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History of Middletown Final Paper

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From Labor Leader to Police Chief: A Biography of Charles Anderson, 1912-1936

"[Charles Anderson has] a quiet, unassuming disposition, but [is] an inherent hustler and few young men in Middletown have as wide a circle of friends and acquaintances." - The Penny Press, Middletown, 1914

On October 2, 1963, Middletown, Connecticut marked the passing of one of its most prominent citizens, Charles A. Anderson. A native Swede who immigrated to America in 1904, Anderson spent eighteen years as a cigarmaker and served nine of those years on the Middletown Common Council. In 1923, he became Middletown’s Chief of Police, a position he held for twenty-six years. Charles Anderson lived through two of the largest, bitterest, most divisive strikes in Middletown history: the 1912 Russell Manufacturing Company strike, and the 1936 Remington-Rand strike. Through these
years, Anderson was to play the roles of labor leader, mediator between labor and
business, reformer of the police department, prominent public figure, and finally,
enforcer of the law, even against strikers for whom he had once been an advocate.
Although it is not possible here to present a full biography of Charles Anderson, this
essay will tell the story of his changing role in Middletown's labor history.

Unions in Middletown, 1904-1912

When Charles Anderson arrived in Middletown in 1904, he must have found the
skilled workers of Middletown already well organized. Craft unions among bartenders,
bricklayers, carpenters, iron molders, and street railway employees, among others,
already existed by this time.1 Closed union shops among skilled workers existed in
several industries, and strikes occasionally occurred among these workers. For example,
in 1910, fifteen iron molders employed in Portland walked off the job after one new
worker refused to join the union.2 When these strikes did occur, they tended to be
peaceful, and win at least limited gains for workers or compromise agreements with
employers. Many of these craft unions were individually affiliated with the Connecticut
Federation of Labor, the state branch of the American Federation of Labor, but no formal
organization yet existed at the local level to unite them.

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Press, 1910
2 "Iron Molders At Pickering's Not At Work." The Penny Press Dec. 9 1910: 8. (Note:
During the time period encompassed by this research paper, the Penny Press changed its
name three times: first to the Evening Press, then back to the Penny Press, then to the
Middletown Press. All citations will use "Penny Press" as the name of the paper for
continuity.)
However, during the 1910s, craft unions were not an option for many of Middletown's workers. The large first-generation Italian population in Middletown seldom obtained skilled positions, and the A.F.I. did not organize among unskilled or semi-skilled workers. One of the only options for such workers was the Industrial Workers of the World, a radical industrial union that organized workers regardless of place of employment, ethnicity, or national origin.³

The Russell Manufacturing Company strike

On May 22, 1912, several girls at the Russell Manufacturing Company, the largest textile plant in Middletown, walked off their jobs over a wage dispute. The strike quickly spread among Russell's semi-skilled Italian, Polish, and some of the American-born laborers at the factory. At the invitation of Salvatore Corio, one of the local strike leaders, Industrial Workers of the World organizers came to Middletown on May 25 to coordinate the strike. On June 4, the strike officially began, and approximately 400 of the 1150 employees of the Russell Manufacturing Company walked off their jobs. The tone of the strike soured three days later, when fighting broke out between picketing strikers, unofficial Wesleyan student police deputies (labeled “Intellectual Thugs” by The Penny Press)⁴, and police officers.⁵

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⁴ “Wesleyan Students Are Called Intellectual Thugs.” The Penny Press Jun. 10 1912:1
On June 9, with the Russell strike failing, the I.W.W. visited the nearby Portland quarries in another organizational drive. Perhaps the I.W.W. organizers were seeking to salvage the Russell strike by starting another strike in Middletown, and hoping that multiple strikes across industries would force the employers to enter into negotiations with their workers. The Portland quarries were another major employer of Italians in Middletown, so the I.W.W. probably thought they could appeal to ethnic solidarity in organizing these workers with their striking brethren. From another perspective, perhaps the I.W.W. had already conceded defeat in the Russell strike, and wanted to leave some organizational base in Middletown among the quarry workers for future labor action. In any case, the organizational drive was a near-complete failure. Only 25% of the workers voted to join the I.W.W., a number fairly close to the level of participation in the Russell strike, but in this case, organizers decided to take no further action at the workplace.

This failure to organize the quarry workers represented a repudiation of the I.W.W. as a bargaining agent in Middletown, and reflected workers' distrust of the organization in the wake of the violent, failed Russell strike. Only a day later, I.W.W. organizers left Middletown, and the Russell strike was effectively over. Some of the remaining striking Italian workers returned to Russell to beg for their jobs back, while others left Middletown or returned to Italy. The strike created divisions between Middletown's Italian Melillean colony and the rest of the populace, and effectively barred the I.W.W. from further organizing in Middletown. After 1912, the I.W.W. would never

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6 "Trying to organize quarry workmen in Portland." The Penny Press Jun. 10 1912: 8
7 Baldwin 84-88
8 "Trying to organize quarry workmen in Portland." The Penny Press Jun. 10 1912: 8
9 Baldwin 84-88
again visit Middletown, at least in an organizational capacity reported in The Penny Press.

The Middletown Central Labor Union

Only months after the devastating defeat at Russell, leaders of several Middletown craft unions, including Charles Anderson, decided to join together to form a Central Labor Union for the town, which would unite the craft unions of the town under one organization. The new Central Labor Union would be affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, and would be designed as an explicit challenge to the I.W.W. and radical labor in the community. The Penny Press reported in 1913 that the M.C.L.U. would,

"[M]eet with much favor from the public, as it will serve to keep out of the city a brand of labor agitators with whom Middletown recently had an unpleasant experience, the American Federation of Labor being the recognized foe of such organizations and their methods."  

In contrast to the I.W.W., which emphasized international worker's solidarity11, such as in their slogan, "An Injury to One Is an Injury to All", the Middletown Central Labor Union was very much framed as a local concern. The organization was considered a part of the movement for "A Bigger, Better and More Beautiful Middletown", and used the slogan "Trade in Middletown and employ Middletown labor."12 The member unions of the M.C.L.U. quickly won the "confidence and good will of the public", and settled

10 "Organized Labor Active In Furthering Interests." The Penny Press Feb. 8 1913: 10
11 Dubofsky 93
12 "Organized Labor Active in Furthering Interests." The Penny Press Feb. 8 1913: 10
"disputes between employers and their employees through amicable discussion". The new Central Labor Union was framed in the Penny Press as the local labor union that could be trusted to be civil and not start trouble, in contrast to the I.W.W.

Charles Anderson and the M.C.L.U.

The Middletown Central Labor Union elected Charles Anderson as its first president. Anderson was quickly recognized by the community as a positive influence in Middletown labor. In 1914, the Press reported that,

"[The] present prosperous condition [of Middletown labor] is due very largely to his [Charles Anderson's] efforts...the tone of local Organized Labor generally has been materially improved. Several matters between employers and employees have been amicably adjusted with the maintenance of good will between all concerned and the benefits of a Central Labor Union have already made themselves manifest."  

Anderson wasted no time extending his influence in Middletown. In 1914, Anderson ran for town councilman as a Democrat. Anderson came in fifth in the election, with 972 votes, compared with the 1200-plus counts for four Republicans, but polled better than any of the other Democrats, and was elected to the Common Council. By this point we can assume that Anderson was in a much better position as a labor organizer than his I.W.W. compatriots had been in 1912, or any of the other Democrats

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13 "Middletown Central Labor Union Has Installation." The Penny Press Jan. 4 1916: 8
14 This is an archaic spelling used in the Press, which has been preserved for consistency.
running for office. Anderson was a pillar of the community, a member of the local fire department and the Fraternal Order of Eagles, and was described by the Press as having "a quiet, unassuming disposition, but [is] an inherent hustler and few young men in Middletown have as wide a circle of friends and acquaintances."17 Between 1913 and 1919, only one strike occurred in a M.C.L.U affiliate, a plumber's strike involving twelve workers in 1916.18 From this lack of strikes, we can assume that Anderson was successful in preventing strike action among skilled laborers during this time in Middletown. Anderson was influential enough, trusted and liked by both businessmen and workers in Middletown to prove an effective mediator between the two.

Unskilled Labor in Middletown, 1913-1918

The situation was different for unskilled and semi-skilled, non-Central Labor Union (or A.F.L.-affiliated) workers in Middletown. Unable to negotiate with their employers through Anderson or other labor organizers, these workers struck more frequently than those in the M.C.L.U. These strikes were generally small, disorganized, wildcat strikes independent of any union, although they were sometimes agitated for by radical organizers. Few of these strikes won any gains for workers. Without the support and solidarity of other unions, as was found in the Middletown Central Labor Union, companies found it easy enough to fire the strikers, and hire new laborers. Between 1913 and 1919, there were ten strikes among non-Middletown Central Labor Union workers. All but one of these strikes was unsuccessful, and in at least two cases, all strikers were

17 "Charles Anderson," undated article from the personal scrapbook of Charles Anderson
fired.\textsuperscript{19}\textsuperscript{20}\textsuperscript{21} Nine of the strikes occurred in a five-month period during 1916, but few were considered significant enough to merit reporting in the Penny Press. In one example from 1916 that was reported in the Penny Press,

"Fourteen of the employes of the Arrigoni Coal company, yesterday struck for an increase of wages and the company after a little discussion decided to let the men go...This morning some of the former employes went to the yard ... and began making trouble for the new men."\textsuperscript{22}

Soon after, the Middletown police intervened, two men were arrested for breach of the peace, and that was the end of labor trouble at the Arrigoni Coal Company.

Another strike in 1916, which we can assume was at least encouraged by the I.W.W. or other radical labor figures (labeled only as "agitators from Massachusetts" by the Press), involved approximately 100 brick workers from one brickyard in Berlin marching on other brickyards in Middletown, "armed with cord wood sticks and knives", and forcing their workers to quit and join the strike.\textsuperscript{23} However, workers at the Middletown brickyards were not as interested in joining the strike (or felt more threatened by their employer than the Berlin workers), and quickly went back to work, protected by sheriff's deputies. All the men from the original strike were fired and


\textsuperscript{22} "Strike at Arrigoni Coal Yards," \textit{The Penny Press} Jun. 1 1916

\textsuperscript{23} "Brick Workers On Strike Riot." \textit{The Penny Press} May 5 1916: 1
replaced by May 12. In conclusion, while labor agitation in Middletown outside of the Middletown Central Labor Union was sometimes militant, it was never well-organized enough to succeed, if it was organized at all.

**Labor in Middletown, 1919**

In general, strikes in Middletown have tended to be infrequent and small relative to the city's size, a phenomenon that has been noted by other authors. However, 1919 was a year of unprecedented labor strife in the United States. Over four million workers nationwide struck, and workplaces that were not traditionally prone to strike, such as police, struck. This unprecedented labor strife was quite prominent in Connecticut: Waterbury and Bridgeport were the sites of serious labor struggles across many industries in 1919. In Waterbury, several months of agitation by I.W.W. organizers culminated in a 6,000-strong walkout of workers from 17 companies. The city was put under martial law for a week, after rioting by strikers injured a police officer. Strikers from December 1918 to July 1920 in Waterbury involved 27,239 workers, representing an amazing 29.81% of the city's population. In Bridgeport, 13,864 workers struck during the same time period.

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24 "Quiet At Brickyards." *The Penny Press* May 12 1916
25 Baldwin 74
26 Houston, John and Alex Kotlowitz, “Class Conflict in Middletown: The Remington-Rand Strike of 1936,” seminar essay, Wesleyan University, 1976: 3
27 John L. Lewis, Dubofsky and Van Tine
30 In Chart A, at the end of this paper, I have compiled percentages of strikers relative to populations for many cities in Connecticut. These are imperfect statistics, to be sure -
Middletown did strike in 1919, but not nearly on the scale that one would expect, given the massive labor struggles going on elsewhere. In the year and a half period from December 1918 to July 1920, there were four strikes in Middletown involving 94 workers, a minuscule 0.69% of the population of 13,638.\textsuperscript{33} A six-day strike involving only forty spinners at the I.E. Palmer Company, which employed hundreds, and was the second-largest textile-manufacturing corporation in Middletown after Russell, was unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{34} Two small strikes among iron molders and laborers in Portland (although some of the workers were from Middletown) at the Portland Foundry Company and Rogers and Hubbard, respectively, were unsuccessful or inconclusive\textsuperscript{35}, although the Press was quick to note "no evidence of outside agitators" in the first case,\textsuperscript{36} showing the community's continuing fear of radical organizers such as the I.W.W.

A more significant two-week strike at the smaller John Convey Cigar Company, involving 20 cigarmakers, resulted in partial concessions of demands for workers.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{33} Chart A, also see footnote 29 on variables of this statistic


\textsuperscript{35} "Rogers and Hubbard Men Strike." The Penny Press Jul. 19 1919

\textsuperscript{36} "50 Foundry Men on Strike in Portland." The Penny Press Jun. 19 1919

Charles Anderson must have been one of the strikers; he worked at the firm, and still served as the cigarmakers' union secretary and treasurer. This fact seems somewhat contradictory to the image of Anderson as mediator between labor and business, representing labor's issues to management, and preventing strikes at other companies in Middletown. However, the strike at the Convey Cigar Company was in support of adopting a statewide union pay schedule that had already been adopted by many other cigar manufacturers in Connecticut, but not by Convey.\textsuperscript{38} Thus, the strike was in support of demands that had already been granted at other companies, perhaps making the cigarmakers more confident that they could win, and that their demands were legitimate.

Why were there no strikes in 1919 at the three largest companies in Middletown - Russell, I.E. Palmer (discounting the small disturbance already mentioned), or the Noiseless Typewriter Company? A large part of the answer seems to be that many of the major companies of Middletown decided together to raise wages and shorten working hours across the board, most likely to preempt any possibility of strikes. Russell initiated this trend on June 9, by reducing working hours from fifty-five to fifty per week, and increased wages ten percent for all workers.\textsuperscript{39} On July 14, the Noiseless Typewriter Company did the same.\textsuperscript{40} On July 22, the Omo Manufacturing Company, Meech and Stoddard, Inc., and the Franklin Electric Company all announced reduced hours and wage increases.\textsuperscript{41} What role, if any, Charles Anderson had in encouraging these moves is not known. In any case, the wage increases apparently satisfied workers in Middletown, and

\textsuperscript{38} "Cigarmakers Go No [sic] Strike Here." \textit{The Penny Press} Sep. 6 1919
\textsuperscript{39} "Russell Co. Gives Employees Shorter Week and Wage Raise." \textit{The Penny Press} Jun. 9 1919:1
\textsuperscript{40} "Noiseless Company Goes On 50 Hour Week Basis." \textit{The Penny Press} Jul. 14 1919:8
\textsuperscript{41} "Local Concerns Increase Wages." \textit{The Penny Press} Jul. 22 1919:4
averted the strikes and civil disorder that plagued many other cities in Connecticut, and across the United States.

**Charles Anderson and the Police Committee: 1921-1923**

Meanwhile, Charles Anderson capitalized on his labor successes to improve his status in city politics. In 1921, Anderson became one of three city aldermen, and head of the Police Committee on the Common Council, soon after Middletown had confronted several scandals within its Police department.

In 1920, a Middletown police officer named Joseph Doherty was suspended for leaving his patrol, going to a pool hall in uniform, and getting into a fistfight.\(^\text{42}\) Five weeks later, the police committee, headed by Joseph P. Kinsella, recommended to the Common Council that Doherty had been punished enough by the suspension, and should be reinstated. The Council accepted Kinsella's recommendations, voting 10-5 in favor of reinstating Doherty.\(^\text{43}\) This decision was not uncontroversial, however. The same day, the Penny Press editorialized against the reinstatement. "It can hardly be held that discipline is maintained in the Police department by the action of the Common Council," the paper declared. "No stretch of the imagination can hold that the punishment fits the offense".\(^\text{44}\)

Two days after the controversial reinstatement, Charles Miller, another member of the Middletown Police force, resigned his post. The move was ostensibly made because

\(^\text{42}\) "Officer Doherty Is Suspended." *The Penny Press* Mar. 30 1920:5
\(^\text{43}\) "Council Votes To Re-Instate Officer Doherty." *The Penny Press* May 4 1920:1
\(^\text{44}\) "Police Discipline." Editorial. *The Penny Press* May 4 1920:4
Miller received a "better business offer," but the timing of his resignation suggests that he resigned in protest of Doherty's reinstatement. The Press editorialized, 

In the resignation of Officer Charles J. Miller one finds evidence of a certain demoralization in the police department which ought to invite prompt action by the city authorities ... Middletown faces something of a crisis in its police department.  

A month later, two more police officers resigned their posts, probably as a reaction not just to the perceived corruption of the department, but also the low pay, which was not seen as competitive with other forms of employment in Middletown. While employers such as the Russell Manufacturing Company had raised wages to compensate for inflation in 1919, the Common Council had done nothing for police officers. The Common Council, facing the threat of more resignations, raised pay by $.50 per day for policemen, based on a petition presented by the members of the force. A full-out breakdown of the police department was averted through the pay increase, but the department still faced significant problems, including a shortage of officers, high turnover rates, and an inadequate police station.

During Anderson's brief tenure as head of the Common Council Police Committee, he advocated for a variety of improvements for the police department. Anderson spoke out for the police department's need of a vehicle, opposed a cut in police pay, and aided in suspending an officer alleged to be drinking on the job.

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45 "Officer Miller to Leave Police Dept." The Penny Press May 6 1920:1  
47 "Council Votes Pay Increase For Policemen." The Penny Press Jun. 8 1920  
48 "Police Force In Need Of Vehicle Avers Anderson." The Penny Press Jun. 27 1921:1  
49 "Anderson Against Cut In Police Pay." The Penny Press Nov. 10 1922:1
Anderson was clearly concerned about the many problems facing the police department, and was one of its most vocal advocates in the early 1920s.

**Anderson's Ascendance to Chief Of Police**

On November 23, 1922, Archibald Inglis, Chief of Police for twenty-nine years, died unexpectedly in his sleep.\(^{51}\) Captain Joseph Kincaid served as acting Chief until a new Chief could be appointed by the Common Council, but made it known that he was not interested in the position on a permanent basis. Despite this, it was considered by the Penny Press that if he was nominated for the position against his wishes, he "could be prevailed upon to accept." Several other members of the Police force, all with at least several years of experience, made their interest in the position known. Charles Anderson put himself forth as a candidate, which the Press considered, "a rather interesting situation", given Anderson's position as head of the Police Committee in charge of picking a new Chief, as well as his complete lack of experience on the force.\(^{52}\) Anderson's statement of interest was quickly forgotten as the Press ran stories on the other candidates.

A month later, Joseph Kincaid reversed his position and decided to apply for the Chiefship. Supporters argued that Kincaid deserved the position, since it would allow him to eventually retire on a half-pay pension of the fairly sizeable Police Chief's salary, and his 40 years on the force "entitled him to recognition."\(^{53}\)

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\(^{50}\) "Suspend Ghent Pending Probe By Committee." *The Penny Press* Aug. 19 1921:1

\(^{51}\) "Chief Of Police Inglis Dies Suddenly At Home; Ill Only Short Time." *The Penny Press* Nov. 23 1922:1

\(^{52}\) "May Go Slow In Selecting Police Chief." *The Penny Press* Nov. 27 1922:1

\(^{53}\) "Kincaid Willing To Accept Chiefship." *The Penny Press* Dec. 15 1922:1
On February 2, 1923, the Common Council Police Committee decided to announce its nominations for the new Chief of Police. The timing of this announcement was no accident. In January elections, the party makeup of the Common Council had changed from a Democratic Party majority to an even split of eight Democrats and eight Republicans, and the February 2 meeting was to be the last in which the lame duck Democrats could vote. The Democrats must have decided ahead of time to seize the opportunity to nominate a Democratic Chief of Police who would they could easily vote in, before they lost control of the Council.

Before the Police Committee announced their recommendation, Anderson made a motion that the Council raise the salary of the Chief of Police temporarily and name Joseph Kincaid Chief of Police for three days, at which point he would be retired by the Common Council. The Police Committee of the Common Council then nominated Charles Anderson and P. Joseph Dunn, a standing officer and a well-known favored pick for the position, for Chief of Police. The Republicans on the Council nominated P. Joseph Dunn alone. Why the Democrats nominated Dunn, along with their clear choice, Anderson, is not clear. The voting proceeded along party lines, with all Democrats except one voting for Anderson, and all the Republicans voting for Dunn, 9 to 6, with the mayor abstaining.

This action "created a profound sensation on the numerous spectators that thronged the gallery" of the Common Council, since Anderson had never been considered a serious candidate for the position. Anderson's appointment, and Kincaid's compulsory retirement were considered unethical, if not illegal by legal observers interviewed in the

54 "Makes Kincaid Chief Of Police For Three Days; Then Anderson Goes In" The Penny Press Feb. 3 1923:1
Press, because of Anderson's position on the Police Committee. Surely, many also questioned whether a union leader could be an effective Chief of Police, given that the required politics of the two positions were seemingly opposed. The move to retire Kincaid was also controversial, for while Connecticut law stated that city governments could vote to retire a member of its police force after 20 years of service, with proof of the member's physical or mental disability, no medical examinations of Kincaid had been made.

How much say Kincaid had in his retirement was another point of contention: the Democrats who controlled the Council stated that Kincaid accepted retirement. Members of the Police Committee met with Kincaid the night before the Council meeting, at which time he stated that he was willing to retire, "The sooner the better."35 The minority Republicans argued that Kincaid was forced to retire against his will.36 Given Kincaid's initial reluctance to even be considered for the position, it seems likely that he was pleased with the arrangement Anderson proposed for him, which allowed him to collect the Chief's pension without any of the attendant responsibilities.

Anderson soon faced another controversy, regarding his unwillingness to immediately retire as alderman from the Common Council after being named Chief of Police. Anderson's staying on the Council was almost certainly politically motivated: had he resigned, the aforementioned balance of power between Democrats and Republicans on the Council would have given a one vote majority to his opponents. On February 6, the Council elected a Democratic city District Attorney, with the help of the Democratic mayor's vote. Swinging this crucial vote for the Democrats was apparently the main

55 “Anderson Can Serve As Alderman Also.” The Penny Press Feb. 3 1923:10
56 “Action Of Council Is Under Discussion.” The Penny Press Feb. 5 1923:1
reason Anderson stayed on the Council, because the day of the vote, it was believed by other Democrats that "he will shortly relinquish his aldermanic position." However, Anderson defied expectations, and stayed on the Common Council until over a month later, on March 26, when Republicans in the Connecticut House of Representatives, hearing of events in Middletown, drafted a bill "providing that no alderman or councilman may hold office in the city for which a salary is paid". The bill was clearly aimed at Anderson, who now collected a salary as Chief of Police. The Penny Press declared that Anderson had provided a valuable service to city Democrats by staying on the Council and maintaining the balance of power, but that he would "find himself in an embarrassing position when police matters are voted on", given the clear conflict of interest that would exist. Only a day later, feeling the pressure of the bill aimed against him, Anderson finally resigned from the Council.

Chief Anderson's Reforms to the Police Department

While the controversy surrounding Charles Anderson's ascendance to the position of Chief of Police had been raging, Anderson had been quietly making improvements to the Police department. On his first day as acting Police Chief, Anderson stated that he would enforce all prohibition laws. This move was apparently much desired by many in the community, since the Common Council received a petition on January 23, 1923, signed by 219 Middletown residents, supporting the enforcement of the 18th amendment

57 "New Police Chief Begins His Duties." The Penny Press Feb 6. 1923:1
58 "Anderson Remains Member of Council." The Penny Press Mar. 26 1923:1
59 "Chief Anderson to Retire From Common Council." The Penny Press Mar. 27 1923:1
60 "Anderson Says He Will Do Full Duty." The Penny Press Feb. 3 1923:1
by the new Chief of Police.\textsuperscript{61} Within a week, Anderson made moves to increase the efficiency of the police force. He aimed to reduce loitering around the police headquarters, by not allowing policemen to sit at the station desk during work hours, which would "also put an end to the promiscuous use of the office telephone." Anderson also developed a plan to organize office records more efficiently, and purchased a typewriter for police headquarters. These efforts mirrored the Common Council's desire to increase discipline for officers:

"In the event of a sergeant being appointed he will be expected to report on the conduct of patrolmen and if he fails he will go on the carpet [of the Common Council]. In the past it is stated that violations of the police regulations have been treated gently. Under the new order of things members of the force will be given hearings if reported by superior officers."\textsuperscript{62}

One of the first officers to come under this new, stricter enforcement policy was John Clarry, who Chief Anderson suspended for one month, for "drunkenness and conduct unbecoming an officer" at the state police field day, and referred to the Common Council. By a close vote of 8 to 6, Clarry was reinstated, and Anderson stated that the officer would be removed from the force should he commit such an offense again.\textsuperscript{63} By the old standards of the Police Department, before Anderson's Chiefship, the punishment would probably have been considered unduly harsh. Clarry was drunk while off-duty at an all-police function, whereas Officer Doherty had been reinstated after a similar length

\textsuperscript{61} Middletown Common Council working papers, Jan. 1923
\textsuperscript{62} "Police Efficiency Is To Be Increased." The Penny Press Mar. 26 1923:1
\textsuperscript{63} "Officer Clarry Reinstated By Vote Of 8 To 6." The Penny Press Sep. 4 1924:1
of time for leaving his beat, and fighting on the job in a pool hall. In 1925, Officer Bartholomew Ghent, was discharged from the police department after Chief Anderson brought charges against him for drunkenness and fighting. In 1926, another officer was temporarily suspended for the same offense, and in 1927, Officer Max Christensen was discharged after two auto accidents on the job. Anderson was determined to enforce discipline within his own police department in a fashion Inglis had not.

Chief Anderson and Labor in Middletown: the 1925 Tuttle Brick Company Strike

Labor-employer relations were another troublesome issue for Chief Anderson. Anderson had pledged to enforce the law, but in 1923, he was also only a year out of an eighteen-year tenure as secretary and treasurer of the Middletown Cigarmaker's union, and ten years of involvement with the Middletown Central Labor Union. During the 1910s, Anderson had made a name for himself as a negotiator between labor and capital, who could "amicably adjust" any troubles and prevent strikes in Middletown while winning gains for workers. Anderson's beliefs had not changed after he became Chief of Police: he remained very pro-union his entire life. However, he would now have to find a way to reconcile ideology with his job as officer of the law.

Anderson faced his first major test in mid-July 1925, when the Tuttle Brick Company of Newfield notified him that "trouble was brewing" in the brickyard, surrounding a drive by the United Brick and Clay Workers' Union to force union recognition at brick factories across Connecticut. The strike threatened to shut down six

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64 "Officer Ghent Is Discharged After Hearing." The Penny Press Aug. 4 1925:1
65 "Council Removes Max Christensen." The Penny Press Jun. 21 1927:1
brick plants in New Britain, as well as others across the state. At the behest of United Brick and Clay Workers' organizers, the Tuttle Brick workers had approached the company for union recognition and requested a closed union shop, and were denied both. On July 24, 200 employees of the Tuttle Brick Company in Newfield struck for union recognition. Later in the day,

"A crowd of 100 or more strikers gathered in a large group but the prompt arrival of a detachment of Middletown police under the direction of Chief Charles A. Anderson ... prevented any disturbance."\(^{67}\)

The detachment included Anderson, the Police captain Joseph Dunn, Sergeant John Ward, and six other police officers, representing more than half of the Middletown police force. No previous strike in Middletown, with the exception of the Russell Manufacturing company strike, had prompted any such police action. The police presence at the brickyard, which initially seemed excessive, later became more justifiable, as strike-related violence began to occur. On August 3, shots were fired at the home of one of the strikers, leading police to believe that other strikers mistook him for a scab.\(^{68}\) It seems equally possible that scabs or strikebreakers in the employ of the Tuttle Brick Company fired the shots, although there is no more evidence for this than the Press' hypothesis. The strike ended unsuccessfully, with the striking employees fired,\(^{69}\) but trouble continued at the company when a suspicious fire destroyed one of its plants in December, at the same time that three other striking brick plants were burned in New

\(^{67}\) "Brickmakers On Strike; Squad Of Police On Duty." The Penny Press Jul. 24 1925:1

\(^{68}\) "Fire Shots At Home Of Union Brick Man." The Penny Press Aug. 3 1925:1

Britain. Given that this type of labor militancy did occur (and perhaps had happened in the past without culminating in a strike), Charles Anderson may have suspected from the start that the strike would turn violent, and thus justified the large police detachment sent to the factory. Anderson filled his new role as enforcer of public order against the strikers, putting his pro-union politics aside in the face of violence and disorder.

**The 1934 Remington-Rand Strike**

Anderson was to face another larger-scale labor trouble in 1934 at the Remington Rand typewriter factory. In 1933, the Remington-Rand employees had voted to join the American Federation of Labor, and also joined the same Middletown Central Labor Union that Anderson had helped found. On May 9, 1934, over 1,000 Middletown Remington-Rand workers walked off their jobs, in conjunction with strikers at four other Remington-Rand plants, over company President James Rand's refusal to recognize their union, or allow a closed shop. Workers expected that the strike would be resolved within a week at most, but Rand refused to recognize the worker's union as a legitimate bargaining agent, and the strike dragged on for weeks without progress.

Almost a month later, on June 5, the Middletown Remington-Rand factory reopened to workers with little advance warning, and union leaders quickly set up a picket line to try to persuade those returning to continue the strike. Twelve Middletown policemen, as well as State policemen, patrolled the picket lines, which were conducted.

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70 “Tuttle Brick Plant Is Damaged By Fire.” *The Penny Press* Dec. 5 1925:1
71 “Remington Workers To Join Federation.” *The Penny Press* Aug. 2 1933:1
72 “Awaken Interest In Labor Unions.” Oct. 3 1933:1
entirely peacefully, and left little for the police to do. The next day, however, large riots broke out at the plant when laborers from Bridgeport, who were unaware of the strike and seeking work, were attacked at the picket lines. Only thirteen Middletown Police were on duty, and quickly called the State Police for reinforcements. The strikers poured into North Main Street, slashing the tires of State Police vehicles, and attempted to block passage of the road by flipping a State Police vehicle. When one of the State Police broke the skull of a striker, other strikers attacked him and broke his arm.

The next day, with sixteen Middletown Police and thirty-eight State Police looking on, the picket lines were completely peaceful, with the exception of a motorist throwing nails under the wheels of a bus carrying workers past the picket lines to the plant. Soon after, the company resumed negotiations with the strikers, and agreed to recognize the union while maintaining an open shop. The workers agreed to this settlement, and by June 18, work had resumed at the Remington-Rand plant in Middletown.

It is notable that on the day of rioting, all the violence that occurred was between State Police and strikers. Despite being the first officers present when violence broke out, no Middletown police were injured, nor were their vehicles attacked. It seems that the Middletown Police Department and Charles Anderson utilized their existing relationship with the people of Middletown to avoid clashes with the strikers, who instead directed their anger against the unfamiliar State Police.

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74 “Noiseless Shop Opened Today; Some Return To Work.” The Penny Press Jun 5 1934:1
75 “Four Are Injured In Riot At Noiseless.” The Penny Press Jun 6 1934:1
76 “Peace Succeeds Riots As Strikers Refrain From Violence Today.” The Penny Press Jun 7 1934:1
The only problem strikers may have had with actions of the local police occurred the morning of the riots, when 50 girls, presumably strikers, gathered in front of the house of Miss Signe Larson, "stones in hand". Middletown Police officer Edward Hill arrived on the scene and dispersed them. After Hill's action, his suspension was demanded of Charles Anderson by "some person" (again, presumably a striker), which Anderson rejected. Although the Penny Press is vague here, we can assume that the girls were assembled at the house of a strikebreaker, intending to attack her, when Officer Hill appeared and forced them to leave. It does not seem that Officer Hill resorted to any sort of violence, so why his suspension was demanded is unclear. However, the incident suggests at least some indiscretion on the part of at least one Middletown police officer.

There is no recorded indication that Middletown Police in fact acted with more restraint than the State Police on that day, but given that the strikers made no complaints against Middletown police (with the exception of Officer Hill) and instead attacked the State Police, it seems likely. Thus, Anderson's police force managed to act in a relatively sympathetic manner to the strikers and uphold his pro-union politics, until the situation turned violent and public order became the first priority, much like in 1925.

The 1936 Remington-Rand Strike

Only two years later, another strike at Remington-Rand would pose additional challenges for Anderson. The strike, which encompassed six Remington-Rand typewriter factories, began over James Rand's refusal to increase wages, and plans to open a new, non-union typewriter plant in Elmira, NY. The strike began on May 26, 1936, and as in

77 "Four Are Injured At Riot At Noiseless." The Penny Press Jun. 6 1934:1
1934, Rand refused to negotiate with strikers, and closed down the plant. This time, strikers made the effort to meet with Mayor Santangelo, Chief Anderson, and the Common Council Police Committee before pickets began, and "asserted they would do everything possible to prevent disorder"78, in an attempt to prevent the introduction of State Police (with their known propensity for violence remembered from 1934) into the conflict. Thirty local police were assigned to the picket lines, and for a month, no strike-related violence occurred.

Violence on the Picket Lines

Sam "Chowderhead" Cohen, one of the professional strikebreakers hired by James Rand in Middletown, sarcastically labeled "A Dove of Peace" by The Penny Press79

On June 26, one month later, the plant was reopened with professional strikebreakers in the pay of James Rand, posing as millwrights responding to an advertisement in the Press to dismantle the plant's machinery. Seventy police, including

78 "Remington Company Employees On Strike." The Penny Press May 26 1936:1
79 "A Dove of Peace." The Penny Press Sep. 25 1936:1
the whole of the Middletown police force, as well as officers from several surrounding
towns, attended the picket lines that day. As the strikebreakers crossed the picket lines,
they "jostled whoever came near them", in an attempt to bully and intimidate strikers.
The police, who directed them to enter the factory in an orderly manner, quickly ended
this behavior. At the end of the work day, the millwrights were asked to visit the police
station, where Chief Anderson, apparently realizing the men were hired strikebreakers,
"ordered [them] to get out of town and remain out", and personally escorted the men to
the city line.  

At this point in the strike, Anderson's sympathies were still clearly with the
strikers, and he used his authority as police chief to remove the disorderly "millwrights"
from Middletown. Anderson also assigned State Police to patrol the regular beats of the
Middletown police, who had all been assigned to the pickets, in hopes of not provoking
the strikers by placing State Police near them.  

Meanwhile, a few genuine former
employees of the plant, as well as others seeking work gradually returned to the factory.

The peace established at the end of May was broken on July 1, when the house of
a new Remington-Rand employee was stoned. Several days later, Rand successfully
obtained a court injunction against the strikers. The injunction limited the union to ten
picketers, and a State Police detail was put at the plant. A union leader responded,

"We do not feel the State of Connecticut owes Mr. Rand or the city of
Middletown the use of State Policemen, especially in view of the fact that
Mr. Rand refused to meet with the State Board of Mediation and

\[\text{References:}\]
\[\text{80 "Deplored." Editorial. The Penny Press Sep. 25 1936:8}\]
\[\text{81 "Rand Hopes To Talk To Employees Here." The Penny Press Jun. 26 1936:1}\]
Arbitration, which attempted to bring about a conference to end the strike.\footnote{82}

On July 8, a large crowd of strikers defied the injunction and gathered in front of the Remington-Rand plant. Middletown police captain P. Joseph Dunn read the Riot Act to the strikers, but they refused to disperse. The Middletown police decided their detachment was not large enough to forcibly disperse the strikers, and left. The Mayor instead called for more state police, raising the number to eighty-three.\footnote{83} On that day, the Middletown Central Labor Union passed a resolution condemning the presence of State police and police from neighboring towns. Strikers began to circulate a petition demanding, among other things, "That only local police officers be placed at the strike area, sufficient in number to protect property of the employer."\footnote{84} On August 3, strikers even demonstrated in front of Mayor Santangelo's house to protest the continued presence of State Police in the town.\footnote{85}

The worst strike violence by far occurred on September 9, when strikers stoned five cars and a bus of workers, resulting in the deployment of 100 State Police to the pickets. For the first time, the State Police used tear gas to disperse a large group of strikers, resulting in "more excitement than ha[d] existed in [Middletown] in many years."\footnote{86} The tear gas was so intense as to force the evacuation of a neighboring silk plant. The Connecticut Federation of Labor, which was holding its annual convention on that date, passed a resolution at its state conference condemning the use of State Police in

\footnote{82} "Rand Declares End Of Strike Is Here." \textit{The Penny Press} Jul. 2 1936:1
\footnote{83} "Big Force Of Police Sent To Middletown." \textit{The Penny Press} Jul. 8 1936:1
\footnote{84} "Keep Above Fog." Editorial. \textit{The Penny Press} Aug. 1 1936:1
\footnote{85} "City Outraged By A Demonstration In Front Of Mayor Santangelo's Residence." \textit{The Penny Press} Aug. 4 1936:1
\footnote{86} "North End Now Quiet, 5 Arrested." \textit{The Penny Press} Sep. 10 1936:1
the strike, and their "unnecessary brutality". After the end of the strike, in testimony to
the National Labor Relations Board, strike leader Hjalmer Anderson testified that on that
day,

"'State Troopers were running up and down like wild Indians, grabbing
certain parties and clubbing them'... He said about 50 State Policemen
waded into the crowd and when he protested to the Chief of Police
[Charles Anderson] he 'got no satisfaction.'" 88

By this point, Chief Anderson had clearly lost his sympathy for the strikers, as a result of
the violence that had occurred. Once again, Anderson's desire for law and order to
prevail in Middletown outweighed his pro-union sympathies. Anderson, "was really
incensed about ... the violent action" 89, and ignored the complaints of strikers against the
State Police.

Early in the strike, Anderson had acted on the strikers' behalf by escorting
strikebreakers out of town. Later, the ongoing violence convinced him to enforce the law
against them, and no longer accommodated the strikers by keeping State Police away
from the picket lines. While, as in 1934, his own officers likely exercised more restraint
than the State Police, he was complicit in the State Police's violence by refusing to
condemn it, as the Middletown Central Labor Union did.

87 "Score Use of State Officers." The Penny Press Sep. 10 1936:1
88 "Declares Strikers Attacked." The Penny Press Dec 1 1936:1
Conclusion

Throughout his life, Charles Anderson favored compromise over confrontation in his various capacities as labor organizer, local legislator, and policeman. He helped found the Middletown Central Labor Union to unify skilled workers, and to reject the I.W.W.’s militant rhetoric of class warfare in favor of negotiation with business. He attempted to avoid strikes, rather than provoke them. As head of the Common Council Police Committee, he allowed Joseph Kincaid to retire with a generous pension while fulfilling his own ambition to become Chief of Police. During his time as Chief of Police, he acted sympathetically to organized labor and attempted to honor strikers’ wishes to keep State Police out of conflicts when possible. However, Anderson had little tolerance for law breaking, whether it occurred among members of his own Police Department or among striking workers. In these cases, he was never hesitant to enforce the law, and protect the community that had adopted him and allowed him to become so successful.

Acknowledgements

Great thanks are due to Professor Ron Schatz, my teacher for this course, for his help and support at all stages of my research. His expertise in labor history was indispensible to writing this paper. Thanks also to George E. Anderson, grandson of Charles A. Anderson, for donating his grandfather’s scrapbook to the Middlesex County Historical Society and letting me interview him for this paper, as well as Jesse Nasta for his help in finding police records for me at the Historical Society. This paper would have been impossible to write without their help.
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The Penny Press

The Evening Press

The Middletown Press
Chart A

Towns Where Three Or More Strikes Took Place From December 1918 To July 1920


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Strikes</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>1920 Population</th>
<th>Strikers as percentage of 1920 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ansonia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9365</td>
<td>17643</td>
<td>53.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13864</td>
<td>143555</td>
<td>9.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>20620</td>
<td>1.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>11238</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4769</td>
<td>138036</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middletown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>13638</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Britain</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>59316</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3888</td>
<td>162537</td>
<td>2.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamford</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>35096</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New London</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>25688</td>
<td>3.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>27743</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putnam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>population under 10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockville</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2215</td>
<td>population under 10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seymour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1273</td>
<td>population under 10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>population under 10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stafford Springs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>population under 10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrington</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>20623</td>
<td>1.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterbury</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27239</td>
<td>91715</td>
<td>29.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willimantic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>12330</td>
<td>9.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cities with a 1920 Population of 10,000 or more that had less than three strikes during this time period: Danbury, Meriden, Naugatuck, Norwich, Stamford

See Footnote 29 for an explanation of the caveats of this chart.

Questions For Further Research

When I began writing this paper, I intended for it to be a history of the Middletown Central Labor Union, with Anderson as a prominent figure in its history, but
not my main focus. After a series of dead ends trying to track down the M.C.L.U.'s records through the Connecticut AFL-CIO and the Meriden Central Labor Council (which the M.C.L.U. merged with), I gave up on this avenue of inquiry as I slowly discovered another story about Charles Anderson himself forming. The records must be somewhere, though, and a more persistent scholar than me could probably find them. The M.C.L.U.'s involvement in the 1936 Remington-Rand strike seems particularly fascinating -- in the wake of the strike, a unionist political ticket was planned, and the union formed more ambitious plans for organizing all labor in Middletown.

I also don't know anything about what happened to Charles Anderson after 1936. Anderson served as Chief of Police until 1949, and lived until 1969, so that's another thirty-three years of his life after my paper that I haven't researched. Part of this has to do with the fact that the Middletown Press has not been indexed past 1939, so searching for Press references to Anderson after this point would be extremely tedious. Still, I believe a more complete biography of this extraordinary man is certainly needed.