



“We Are One”: Women’s Labor Activism in New York City

Online Workshop – August 19, 2021

Featured MCNY Sources and Exhibitions

Activist New York, an ongoing Museum exhibition, examines 400 years of social activism in New York City. This online exhibition includes a case study focusing women’s activism in the garment industry in the early 1900s. Access the full exhibition at activistnewyork.mcny.org

I Am a Working Girl: Upheaval in the Garment Trades, 1900-1915

This case study in *Activist New York* examines how activists like Clara Lemlich, Rose Schneiderman, and Frances Perkins organized and advocated for higher wages, better hours, and safer working conditions in New York City garment factories.

Learn about activists, examine photographs and artifacts, and find lesson plans at activistnewyork.mcny.org/exhibition/economic-rights/garment

City of Workers, City of Struggle: How Labor Movements Shaped New York (May 2019-January 2020) traced the social, political, and economic stories of New York City’s diverse communities of working people and considered the past, present, and future of labor in the city. Find associated lesson plans from this exhibition below.

“We Are One”: New York Women’s Activism in the Garment Industry, 1909-1990

This lesson plan introduces students to key events, primary sources, and vocabulary for the history of women’s activism in the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU) from the 1909 Uprising of 20,000 to the 1982 Chinatown Strike. Find it at mcny.org/lesson-plans/city-workers-city-struggle-lesson-we-are-one

Civil Rights and Union Rights: Racial Justice and Labor Politics in 1960s New York City

This lesson plan introduces students to key events, primary sources, and vocabulary for understanding the relationship between the civil rights movement and organized labor in the 1960s. Find it at mcny.org/lesson-plans/city-workers-city-struggle-lesson-civil-rights-and-union-rights

Online Primary and Secondary Sources

Zoe Greenberg, “Overlooked No More: Clara Lemlich Shavelson, Crusading Leader of Labor Rights,” August 1, 2018, *New York Times*. Accessed on August 9, 2021.

nytimes.com/2018/08/01/obituaries/overlooked-clara-lemlich-shavelson.html

“Remembering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire,” (January 2011). Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation & Archives, Cornell University.

This online exhibition is geared toward middle and high school students and features primary sources for exploration. Access it at trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/index.html.

Kathryn Dowgiewicz, "The Chinatown Struggle of 1982," The Kheel Center ILGWU Collection. Accessed on August 9, 2021. ilgwu.ilr.cornell.edu/announcements/5.html

Recommended Readings for Young People

Duncan, Alice Faye and R. Gregory Christine. *Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968*. New York: Calkins Creek, 2018.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Uprising*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, 2007.

Markel, Michelle and Melissa Sweet. *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909*. New York: Balzer + Bray, 2013.

Marrin, Albert. *Flesh and Blood So Cheap: The Triangle Fire and Its Legacy*. New York: Yearling, 2015.

Sources on Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education Practices

The Culturally Responsive Education Hub collects tools and resources, and provides history and context for providing culturally responsive education to all students. Created and maintained by the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative at NYU Metro Center. Access at crehub.org

"Transforming Our Public Schools: A Guide to Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education," NYC Culturally Responsive Education Working Group and the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative, NYU Metro Center. Accessed on August 9, 2021. static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc5da7c3560c36b7dab1922/t/5ed12955d45eb54e7a0854a3/1590765951611/CEJ_CRSEBook_v7.pdf

Recommended Readings for Educators

Bao, Xiaolan. *Holding Up More Than Half the Sky: Chinese Women Garment Workers in New York City, 1948-1992*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

chan, huiying b. "How Chinese American Women Changed U.S. Labor History," *Open City*, May 1, 2019. Accessed on August 9, 2021. opencitymag.aaww.org/chinatown-garment-strike-1982/

Orleck, Annelise. *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Quan, Katie. "Memories of the 1982 ILGWU Strike in New York Chinatown," *Amerasia Journal*, 35:1 (2009): 76-91. Accessed on August 9, 2021. laborcenter.berkeley.edu/memories-of-the-1982-ilgwu-strike-in-new-york-chinatown/

Sergel, Ruth. *See You in the Streets: Art, Action, and Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016.

von Drehle, David. *Triangle: The Fire That Changed America*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003.

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