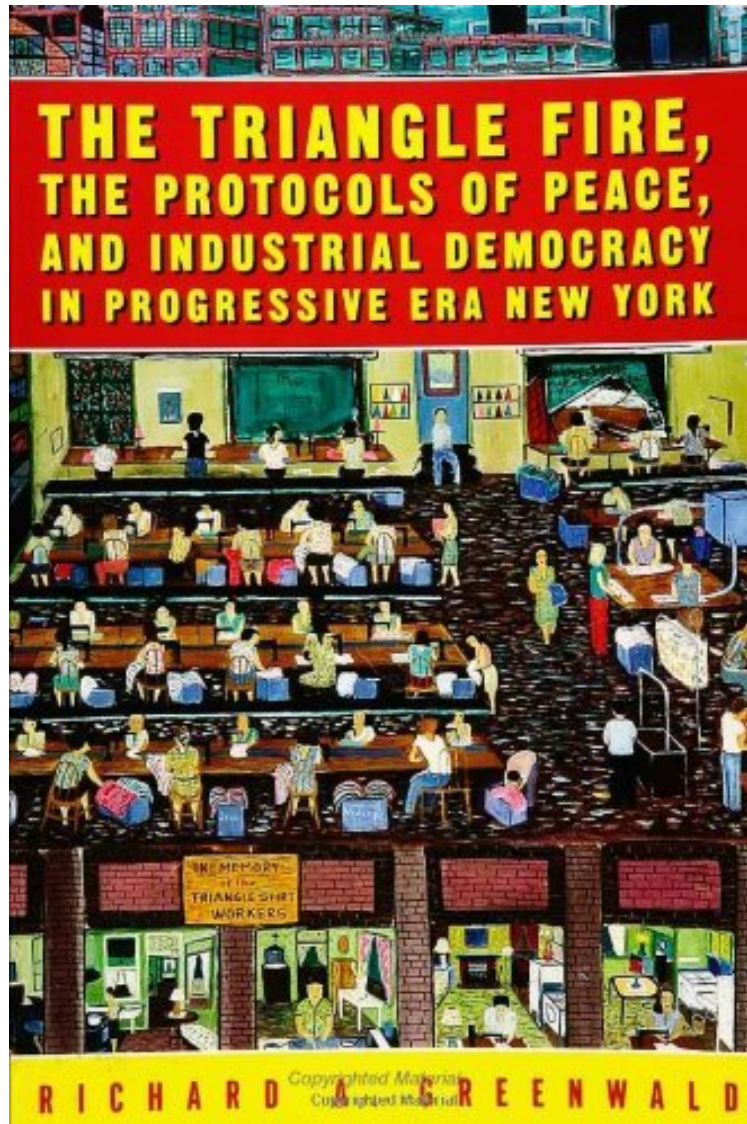


[Download free pdf] The Triangle Fire, Protocols Of Peace: And Industrial Democracy In Progressive (Labor In Crisis)

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Richard Greenwald

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Richard Greenwald : The Triangle Fire, Protocols Of Peace: And Industrial Democracy In Progressive (Labor In Crisis) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Triangle Fire, Protocols Of Peace: And Industrial Democracy In Progressive (Labor In Crisis):

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. First attempts at tri-partite industrial democracyBy J. GrattanThe working lives of garment workers in NYC in the early 20th century were horrendous: working conditions were

miserable, unsafe, and unhealthful with autocratic employers subjecting employees to abuses and arbitrary rules, like having to pay for needles and thread, which was a not subtle way of cheating workers out of their already meager pay. This book is about the Progressive era reaction and solution to that workplace regime involving the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), middle class reformers and experts, the Factory Investigating Commission (FIC), an arm of the NY legislature, and the garment workers themselves. The fire at the Triangle Company, located in the upper floors of the Asch Building in NYC and devoid of fire safety measures, where 146 shirtwaist-making women were trapped in a fire either burning or leaping to their death on March 25, 1911, served as a catalyst for the solidification of reform measures. The book begins with the Uprising of Twenty Thousand, an industry-wide strike coordinated by the shirtwaist makers' union (a division of the ILGWU) in 1909. The owners and other forces of reaction overplayed their hands, as middle class society of NYC was aghast at the abuse that young striking women were subjected to on picket lines by thugs and policemen and by officers of the legal system. That public focus facilitated settlements with some improved working conditions, although Triangle workers returned to work with no new settlement with fatal consequences. However the Great Revolt the next year involving 75 thousand cloak-makers (also a division of the ILGWU) finally achieved what Progressive reformers wanted: the clipping of the wings of unfettered business with tri-partite oversight involving the public, business, and workers represented by a union. The Protocols of Peace was a private agreement between the cloak-makers business association and the ILGWU that sought to define nearly all facets of the cloak-making business involving labor. No longer could workers simply walk off the job over a dispute. Instead all grievances had to be tendered to a multi-step grievance process while work continued. Union workers also gained the right of preferential hiring. Piece rates were now subject to joint consultation via shop committees. While the Protocols was a private agreement, designated neutral public members sat on boards at the highest levels. Industrial democracy is a concept that gets considerable attention in this book and apparently had some resonance in that era. But its meaning is disputed. For many, industrial democracy may conjure a direct role for workers, perhaps through worker bodies, of defining and controlling most all aspects of work and directly negotiating compensation. Yet that is hardly what the "peacemakers," that is the reformers, had in mind. The ILGWU's role was more to discipline workers and enforce the agreement than empower workers. Those different perspectives did clash. Workers became unhappy with such issues as the slow process of grievance settlement, the setting of piece rates, and employers ignoring union preferential hiring. Workers inevitably engaged in wildcat strikes to force resolutions, which were violations of the no-strike provisions of the Protocol. Both the shortcomings of Protocolism and the tragic, yet highly preventable, deaths of over one-hundred workers in the Triangle fire spurred the formation of the FIC in June, 1911. In addition, Tammany Hall, the Democratic political machine in NY and dependent on working class voters, realized the necessity and opportunity to be pro-active concerning working conditions for their supporters. Two Tammany politicians, Al Smith and Robert Wagner, later of national stature, led the efforts to create the FIC to propose and enact pro-worker legislation. The FIC paralleled the Protocols in many ways as many reformers, intellectuals, etc worked with both bodies and addressed many of the same issues. Frances Perkins, a social worker later to become FDR's labor secretary, was a key figure in both bodies. The actions of the FIC advanced notions initiated by the Protocols with the difference being that legislation applied to all targeted citizens of the legislation with at least the possibility of state-led enforcement. Fire safety and sanitation issues were first on the FIC agenda followed by gender- and age-based legislation designed to protect the health of the targeted workers by limiting hours and night work. Non-gendered legislation, like minimum wage laws, proved to be fatally divisive to the FIC. Both the Protocols and the FIC had either dissolved or lost effectiveness by 1916, though most of the FIC legislation remained in place. The idea of tripartite regulation of business had lost credence by the early 1920s, only to be revived in the New Deal by many of those individuals involved in the NYC garment wars. The book only covers a few years in one state - mostly one city, though the largest in the US - in an experiment in a nebulously defined industrial democracy. One is struck by the difficulty that workers had then and now in establishing humane and just workplaces and the fragility in maintaining any gains. The book is definitely an insider labor relations book with assumptions being made about labor movement organization and labor terminology. The book proceeds first on the Protocol track and then secondly on the FIC track. Though occurring during the same time frame, the interactions and cross-impacts between the two are barely described. So many individuals and formal organizations, like boards, are named that at times maintaining continuity is difficult. For example, what "Board" is being discussed? Secondly, the author declines to offer much in the greater significance of the events and actions discussed. For example, where do garment workers of today stand? Is there the equivalent of the Protocols? How is industrial democracy viewed today by workers? By business? By the state? However, the book is a worthwhile contribution to the history of labor in America. It provides better context than most books that are concerned only with the Triangle fire.

America searched for an answer to "The Labor Question" during the Progressive Era in an effort to avoid the unrest and violence that flared so often in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the ladies' garment industry, a unique experiment in industrial democracy brought together labor, management, and the public. As Richard Greenwald explains, it was an attempt to "square free market capitalism with ideals of democracy to provide a fair and

just workplace." Led by Louis Brandeis, this group negotiated the "Protocols of Peace." But in the midst of this experiment, 146 mostly young, immigrant women died in the Triangle Factory Fire of 1911. As a result of the fire, a second, interrelated experiment, New York's Factory Investigating Commission (FIC)—led by Robert Wagner and Al Smith—created one of the largest reform successes of the period. The Triangle Fire, the Protocols of Peace, and Industrial Democracy in Progressive Era New York uses these linked episodes to show the increasing interdependence of labor, industry, and the state. Greenwald explains how the Protocols and the FIC best illustrate the transformation of industrial democracy and the struggle for political and economic justice.

"Greenwald offers a fresh approach to this oft-traveled terrain..[He] meticulously details the many semantic and political shifts that characterized [the protocols].highly recommended." WorkingUSA "Law and Order in Industry is packed with interesting historical facts, based on the author's examination of an impressive volume of primary and secondary resources." Jonathan Cutler, author of Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism "Greenwald's study of industrial democracy is still an ambitious effort that offers new insight into industrial relations in the Progressive era and suggests the ambiguous legacy of workplace reform for both the agency of workers and the possibility for genuine industrial democracy." The American Historical "Greenwald offers a detailed, well-researched account that eschews simple characterizations...Greenwald's monograph makes an important contribution to the historiography of the Progressive Era...This fine case study offers thought-provoking insights into the intersection of work, class, gender, urban politics, and reform. At minimum, it should be of interest to urban, gender, business, labor and Progressive Era historians as well as to scholars of industrial relations and labor studies." H-Net "Greenwald offers a highly readable, albeit detailed, account of an important era in labor and industrial relations history. In it readers will notice similarities to contemporary union concerns: tensions between rank and file activism and bureaucratic structuring in both unions and industrial relations, the challenges of organizing an entire industry, the limits to state labor reform, and the fragility of political alliances...Careful readers will see the relevance in high relief." Labor Studies JournalFrom the PublisherA history that uncovers the birth of Industrial DemocracyFrom the Inside Flap"[This book] is packed with interesting historical facts, based on the author's examination of an impressive volume of primary and secondary resources." —Jonathan Cutler, author of Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism