**(6:37) Industrialization and Immigration Reshape the United States**

**John Morrison Describes Work as a Mechanic in New York City**

Source: U.S. Senate, Report of the Committee upon the relations between Labor and Capital (Washington, 1885) pp. 755-759.

Senator: What is the prospect for a man now working in one of these machine shops, a man who is temperate and economical, to become a boss or a manufacturer of machinery?

Morrison: Well, speaking generally, there is no chance. They have lost all desire to become bosses now. The trade has become demoralized. First they earn so small wages; and next, it takes so much capital to become a boss now that they cannot think of it, because it takes all they can earn to live ... I understand that at the present day you could not start in the machinist’s business to compete successfully with any of these large firms with a capital of less than $20,000 or $30,000.

Question: What does John Morrison mean when he says that trade is “demoralized?”

**Jewish Immigrant Experience (1906)**

Source: Isaac Metzker , ed. *A Bintel Brief*, Ballantine Books ‑ New York

Esteemed Editor,

I hope that you will advise me in my present difficulty. I am a ‘greenhorn,’ only five weeks in the country, and a jeweler by trade. I come from Russia, where I left a blind father and a stepmother. Before I left, my father asked me not to forget him. I promised that I would send him the first money I earned in America.

When I arrived in New York I walked around for two weeks looking for a job, and the bosses told me it was after the season. In the third week I was lucky, and found a job at which I earn eight dollars a week. I worked, I paid my landlady board, I bought a few things to wear, and I have a few dollars in my pocket.

Now I want you to advise me what to do. Shall I send my father a few dollars for Passover, or should I keep the little money for myself? In this place the work will end soon and I may be left without a job. The question is how to deal with the situation. I will do as you tell me.

Your thankful reader, I.M.

ANSWER: The answer to this young man is that he should send his father a few dollars for Passover, because, since he is young, he will find it easier to earn a living than would his blind father in Russia.

**Jacob Riis Describes Life on the Lower East Side of New York**

Source: Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives (1890), pp. 43-44.

“That was a woman filling her pail by the hydrant you just bumped against. The sinks are in the hallway, that all the tenants may have access--and all to be poisoned alike by their summer stenches . . . listen! That hack cough, that tiny, helpless wail--what do they mean? The child is dying with measles. With half a chance it might have lived; but it had none. Come over here. Step carefully over this baby -- it is a baby, in spite of its rags and dirt . . . That baby’s parents live in the rear tenement here. A hundred thousand people lived in rear tenements in New York last year.”

**Question:** Why does Jacob Riis think “infant mortality” was so high in Lower East Side tenements?

**American Attitudes Toward Immigrants in the 1920s**

1. The following quotes were made by two Congressmen during the debate over immigration quotas in December, 1920 (Congressional Record, 1921).

Congressman James McClintic, Democrat Oklahoma: “I say the class of immigrants coming to the shores of the United States at this time are not the kind of people we want as citizens in this country.”

Congressman Lucian Parrish, Democrat Texas: “We should stop immigration entirely until such a time as we can amend our immigration laws and so write them that hereafter no one shall be admitted except he be in full sympathy with our constitution and laws.”

2. Nicolas Vanzetti was tried in Massachusetts twice, first for bank robbery and then for murder. In the first trial, Webster Thayer, who was the judge in both cases, told the jury: “This man, although he may not have actually committed the crime . . . is nevertheless morally culpable, because he is the enemy of our existing institutions.”

3. Statement by Bartolomeo Vanzetti, April 10, 1927: “Sacco too is a worker from his boyhood, a skilled worker, lover of work, with a good job and pay, a bank account, a good and lovely wife, two beautiful children and a neat little home at the verge of a wood, near a brook. Sacco is a heart, a faith, a character, a man; a man, lover of nature and of mankind. A man who gave all, who sacrifice all to the cause of Liberty, and to his love for mankind; money, rest, mundane ambitions, his wife, his children, himself and his own life. Sacco has never dreamt to steal, never to assassinate. He and I have never brought a morsel of bread to our mouths, from our childhood to today, which has not been gained by the sweat of our brows. Never.... Oh yes, I may be more witful as some have put it. I am a better babbler than he is, but many, many times in hearing his heartful voice ringing a faithful sublime, in considering his supreme sacrifice, remembering his heroism I felt small, small at the presence of his greatness and found myself compelled to fight back from my eyes the tears, and quench my heart trembling to my throat not to weep before him: this man called thief and assassin and doomed. But Sacco’s name will live in the hearts of people and in their gratitude, when... your laws, institutions, and your false gods are but a dim remembering of a cursed past in which man was wolf to the man. If it had not been for these things I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man’s understanding of man, as now we do by accident. Our words, our lives, our pains -- nothing! The taking of our lives -- lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler-- all! That last moment belongs to us -- that agony is our triumph.”

4. “Chicago Girl Urges General Protest Strike” was published in the Johnstown, Pa. *Tribune*, on August 10, 1927. It is about a female teenage Italian immigrant who led a political protest in Chicago against the threatened execution of Sacco and Vanzetti.

“A bright-eyed 18-year-old high school girl paced her cell at police headquarters today shouting she was an anarchist after having been arrested while leading thousands of shouting Sacco-Vanzetti sympathizers through the streets last night. It was the girl who brought chaos to an orderly Sacco-Vanzetti protest meeting. As the meeting ended she dashed to the street, shouting: “General strike! general strike!” This added a splash of color to the otherwise drab proceedings of the meeting and inflamed the gathering.

With the girl, Aurora D’Angela, at the lead, the crowd surged into the street and marched along shouting the “Third Internationale” and appealing for a general strike. For a few blocks the protest parade was orderly. Then a motor car was ripped and torn by the crowd. A street car was boarded and the girl slapped the motorman. One small police motor car attempted to stop the parade, but its passage was blocked. Additional police motor cars swept into the tide of shouting enthusiasts and tear gas bombs were unloosed into the crowd. The tear gas bombs caused the crowd to disperse and 15 of the leaders--including the 18-year-old girl--were arrested.

She maintained she had long attended Liberal meetings in Chicago and said: “I am an anarchist. My father was an anarchist.” Throughout the entire din there was a cry that Sacco and Vanzetti were being persecuted by capitalism. No signs were in evidence and the only means of identifying the crowd was in the constant shouting.