hand", for example, learned the jobs of both the back tender and machine tender well enough to take over during an emergency or assist at hectic moments, and had previous experience as a "second" and "third" hand. Knowledge of short-cuts and trade secrets were shared collectively and developed over a number of years. This collective knowledge gave workers a high-degree of informal control over the pace of production, affording them time, as another employee put it, "to be human, to talk, to joke around or pull pranks." Within this informal work culture, certain habits and standards of work that would prove resistant to the reorganizations of work were constructed and sustained. But, as this illustration makes clear, this new work culture was ultimately rooted in the union-based guarantees of seniority and steady advancement through the "line of progression."

All of IP's varied attempts to reassert control of the work process hinged on driving a wedge between union practice and work practice. In

1981, IP embarked on a program to reduce its workforce and reorganize the production process. But early retirement plans and the installation of a Quality Improvement Program, which union leaders saw as a barely disguised attack on contract language, produced only modest results.[18] With the creation of the Human Relations Department in 1984, IP intensified its efforts. For example, workers were continually reassigned to jobs outside their classification in direct violation of contract agreements. Union grievances proliferated between 1984 and 1987. But under LaVoie's tutelage, company officials enacted a strategy of "massive grievance denial, sending more and more of them to arbitration."[19] With the grievance process bogged down, management pursued manifold avenues to reclaim control of production. Process engineers initiated a series of time/motion studies. Workers claimed the engineers were like shadows, "following us everywhere and documenting everything."[20] At the same time, the company mandated that workers attend classes on writing training manuals. Although workers did not have to participate in the writing of the manuals, company officials launched an all out

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[18] This attack on the seniority system was carried out largely by area foreman and supervisors, who repeatedly violated the contract agreements by assigning workers jobs outside of their classifications. Records of Grievance proceedings stored at Local 14's union hall show this practice steadily increased with the ascendancy of the new Human Relations Department.

[19] From an interview with Bill Merserve, former president of Local 14.

[20] From an interview with Roland Samson, former IP employee, now union official.

effort to encourage participation. Despite their efforts, only a limited number of workers participated. Consequently, "manual coordinators" were assigned to every department to interview workers on all aspects of their jobs. As a machine tender who had been interviewed later claimed:

> They [the interviewers] were interested in "all the nuts and bolts of the job, all the short-cuts. They just wanted to pick our brains to learn the process of papermaking, because until then management *had pretty much left the process up to the hourly employees.* We had a pretty good idea what this sudden interest meant."[21]

Indeed, everyone had a fairly good idea what "this sudden interest" meant. Local union officials urged all workers not to cooperate until an agreement could be reached with the company, stipulating that these manuals would not be used to train replacement workers during a strike. When the company refused, speculation about a forced strike became part of everyday conversation both in the mill and in the wider community. Speculation reached a fevered intensity when IP began to construct a barbed wire fence to encircle the entire IP complex in 1986. Workers were keenly aware of other paper companies' recent use of barbed wire fencing to protect replacement workers from irate strikers.[22] The local unions immediately began planning strike strategies.

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[21] This informant requested anonymity, as did many of the people who were not public figures during the strike and who remain dependent upon IP for their livelihood. As a result, throughout this chapter names are attached only to quotations from public figures.

[22] The Boise Cascade mill in nearby Rumford, for example, had used the same tactic during a strike in 1985-6.

The organizational form of the union limited the planning process, however. There were two union locals simultaneously representing workers in the mill. Both were part of UPIU, which came into existence as a result of the 1972 merger of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite, and Paper Mill Workers, representing skilled and unskilled/semi-skilled workers respectively. As we have seen, the increasing complexity and automation of paper production rendered obsolete a unionism based on strict skill hierarchies. But the consolidated UPIU never merged its locals -- which, in any case, would likely have been resisted by at least some of its regional representatives whose authority was based on their control and coordination of relations between locals. As a result of this residual dualism, the two locals at the Androscoggin Mill negotiated contracts, filed grievances, and elected officials separately, which impeded the development of a coherent strategy. In addition, IP played one local off the other to its continuous advantage.[23] Notwithstanding the increasing collectivization of the relations of production, this fragmented union structure undermined the local UPIU union's political and economic power.

A search for appropriate forms of representation eventuated in the merging of the two locals into Local 14 in 1984. Local 14 quickly became a centripetal force for what had become a highly privatized community.

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[23] Bill Merserve interview, 1990

One significant consequence of the merger was the amount of money the local now had at its disposal. In 1986, a building was purchased for a permanent union hall with offices, meeting rooms, and a recreation room. In a town were there was little, if any, public space for workers to meet away from the watchful eye of bosses, religious authorities, or middle class observers, this was an astute political move. Money was also allocated to pay for a full time president. Without having to shift between work in the mill and the duties of office, Bill Merserve, Local 14 president, could spend more time developing strategy. Merserve soon began drawing on the political acumen of Peter Kellman, a labor organizer from Maine with considerable experience as an organizer in the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s. In one of their first joint endeavors, Merserve and Kellman developed a series of workshops to train workers as public speakers and to write press releases. In the advent of a strike, these skills could be used to both build public support and counter the negative public relations campaign that IP would inevitably wage. More important initially, a monthly newsletter and occassionally turbulent weekly meetings dramatically increased communication and brought people into informal contact outside of the workplace. Within this new public space, a renewed sense of collective purpose began to emerge.

Management/labor relations declined still further over the next year. The 1987 contract that IP offered Local 14 asserted the company's control over the work process. Its key features were the elimination of the seniority system through a program of "team manning" aimed at providing "total flexibility" to job assignments. In language that evoked the drive system of the 1930s, work assignments were now to be left up to department foremen and supervisors. Under the terms of the contract, flexibility would also extend to employment status. There were two aspects to employment flexibility. First, the company called for the immediate elimination of over one hundred seventy five jobs. Second, over 320 maintenance jobs were to be sub-contacted out to a non-union firm, a move that would eliminate the closed shop. IP also demanded an extension of work time from remaining employees. Christmas holiday shutdowns -- the only surviving day that the mill was closed -- were to be eliminated; premium pay for Sundays and holidays was also to be eliminated. As IP had done in 1921 to force a strike, company spokespersons declared that none of these "proposals" were negotiable.

The seriousness of IP's intention not to negotiate any of the terms of the proposed contract was demonstrated on March 21, 1987 when workers in Mobile, Alabama were locked out after they rejected an identical offer. Representatives from local unions in Jay, Maine, Lockhaven, Pennsylvania, and DePere, Wisconsin were immediately brought together at UPIU national headquarters in Memphis. UPIU

president Wayne Glenn announced a strategy to the three locations. They were asked to urge their members to "reject" the contracts that they would be "negotiating" imminently, and form a common strike "pool" with the locked out workers in Mobile. Glenn was certain that with four important mills shut down, IP would be forced back to the bargaining table. Although one could fit an airplane through the holes in Glenn's logic, the representatives from the four localities agreed to urge their members to strike.[24] Glenn's optimism was undoubtedly comforting in very dire circumstances. Yet, IP advertised for replacement workers even before the UPIU membership could vote on the proposed contracts. In a largely symbolic act of defiance, members in each of the three locations unanimously rejected IP's contracts and joined the strike pool.

The Strike

The 1987-88 paperworkers' strike was a central social drama of the 1980s, a decade that witnessed a resurgent neo-liberal attack on working people and their organizations. Beginning with Ronald Reagan's firing of the PATCO strikers, U.S. corporations aggressively demanded concessions

[24] Since IP clearly wanted to force a strike, Glenn's plan merely gave IP what it wanted. Further, since the Mobile lockout was clearly illegal, it would have been better to have the locals separate the contract vote from the strike vote. In that way, IP would have been forced to lock out the workers in all the locations. As it turned out, the workers in Mobile were the only ones whom the NLRB considered to have a legitimate claim to their jobs once the strike was over, since they had, indeed, been illegally locked out. The NLRB declared that workers in the other three locations had "voluntarily" left their jobs, and so could be considered "permanently replaced." A move which should have been no surprise for anyone familiar with the Reagan-era NLRB.

from their workers. A string of protracted but broken strikes in the steel, meatpacking, and mining industries, to name a few, were indicative of the relentless zeal with which corporations pursued their goals. Rollbacks in wages, benefits, and working conditions characterized collective bargaining during this decade. IP's forcing of a strike was in full alignment with this neo-liberal assault. Yet, the strike turned into a major social drama in which the key terms of Fordist hegemony -- work, community, cooperation -- were gradually subverted and reinscribed onto a language of class. I use the term drama carefully, because the strike unfolded through a series of arguments, actions, and cultural performances that obtained a high degree of theatricality. This emphasis on the strike as theater draws attention to the essential work of cultural production and performance involved in mobilizing political identities and movements.[25] The fairness of one's demands cannot simply be proclaimed, they must be demonstrated; a community cannot simply be called into action, it must be imagined and enacted; and, class loyalties cannot simply be invoked, they must be symbolically constructed. This process of demonstration, imagination, enactment, and symbolic

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[25] The intimate relationship of labor strikes and political theater is explored in a couple of edited volumes coming out of the history workshop movement in England. See Howard Gooney and Ewan MacCall, eds. (1986), and Raphael Samuel, Ewan MacCall, and Stuart Cosgrove, eds. (1985). Even more relevant, though, is Kirk W. Fuoss's (1997) exploration of the genres of drama and cultural performance embedded in strike activity itself.

construction is inherently theatrical, "carnivalesque at one moment, melodramatic at another, but always larger than life."[26] Within the "hot-house," "larger than life" drama of the strike, claims to community and allegiance were reconstructed and rearticulated to a new political/cultural configuration of class.

The strikes' series of dramatic arguments, actions, and cultural performances were both strategically and symbolically significant. Strategically, they were central to the continual work of building a unified strike community, at first local, of course, but then evolving slowly into a community of the present and the absent. Symbolically, they demonstrated the strikers' capacity to organize work, community, and, later, union affairs themselves. Again, only theatrical metaphors seem able to capture the impact of these actions. They set the stage on which the strike played out locally and nationally. In one way, multiple demonstrations of capacity directly countered IP's assertions that its unionized workforce had become inefficient. This fostered a national debate of the merits on new forms of work organization, such as the "team concept" which approximated the Japanese model. In another way, they also questioned the adequacy of available labor organizations and existing laws to represent and protect workers, leading to either premature epithets for the labor movement or a search for new organizational forms and political organizations. In any event, several

[26] Raphael Samuel (1985:xiv-xv), Samuel, MacCall, Cosgrove (ibid).

transgressions of hegemonic boundaries resulted from these cultural performances, spiraling the strikers forcefully into the world of national discourse. Jesse Jackson's embrace of the language and politics of class during the 1988 presidential campaign grew directly out of his visits to Jay's "Labor Temple" during the strike, demonstrating one of the ways in which the strike crystallized a national concern with issues of security and justice during the waning moments of Fordism.

Demonstrating Efficiency

During the first days and weeks of the conflict, strikers' arguments and demonstrations centered on the issue of efficiency, a traditional labor issue, which barely hinted at the organizational and cultural innovations to come. Bill Merserve's comments to the press on the first morning of the strike address the issue of efficiency directly.[27] Taking each point of IP's claims of worker inefficiency in turn, Merserve offered a counter argument:

> The company claims it needs to cut our wages in order to remain competitive. Baloney! According to a report commissioned by UPIU, IP's labor costs average $1,100 per person per year less than the industry average...
>
> So why does International Paper continue to seek concessions from its union employees? We think the company wants to hide its bloated and inefficient management. At the same time that our labor costs are less than the industry average, IP's overhead exceeds

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[27] Statement of Bill Merserve, President UPIU Local 14, June 16, 1987. Jay Strike Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Maine, Orono.

> the industry average by an incredible 21%. Despite these high costs, IP officers voted themselves an average salary increase of 38%.
>
> We conclude that there is no economic justification for the concessions demanded by International Paper. Productivity should be *rewarded,* not *punished.* And good management means that overhead problems should be *solved,* not *ignored.*

Further,

> IP management wants to hide their failures behind words like "competition" and "return on equity." The company claims that the Androscoggin Mill just isn't profitable. Once again, we say *baloney!* International Paper has adopted a coordinated bargaining where they demand the same basic package of wage and work rule concessions from every one of their facilities, regardless of their profitability. For instance, IP wants their mill in DePere, Wisconsin to give up premium Sunday and holiday pay and permit subcontracting of union jobs. The same demands that IP wants from us. And the DePere mill has averaged a return on assets *better than 15% over the last four years. . .*
>
> UPIU believes that when the sacrifices of working men and women create a healthy, profitable company, those workers should share in the fruits of that success. To do otherwise is corporate arrogance of the worst kind.

An ambiguity is immediately apparent. Merserve's comments center on productivity and efficiency, thus situating them squarely within the previous discourse and practice of Taylorism, a form of work organization that was physically and psychologically debilitating for workers, no matter how much informal control they exercised on the shop floor. In fact, many workers experienced the strike-induced release from work as a time of great personal and intellectual growth.[28] At the

[28] *This theme was stated in one form or another in almost every* interview I conducted after the strike by both IP employees and their spouses.

same time, Merserve's comments oppose the idea of work as condemnation or degradation, as something imposed, an idea held by both labor activists and radical sociologists.[29] Productivity does not come from management, Merserve contends, but from workers' own efforts and efficiency. By disputing the usually taken-for-granted corporate claim of competitive necessity, Merserve stakes a political claim of his own: "Workers sacrifices should be rewarded." Here, the founding principle of the Fordist bargain -- increased productivity tied to progressive wage increases -- is turned into a worker's right. Now, we see the intended audience for Merserve's comments is different than first suspected. They address, primarily, other workers; the articulation of a workers' right is, simultaneously, a claim to community, a community sustained by the virtues of hard work and sacrifice. Although its meaning shifted considerably over the course of the strike, the process of reimagining and renegotiating community was central to the development of an oppositional political discourse.

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[29] This idea has a long genealogy, from the Saint-Simonians and Fourierists, to Harry Braverman (1974) and Andre Gorz (1982), and groups like the contemporary "Solidarity", which publishes Labor Notes. As H.F. Haug (1987) shows, this immiserization discourse had/has a huge impact on the way union strategies and bargaining positions. Jacques Ranciere's various efforts to take workers' words seriously throws political light on this workers' refusal of imposed ideas. In fact, the phrase "the idea of work as condemnation" belongs to him. See Jacques Ranciere (1983: 9). Ranciere develops this point at length in his study of *The Nights of Labor* (1989: 257-302).

But if Merserve's comments address other workers, IP was the subject of that address . The very act of building a workers' community serves as what Jacques Ranciere calls a "logical demonstration", an action or series of actions to demonstrate the fairness of the strikers' demands.[30] One of the ways in which the building of community served as "logical demonstration" can be seen in the organization of the Food Bank.

It was one of the forms of mutual aid that Local 14 developed at the outset of the strike to help strikers secure the basic necessities. Other forms included a job-bank and emergency mortgage and medical funds. But, the food-bank was the most visible to the wider-community. Its main activities took place in the parking lot and building of the old credit union on Route 4, the main road through Jay and Livermore Falls. The food bank fed over a thousand families each week, at a cost of approximately $40,000 a month. Because of the high visibility of this enormous operation, the weekly food distribution days were staged for maximum symbolic effect. Distribution day was organized very much like an assembly line. Cars drove into the parking lot at a designated time that depended on the size of one's family. A greeter handed a card to the driver and, simultaneously, radioed the number of bags required to the bag handlers. Next, the appropriate number of bags were shipped via conveyer belt to the rear of the building where other food bank volunteers packed them into the car's trunk. The whole process took less

[30] Jacques Ranciere (1995: 47)

than a minute. This was, simultaneously, a form of mutual-aid and a demonstration of workers' capacity to efficiently organize production themselves. It was, thus, a masterful cultural performance that worked on a couple of levels. First, and most obvious, the Taylorized distribution process symbolically countered IP's claims that this form of work organization had become unproductive. At the same time, it visually demonstrated Merserve's argument that managerial incompetence, not worker inefficiency, lay at the root of IP's problems. Second, this symbolical demonstration of strikers' capacity projected a new image of community.[31] But, adherence to the Taylorist notion of efficiency maintained the social grammar of authority that inscribed the IP community. In this way, strikers affirmed their dependence on the reciprocal obligations and expectations that sustained the hierarchical community, and established their right to continued participation and, importantly, employment. Still, a latent meaning is embedded within this demonstration; labor created IP's wealth, an idea that became increasingly prominent, and contributed to the building of a local counter-hegemonic movement.

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[31] Jacques Ranciere (1995: 47)

Demonstrating the Strikers' Community

Jay's *Labor Temple* became the central site for inscribing an oppositional, strikers' community. If the Jay strike evoked late 19th and early 20th century labor struggles, as many commentators suggested, it was largely a result of the rancorous expressions of community that were evident at the mass meetings each Wednesday night.[32] In fact, holding mass meetings was part of a wider strategy to "build a strike community.[33]" The strike's organizers understood that injunctions and the growth of professional strike breaking firms rendered the picket line an ineffective, if highly symbolic, tool. Their only hope of bringing IP back to the bargaining table, as they saw it initially, was to mobilize a political movement in the community, and eventually assume control of the local political apparatus. Peter Kellman, who had become the strike's chief organizer, drew on his experience as an activist in the 1960's civil rights struggles to develop strategies to mobilize support for the strike.

The institution of the mass meeting had the most direct connection to the civil rights movement. The idea for it was Kellman's; he had organized a number of mass meetings in Alabama churches to build political support for the independent political parties SNCC was

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[32] The comparison of the Jay Strike to "old fashioned labor struggles" was commented on frequently, not least by visiting labor reporters and historians at the Wednesday night "mass meetings. See the comments of James Green, U. Mass labor historian to the assembled crowd at a meeting on 12/23/1987, tape 19, Jay Strike Collection, ibid.

[33] Peter Kellman interview, 12/1/1990

organizing in 1966.[34] At the very least, the strike's organizers saw the meetings as a forum to keep strikers' families and supporters informed and to counter IP's mass-mediated explanations of the strike. Mass meetings quickly became the strike's communication hub. The progress or obstacles of contract negotiations were publicized, committee spokespeople gave updates, and reports of organizing successes or failures in the other striking locations were delivered weekly. The availability of timely, accurate information drew people to the meetings initially.

But the mass meetings soon became the focus of considerable psychic and social energies. Strikers and large segments of the wider community were intensely angered and enraged by IP's declaration that its workers were uneconomic and potentially redundant. In the mass meetings, people found an outlet for their rage. They mocked figures like Casey LaVoie, roared profanities at the mention of IP, and read poems that essentially damned "superscabs" (locals who crossed the picket line). In the process, they developed forms of expression that were central to the reimagining of community. Before long, Jay's community center was renamed the Labor Temple, in an attempt to capture the spirit of the insurgent unionism and expanding political consciousness that was evident every Wednesday night, and which made the mass meetings a

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[34] Peter Kellman interview, 2/17/1991

mecca for an international array of labor activists, radical academics, "labor-friendly" politicians, and unionists.

Cultural performances at the mass meetings were central to the inscription of a strike community.[35] Performances ranged from formally staged events like "The Strike Dance" or musical performances of labor songs, to more informal "readings" of letters, poems, and stories. The lines between performers and audience were often blurred, if not completely erased during a presentation. For instance, the performance of "The Strike Dance" included not only the dancers' interpretation of a strike, but also slide projections of both the 1912 textile strike in Lawrence and the Jay strike, a rendition of "Solidarity Forever" by the band, and the audience holding hands and singing along. Or, a story -- a recasting of the teller's personal experience of an earlier strike -- frequently would be commented upon, cheered, and embellished by the audience. These performances provided an important space to reimagine community in terms of class allegiance. This cultural construct led eventually to the subversion of IP's hegemonic definition of community as locality.

Renegotiating the boundaries of the strikers' community necessarily involved symbolic exclusions. Labor songs played an important part in this symbolic process of boundary maintenance. The Union Picketers, a local band comprised mostly of strikers, became a

[35] I have drawn here on Kirk W. Fuoss' (1997: 117-146) useful and eloquent analysis of the relationship between cultural performance and the inscription of strike communities in the 1930s.

favorite fixture at mass meetings by playing labor songs, which they often modified to mock and ridicule figures considered outside the community. Tellingly, they frequently mocked Casey LaVoie by making him the subject of the song "Union Buster." The lyrics of one of their most popular songs, *Scabs Out, Union In,*[36] distinguishes between insiders and outsiders in developing the notion of a strikers' community.

> From Pennsylvania up to Maine, Alabama and Wisconsin too
> The Paperworkers are out on strike, F&O and UPIU
>
> Fighting for our jobs and families and to keep our dignity
> And with the help of the whole labor movement, you know we're gonna whip IP
>
> Just a singin' scabs out, union in
> United Paperworkers are gonna win
>
> International Paper is a company up to its necks in money bags
> So it gives the bosses great big raises, and gives our jobs to scabs
>
> Well we're the ones that built IP
> We ain't takin' this lying down
>
> With the help of a little solidarity
> We're gonna bring old IP down[37]

The refrain, "scabs out, union in," became, in fact, a ubiquitous boundary marker. As a ritualized salutation, it demonstrated a speaker's commitment to the community. At the same time, it also turned physical terrain into representational space. Signs and banners painted

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[36] Written by Phil Wilayto, nd.

[37] Transcription mine, from The Union Picketers tape, "Solidarity Forever: Our Struggle Against the IP Company"

with this phrase were strategically placed along Route 4, the main road running through Jay and Livermore Falls, in a symbolic act of reclamation.

Similarly, ritualized uses of public space played a central role in the renegotiation of community. Strike parades and a contemporary form of what E.P. Thompson called *rough music* made a claim to community while simultaneously identifying known violators of accepted social relations.[38] One of the biggest strike parades took place on August 1, 1987, just two months into the strike, which gives a sense of how quickly a strike community formed. On that day, ten thousand people linked arms and marched with signs and banners through the streets of Jay toward the mill. Along the way, they passed mock graves of all the local strike-breakers, or "superscabs", chanted "scabs out, union in", sang "Solidarity Forever", and screamed profanities at IP's security guards who lined the roofs of the mill. Men, women, and children wore union shirts, hats, and jackets, either representing Local 14 or a visiting, supporting union affiliation. In this way, the strike parade demonstrated the strikers distance from IP, and made public -- publicized -- their withdrawal from its hegemonic community.

At the rally following the parade, a widely disparate group of speakers confronted directly IP's mass-mediated images of the strike. In a series of television ads addressed overtly to the "middle class" and tacitly

[38] E.P. Thompson (1993: 467-538)

to Maine's vast army of marginal workers and potential strikebreakers, IP framed the strike in a discourse of competitive logic. Actors representing school teachers, shop-owners, and professionals voiced their scripted concerns. In one, a gray-haired gentleman sitting in his comfortable home speaks directly into the camera:

> Gee, I didn't know the average hourly worker at IP earns over $37,000, not including benefits. I wish all workers were so fortunate. The union has a right to get its best deal, but everyone should be fair and considerate. If IP can't remain competitive in a tough market, we all lose. We all want Maine to work.[39]

Addressing the rally, Peter Kellman pulls apart the unified Maine referenced in the ad:

> Tourist maps never show the Rumfords, the Jays, the Madawashas, or the Millinockets. There are two Maines: east of route one and our Maine.[40]

Similarly, John Martin (Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives) casts IP as outsiders:

> "Mainers" are known as hard working people, willing to give a honest day's work for a honest day's pay. This strike centers around a financially healthy, out-of-state corporation wanting to take more out of Maine's hard working people. But, IP's competitive health is determined far more by international exchange rates than premium pay for Sunday work. The central issue in this strike is one of fairness for working men and women.[41]

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[39] Tape 4, Jay Strike Collection, ibid.

[40] Rally Tape, 8/1/1987, Jay Strike Collection (ibid)

[41] Rally Tape, 8/1/1987, Jay Strike Collection (ibid)

Both speakers subvert IP's carefully constructed rhetoric of community in an act of discursive reclamation, which simultaneously establishes a working class community wider than the locality and casts the corporation as an "out-of-state" parasitic entity.

This process of reclaiming community found a more culturally vibrant, if less articulate, form of expression in the course of the strike. Notably, "rough music" was invented. Although it is not clear how the practice started, at the end of each mass meeting, the participants drove their cars around the mill two or three times, all the while keeping their hands pressed on the horn and screaming out the windows. As at least a thousand people attended the meetings each week, the line of cars circling the mill often stretched for well over a mile. The cars drove exceedingly slowly, and made many stops to permit passengers to directly mock IP security personnel and guards. But the deafening roar of the horns never abated. "Rough Music", as E.P. Thompson describes it, "is a term . . . used to denote a rude cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery or hostility against individuals who offended against certain community norms."[42] In 19th century England, pots, pans, chamber pots, and other household items were used to make the "cacophonous" noise. The targets of protest where often figures like tax collectors and speculating landlords, who were seen as parasitic disrupters of older economic relations, which, although not egalitarian, were

[42] *E.P. Thompson (1993: 467)*

viewed as protected by reciprocal obligation and expectation.[43] Therefore, transgression of these accepted social relations and responsibilities was considered an injustice of the highest order. Thompson's definition places the *discordant horn music* within a long history of political and cultural protest, and shows a similar cultural logic for disparate groups of workers being marginalized within the social relations of production. This logic is clearly evident in the spontaneous invention of this form of protest during the strike. *Rough musicians* protested IP's violation of the terms of the Fordist bargain, with its reciprocal responsibilities, and demanded justice. In the process, they significantly redrew the boundaries of their community.

These manifold expressions of community formation and renegotiation sustained a remarkable local political movement. The extent of its achievements is captured by the conferred title of *The People's Republic of Jay*, a coinage employed by friend and foe alike. The political movement promoted and elected local papermakers in races for all five seats on Jay's Board of Selectmen and for a seat in the State Legislature. It passed the most stringent environmental legislation in the United States, which gave the town of Jay the responsibility for enforcing all environmental laws, as well as licensing and monitoring the disposal

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[43] Susan G. Davis (1988: 96-97)

and discharge of pollutants.[44] Its media campaign drove a substantial wedge into the paper industry's virtual informational monopoly in the region. And, it essentially took control of informal activities like Little League, various charities, and allocation of moneys for special events.

Remarkable as this political achievement was in the 1980s, it still begged the question of effectivity. This hard-won creation of a working class public and political formation still found the strikers isolated. They were isolated not because other unionists and political activists did not support them -- far from it -- but because their own union did not support them, at least not in the ways that mattered. The problem of building appropriate organizational forms to expand their movement became a pressing matter. Striker-activists worked on two fronts: the organizational and symbolic. While the symbolic construction of class loyalties significantly transformed ideas of class in the U.S., albeit for an all too brief moment, the organizational efforts ultimately ended in failure. Here, perhaps, is the greatest tragedy of the strike, and its greatest lesson.

Demonstrating Class: Imagining a Community of the Present and the Absent

The realization that UPIU had withdrawn support for expanding the strike beyond the four original locations came early, right at the end of

[44] Lewiston Daily Sun, 3/8/89 and 3/3/89; Maine Times, 3/3/89; Peter Kellman (1994: 20-27)

the first summer. In hindsight, the strikers were given a comic forewarning of UPIU's withdrawal during a massive support parade and rally on August 1st in Jay. Concluding his brief remarks to the crowd, UPIU regional representative Jimmy Dinardo flubbed the ritualized salutation, "scabs out, union in." Removing his ever present cigar from his mouth, Dinardo could only say, "strikers out, union in."[45] Within weeks, Dinardo's misspoken chant could easily have been mistaken for UPIU policy. Two incidents in August were telling. First, Wayne Glenn, UPIU president, scheduled a meeting in Memphis with the representatives of the four locations to unveil the union's plan for the "long haul." But, when the strikers arrived, they were told that the plan was not ready for review.[46] Shortly before, a contract for an IP mill in Hamilton, Ohio was allowed to expire without either the company or the union notifying the other. This was no mistake. The NLRB considers contracts that expire without the proper notification to be automatically renewed. Although Glenn had pledged not to sign any contracts until the strike was over, he found a loop-hole that allowed a contract to be renewed without any one having to sign.[47]

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[45] Rally Tape, 8/1/1987, Jay Strike Collection (ibid)

[46] Somewhat later, members of the Jay contingent were informed by an unnamed source that the plan had been developed and "pulled" at the last minute. Bill Merserve interview, 1/15/1991; Peter Kellman interview, 2/12/1991

[47] Bill Merserve interview, 1/15/1991; Peter Kellman interview, 2/12/1991

Reacting to this unspoken shift in policy, striking members of Local 14 decided to take the lead in building the strike. First, they developed a plan to expand the strike pool, which Bill Merserve sent to UPIU headquarters for distribution at the end of August, 1987. In brief, "The Plan" outlined numerous ways to improve communication among the geographically dispersed rank and file members of UPIU and expand the strike pool. A few days later, Wayne Glenn mailed "The Plan" to the membership with a cover letter that signaled his disapproval. One paragraph is particularly illustrative of Glenn's desire to maintain control of the strike:

> You may feel free to implement any or all parts of his suggestions; however, I don't think it is necessary to have groups traveling around the country. I think it would be much less expensive if we let our trained staff work on this problem in each location.[48]

This paragraph also suggests the ways in which grass-roots activity was undermined within the UPIU.

Members of Local 14 were forced to look for help outside UPIU. In the fall, Merserve and Kellman invited Ray Rogers, head of *Corporate Campaign*, to speak at a mass meeting. Rogers achieved both notoriety and infamy within the labor movement for his approach to labor strikes that combined a concerted media attack on corporations with grass-roots organizing. At the meeting, Rogers outlined a fairly comprehensive plan to take the strike beyond the locality, including secondary boycotts of

[48] Correspondence of William Merserve, Jay Strike Collection (ibid)

corporations tied to IP at the directorate level and the creation of a "structure to channel solidarity" not only within UPIU but in the wider-labor movement.[49] This was a message the audience was obviously ready to hear. The trick would be to get UPIU to hire Corporate Campaign.[50] Not surprisingly, Glenn was not receptive to Local 14's request. Before the strike even began, UPIU had retained the services the Camber Group, a "labor" consultant firm with powerful allies in the AFL-CIO, to develop a public relations campaign.[51] Even though this campaign was all but nonexistent, Glenn considered the hiring of Rogers and Corporate Campaign a duplication of effort. But Merserve pushed hard, and Rogers was eventually hired by UPIU in December.

Rogers developed a three-part strategy that centered on media campaigns and protests against corporations with directorate and financial ties to IP, a grass-roots initiative to mobilize support for the strike, and a program to unify the efforts of the four striking IP locations. Rogers' program was swiftly enacted and, by January, had forced the strike into national discourse.

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[49] Ray Rogers interview, 11/16/1990

[50] Based on numerous interviews with meeting participants

[51] Despite his self-proclaimed identification as a labor consultant, Victor Kamber has often been accused of guiding corporate public relations attacks on unions. See Jonathan Tasini's article in the Village Voice *(8/11/1992: 39-40)*

The media campaign, begun against IP and affiliated corporations in February, quickly had a tarnishing affect on the public image of all the corporations involved. More importantly, several unions declared that they would withdraw all funds from the Bank of Boston and PNC Financial Corporation because of their continued ties to IP. Within a month, IP called for joint negotiations with all four striking locations, a seeming reversal of its earlier policy of dealing with each local separately. But, IP made the termination of the corporate campaign a condition of these negotiations. Against the violent opposition of the striking locals, UPIU suspended campaign activities in anticipation of the negotiations. Not surprisingly, IP's offer to negotiate was a ruse to undermine the escalating impact of the corporate campaign. At the scheduled time, the company announced that the strikers were permanently replaced, and any negotiations would have to start with the acceptance of that point. After UPIU's strategic blunder in calling off the campaign, it became increasingly harder to enlist other unions to withdraw funds and other holdings from the targeted financial institutions. In fact, this aspect of the corporate campaign had relatively little success from that point on.

But, Local 14's "caravans" through Maine, New England, and, eventually, most of the U.S. constituted a significant moment in the re-imaging of class in the U.S. At each stop along their route, for example, the 50 members of the New England "caravan" staged a dramatic recreation of the political movement in Jay/Livermore Falls. They

marched into each town carrying union banners, spoke in schools and political gatherings during the day, and concluded with a mass rally in the evening. As both word of mouth and media coverage began to spread, and as the caravan made its way around the region, the crowds grew larger. By February, the caravan mobilized enormous financial and physical support for the strike. To take only one example, paper workers in the towns of Rumford and Westbrook, Maine increased their monthly dues and contributed over $11,000 a month to the strike fund. Even more, many working class communities in New England that the caravans visited held weekly "plant-gate" collections, and sent representatives to the weekly mass meetings to deliver the funds directly, an important gesture which held great symbolic significance.

On their own, the caravans were a distinct form of cultural production. They confronted, both physically and symbolically, the discontinuous territorialities and histories installed during Fordism. And, for a few months, Local 14 activists were seemingly everywhere: setting up picket lines in front of other IP mills, leading the 1988 labor day parade in New York City, waving strike banners and Jesse Jackson posters at the 1988 Democratic Convention, protesting in front of the Bank of Boston, and marching with striking professional football players. These circulations and crossings of paths in and through space fostered an emergent sense of class belonging. Suddenly, not only were Local 14 activists everywhere, but *everywhere* was in Jay/Livermore Falls. Jay

was the departure point for a truck convoy taking medical supplies, food, medicine, and clothing to Nicaragua. And, strikers in Jay/Livermore Falls baled hay for drought-stricken farmers in Ohio.

Clearly, the caravans were an important conduit of working class communication -- a mechanism to share stories, implant images of "solidarity" within local and national psyches, and overcome the regional differences constructed during Fordism. Yet, the images of the caravans are not easily encompassed by recent anthropological and historical frameworks of class and culture that privilege the local. As political and cultural mechanisms used to join disparate points on a working class map, the caravans demand more fluid metaphors than social historians usually employ. But, a number of useful images do exist in literatures that take social and spatial displacement as their primary focus of description and analysis. In Jack Conroy's proletarian novel, *The Disinherited,* for instance, cars are both a metaphor and a catalyst for an expanding political consciousness. Cars as metaphors bridge the rupture between localist forms of identity and a sense of class belonging. Larry Donovan's -- the novel's central protagonist -- ride out of town in the final scene defines a working class aesthetic of resistance. It is a symbolic transgression of the social and spatial markers of the political order.[52] Peter Linbaugh's parallel discussion of the importance of ships among the 18th century 'deep sea' proletariat widens and deepens our understanding

[52] Jack Conroy (1991 [1933])

of the cultural and political significance of elements of mobility in working class formation. His brilliant excavation of a pan-Atlantic working class treats ships as central sites of political dissent and cultural production. They were the most important conduits of communication among this transcultural working class. "Such pan-Atlantic interchanges, and the communities built upon them on ship and on port," writes Linebaugh, "are often regarded as marginal. The contrary may be true: they were the essence of the proletariat of merchant capital, and they were the basis of the circulation of rebellion in widely differing geographical and cultural settings."[53] In the spirit of Conroy's and Linebaugh's insightful explorations of mobility, I want to suggest that the strikers' caravans were both symbolic metaphors of transgression and the basis for a 'circulation of rebellion.'

Accordingly, the caravans were central to the inscription of a community of the present and the absent. As the approximately two hundred caravan members began to circle back to Jay/Livermore Falls, they conveyed their experiences through an emergent language of class. Witness the advice a returning caravan member offers to his peers about to embark on a trip:

> You hear about the struggles of oppressed people in Central America and other places fighting to gain rights and maintain dignity. They often have to carry weapons to make their point. We'll carry words in our fight. Let them know what's involved in

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[53] Peter Linebaugh (1991: 136 and passim).

> this fight. Eventually it will become clear, whether you're working for Eastern, IP, Ford, that in one day we can shut them all down.

These remarks, and countless others, demonstrate that the strikers' imagined community was increasingly inscribed by the idea of class allegiance. This new sense of class belonging fostered a momentary feeling of invincibility. Yet, by the second half of 1988, the strikers' faced the organizational limitations of contemporary unionism, and, eventually, a stunning defeat.

In March of 1988, Local 14 activists launched an "outreach" program to establish communication between local unions within the "IP system," and to explore the possibility of establishing a structure for joint decision making. Strikers from Jay/Livermore Falls traveled around the country, visiting unionists in as many IP locations as possible. Their travels brought them into contact with unionists from some twenty different international unions, including the IWA and the Teamsters, all of which represented workers in facilities owned by IP. These trips mobilized a great deal of support for the strike, but a forum was needed to consolidate that support. The IP pension council provided an embryonic organizational form to bring the disparate unions together. Representatives of all the unions within the IP system had a seat and a vote on the pension council. It was the only forum in which they had shared decision-making responsibilities. Local 14 initiated the idea of creating a parallel workers council, which would bring all IP workers into a common organization. In one of the council's first decisions, it initiated

the red shirt/blue shirt days. On red shirt days, participating locals worked at an extremely slow pace, a process that unionists call working-to-rule. Working-to-rule means following the company's work rules to the letter. It is impossible for companies to take action against this form of work slow-down because, technically, the workers are meeting their full work responsibilities. On blue shirt days, though, workers from participating locals worked at their regular pace, an act that, when juxtaposed to work slowdowns, demonstrated the extent of workers' control over production. In all, forty locals, many from different unions, participated in this work slow down. This cross-institutional cooperation was potentially a major threat to IP, because it demonstrated how quickly significant parts of its operations could be shut-down or made unproductive. But, it seemed to constitute more of a threat to UPIU. After the "IP Workers' Council" met to consider the idea of initiating a massive action to terminate all union agreements with IP, UPIU regional Vice Presidents and representatives began their subterranean efforts to forestall this action. Many actively refused to cooperate; others simply refused to set up meetings to bring the idea to their members.

Nonetheless, pressure built within the "IP Workers Council" to expand the strike pool. Consequently, the UPIU national leadership continued to publicly support the idea. Indeed, they helped push through a two-part agreement at the UPIU national convention in August to expand the pool. The first part of the agreement stated that any location

with an active contract with IP should push for it to be re-opened. This action would allow that location to join the strike pool. The second part of the agreement stipulated that the UPIU leadership would sign no consessionary contracts. Yet, contracts were negotiated at a number of IP locations within a month of the convention. UPIU allowed this because the regional Vice Presidents and representatives from those areas did not consider the contracts to be concessionary. Hopes of expanding the strike pool were rapidly diminishing.

It is significant that UPIU president, Wayne Glenn picked the next meeting of the "IP Workers' Council" as the moment to "call off" the strike. It was the first time that members from all 20 international unions within the IP system had gathered to consider a plan of action to bring the strike to an end. Wayne Glenn simply told the representatives from the striking locations that IP was presenting better contracts, and he was going to sign them. Glenn cautioned the representatives that they could continue to strike if they so desired, but UPIU would no longer support them.

And, so, the longest and, possibly, most bitter strike of the post-war period ended without fanfare or apology. Most workers from Jay/Livermore Falls and the other striking locations were "permanently replaced" during the strike. Very few ever regained their jobs. By 1991, only two hundred and fifty workers out of the original twelve hundred seventy-five in Jay/Livermore Falls were back at work in the mill. The

others became either contingent workers in the new "post-fordist" economy, or low-paid workers who earned their livelihood by working two or three part-time jobs.

Conclusion

From Locale to the Community of the Present and the Absent: Rethinking the Study of Working Class Culture

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[1]Frederick Engels' prescient urban ethnography, *The Condition of the Working Class in England,* firmly tied class formation to the 19th century city form itself. Engels identified the emergence of working class mass movements with the concentration of increasingly impoverished workers into class-segregated urban neighborhoods, a condition that facilitated the creation of autonomous institutions such as reading rooms, working men's clubs, and mutual-aid societies.[1] While brilliantly capturing the emergent class antagonisms of the factory system, Engels' mapping of 19th century urban space rested, unfortunately, on a homologous relationship between class formation and locale.[2] This seemingly homologous relationship identified by Engels is also the starting point of contemporary studies of working class culture. These may tone down his assumption of class formation as a natural and inevitable process or render it more complicated by the introduction of additional factors, but they still largely view the working class through

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[1] Frederick Engels (1969 [1892]). See, also, Eric Hobsbawm's introduction to Engels' text, and Ira Katznelson (1992: 141-156).

[2] Ira Katznelson (1992: 152)

the lens developed by Engels in the mid-19th century. Engels' influence is writ large in social history's linkage of working class resistance and autonomous communal traditions.[3] It also is clearly evident in the "new" historical sociology's identification of community as a 'natural' arena of working class cooperation and combination.[4] Engel's framework similarly informed the long excavation of "American exceptionalism." Werner Sombart's piercing but mistaken question, why is there no socialism in the U.S.?, has haunted generations of U.S. historians and sociologists who have tried to explain why workers in American industrial cities have been more quiescent than their European peers.[5]

The shifting temporal and spatial matrices of working class culture, evident in my study of Jay/Livermore Falls, are not easily encompassed by the line of inquiry that Engels established. As we have seen, not only have working class forms of association changed dramatically over the past century, but quite frequently the community has been reimagined and even its very borders have fluctuated markedly. This historical and

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[3] See the references in the introduction.

[4] This idea is found in Kim Voss' 1988: 330-364) study of the Knights of Labor, which is, in turn, included in a special issue of Theory and Society on "Solidary Logics", edited by Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly. Tilly's concluding remarks gives a special place to Voss' "reconceptualization" of the role of community in class formation which, against much historical evidence to the contrary, suggests that craft community institutions were central to working class formation. Engels' couplet of immerserization/class formation is, thus, reversed, but his logic retained.

[5] Werner Sombart (1906).

geographical flux was not generated solely within the locality; it was conditioned, as well, by larger processes of state, capital, and working class formation. The varied experiences of generations of workers in Jay/Livermore Falls powerfully illustrate that processes of class formation necessarily extend beyond the boundaries of any single locality. Even more, their experiences indicate that class formation is a process without guarantees.

This is not to retreat into historical pessimism. It is simply to suggest that the study of working class culture and formation demands a more nuanced theoretical framework. Marx's distinction of a class "in itself" and "for itself" provides a useful starting point. This distinction was at the core of Marx's historical method. It allowed him to interrogate the conditions in which an economic class was transformed into a powerful political and cultural force in society. For Marx, there was nothing inevitable about this transformation. Accordingly, he explored the impact of the Factory Acts, the Bonapartist state, national traditions, and forms of political organization -- to name just a few of the objects of Marx's theoretical gaze -- on working class formation.[6] Marx's methodological and theoretical innovation was to contextualize the "making" of a working class within unfolding manifestations of structural power.

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[6] *Key texts are the historical sketches in Capital, The Eighteenth* Brumaire, and Marx's various comments on the Paris Commune.

Marx's emphasis on contextualization has been a guiding thread throughout this study. Specifically, I have explored how the collectivizing significations, forms and practices of two historically discontinuous working class publics within Jay / Livermore Falls were successfully enucleated -- localized -- by both IP and the state.[7] The strikes of 1921 and 1987-88 were central moments in the making and unmaking of a powerful localism which became both an expression and structuring force of the fundamental relationships and orientations of local paperworkers and their families. During the 1987-88 strike, local paperworkers transgressed the boundaries of hegemonic incorporation in two significant ways. First, they moved beyond the parameters of the localist culture fostered by IP, inscribing a community of the present and the absent. Their highly theatrical enactments of class solidarity -- a key word in the strike -- were integral to the mobilization of new political identities both within the locality and well beyond its borders. Second, they confronted the enucleating containments of Fordist unionism by constructing alternative organizational forms that crossed the jurisdictional boundaries of UPIU. This latter transgression failed to accomplish the goal of winning the strike. At the same time, this organizational innovation, tentative as it may have been, highlighted the

[7] The process of enucleation is explored in Antonio Negri's (1994:51-122) philosophical investigation of the state's constitutionalization of labor.

extent to which decentralized labor relations had ensured predictability and accountability throughout the Fordist period.

Thus, the cultural and organizational struggles of Local 14 activists are enormously suggestive for an expanded understanding of class formation. They reveal that a class comes into being -- is formed -- through the creation of a network of connections among and between localities, and that those connections must be simultaneously cultural and organizational. In other words, they must both create meaning and enable action. As the Jay/Livermore Falls paperworkers' discovered, *meaning* without politically enabling organizational forms only goes so far. The struggles of Local 14 activists, like those of their elders in 1921, force us to rethink the notion of "autonomy" that pervades recent studies of working class communities. As we have seen, the historical geography of Jay/Livermore Falls has been informed and shaped by processes that transcended this single community, "moving through and beyond [it] and transforming [it] as they proceed."[8]

[8] Eric Wolf (1982: 17)

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IMAGE EVALUATION
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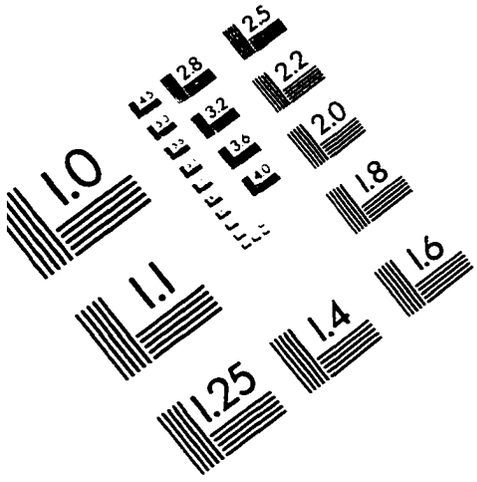

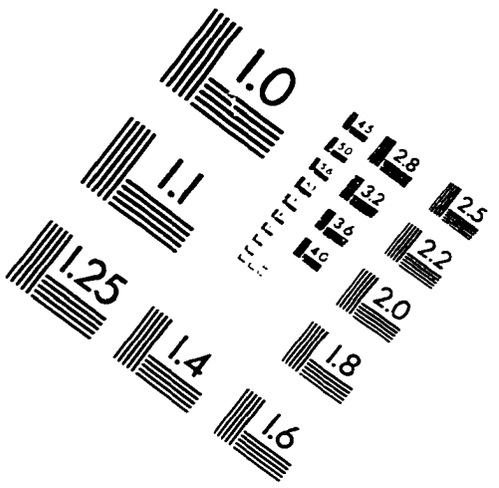

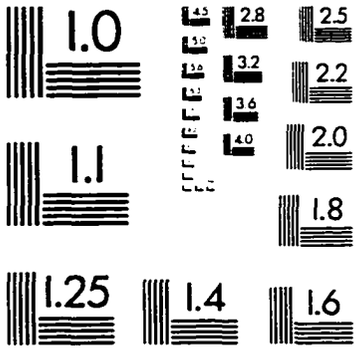

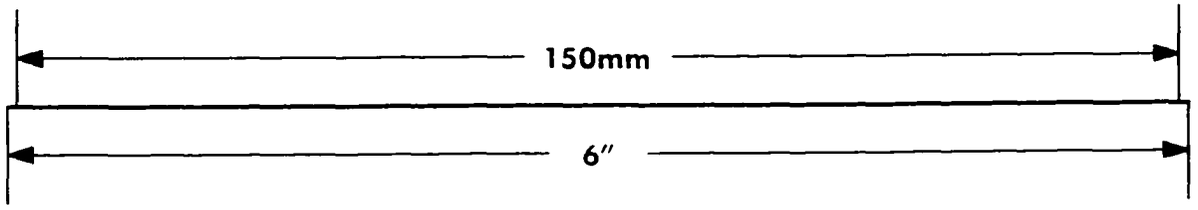

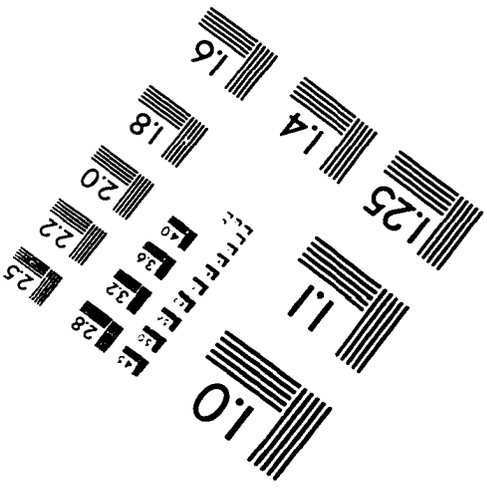

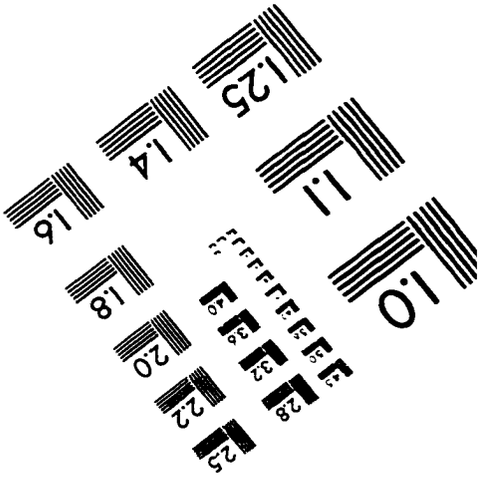

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