

Aim:

- What actions could workers have taken to improve their conditions during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?

It's 1911 and the worst industrial accident in American history has just occurred. 136 woman workers, most in them teens, have perished in a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory in Manhattan. In response, the New York State legislature has created a commission to investigate problems in factories and to recommend solutions to those problems. You are on that commission and have received four documents. Based on the information provided, identify the problems workers faced and for each make a recommendation on what should be done to address or solve that problem.





# Problems Faced by Workers

# Problems Faced by Workers

- Long hours
  - Child labor
  - Low wages
  - No job security
  - Unsafe working conditions
  - Poor/unhealthy working conditions
- lack of freedom*

Why as individuals would workers not have much power?

## Do Now:

- What could workers do to improve working conditions during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?

# Aim:

What actions could workers have taken to improve their conditions during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?

**Homework:** Textbook page 606 - Question #4

Do Now: What could each of the following do to improve working conditions during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?

- Government
- Industry
- Workers

# What government can do?

- Pass laws- child labor, minimum wage, safety

# What could Industry do?

# What workers can do

- Organize unions - Organization of workers that seeks to improve conditions, wages, etc. through the collective bargaining process
- Collective bargaining – negotiating with employers as a group rather than as individuals
- create political parties – have people run for office
- lobbying – trying to influence legislators who are favorable to your interests (talk to them, give them campaign contributions)

# What are the Weapons of Unions

- Strike – refusal to work
- Boycott – refusal to patronize strikebound company
- Picketing – parade outside workplace
- Publicity – appeal for public support (newspaper, radio, television)

- **Aim:** What efforts were made to limit the abuses of Big Business during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?

## **Homework**

- Friday 12/8 - Review Sheet due
- Monday 12/11 – Exam

**Do Now:** what tactics did management use as a weapon against unions?

# Obstacles Facing Unions

## 1. Tactics and power of Owners and Management (Homestead)

- Pinkertons
- Replacement workers
- Lockout - the exclusion of employees by their employer from their place of work until certain terms are agreed to.
- Blacklisting - put (a person or product) on a blacklist.

## 2. Public opinion was often against workers (Haymarket Incident)

- Believed unions were influenced by “radical” ideas like socialism and communism



## 3. Government – often sided with management (Pullman Strike - President sent in troops to move trains)

## 4. Changing nature of workplace – Mechanization decreased need for skilled workers. Unskilled workers easier to replace

# Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890)

- prohibited any “trust, combination or conspiracy that restrained interstate commerce.”
- often used against Unions (Eugene V. Debs - Pullman Strike).

# Early National Unions

## **Knights of Labor**

- Uriah Stephens, Terrence Powderly
- Industrial Union
- Welcomed all workers (skilled, unskilled, did not discriminate on account of ethnicity, race, gender)
- In addition to higher wages, better working conditions, supported broader goals (end to child labor, worker owned factories, BLS)
- Opposed strikes as a tactic

## **American Federation of Labor**

- Samuel Gompers
- Trade Unionism
- Skilled Workers only
- Locals usually discriminated
- “Bread and Butter Issues” (Higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions)
- Greater willingness to strike if collective bargaining broke down

# Types of Unions

- Trade Union – skilled workers all performing the same job (eg. electrician, plumbers, carpenters)
- Industrial Union – workers in same industry performing different jobs. Usually semi-skilled and unskilled workers. (eg. United Auto Workers)

- **Radical** - advocating thorough or complete political or social reform -
- **Conservative** - holding to traditional attitudes and values and cautious about change or innovation
- **Idealistic** - unrealistically aiming for perfection.