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CITY IN TURMOIL:
TAMPA AND THE STRIKE OF 1910

By JOE SCAGLIONE

STORM SURGE

As sixty mile an hour winds pounded sheets of rain across the Tampa area on 18 October 1910, the storm’s ferocity cut the city’s ties to the outside world. The heavy winds forced telegraph wires down. Two trains that connected Tampa with other parts of Florida could not be located. Officials thought them lost. But as this storm began to subside, allowing Tampans to begin surveying the damage in the early morning hours, a more dangerous whirlwind stirred the muddy rainswept streets of Ybor City and West Tampa.1 Three hundred "special police" armed with weapons patrolled the streets and avenues of the cigar manufacturing districts. This mobilized force, riding four men to an automobile, represented Tampa’s response to assassination, assault and arson. The Tampa Morning Tribune proclaimed that "No violence or disorder will be allowed within city limits-police to disperse mobs," and thus the armed patrols, including members of Tampa’s most prominent families, acted to enforce Tampa Mayor D. B. McKay’s edict in the Latin districts of Ybor City and West Tampa.2

The growing city of Tampa, Florida, with a population of 38,524 and West Tampa, with 8,258 citizens, entered the year 1910 riding high on a crest of prosperity and confidence.3 As the Tribune reported, Tampa had just completed the most prosperous fiscal year in its history, indicating a strong financial foundation.4 By October 1910, that foundation, the clear Havana cigar industry, was crumbling.

This industry, the lifeblood of Tampa’s economy, was paralyzed. Manufacturers had closed all factories in both Tampa and West Tampa, while opening branch factories in other Florida cities and in New York. Cigar workers had left the area in droves, some migrating to work in the new factory branches, while others returned to Havana or Key West. Those who stayed filled their idle time with meetings, marches, confrontations and violence. Tampa’s armed citizens’ patrols ruled the city streets.

Within this environment occurred one of the longest and most violent cigar industry strikes. The 1910 strike lasted seven months. One man was assassinated, two men were lynched, others were shot and assaulted.5 Three members of the Joint Advisory Board of the Cigarmakers International Union (CMIU) were convicted of "conspiring to prevent cigarmakers from working in Tampa’s cigar factories," and the welfare of both the cigar industry and the community suffered.6 The strike action of 1910 displayed a set of dynamics which belong exclusively to that event. However, this violent confrontation had its antecedents in the history of the cigar industry labor movement in Tampa and in the nature of the cigar worker himself.

A NEW INDUSTRY ARRIVES

The Tampa cigar trade owes its very birth to labor strife in other areas such as Key West and New York where union
movements had precipitated relocation. The decision to move the factories of Don Vicente Martinez Ybor and Ignacio Haya to Tampa in 1885 was based on a fear of continued labor strife. But labor troubles did not wait long to manifest themselves in this new location as a labor dispute delayed the opening of Ybor's El Príncipe de Gales factory. Ybor had hired a Spanish bookkeeper, and Cuban cigarmakers would not work until the Spaniard was removed. Ybor acceded to his employees demands. However, because of this delay, Haya's Factory No. 1 rolled the first production cigar in Tampa.

This incident illustrates the role that labor assumed in Tampa. Ybor and Haya had not shed themselves of labor dissent by their move. In the period from 1887 to 1894, the Tampa cigar factories witnessed 23 "walkouts." Major strikes occurred in 1899 (the weight strike), 1901 (La Resistencia), 1910, 1920 and 1931. The character of the cigar worker played a significant role in the nature and frequency of these strikes and walkouts.

The status of immigrant workers in the cigar factory was an important factor. John Bodnar contends, "Skilled workers could overcome ethnic differences in the formation of narrow craft unions." The interaction of Cuban, Spanish and Italian laborers in the Tampa factories produced such a blend. Aided by the educational exposure received from the "lector" or "reader", the craftsmen that tolled within the "galería", the cavernous workroom, became well-versed in the classics, as well as the political themes of the day. Many workers flocked to the powerful siren call of anarchism and socialism.

The education and philosophy, which these immigrant workers absorbed, wove their way into the community. Each night the stories and the latest news reached eager ears at the family dinner table. In this manner, the social and political issues of the day spread through the community, nurturing the socialization and politicalization of these new Americans in the process.

The nature of the factory work, inside the galería where hundreds of workers sat side by side, helped develop the labor temperament of cigarmakers. Mere proximity to quickly developing labor-management confrontations created an immediate and threatening response. Because a production-based industry must maintain operation in order to compete, the manufacturers normally met their employees' demands quickly for fear of losing productive capability over a trivial matter. In this sense, the character of the cigar factory laborer may have been slightly spoiled, as it was not until the 1901 strike, La Resistencia, that workers met with any substantial labor defeat.

The dissolution of the labor union called La Resistencia fueled the growth of the CMIU, which in 1910 claimed a membership of 6,000 in Tampa. In June 1910, the Clear Havana Manufacturers Association members in Tampa began dismissing local selectors and importing selectors from Cuba. This discharge ignited the feud that erupted into a full shutdown of Tampa's cigar trade over the manufacturers' refusal to recognize the union. On 25 July 1910, at the Vega Cigar factory eighty-five workers walked out at two P.M., because Vega, the owner, had refused to recognize the local union of the CMIU. The walkout would spread as other owners followed Vega's lead, and the strike would not officially end until 25 January 1911, when the CMIU's Joint
Advisory Board (JAB) declared the strike over.15

**RECOGNITION IS SERIOUS BUSINESS**

Union recognition is an important question which separates the employer and the employed. Recognition is an issue over the control of labor. Until a union is officially acknowledged as the representative agent of the employed, the employer may restrict his responsibilities to his employees to those mandated by law. Recognition creates a parallel power structure and a modus operandi by which both parties must contractually abide. This question transformed a grievance over the use of foreign selectors into a general strike that crippled Tampa in 1910.

The CMIU publicly announced its move for recognition during a mass meeting at The Labor Temple, 29 June 1910. Angelo Leto, a member of CMIU local No. 400, ignited the crowd declaring it was the manufacturers who were forcing the victimized cigarmakers to strike by not recognizing their union.16

Six days later on July 5th at the Bustillo Brothers and Diaz factory, the union organizing committee confronted the firm's bookkeeper, J. F. Easterling. Angered by their impertinence, Easterling pulled a gun and fired at one committee member, barely missing.17 This action made the bookkeeper a main target of union radicals.

The CMIU held another mass meeting on July 13th. The union excoriated the manufacturers' position as revealed in a newspaper article, which blamed the selectors for the labor strife. One union orator charged that within the last twenty days four to five thousand men had lost their jobs and up to two thousand had already left Tampa with more sure to follow.18 The *United States Tobacco Journal* backed the union's contention that the sole motive in the conflict was the manufacturers' refusal to recognize the union.19 Due to the violent dynamics of this struggle, issues of race, ethnicity and class also surfaced. But the central driving force was the pursuit for union recognition.

**THE LINE IS DRAWN**

Neither side would back away easily. The line was drawn in the leaves of tobacco left rotting on factory floors, and each dared the other to cross. The owners began using police to protect their factories against union subversion.20 The use of "special police" to augment the regular force reached immense proportions before the strike ended. Tampa recruited many of these special police from other towns and cities in Florida.21 During Tampa's mayoral campaign in April 1910, D. B. McKay, the White Municipal Party candidate, bragged about his part in the 1901 strike and the use of "citizens' committee" to destroy *La Resistencia*. He declared there had been "a demand for the action of determined men."22

The use of special police and citizens' committees was nothing new. In 1886, when Tampa secured the fledgling cigar industry, the city's Board of Trade, the antecedent to today's Chamber of Commerce, guaranteed Ybor and Haya protection against agitators who might interrupt business-as-usual.23 With the recent memory of the Haymarket Riot in May 1886, the union's power to disrupt remained a very real fear. In later years, the 1892 confrontation between Pinkerton detectives and steel workers at Andrew Carnegie's Mills and the 1894
Pullman Company conflict served to revive the fearful images of union violence.\textsuperscript{24} The citizens’ committees discouraged this behavior. They consisted of the community's leading businessmen and acted as vigilante groups, though many times sanctioned by local law. These committees used whatever means, legal or not, to cleanse their communities of undesirable elements.\textsuperscript{25} In 1901, a citizens’ committee in Tampa had severed the strength of La Resistencia by forcibly placing thirteen union leaders on a steamship bound for the Honduras coast where they were left and warned "never to return to Tampa on pain of death."\textsuperscript{26} McKay's reminder of that action during his 1910 mayoral campaign had stirred bitter memories.\textsuperscript{27}

The citizens' committees played an important role in the labor disruption of 1910 as well. As representatives of the business interests and power structure, these committees mirrored Tampa's prevailing racial and ethnic biases. Two contemporary editorial statements serve as example. The Wauchula Advocate exhorted, "If Tampa would import a few hundred Irishmen with stout blackthorns, it would have less trouble with its 'eyetalians'."\textsuperscript{28} The Bradenton Journal followed the Advocate's lead by claiming that the Italian workers were the chief perpetrators of the violence, stating, "Tampa is not the only place where Italians have proven themselves undesirable citizens."\textsuperscript{29} A 1909 editorial in the Tampa Morning Tribune, referring to the number of assassinations in Tampa's Italian community, provides a glimpse into the attitude toward that ethnic group:

"...not one Italian has been punished for any degree of homicide. The spectacle of two or three Italians hanging from the gallows would be very edifying and effective about now."\textsuperscript{30}

Terms such as "'undesirable element", "anarchist" and radical were labels used to describe any and all components of society which did not conform to the predominant white-Anglo view of society. Those within the Tampa immigrant community owned a different view. In 1980, Joe Maniscalco reminisced about the strike and the nature of the Italian community:

"The people didn't know we had a strike! The way the people, they take care of each other. All you can thank the Italian people that had the businesses, the grocery stores, the wholesale house. They used to give food to the people."\textsuperscript{31}

These two contrasting views are both valid: one of condemnation of the Italian community inflamed by the rhetoric of the newspapers and the power elite; the other, the nostalgic memories of an old man, who as a boy found comfort and trust among his fellow Italians.\textsuperscript{32} The Tribune provided another more poignant side of the dilemma, that of the afflicted immigrant families:

"There came to The Tribune office yesterday a woman of middle age, scantily dressed, bearing in her hand wrapped in a bit of greasy paper, a half pound of the fattest of fat bacon. She is the wife of a cigarmaker who has been out of work, on account of the strike, for fifteen weeks. At a hovel which serves as a home in West Tampa, this woman has six children ... the wife and mother worked as a stripper (of tobacco stems) in a cigar factory while her husband made cigars in another. (Since the strike) they have been sus-
tained by the dole given out by the well-paid leaders of the cigarmakers—they have been the beneficiaries of the joint Advisory Board. The woman spoke with the earnestness and the pathos of distress and hopelessness in her voice and the tragedy of want upon her face ... The piece of bacon ... was the piece de resistance of the dole of sustenance given her by the order of the joint Advisory Board. A dog would not have eaten it. This was meat for man, woman and six hungry children. In addition, she got ten cents worth of stale beans, ten cents worth of wormy grits, and few ounces of cooking necessaries."

Rhetoric or truth, the image is heart-wrenching. The Tribune offered to release the name of the woman to those wishing to be of help to her family.

THE HEAD OF THE DRAGON

The joint Advisory Board (JAB) was the central committee which represented the CMIU membership in negotiations with the manufacturers. As the strike expanded, the JAB assumed more control over the striking workers. The leaders of this committee were staunch union men. Jose de la Campa, Brit Russell, J. F.Bartlum and others took the lead in the movement.

Manufacturers began to use the special police to protect their factories and their remaining workers against union agitators. Agents of the United States Immigration Department began to deport alien selectors. Tensions mounted. The Tampa Board of Trade decided to intervene and set up a committee of ten citizens to help settle the strike. However, in a three hour meeting in which the committee mediated between the manufacturers and the JAB, the issue of union recognition once more divided the groups. The proceedings adjourned, as the Board of Trade, frustrated at the impasse, admitted defeat in late August.

Tampa’s economic welfare deteriorated quickly. The Balbin Brothers factory of West Tampa had relocated to St. Augustine. They utilized many workers in this “branch factory” who had previously worked in Tampa. Tampa manufacturers discharged ninety percent of the remaining laborers in late August, leaving only an average of fifteen workers at some factories.

Other Florida cities such as Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Miami and Palatka benefited from the strike, as owners established more branch factories. These and other southern cities, Mobile, Alabama for one, offered enticements to manufacturers to permanently relocate. The Pensacola Journal observed, “Tampa cigars are now made in Key West and Miami.

The strike, now one of massive proportions, was affecting all segments of society, especially the citizens of Tampa and West Tampa. Family squabbles increased. Several ended up in police court. The conflict ruined the business of the traveling cigar salesman, who, after many years of building profitable routes, now had no product to sell and was losing clients. Even boarding houses reflected the bad times. In some boarding houses with a majority of union laborers as tenants, non-union residents were forced to find other lodging. Upon doing so and establishing a non-union majority in their new home, they forced the union men already living there to move. This created segregated living arrangements. The Tribune agitated to rid Tampa of undesirable elements, prompting police who began...
arresting "vagrants, panhandlers and human parasites who thrive on the illicit earnings of women." Arbitrary arrests, based on mere insinuation and innuendo, threatened civil rights in Tampa.

The atmosphere, more tense each day, turned Tampa into a city on the brink of chaos. Manufacturers insisted on opening their factories. Sheriff Jackson pleaded with the citizenry not to react with violence. But no one listened.

**BY THE MIGHTY SWORD**

As August ended, and two factories began to open in West Tampa, a crowd converged on the Santaella factory. Mayor Brady of West Tampa (a separate municipality from Tampa at that time) ordered police to disperse the crowd. Searching men as they went through the crowd, they found three with concealed weapons and arrested them. The mob, now more agitated, refused to scatter. Mayor Brady then summoned the Fire Department and ordered them to open fire with high pressure water hoses, which finally dispersed the angry throng.

Several unionists tried to persuade non-union laborers not to return to the opened factories and gunfire erupted. A saloon owner in West Tampa, ambushed at Pine Street and Cleveland, died of two shotgun blasts. No witnesses came forward. As violence mounted, manufacturers locked factory doors and "hung up the 'Nothing Doing' sign," signifying the industry was shut down indefinitely.

In the midst of these events, Labor Day 1910 was celebrated with picnics and the grandest of parades, which wound its way through streets of Ybor City, as if mocking the violence of recent days. The *Tribune* called this day the "greatest Labor Day festival in history." Several days later on 11 September 1910, a benefit picnic with all proceeds given to the union was held at Sulphur Springs. But the violence resumed when a mob severely beat an old Italian cigarmaker. Gunmen fired at the foreman of Valle and Company. A gunbattle ensued in which police apprehended one of the assailants. A Large number of police at the train station cleared the platform of loiterers. Other groups of police wandered through a large crowd in Ybor City searching people. They arrested two for concealed weapons. By mid-September, the civil condition bordered on anarchy.

**EASTERLING AND THE TWO ITALIANS**

The event which ignited the powder keg occurred on 14 September 1910. A mob met J. F. Easterling in front of the Bustillo Brothers' and Diaz factory at 1:30 in the afternoon. As he attempted to enter the factory, gunfire erupted, and the bookkeeper fell wounded. The forty-nine year old Easterling had worked for Bustillo Brothers' for four years. The *Tribune* quickly incited the public now that "the first American" had been attacked "as an outgrowth of the present differences."

The Tribune then published what the Anglo-white population was thinking, "Easterling is and must be the very last American to be attacked in this bold, blood-thirsty manner." Mayor McKay followed suit by promising a renewed commitment to the protection of life and property.

The Police Department had clues concerning three men involved in the shooting but were not releasing information. Finally, at six
o'clock P.M. on September 20th, authorities arrested Castenge Ficarrotta, a forty-five year old unemployed Italian, and Angelo Albano, a twenty-five year old Italian insurance salesman. Both men were from West Tampa. At nine o'clock, while being transported to the county jail by two officers in a horse pulled "hack", a mob overtook the group and aimed guns at the officers’ heads. The two Italians were abducted.

The following morning both men hung from a huge oak tree at the corner of Grand Central (now Kennedy Boulevard) and Howard Avenue. A sign pinned to Albano’s trousers warned,

"Others take notice or go the same way. We know seven more. We are watching. If any more citizens are molested, look out.

Edwin Lambright remembered that morning and how people coming down Grand Central Avenue found the bodies of the two men hanging from the tree along the side of the road. Lambright noted that Ficarrotta and Albano had been among the crowd from which the shots were fired at Easterling. A Tribune editorial discussed the lynching of the two Italians and argued that this action delivered "the verdict that the people of this city will not tolerate the ‘business’ of assassination for hire." A coroner’s jury investigating the lynching adjourned after one week without determining who was responsible.

Threatening letters promising the same fate awaited them were sent to de la Campa and other members of the JAB. Florida Governor Gilchrist inquired into the nature of the threats.

But the status of the strike remained the same.

On September 28th Easterling, thought to be recovering nicely, died suddenly of a stomach ulceration, possibly complicated by the bullet damage.

As September gave way to October, arson became another tool against the manufacturers and their business allies. On October 1st fire completely destroyed the Balbin Brothers factory in three-quarters of an hour. That same night a quick response by the Fire Department saved the Tribune building from the same fate. The following day three hundred cigar workers exited the city by steamship en route to Key West. The citizens of Tampa determined to stop these incendiary acts, incited by the Tribune against the "anarchistic, lawdefying element" in the community.

THE CITIZENS TAKE CONTROL

Enraged by assassination, arson and assault, and stirred by the burning words of the Tribune, the citizens of Tampa seized control. On October 4th a group of professional and business men representing the economic interests of the city assembled at the courthouse. During this mass meeting, the convocation appointed Colonel Hugh C. McFarlane as Chairman of the newly formed Citizens' Committee. Mayor McKay also took part. A strong sense of purpose and a rallying cry to the patriotic duty of each citizen characterized this meeting. The assembly adopted resolutions guaranteeing the protection of the manufacturers and the workers who wished to return to work and called for all those who had left Tampa, workers and owners, to return. The Citizens' Committee resolutions also held the JAB responsible for any further "acts of lawlessness."
The Manufacturers’ Association responded by meeting with the Citizens’ Committee on October 10th and by accepting the Committee’s guarantee of protection if the owners reopened their factories. In reaction to this move, the Building Trade Council, a group of seven trade unions, vowed to morally and financially support the striking cigarmakers. Now with new found support, the JAB acted defiantly, threatening to ship the cigarmakers out from Tampa if the Citizens’ Committee exerted control. Tension in Tampa was now at a fever pitch.

The owners decided to reopen the thirty-six factories they had closed and to offer work to all who applied. The Citizens’ Committee had two hundred armed men ready to respond to any trouble.

On 17 October 1910, in a blitzkrieg of activity, the Citizens’ Committee arrested Jose de la Campa, Brit Russell, J. F. Bartlum and two others, setting their bail at $3,000 each. The original charges included "the premeditated intent of causing the death of J. F. Easterling," as well as several counts of "conspiracy to prevent workmen from returning to work." Though the charge concerning Easterling was later dropped, a jury found the trio, de la Campa, Russell and Bartlum, guilty of the charges pertaining to their interference with the rights of workers to work.

With this massive show of force, the Citizens' Committee now controlled Tampa. The purpose of their patrols was two-fold: first to liberate the cigarmakers from the influence of their despotic leadership and secondly to allow them to return to the factories without the threat of any harm. The Committee succeeded in both these goals. The Tribune praised the citizens of Tampa for boldly seizing control of the conflict in spite of great personal risk.

Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor (of which the CMIU was a member), complained to Florida Governor Gilchrist about the tactics and the treatment of the jailed strike leaders. The Governor visited Tampa himself and investigated, finding the Citizens' Committee and all local officials innocent of Gompers' charges and justified in their actions. By November 1st workers were slowly returning and factories were reopening in response to their return. Radical strikers circulated a manifesto which advocated the use of violence and proclaimed, "Let all strike breakers be damned for now and forever." But these threats had little effect as cigar workers tired of the strife. Workers were returning in larger numbers, confident of Tampa's future.

Val Antuono, an Italian immigrant entrepreneur, placed an advertisement in the Tribune, asking for "one hundred boys or girls to learn cigarmaker's trade-can earn wages of $15 to $20 a week within less than six months."

Through the month of December, workers trickled back to the work benches. By 23 January 1911, twenty-three hundred and sixty cigarmakers, selectors, packers and stuffers had returned to Association factories. Italians, many of whom remembered being called "strike breakers" during the 1901 strike, stubbornly held out until the last. The owners considered the Italian workers to be the key to the lingering clash. The owners also believed once the Italians returned others would follow.

Finally, on 25 January 1911, the joint Advisory Board and the local cigar union
executive boards declared the cigar strike ended by a unanimous vote. The vote of the individual members was overwhelmingly in favor of ending the strike, although some diehard radicals objected.89

On January 29th, the manufacturers announced the closing of the branch factories. Hundreds of workers, who had been working in Key West and Havana, applied for Jobs in Tampa. The P. and O. Steamship Lines and two Atlantic Coastline railway trains were full carting returning cigar craftsmen to Tampa.90

THE COSTS OF THE STRIKE

The strike of 1910 exacted many high costs. The most dramatic were, of course, the lives of Easterling, Ficarrotta, Albano and Martino (the West Tampa saloon keeper). Other human costs, such as the dislocation of masses of people, starvation of children, the breakup of families, merely give testimony to the vastness of human suffering incurred by many of the participants. These sacrifices overshadow and outweigh any economic losses that occurred.

Economically, the cigar output of 1910 dropped off over sixty-five million cigars from 1909. One quarter of a million dollars per week was lost in payrolls. General business losses in Tampa amounted to $350,000 per week, and the cigar industry itself sacrificed fifteen million dollars in orders.91

TAMPA, THE NEXT GREAT CITY?

In spite of the setbacks, Tampa also registered many impressive gains during this volatile year. An election annexed East Tampa to the city of Tampa and the port area as well.92 The Port of Tampa, in terms of tonnage and valuation of gross business, outperformed all previous years with a 34 percent increase in tonnage over 1909, reaching a total of 1,105,751 gross tons.93 The Tribune reported that the banking industry had experienced its most lucrative year in history.94 Tampa Electric recorded its biggest gain in history as well.95 The Customs House, a barometer of the cigar industry’s import and export activity, experienced the biggest day since the beginning of the strike on 30 January 1911.96 Building permits increased $135,000 to $1,685,586, while the phosphate industry increased tonnage by 428,000 tons to 1,469,317 tons. Post office receipts also increased $3 1,000 to $169,106. One area to show a loss was the internal revenue, with a loss of $163 ’000.97

Though 1910 did not reach the zenith that business leaders had predicted, the year did manage some successes as reflected by these statistics.

EPILOGUE

Tampa’s labor movement received a deafening blow from the events of 1910, but just as it had rebounded from the destruction of La Resistencia in 1901, labor survived. The strike of 1910 stands important because it mirrored many attitudes and values held across America during that day. Attitudes toward immigrant populations, primarily arriving from southern and eastern Europe, as well as the Orient, challenged the security of the Anglo-Saxon traditions of the power elite. In Tampa a cacophony of foreign languages blended into a harmonious mix in the galeria, as, side by side, Italian, Cuban, Spanish and American craftsmen created art, and the black or white colors of the artisans’ skin could not be detected in the laughter,
the sweat, the toll and the solidarity of the workplace. Outside the workplace, there existed a different reality.

The existence of a white power structure in one-industry towns such as Tampa underscored the realities of immigrant communities. Many improprieties of the immigrant laboring class were overlooked as long as the status quo was maintained, and production was not threatened. But if threats to prosperity did occur, as in Tampa, the ruling class possessed several tools with which to assert control. These tools were utilized in the 1910 strike once the struggle had spread beyond the immigrant enclaves to menace the lives of American citizens, as did the assassination of Easterling and arson at the Tribune building.

Among the most potent of the tools available to the power structure were lynching, police action and citizens’ committees. In Tampa the citizenry employed all three means to terrorize the immigrant workers in order to reassert control over the means of production, the labor force. Lynching was commonly used in 1910 against blacks and foreign elements deemed "undesirable." Within this context, the lynching of Ficarrotta and Albano gains more sociological significance as a phenomenon of the mentality of that era.

The use of "special police", local country ruffians itching to prove the superiority of red-blooded Americans over any foreign element, suspended the basic civil rights of all citizens and placed the city in the hands of legalized thugs.

Of the three tools, the Citizens’ Committee proved the most powerful, as this method validated the use of lynching and special police as arms of Justice as determined by the city’s white ruling class. In 1901 and again in 1910, a Citizens’ Committee had stripped the union and its members of due process of law in a conspiratorial manner covered up by the legal infrastructure. The importance of these committees can not be overemphasized, as they meted out justice born of economic necessity to preserve the industry on which Tampa’s fortunes rested.

In labor’s defense, it fell victim to the dynamics of the time, a period when things foreign fell suspect to microscopic inspection and rejection. Among those foreign “things” were the philosophies, the customs and the languages which tended to make acculturation difficult for the immigrant laboring class. In general this difficulty facilitated an additional form of control by which the ruling power elite could manipulate immigrant labor. However, the nature of the cigar worker as an artisan and the environment of the galeria with the lector acting as an educational tool all worked to create an anomaly: skilled craftsmen who were receiving education while on the job in an atmosphere conducive to social and intellectual growth. Perhaps this condition within the factory was the element which cemented the strikers' resolve in the cigar industry.

The strike of 1910, along with its other incarnations already noted, left a legacy of labor-management conflict which influenced the long range attitude toward labor in the city of Tampa and the state of Florida. The battle over union recognition continues today, and the fight over closed shops in Florida is one which remains an enigma to contemporary labor leaders. They may do well to search for the seeds of this dilemma in the early labor movement among the cigar workers and in the strike of 1910, in particular.
Abbreviations to be used:

TMT- The Tampa Morning Tribune
USTJ- United States Tobacco Journal


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7 L. Glenn Westfall, Research Study for the Development of the Ybor City Museum (Bureau of Historic Sites and Properties, ) 165.

8 Ibid.


10 Ibid., 111.


12 Mormino and Pozzetta, Immigrant World, 112.

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15 "Advisory Board Brings Strike Of Cigar Workers To Final End," TMT, 26 Jan 1911: 1.


17 "Members Of Committee Get Warm Reception," TMT, 6 Jul 1910: 12.


19 "Unknown Title", USTJ, 24 Aug 1910: page unknown.


21 "100 Policemen Assigned Duty," TMT, 18 Sept 1910: 3.


23 Westfall, Research Study, 165

24 Ibid., 159-160.

25 Ibid., 160.

26 Mormino and Pozzetta, Immigrant World, 117.


31 Joe Maniscalco, Mormino/Pozzetta interview, 3 Apr 1980.

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57 Ibid.

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