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# WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE?

A Photo Essay On The History Of  
Working Women In The  
United States

## Incomplete Copy



BY THE SAN FRANCISCO WOMENS' HISTORY GROUP

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**By knowing who we have been  
and what we have done,  
we will know who we are  
and what we must do.**

**The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand  
New York City, 1909**

PICTURE ON COVER:

The shirtwaistmakers of two New York shops had been on strike for a month when a mass meeting of women from all garment shops of NY was called. A teen-aged striker, Clara Lemlich, who had already suffered several broken ribs from police attacks on the picket line, became impatient with the empty speech-making. She said, "I am a working girl, and one of those who are on strike against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether or not we shall strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared . . . now!" Between 20 and 30 thousand walked out the next day.

**DO YOU WANT TO RENT A SLIDE PRESENTATION  
OF THE HISTORY OF WORKING WOMEN?**

The photographs in this book, along with some other photographs that we couldn't include, were collected for a slide visual presentation. We are in the process of trying to get funding so that we can make copies of the slides and a narration to accompany the slides. If you can use such a slide presentation—either in your union, your class, your women's group, or with friends—please get in touch with us.

Also, the material presented here is being made into a half-hour television presentation, on local KOED-TV, San Francisco. Afterwards we will be able to rent out the 1/2-inch videotape of the presentation, if you are interested, we would like to hear from you.

Also, we are always looking for additional photographs, documents, and materials about the history of working women. If you have access to any material that would supplement this book, please write to: Women's History Group, 507 Capp Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.

# What Have Women Done?

by: Women's History Study Group

KATHLEEN DROLET, clerk typist  
PEGGY ELWELL, sandwich wrapper  
MINNIE FAVRE, secretary  
MELANIE JENNINGS, school bus driver  
CAROL TOKESHI, clerk typist

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*Myth: My Mother Doesn't Work. She's a Housewife.*

Women spend 21 hours a week fixing meals; four hours shopping for food; five hours doing the laundry; ten hours doing house cleaning; 40 hours doing childcare. Their payment for the above services rendered we all know too well. Yet, these services provide industry with a steady work force of well fed and cared for men, and a future generation of workers besides.

*Myth: Women Can't Be Organized*

Women have been organizing themselves since the beginning of industrialization. Today, minority women take the lead. Four thousand Chicana strikers walked out of nine plants of Farah Mfg. Co, determined to have a union. Said one, "If Farah wants slaves, he's going to have to look elsewhere, we've had it."

*Myth: Women are Docile*

Time and again women have been more militant than men in battles of workers. At Flint wives used clubs and broomsticks to keep scabs out just like they had kept scabs out of the mines, following Mother Jones. Women have been determined to have their way if they had to die for it.

*Myth: Women Work For Pin Money*

Forty per cent of the working class are women. Two-thirds of these are single, divorced or widowed, or their husbands make less than \$7,000 a year.

If women were working just to get out of the house, why would they take jobs doing menial, repetitive, dirty work for wages that average half of those of men.

### Look what we women have done.

At Farah plants in the Southwest, at Oneita plants in South Carolina, women went out on strike, and out they stayed until they won the right to unionize. Women, like the wives of Shell strikers in California, manned picket lines for health and safety regulations.

Women have marched for other issues related to work, to community, and international struggles: for childcare, for protective legislation, for minimum wage laws, for welfare rights. Women of all nationalities united in one voice to protest the war in Vietnam.

These women of the 1970's were upholding a long tradition of militancy and active resistance against injustice. This tradition goes back hundreds of years to the rebellions of female slaves. It was continued by women marching time and again against factory owners who denied them a living wage or decent working conditions. The turn of the century shirtwaist makers, fed up with intolerable working conditions, closed hundreds of garment shops in New York. Women and men fought police and scabs many times in the 1930's, like at Flint, at "Little Steel," and at Woolworth Stores.

We have seen an effort to erase women from the pages of history. When women are mentioned, they are veiled in many myths of "womanhood." Women are defined as helpmates of men, their companions and supporters. "Behind every man there is a woman" and "behind" is where they should stay.

The media, the schools, government propaganda, and even religion—all tools that the wealthy and owners of industry have been able to use to their best interest—have propagated this idea.

The myth that women are not as intelligent, capable, or strong as men has kept women out of high paying, skilled jobs. Yet, during war time, industry depended on women to fill the jobs vacated by men, the same jobs they were not "capable" of doing.

Employers use the notion that "woman's place is in the home" to their best interest. They could hire a man and know that he would get two workers for the price of one. The man produced goods that spelled profits in the bosses pockets. The man's wife would keep him fed, clothed and happy and together they would produce the next generation of workers.

Employers were quick to turn around the "women at home" myth when the economy needed a reserve labor force. But bosses still got two workers for the price of one, because women had primary responsibility for the home and children whether or not they put in eight hours of wage labor. Some women work an estimated 80-90 hours a week.

Why have employers perpetuated these myths? Because it is in their interest to have a surplus labor force that can be bought at the lowest possible price. When employers can keep women in an inferior position then they can buy their "inferior" labor for lower wages. Minority women can be hired at even lower wages.

This way of dividing workers works to the detriment of all working people because bosses can threaten the jobs of men with cheaper female labor, or they can drive down the wages of white women with the threat of hiring minority women for less. It is clear that the system that keeps women down, also keeps men and minorities down, until they unite to fight for their rights. Today, women are on the rise, and THE RISING OF THE WOMEN MEANS THE RISING OF US ALL.

# Sharing the hardships but none of the privileges



Many poor women, imprisoned under the repressive laws of England and Europe, were shipped to colonial America to increase the labor force, either as brides or indentured servants. In Massachusetts, fifteen shillings was the usual price for a wife.

The earliest adventurers of colonial America were merchants and English nobility who soon discovered the necessity for laborers to build settlements and harvest the riches of the new world for trade. Political misfits and religious dissidents also came hoping for a new life.

America's attractive resource was land. But from the beginning, getting the land meant pushing off the Native Americans. Having the land meant undreamed of hard work. Slavery was one answer to the need for laborers.

Native Americans were captured as slaves, but those who didn't resist died off quickly from the disease and cruel treatment of the colonizers. Merchants and landowners sought other sources of labor.





Women were not spared the sadistic treatment and horrible tortures inflicted on slaves—beating, castration, branding, being burned alive, collared, and cuffed.

## For slaves, no rights

An important source of labor in the 1600's and 1700's was indentured servants. These were men and women, prisoners or those stricken by debt, who were forced to bind themselves in virtual slavery for periods of four to eight years. Indentured to the wealthy in exchange for passage to America, they had no rights. The length of bondage could be arbitrarily increased for any offense, real or alleged.

Free women, lured over from England, were in great demand as brides and mothers. Even more, they were needed as workers in the household and fields.

Women had few rights. They did not even have legal custody of their children. Husband and wife became one person, and that person was the husband.



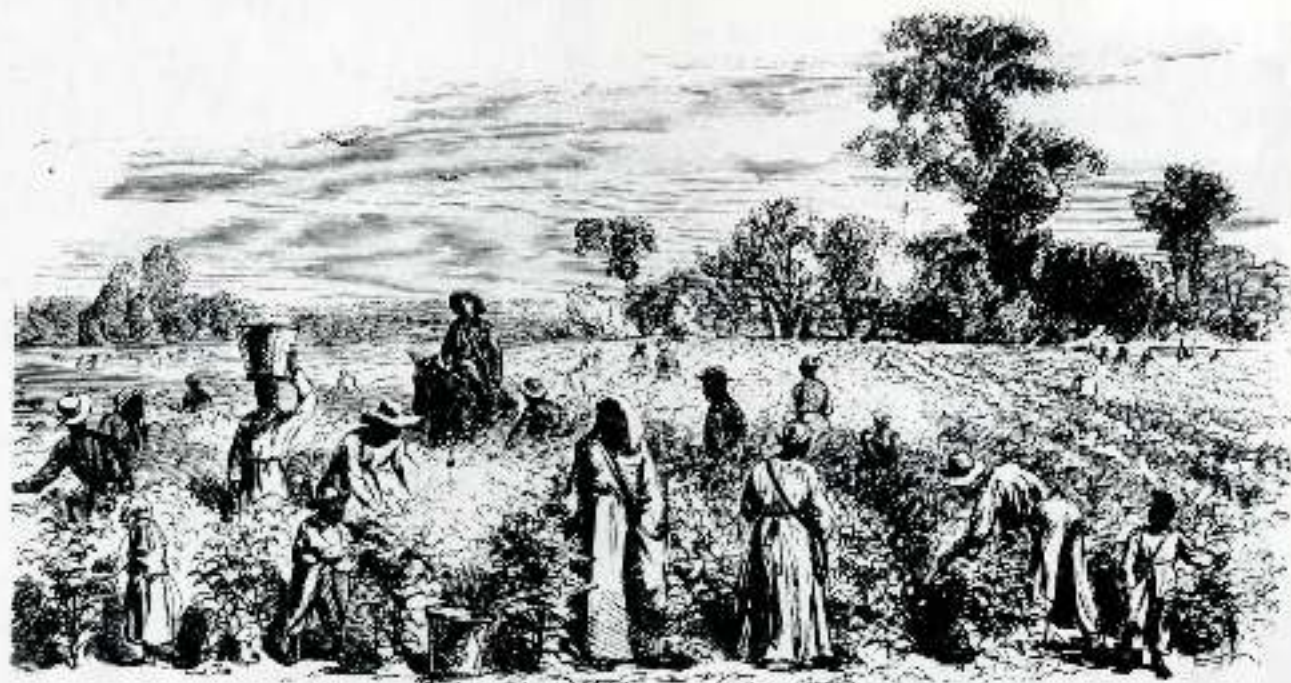
# at all, civil or human

In the South, the economy was built on the backs of black slaves from West Africa. They provided the labor needed year round to cultivate the crops. Black women were not only exploited as unpaid workers. They were used as breeders of the master's children, were abused sexually, not only by the slaveowner, but by any white man who wanted to use them. Fighting against these hated relationships meant facing cruel beatings and tortures.

A woman in this new land, black or white, faced exhaustive workloads and received only gross humiliation for her contribution to the community and to the economy. She shared all the hardships and none of the privileges of white men.



"When I asked what she had done, he said she had done nothing, but that her master wanted money . . . I asked for leave to shake hands with her, which he refused . . . I have never seen or heard from her from that day to this. I loved her as I love my life."—Narration of the life of Moses Grundy.



# "We're tired of toil for naught"



With the invention of the spinning jenny, the power loom and other technological devices in the mid-nineteenth century, raw human resources were needed in quantity. Handicrafts, traditionally produced by the wife at home, could be produced in great numbers in factories. Mass production made commodities cheaper. But the factory system needed workers.

White women and children were the first to fill the growing number of jobs. When a woman had been working at home from sun-up to sun-down for no wages, the chance to work in a factory seemed like real freedom.

The jobs were semi-skilled, repetitive, demanding moderate physical exertion for long hours. With rare exception, the work women did was akin to their work in the home: spinning, weaving, sewing, shoemaking, laundering, and preparing food. A sixty hour week averaged only \$3 to \$7 in wages. Yet employers claimed they were doing a service to society by keeping poor women and children from "idleness and poverty."

"Bell Time" by Winslow Homer





Women were increasingly required to work more machines. They got paid on a piecework basis and had to take work home after their 13 hour day.

These measures for wringing greater production out of women were not met with passive acceptance. In many places women organized spontaneous "turn-outs."

In 1828 the militia was called out against young girls and boys protesting the compulsory 12 hour day in a Paterson, New Jersey factory. That same year three to four hundred women working in Dover, New Hampshire cotton mills took to the streets demanding the right to form a union.

In 1834, over 1,000 women marched out of the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, singing:

Oh, isn't it a pity that such a  
pretty girl as I  
Should be sent to the factory to  
pine away and die?  
Oh, I cannot be a slave, oh I  
cannot be a slave,  
For I'm so fond of liberty."

The militant shoe-workers of Lynn, Mass., formed the first national organization of working women in 1869. Called the Daughters of St. Crispin, it was an auxiliary to the trade union of men shoe-workers. In 1872 they defeated a wage cut.

"We, the free women of Lynn, will submit to no rules or set of rules that tend to degrade or enslave us."



*Shoemakers Strike, Lynn, Mass. 1869.*



On the First of May 1886, 350,000 workers went out on strike for the eight hour day. Over half of them got their demand, and work hours were reduced for all. A good side result was that thousands of workers affiliated with organized labor.

We mean to make things over;  
we're tired of toil for naught  
But bare enough to live on;  
never an hour for thought.  
We want to feel the sunshine;  
we want to smell the flowers;  
We're sure that God has willed it,  
and we mean to have eight hours.  
We're summoning our forces from  
shipyard, shop and mill:  
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest  
eight hours for what we will.



"Rock-a-bye baby, in the tree top.  
 When you grow up, you'll work in a shop.  
 When you get married, your wife  
 will work too.  
 Just so the rich will have nothing to do."



The cotton gin contributed considerably to the position of cotton as King in the South. It drastically reduced the labor needed to clean the seeds from the cotton and meant that more slaves could be used as field laborers. This led to tremendous expansion of cotton growing and the need of land outside the deep South to grow it on.

This wasn't the last time that women were to be called into the labor force in wartime. Here women make ammunition in the Civil War.





SOJOURNER TRUTH

*"That man over there say that a woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helped me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me a best place... And aint I a women? Look at me. Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me... And aint I a women? I could as much and eat as much as a man when I could get it, and bear the lash as well... And aint I a woman? I have borned thirteen children and seen them most all sold off into slavery. And when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard... And aint I a woman?"*

*Sojourner Truth: Speech before the Women's Rights Convention at Akron, Ohio in 1851.*

## Resistance - flight and insurrection

While white women were beginning to organize to free themselves from being factory slaves, Black women and men were fighting against their chattel slavery. There were hundreds of slave rebellions in the South, the most successful of which was the Nat Turner rebellion in 1831.

Harriet Tubman, born a slave was only 14 when she first helped a slave escape. She spent the rest of her life leading the exodus of more than 300 Black slaves by way of the underground railroad to the North. A price of \$40,000 was put on the head of this woman called the "Moses" of her people.

The courage of Southern Black people fighting to end slavery inspired free Black men and women in the North to organize militant anti-slavery associations

which helped slaves escape to Canada.

Born a slave, Frederick Douglass escaped to the North. He became a brilliant writer and orator exposing slavery and arousing the people against it. He spoke far and wide for suffrage for Black people and for women.

Sojourner Truth, another ex-slave, spent most of her life organizing anti-slavery associations and speaking to groups of women and men, Black and white. She linked abolitionist groups up with the struggle for women's rights.

From the outset, white women as well as Black women, spoke out against the system which kept Black people enslaved. This was in direct defiance of laws which forbade them to speak in public.



Susan B. Anthony



Elizabeth Cady Stanton



Sarah Grimke



Angelina Grimke



Harriet Tubman

White middle class women, in legal bondage to their husbands, felt a kinship with the struggle of Black slaves, organizing more than 100 anti-slavery societies by 1830. In their fight against slavery, they began to confront the oppression they felt as women. The training that women got in the abolitionist movement they put to good use in their own struggle for the right to speak and the right to vote.

In 1848, Elizabeth Candy Stanton and Lucretia Mott called the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y. This was the beginning of the century long struggle for woman's suffrage.

In general, working women did not participate in the suffrage movement. For them, "equal rights" was more than a question of education or getting the right to vote. Long hours of work left them with little time, and more urgent were the issues of shorter working hours, higher wages and better conditions.



Lucy Stone



Lucretia Mott



Carrie Chapman Catt



Maria Weston Chapman

The Civil War and Reconstruction broke the system of slavery in the South. But any gains were short lived and had little effect on people's lives, especially after the defeat of reconstruction. From slaves to serfs, Black people worked as sharecroppers, doing the same back breaking labor they had done as slaves. Very few Black people had land of their own.

A few Black women were hired to do the dirty work in the tobacco industry and canneries. The higher paying, cleaner industrial jobs were open to white people only.

When Northern business united with the Southern land interests in the 1870's to finally crush the reforms of reconstruction, all barriers to the oppression of the Black population were removed. A Jim Crow system of segregation and discrimination was consolidated. In many ways it was more vicious than before the war. Lynch mobs terrorized Black men and women who were fighting for the rights their people had died for in the Civil War.

Ida B. Wells, Black woman editor of the *Memphis Free Press*, made lynchings a national issue, and did more to forward the anti-lynching crusade than any other person.



"When the Hebrews were emancipated, they were given three acres of ground upon which they could live and make a living but not so when our slaves were emancipated. They were sent away empty-handed, without money, without friends, and without a foot of land to stand upon."

Frederick Douglass

**From slaves  
to serfs**

# European Immigrants

## New world, new oppressions

In the mid and late 1800's, waves of immigrants fleeing the depression, misery, and pogroms of Europe began to fill the factories. Millions of Irish, Russian Jews, Italians, French, Germans, Poles, Yugoslavians, and others came to the U.S. seeking a better life. Most of them had barely enough money for their boat passage.

The majority of these immigrants were rural poor whose crops had failed them in Europe. They didn't have the knowledge of English to take the skilled jobs as clerks and bookkeepers; neither did they have the capital to set up as shopkeepers.

In general, immigrants found only crowded, tenement housing. Since cities were densely populated, and jobs were scarce, there was heavy anti-alien discrimination and campaigns to keep "foreigners from taking American jobs." It was to the business-

man's advantage to reinforce barriers between nationalities because it meant they could use one group of immigrants to compete with another group for the few available jobs at low wages.

Whole families had to work long, hard hours in order to pool enough money to live on. Men were paid little, women less, children practically nothing.

Women went to work in canneries, as domestics, or worked in their own homes sewing, laundering, ironing, or making toys and beads. All too frequently they were brought into the industrial work force as strikebreakers. Yet in many strikes after the turn of the century, immigrant women made important contributions in the battle for decent living standards for all.

While immigrants filled the factories in the East, land speculators pushed open new territory. Native Americans were slaughtered or confined on large desolate reservations.

In the Southwest, Mexicans were forced off their lands by rich Anglo cattlemen and railroad barons. They ended up in the hardest jobs—in mines, in fields, and on railroads—for the least amount of pay.



*Family At Table*—An Italian woman with tears running down her cheek said: "All the family work the whole week for so little we almost starve. All the week stick the pins in the cards, but more curses than pins go in the cards."





*New York Seamstresses, 1846*—Class consciousness was developing rapidly. Reports of a mass meeting of seamstresses held in New York stated that the women were making shirts for 4 cents apiece, while agents of debauchery circulated among them with offers of ease and plenty.

"This is what makes us so radical. This is what makes us want to see rich men hoeing corn and rich ladies at the wash tub."





*Chinese on Angel Island*—Chinese women, except for the wives of merchants, were excluded from the U.S. by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1884. So few Chinese women came to the United States that not even a near numerical equality in the sexes was achieved until the middle of the twentieth century. Consequently there were few Chinese women in the labor force. Chinese women and men who arrived in the late 20's and early 30's were kept in camps on Angel Island for up to three or four years before being allowed entrance into the U.S., much as immigrants to the East coast were kept at Ellis Island in New York. People wrote their own histories on the walls of the cells on Angel Island.

In California, another wave of immigrants arrived in the mid 1800's. Chinese were put to work building the railroads, digging the mines and developing the agriculture of California. They were followed by Japanese and Filipino contract laborers who were paid less than four dollars a month and lived in miserable labor camps. In Hawaii, as early as 1850, American sugar cane plantation owners built a fortune on the backs of Chinese and Japanese laborers.

When the depression hit during the 1870's, Chinese workers were blamed. They were accused of taking jobs from the whites. Chinese were driven into crowded Chinatowns in the big cities and were thrown out of work.

For the most part, Chinese women were not allowed to enter the U.S. Exclusion Laws passed in the 1880's severely limited further immigration of men and women. The Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943.

When Chinese, Japanese and Filipino women did arrive they worked in the fields, in the canneries, in sweatshops and laundries.

## New sources of wage slaves

*Japanese Women Sugar Plantation Laborers, Hawaii, 1918*—Asian women are not the frail, passive, obedient little dolls they have been stereotyped to be. These Japanese women workers had to be strong to withstand the harsh conditions of Hawaii sugar cane plantations. And they weren't so passive either as they participated along with other Asian workers in numerous strikes for better working and living conditions, better wages and for union recognition.

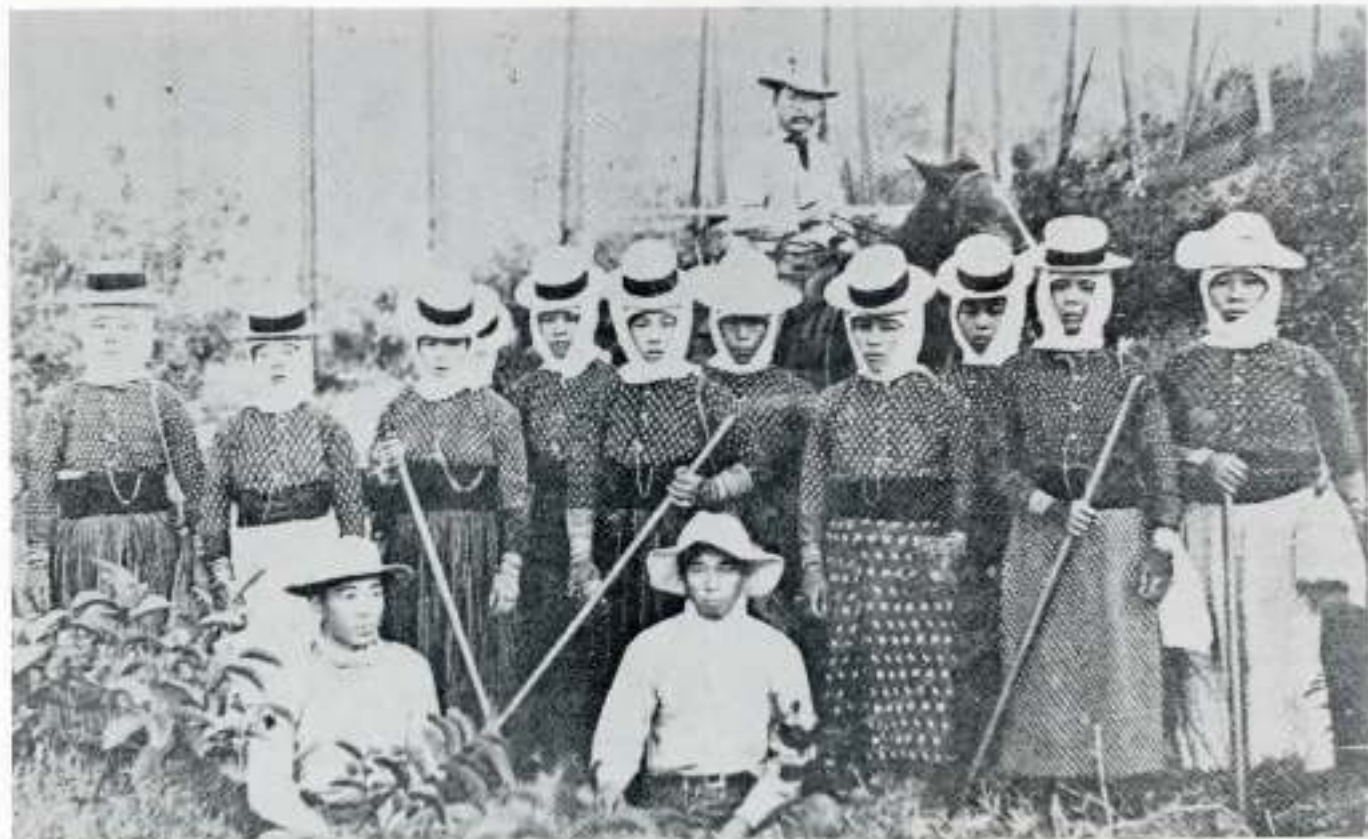




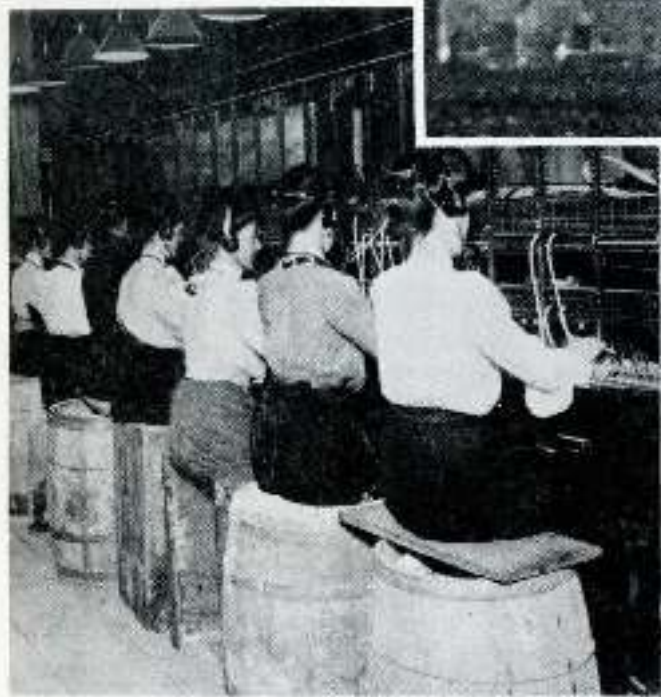
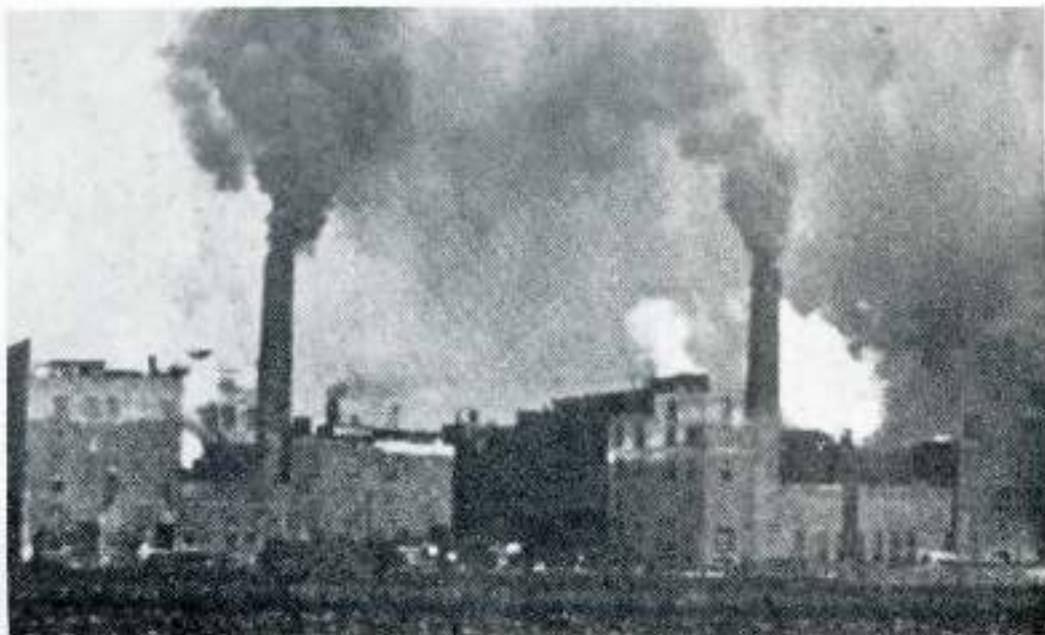
Japanese picture brides came mainly to the U.S. between 1900 and 1910. They often joined their new husbands working in the fields or in small businesses such as laundries, shoe shops or restaurants. Others went to work on plantations, as garment workers, in canneries, in factories processing Japanese foods, and other low paying jobs.

First Japanese Immigration was encouraged by those who wanted a cheap source of labor. Anti-Japanese sentiment rose among white workers who feared the competition.

When Japanese workers began to organize for better conditions, steps were taken to pass laws segregating Japanese Americans and barring them entry to the U.S. Despite this, picture brides continued to immigrate until 1924 when the Immigration Act was passed, excluding all Asian immigrants.

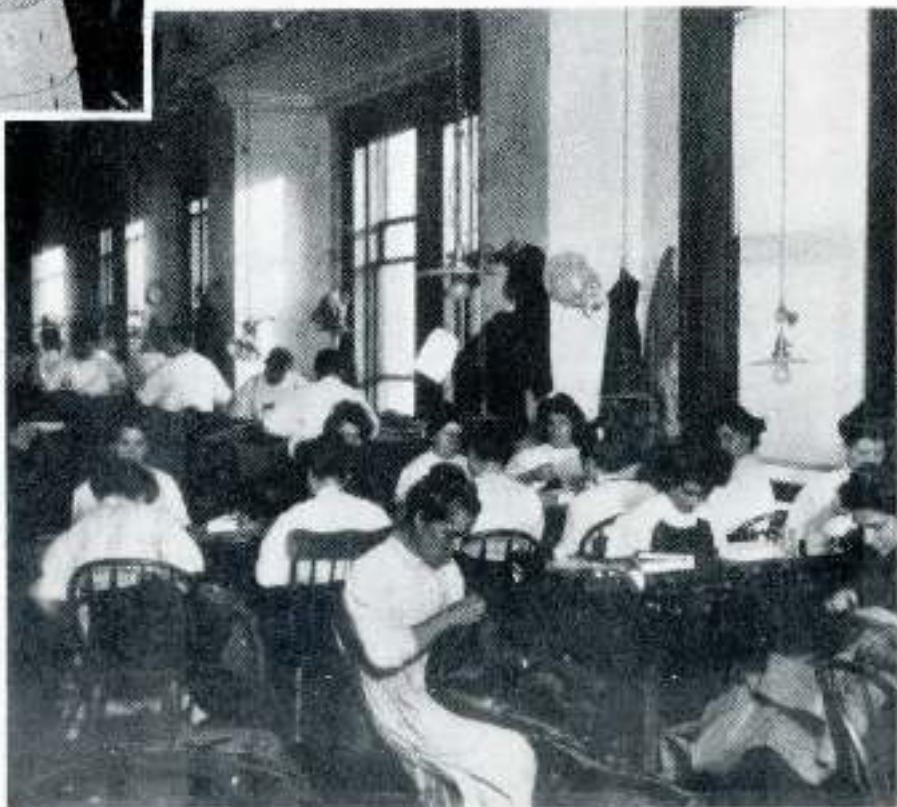


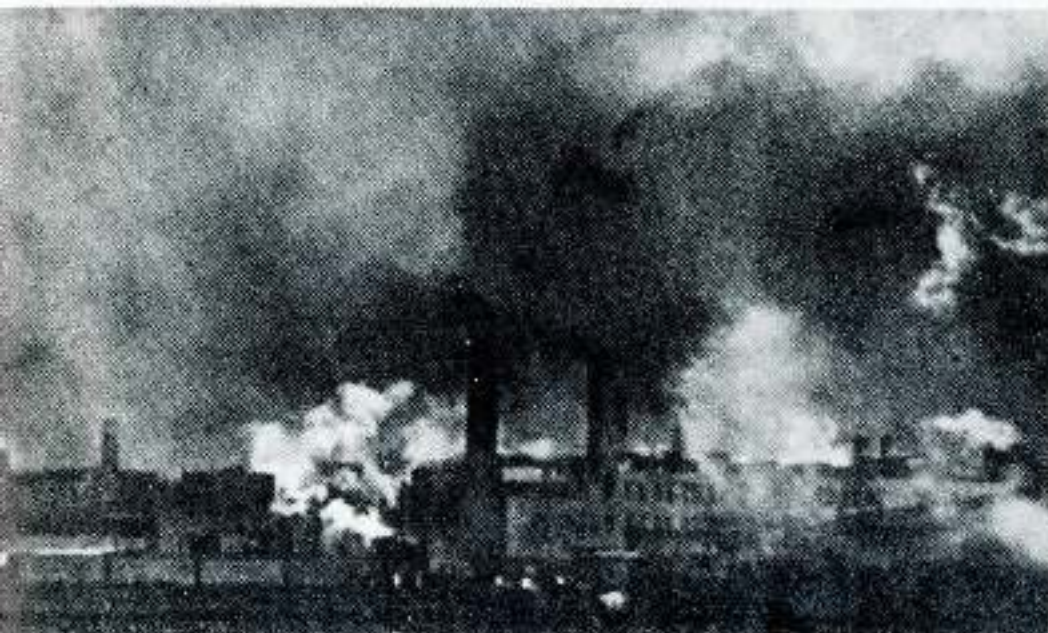
*Ad For Telephone Operators—*  
"The colorful, fascinating work  
of the operator . . . The work is  
pleasant, healthful and con-  
genial . . . The entire atmos-  
phere is stimulating and whole-  
some."



## Turn of the century

I looked at the other two workers beside me and saw they did not look at all rested. I had spent a good part of the day, Sunday, in bed, trying to get over the effects of 54 hours work the week before. "Rest!" One of them looked at me with amazement. "Sunday's the only day I have to do all the washing and cleaning and cooking up for the week."





## work places



*Women Meat Packers*—Immigrant workers fought for survival in the mile square complex of livestock, pens and slaughter houses in Chicago. Upton Sinclair's book "The Jungle" describes the conditions: the stench, the heat, the brutal treatment of men, women and children by petty boss tyrants. Women and children could earn 5 cents an hour, men 15 cents. Later on, in the meat packing industry, women would play a leading role in the struggle for a union, better wages, better conditions.

# No time to go to school



Children, over two million of them in 1900, worked beside their mothers and fathers in mills, coal breakers, canneries and fields. They slaved twelve hours a day. Sleep was the recreation of children too tired to eat. Many of them never lived to be adults. From the managers point of view, child labor was perfect: cheap and docile.

"Our children grow up un-learned,  
no time to go to school;  
Almost before they have learned to walk,  
they have learned to spin or spool."



"It was so hot in the fields. My mother did not make me hurry, but some of the mothers would yell at the children because they wanted them to pick faster so they could make more. I have seen children crying in the field. I would feel so sorry for them. Ladies get tired, so you know little children get tired."

These "breaker boys" worked in the coal mines picking out slate from the coal as it slid down a chute. They grew up pale and hunched as their fathers had, from ten hours a day stooped over in the darkness of the mines. Children were used because they were small and could hide in the niches as the coal cars went by.





The Women's Trade Union League was one of the most successful in organizing women in the early 20th century.

## Women! Organize!

Women and immigrants saw the need to organize in order to fight together for their rights. But they were systematically excluded from most unions. The American Federation of Labor organized workers along craft lines, but included only skilled workers. No women, immigrants or Blacks were allowed. The AF of L said women were too difficult to organize because they were not permanent members of the work force; besides, they might not be able to pay the dues out of their poor wages.

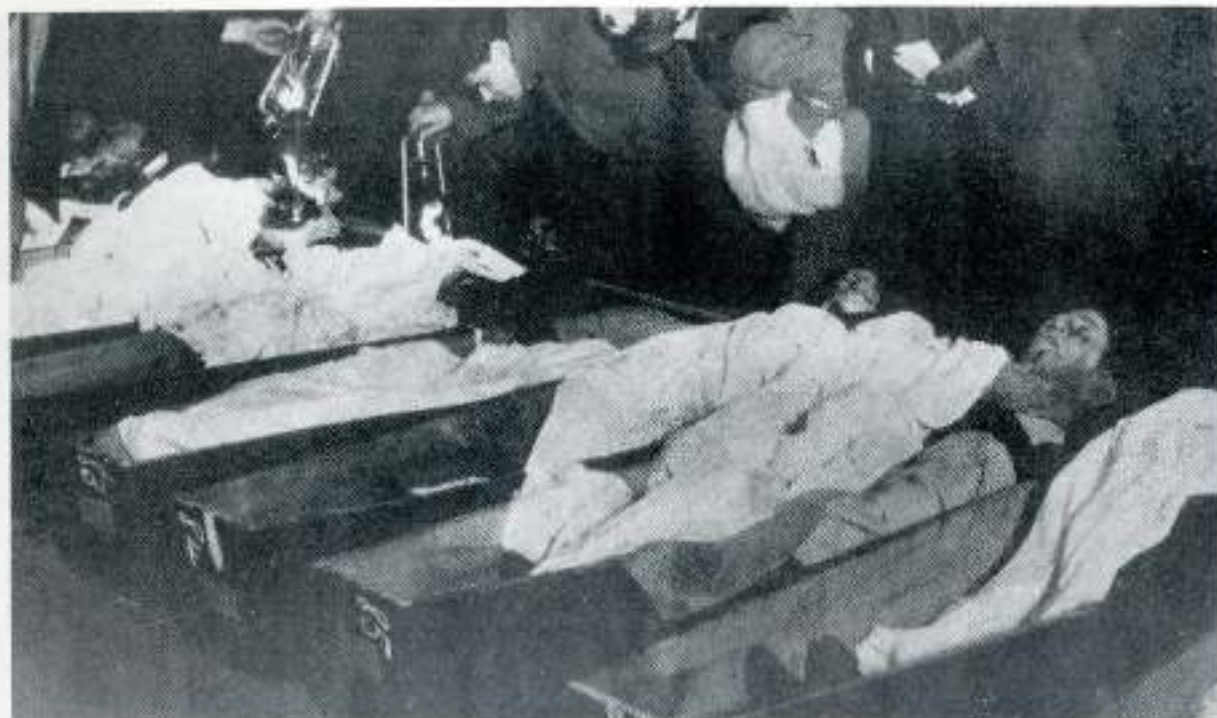
At the same time women were continuing the tradition of organizing themselves in the face of discrimination from union leaders. A number of local women's unions arose around specific issues of better working conditions and increased wages. When women did organize this way, they were denied recognition and support from larger unions. Only a couple of national unions, the Cigarmakers Union

and the Typographical Union, allowed women into their ranks.

The Knights of Labor first organized in 1869 among garment workers, became "the first large organization to systematically encourage the admission of women on an equal footing." By 1888, 12,000 women in 20 different industries including housewives had joined.

Workers saw that the lower pay for working women was a threat to the wages of men so they demanded equal pay for equal work. In spite of the official policy of the Knights who were opposed to strikes, members went out on strikes for union recognition and for other rights of workers.

The Knights of Labor's progressive stand was not enough to offset the growing trend toward labor organizing along narrow craft lines and discrimination towards women and immigrants. .



*Triangle Fire Tragedy, April 20, 1911*—The Triangle Shirtwaist Company had ignored safety precautions and had locked fire exits to "safeguard employers from the loss of goods." The twisted fire escapes were a grim joke for the women who had to jump from the 10th floor to get out of the flames.

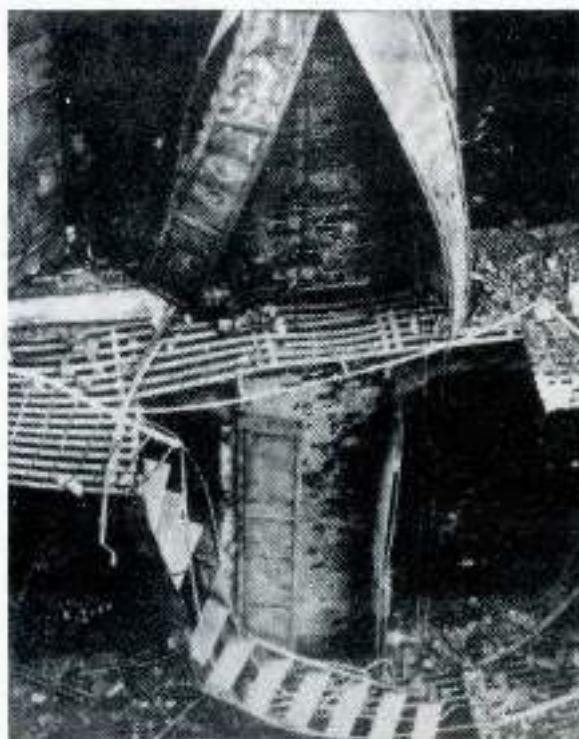
One hundred fifty-four women died in the fire. Their broken and charred bodies were lined up in coffins for relatives to identify. The fire set off a chain reaction of resistance among garment workers. Because of the Triangle Fire, industrial safety regulations, sprinkler systems in factories were installed in New York State.

One organization that had some success organizing women to fight for better working conditions was the National Women's Trade Union League. It drew its support both from men's trade unions and from middle class, educated women who didn't have to work.

Its aim was to aid in organizing women into trade unions. The more wealthy members lent financial support to the first large strikes in women's trades: the Shirtwaist Makers Strike, 1909; and the Fur and Leather Workers strike, 1912.

In response to the tragedy of the Triangle Fire, the number of women in the organization mushroomed, signing as many as 1,500 new members a day.

Another militant union that included women was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), organized in 1904. Its influence was greater than its size (75,000 at the largest) would indicate. The unorganized, unskilled and many immigrants and migratory workers followed its spirited leaders in many bitter struggles.



Elizabeth Gurley Flynn joined the IWW at the age of 15. Her upbringing in the slums of New York, and what she later saw in factory towns across the country convinced her to dedicate herself to union organizing. She became a leader of the free speech fight in Spokane, and strikes in Lawrence, New Bedford and Lowell.

Joe Hill's song, "The Rebel Girl", about the strong role of women in labor struggles was dedicated to her.

In organizing the Lawrence strike, she held special meetings for the women. They had to overcome opposition to women's picketing and having meetings. She knew that if women were kept home, isolated and worried, the strike would be endangered. Women did get out and demonstrate, carrying babies and picket signs. They were more fearless than men at times, and more women than men were arrested for harrasing scabs.



## Give us bread, but give us roses

In Lawrence Mass., in 1912, over 20,000 workers of many nationalities, over half women and children, went on strike. They struck successfully for ten weeks despite intimidation and brutality, against long hours, insufficient wages and speed-up. These children are not on holiday, but are workers on strike.



*Bell Telephone Operators Walk-out—*  
In 1919 a tidal wave of strikes swept the country to protest post-war unemployment and lagging wages. Especially significant for women was the strike of 8,000 telephone operators. They walked out on April 15th and picketed the exchanges 24 hours a day for six days. Their success in tying up service in five New England states was even more significant because they got the line-men to support their strike. They have every right to smile, it was a complete victory.



## Yet more victories

In 1912, fur and leather workers in New York struck for six weeks. These militant men and women, many of them immigrants allowed no scabs to enter workplaces during the strike, which they eventually won.





# WWI

## Relying on women, great labor reserve



World War I accelerated the number of women in a wider variety of jobs. All kinds of restrictions and taboos against women working in dirty industrial plants gave way in response to the need for more workers in heavy industry. For the first time, industrial jobs were open to more Black women for as long as the war lasted.



*Clerical workers*—When typewriters were first introduced, men operated them because they were thought to be too complicated for women. In 1870 there were seven women clerical workers, in 1900 200,000, and in 1936 two million. Now clerical workers are about one third of the female work force.



Women continued in the work force after World War I, although they were pushed out of most of the skilled or heavy jobs. The suffrage amendment was passed in 1920 giving women the vote, but it didn't change the sexual division of labor or the lower wages women received.

Nor did it change the work women had to do at home. Millions of housewives were still on call 24 hours a day, cooking, washing, cleaning, and caring for children for no compensation but what their husbands could earn for the whole family.

The "roaring twenties" has been painted as a time of high production and prosperity by those who chose to ignore the facts about the majority of people.

Workers averaged less than \$25 a week. Women made half of that. Survival income for a family was estimated at \$2,000 a year. But 60% of families had to live on considerably less. The wealthiest one percent of the nation had more money than forty percent of the poorest earned all together.

When the Depression struck in 1929, twelve to seventeen million workers were left unemployed while those still working had their wages cut in half. Wages for women were slashed to \$7 a week. Black women never saw that much because they were pushed back into domestic work. Meager savings disappeared. Families were evicted. People faced starvation.

**We can vote,  
but how will  
we eat?**

After a long, hard struggle, the Women's Suffrage Amendment was finally ratified in 1921.



*Mother Jones*—One of the most effective and colorful organizers for the Knights of Labor and for the mine-workers was Mary "Mother" Jones. Born in Ireland in 1830, her four children and husband all died in an epidemic. She then became a labor organizer and for 50 years was in the middle of the violent mine strikes of that era. She moved from strike to strike, speaking tirelessly to both working women and men. Her exploits with the miners' union were fearless and memorable—she once told the striking men to stay home and mind the children while she led a brigade of their mop-carrying wives to chase the scabs out of the mines.

Mother Jones didn't go around talking about women's rights. She knew that women's equality at that time would mean women would be "free" to die in the mines like men did. Instead she believed that winning the vote for women was secondary to winning economic justice for all working people. Her undaunted efforts helped build real solidarity throughout the labor movement, especially between men and women.



## **We need good jobs and decent pay**

The existing union leadership did nothing to fight these conditions. Most union leaders were barely distinguishable from businessmen, trying to outdo management in speeding up production and vilifying communists. Strikes and struggles were deemed "unamerican." Unemployment insurance and relief was decried as "undignified" for workers.

As the depression deepened, employed and unemployed working people took matters into their own hands. There were hunger marches and numerous strikes including hundreds of thousands of women in mills, shoe factories, and clothing industries. The communist-led unemployed councils fought evictions, supported strikes and demanded relief for unemployed workers.

The women's ILCWU grew to five times its former size. The CIO broke away from the AFL in 1935. It organized working women, skilled and unskilled in unprecedented numbers on an industry wide basis. Women were still at the bottom of the heap, with minority women at the bottom of the bottom. All during the depression women were urged to stay home and leave what few jobs there were to men. Once again, women and minority workers were forced into poorer paying jobs as a reserve labor force. This economic status was justified on the basis that women were less entitled than men to good jobs, decent pay and the right to organize.

# Depression - strikes and struggles



"Baby Strikers" of Allentown, Pa., 1933—Factory owners used to think child labor was perfect: cheap and docile. But when women and children are forced to work 60 to 72 hours a week in sweatshop conditions, they become wise and tough. In May, 1933, girls only 14 and 15 years old struck against oppressive conditions at four clothing factories in Allentown. Some child workers were so young that bosses provided "hiding places" for them when factory inspectors came around. Those who weren't hidden were easily "overlooked" by inspectors, who often didn't bother to ask their ages.

*Protesting WPA Discrimination, And Job And Wage Cuts*—In 1935 Roosevelt formed the Works Project Administration which made jobs for 3 1/2 of the 10 million jobless. Many WPA projects were make-work assignments of scant value, designed merely to keep workers busy and prevent them from rioting. WPA workers received \$50 a month, scarcely more than relief dole. In addition, Third World people, especially Black people, whose needs were usually greater, whose families were larger and whose chances for employment were worse than those of whites, were the last to receive relief, the first to be cut off, and the last to be hired for work relief. Here, women protest the 1937 outbacks in WPA jobs and wages, as well as WPA discriminatory practices.





This quote about coal miner's wives in Illinois in 1933 describes these women in a needle trade's strike in the same year. "Beaten with police clubs, gassed, shot down by militia, arrested, jailed, back on the picket line and jailed again, women workers have fought to the finish against fun thugs, company guards, coal and iron police, Ku Klux Klan gangsters, National Guardsmen—and all the other brutal representatives of organized capital."

*Women in the Fur and Leather Workers Union Protest Post-war high Prices, Job and Wage Cuts*—As veterans returned to their jobs and war production decreased, bosses thought it would be easy to cut overtime and eventually lay off the women and minority workers. But workers united to fight back, like these Fur and Leather workers who went on strike in 1926, 1927 and 1938. As part of the post-war drive to increase wages, women manned picket lines month after month, winning wage increases to meet food prices which had doubled in 7 years.





*Women Support The Men At Flint*—When auto workers staged the famous sit-down strike against GM in 1937 at Flint, Michigan, their wives were among their most militant supporters. With over 4,000 men occupying 4 plants for the duration of the strike, much of the support activity depended on the leadership of women.

Not only did women picket night and day, but they also found time to prepare and serve food to strikers and picketers. To boost the men's morale inside the plants, they brought the children for brief chats. Tremendous support demonstrations were mobilized, including strikers' families and thousands of workers who came from Toledo, Detroit, and other cities on a moment's notice. With such support and organization, a union was won at GM, the first industrial giant to be unionized!

**Flint**

*Women's Emergency Brigade*—Thousands of strikers' wives joined the Woman's Auxiliary, and hundreds formed the militant Women's Emergency Brigade. These women armed themselves with two-by-fours and more than once engaged the police in battle.



**Victory through unity!**



*"Little Steel" Strike—Women Join the Fight*—The victorious Flint sit-down inspired other industrial workers to organize unions, and the steel workers took up the struggle in 1937. As at Flint, the strikers' wives fought at their husbands' sides. Police are supposed to protect the innocent, right? But it was courageous women like these who soon found out they had to take the law into their own hands to fight off police attacks on picketers and back their husbands' just demands for better conditions in the deadly steel mills.

## Women at Little Steel stand up







*1937 Sit-Down at Woolworth's Builds Retail Clerks Union*—The helpful ladies behind the counters at Woolworth's 5 & 10 decided to help themselves in New York during a 1937 sit-down. The strikers, mostly women, of the Retail Clerks Local 1250 blocked the aisles and refused to make sales for the owners of the giant chain-

store until their demands were won. What did they want?—a 40-hour week, a \$20 minimum weekly wage, a full hour for lunch and union recognition. They sat down and slept-in until they won!

*Men Support The Women*—Men and women supporters of the Woolworth's strike pass supplies and blankets past the guards to the women sitting down inside.

# Woolworth women sit-down





## Organizing in Chinatown

Chinese garment workers, both men and women, went out on strike in February 1938 for the right to unionize. The strike against the Golden Gate Manufacturing Co, owned by Joe Soong of the National Dollar Store, led to the formation of the first Chinese Local in Trade union history—the I.L.G.W.U. local #31.



# WW II -Woman power in demand



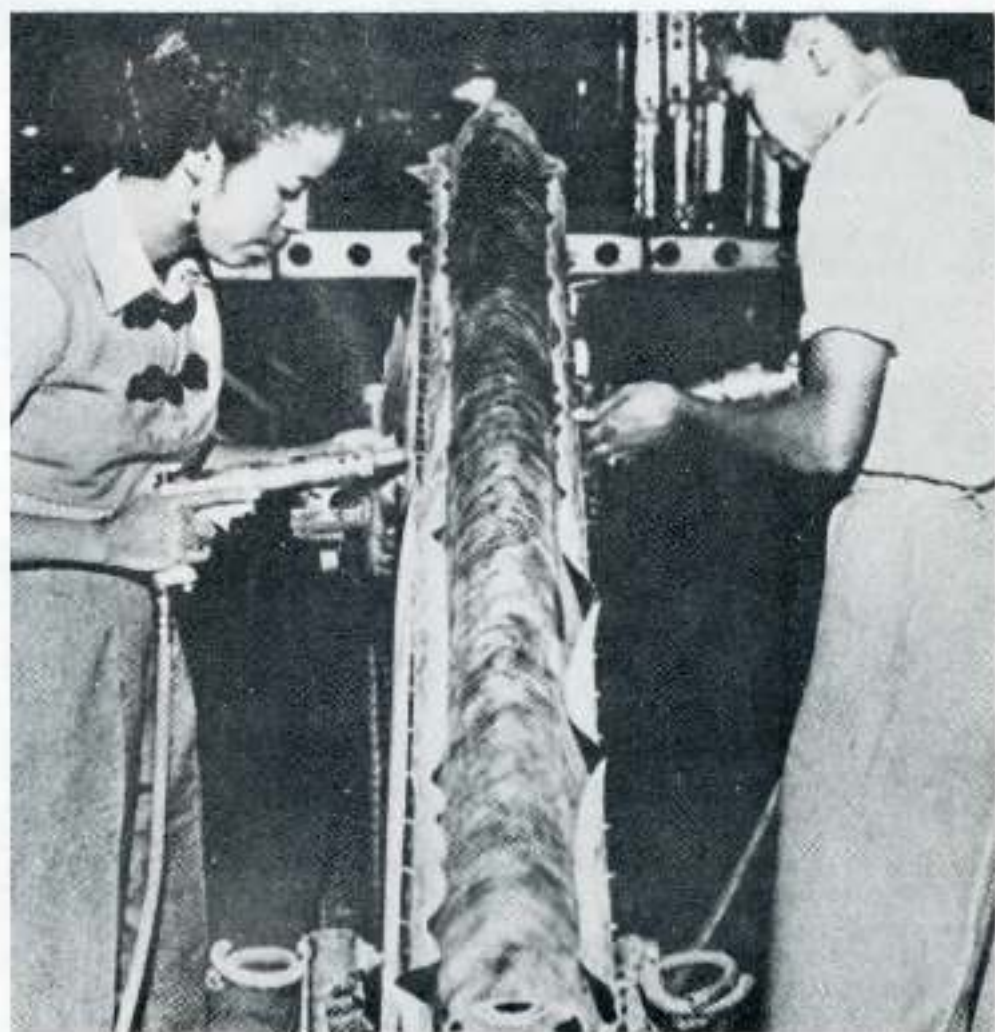
The second world war changed many things. Over six million women entered the labor force in all occupations, an increase of over fifty percent. Now in the face of an unprecedented need for their labor, women were the target of a barrage of propaganda. The same people who earlier had convincingly declared that "woman's place was in the home," now argued that women should get out and work. Once again the demands of the economy relied on the available cheap labor source in women. The war caused a greater change in women's economic status than had been achieved in the previous fifty years.

Women were allowed to bring out their great reserves of skill energy and ingenuity. They performed countless tasks and performed them competently dispelling some of the stereotype ideas about woman's abilities.

Black women were affected even more radically by the increased demand for labor. Over 400,000 domestics left their former jobs and went to work in war industries. The number of black women in farm work dropped from 20% to 7% because of the availability of industrial jobs and mechanization.

Between 1939 and 1945, the number of women in organized labor tripled. Wages went up, but they were frozen at a 15% increase during the war. At the same time, prices rose 45% and corporate profits rose 250%.





## Women move into heavy industry



### *Executive Order 9066*



These working women were again faced with a dual burden as workers and as homemakers. Child-care in particular was a great problem that was not met adequately by government or industry. There was space for only 10% of the children needing day-care.

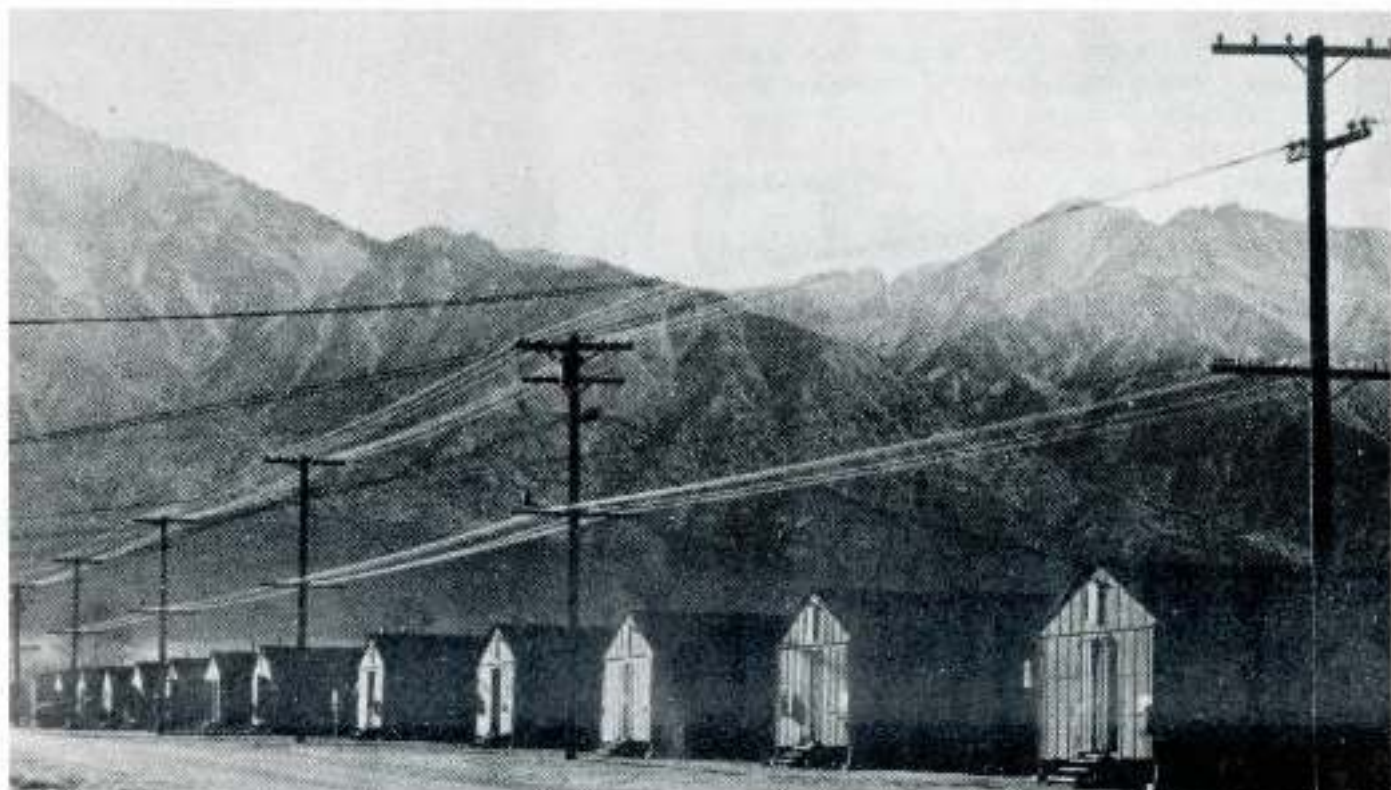
A new trend was set during the war, changing the profile of working women forever. A smaller proportion of women workers were young and single. Married women over thirty-five swelled the ranks of labor. 75% of the new women workers were married and the number of wives in the labor force doubled.

While the war improved the economic earnings of women, they still earned only half as much as men. Black, Asian, Chicana and Puerto Rican women made less than that. The issues of equal pay for equal work, equal opportunity for jobs, and community services such as childcare remained unchanged.



Japanese played such an important role in Hawaii's economy, their "security problem" could be overlooked.





## *Executive Order 9066*

*Japanese women in concentration camps.* After the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese during WWII the U.S. government evacuated Americans of Japanese ancestry on the West coast to concentration camps. An anti-Japanese campaign had been waged by the press, labor leaders, political leaders and growers' associations (who wanted the Japanese truck farm industry). Evacuation orders were motivated more by racial prejudice rather than military necessity. Surrounded by barbed wire, the camps were located in desolate areas. Hastily built barracks and intolerable living and working conditions characterized the internment. These were met with strikes and riots by some Japanese who were then segregated from the rest. Japanese women assumed new roles and participated more in running the schools and camp activities.

With the end of the war, public opinion once again turned against female employment. Government and the press urged women to give up their jobs to returning veterans as at the end of World War I. Women were relegated to the kitchen now that the emergency was over.

Women resisted the push back home. Women needed to work because families couldn't get along on one salary. Three out of four women who had been hired during the war intended to continue working. So, although there were heavy layoffs in war industries immediately after the war, women were rehired in clerical positions and in new consumer industries. Two years after the war had ended, there were one million more women in the nation's factories than there had been in 1940.

By 1949 the female labor force had increased by over 5.25 million. The percentage of women working at jobs outside their home continued to climb, and more and more of these women had children under six.

For the first time, after World War II, married women comprised a majority of working women. Society was willing to accept the concept of the working wife as long as she could keep up with the house work with the help of modern appliances and packaged foods. Her role as family provider was still seen as secondary to her husband's.

## Women resist the push back home





# Salt of the Earth



"And so they came the women . . . they rose before dawn and they came, wives, daughters, grandmothers. They came from Zinc Town and the hills beyond, from other mining camps, ten, twenty, thirty miles away . . . By sun-up there were a hundred on the line. And they kept coming—women who had never been seen before, women who had nothing to do with the strike. Some how they heard about a women's picket line—and they came."

*Salt of the Earth* was a film about a strike by mainly chicano zinc miners. Made for general release in 1954, it was blacklisted in the McCarthy era because it told the truth. Bosses tried every tactic to break the strike, including a court injunction forbidding the striking miners from picketing. So the women took up the picketing, most over their husbands' protests. They were jailed—and returned to the picket lines when they were released. It was their persistence and the solidarity that developed between the women and their husbands that finally won the strike.

# Ain't gonna let nobody turn me roun'

"I'm too tired to go to the back of the bus," said Rosa Parks, sitting down in the front. With this action the Civil Rights Movement began.

Black women played a leading role in many Civil Rights groups like SNCC and Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, in organizing bus boycotts, marches for fair housing, lunch counter sit-ins, and picket lines demanding jobs.

In community projects in towns all over the South, Black women and white women led the fight against segregation and discrimination.

Fannie Lou Hamer, a fiery orator from Ruleville, Miss. became a symbol of militant resistance. At the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City in 1964, she led Black and white people in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to challenge the racist State Democratic delegate. They were offered a weak compromise which they rejected unequivocally.

The Civil Rights Movement, black rebellions in cities and the explosive growth of Black organizations like the Black Panther Party inspired women of all nationalities to take a more militantly active part in political struggles.





# Women struggle on many fronts



Asian women felt a particularly strong solidarity with their Vietnamese sisters.

Standing up to the system of profits which oppresses all workers takes courage, particularly for minority women who face triple jeopardy oppression as workers, as members of a minority and as women. Women of all races are taking hold of their tradition of resisting injustice and are fighting battles on many issues.

The war in Vietnam spurred many women who had never before been politically active to march in protest of the inhumane extermination of a whole people. The undaunted courage of the Vietnamese women in the face of U.S. aggression sparked in some women a sense of their own power to fight the oppressive system from within the U.S. Women's role in the political movements became less of an exception and more of a rule.

In the 60's, white women, primarily middle class, popularized the struggle for women's liberation. The media quickly made a mockery of this movement by stereotyping "women libbers" as braless females who wanted to be free from housework and children and who wanted nothing to do with men. Many did join

women's groups and caucuses. But it became increasingly clear that there were no individual or small group solutions to the oppression of women.

Most women saw that the enemy was not men, but the American system that turns women into sex objects for commercial value and pits women against each other and men.

In the 70's the battle for women's rights is being waged by growing numbers of working women. As the movement has broadened the issues have sharpened: birth control and the right to decent health care for women, childcare, the defense and expansion of protective legislation on the job.

Black and other minority women have begun to organize against state programs that force them to undergo sterilization, sometimes without their own consent, as a condition for receiving medical care during pregnancy.

Throughout the country women are fighting for the right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. The way it is now, in many places, only rich women can afford to have safe abortions. Poor women have to resort to back-room butchers or harmful drugs.

# Si se puede - It can be done!



We have fed you all for a thousand years  
For that was our doom you know,  
From the days when you chained us in your fields  
To the strike a week ago.  
You have taken our lives and our babies and wives  
And we're told it's your legal share,  
But if blood be the price of your lawful wealth,  
Good God! We have bought it fair."

by an unknown proletarian, 1908.

Chicano farmworkers have been leading the struggle to unionize. The women who have worked in the fields have taken the lead in the fields, on picket lines and in organizing the boycott. Hundreds of UFWU members went to many cities to organize the boycott of grapes, lettuce and Gallo wine.





*Puerto Rican Day Parade*—Widespread poverty and unemployment in Puerto Rico under U.S. colonial domination drove 1½ million Puerto Ricans to the U.S. mainland (most since WWII) in hopes of finding better jobs and living conditions. Continued racism and exploitation smashed these hopes. In eastern cities, Puerto Rican women share the bottom of the job heap with Black women. The majority of Puerto Rican women workers are employed in the garment industry. Ninety percent of the domestic and hospital workers in New York are Puerto Rican and Black. The spirit of Puerto Rican women and men has met racism with resistance and renewed consciousness of their national history and oppression.

## Puerto Rican women

*Children can't learn on empty stomachs:* Survival programs such as this free breakfast program were initiated in the Puerto Rican community by the Young Lords of New York.



Japanese women protest ILGWU's "buy American" campaign, which implies that Japanese workers are to blame for rising unemployment among U.S. garment workers. This has led to racial antagonism toward Japanese-Americans. New York, October 1972.



On November 7, 1973, the 300 Chinese, Filipino, Black, Latino, and white workers at San Francisco Gold Company won the right to have a union. This came after a two month unionizing drive spearheaded by sixty Chinese garment workers.





## No more broken treaties

Sixty percent of all Native American families live below the federal poverty level. Male unemployment among Native Americans is triple and sometimes five or six times higher than for whites. Women are forced to take low-paying service or industrial jobs—when they can get work at all.

The occupation of Wounded Knee was part of the continued resistance of Native Americans. The takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Custer demonstration, the occupation of Alcatraz Island and other actions are part of the fight of Indians on and off the reservation. Indians have been driven off their land, the government has broken treaty after treaty. Their true history has been erased. Their share in America is poverty, unemployment, poor housing and poor education.







*Shell strike, 1973*—the issues of health and safety for the strikers and their families. Women lived with the daily fear of the dread phone call from Shell with the news of their husbands injury or death. These women understood that in order to win the strike the plant had to shut down. Many wives were arrested in front of the refinery gates as they blocked the entrance of scabs.

Stewardesses have traditionally been subjected to the criterion of beauty on the job market. Other help wanted ads read "must have pleasant appearance for front office work"; "good pay for sharp cutie". Sex charm is used to sell plane rides, drinks, appliances and cosmetics. These angry stewardesses in the 1973 TWA strike are a far cry from the image of a dumb blond and the passive wide-eyed beauty.





**Doubling as  
breadwinner  
and homemaker**



The home life of women is a daily sacrifice to a thousand unimportant trivialities. For any woman who works in the home, a woman's work is truly never done. But close to fifty percent of women work another job outside their home. Many, Black women in particular, are forced to do domestic work in other's homes.

Whether doing housework all day for no money or domestic work for little money, or working at home late into the night after eight hours on another job, keeping house is repetitive, thankless and invisible.

Women have primary responsibility for the children. Many women, in fact, are the sole support of their families and carry the burden alone. For working women, and especially single parents, child-care is a daily problem. Baby sitters are expensive and paying them is like taking a wage cut.

Childcare centers accommodate only 10% of the six million children of working mothers. This percentage is the same as during World War II when centers were federally funded because of the need for women to fill the jobs vacated by men. Federal funds have continued to trickle into childcare, and Nixon threatened to take even that little away in '73. Angry working mothers, determined not to quit their jobs and be forced back on welfare, took to the streets. This stalled the cutbacks.





## Where women

On still another front, some working women—professional and non-professional—seeking equal pay for equal work, have revived the Equal Rights Amendment which had been bottled up in committee since 1923. Though the ERA itself has not yet been passed, employers have already shown how they intend to use it. Instead of equal rights, they are making it equal lack of rights.

By using Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which says there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, age or religion, companies are taking away breaks for women, since this "discriminates against men." Bank of America in San Francisco tried to take away company-provided taxi fare home for women who worked night shift until the men and women got together to protest B of A's tactics. Fiberboard Corporation has taken away overtime after 8 hours for women. Many companies have lowered men's wages to the level of women's.

*Women Who Work*, by Grace Hutchins. (N.Y.: Itating descriptions of working women, their the tions against which they struggled. Unfortuna may find it in the stacks of some libraries. It is

*Labor's Untold Story*, By Richard O. Boyer and \$2.50) This story of battles and betrayals ar events that involved women. It is good back which women's struggles took place.

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*Black Women in White America: A Documentar*, 1973, \$3.95) This is a collection of first hand a



## work today

Realizing the weaknesses of the ERA, men and women have pushed for bills that specify that laws which protect rights specifically for women be extended to men. But again, big companies are getting around this. In California a bill is pending which extends protective legislation to cover men as well as women. Before this bill is passed the Industrial Welfare Commission which proposes and enforces state protective laws, is wiping out many of the laws that protect women so there will be few left to extend to men. Their new proposal does not specify weight limitations; no lounges for men or women; no specific temperature limits—hot or cold (heat is being turned off in some plants); overtime will be paid after 40 hours a week instead of 8 hours a day. Sanitary conditions, especially important for migrant workers do not come under the proposed new laws.





## Looking to women around the world

Throughout the world, women have risen up to take a vital role in the struggles to liberate their nations. They are working to build new societies that recognize the real equality of women and men.

"Women, arise, awake, march, let your echoing footsteps be heard from ocean to ocean and across the seven seas . . ."



*Women Who Work*, by Grace Hutchins. (N.Y.: International Publishers, 1934) This book contains fascinating descriptions of working women, their thoughts and life-styles as well as the miserable work conditions against which they struggled. Unfortunately, it is not readily available in book stores, but you may find it in the stacks of some libraries. It is worth hunting for.

*Labor's Untold Story*, By Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morais. (United Electrical Workers, 1955, \$2.50) This story of battles and betrayals and victories of American working people includes some events that involved women. It is good background reading, painting the picture of the times during which women's struggles took place.

*Century of Struggle* by Eleanor Flexner. (N.Y.: Atheneum, 1973, \$3.95) This is a history of the struggle for suffrage for women, the original women's rights movement in the United States. It shows the relation of the suffrage movement to the abolition movement and the development of working women's organizations and trade unions.

*Black Women in White America: A Documentary History* edited by Gerda Lerner. (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1973, \$3.95) This is a collection of first hand accounts where black women tell not only what it's like to be oppressed—as blacks and as women—but also how they have struggled against their oppression. This is an incredibly lively and moving collection.

*Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, edited by Robin Morgan. (N.Y.: Vintage Trade Books, 1970) Includes writing on jobs, schools, sexuality, black women, chicana women, gay liberation, China.

*Asian Women* by Asian Women, (U.C. Berkeley, 1971) Collection of writings that describe the history and living situation of Asian women in the U.S. United Front Press, \$2.00

*Women and Work in America* by Robert W. Smuts. (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1971)

*Women in American Society: An Historical Contribution*, by Ann D. Gordon, Mari Jo Buhle, and Nancy Schrom. (Cambridge: Radical America, 1972, 50 cents) From the Introduction: ". . . those who believe women have no history are poorly equipped to affect that struggle. . ." and "to misunderstand women's history is to misunderstand American history as a whole."

*The Political Economy of Women's Liberation*. Two articles. Women as house workers (by Margaret Benson) and as wage laborers (by Mickey Ellinger). United Front Press, 25 cents.

*Liberation Now*, edited by Deborah Babcox and Madelin Belkin (N.Y.: Dell, 1971) Includes a number of personal accounts of the experiences of women at work.

*The Women in American History* by Gerda Lerner. (Menlo Park, Calif: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1971) This deals more extensively with black women's history as part of the general history of American women.

## Picture Credits

Many people helped us look for pictures. Some photographs came to us with no sources indicated. Below are some of the sources of pictures. (CODED: top (t); bottom (b); middle (m); left (l); right (r); no indication means all pictures on page.)

**Brides from Bridewell**, Walter Blumenthal: 5; photo of sculpture (by Etienne Jeaurat).  
Bureau of Indian Affairs: 48(t)  
Cathy Cade: 49(b), 51, 53(b), 54, 55(t,b)  
**Century of Struggle**, Eleanor Flexner: 12  
The Chinese Helped Build America: 16(t)  
Culver Service: 25(b-1), 18(t)  
**Executive Order 9066**: 39  
Farah Film Committee: 50  
**Harlem on My Mind**, Allon Schoener: 45(l)  
**Indian Voice Magazine**: 45(b)  
Japanese American Research Project: 17  
Russ Jennings: 45(l), 52(t)  
Mishas: 55(m)  
**National Geographic Magazine**, 1944: 35, 36, 37  
New York Public Library Picture Collection: 5(m), 6(b), 7(l)  
**Out of the Jungle**, Orear and Diamond: 18-19(t), 19(b), 42(l)  
**Palante**: Young Lords Party: 46  
**Pictorial History of American Labor**, William Cahn: 2, 5(b), 6(t), 7(b), 8, 9, 10 (t,b), 14(b), 23(b), 24(b)  
**Pictorial History of the Negro in America**, Hughes and Meltzer: 10(m), 12(m), 13(t,m), 42(t), 43 (m and t-r, b-r)  
**A Proud People: Black Americans**, Irving Werstein: 42(b)  
**Revolt of American Women**, Oliver Jensen: 25(l), 26, 40  
**Salt of the Earth: Story of a Film**, Herbert Biberman: 41  
**These Are Americans**, John A. Rademaker: 38  
**Women Against Slavery**, Samuel Sillen: 12  
**Women Are Here to Stay**, Agnes Rogers: 15(t), 18, 20(t), 22, 27  
World Wide Photos: 32(t), 40



BREAD AND ROSES  
By JAMES OPPENHEIM

AS WE COME MARCHING, MARCHING IN THE BEAUTY  
OF THE DAY,  
A MILLION DARKENED KITCHENS, A THOUSAND MILL  
LOFTS GRAY,  
ARE TOUCHED WITH ALL THE RADIANCE THAT A SUDDEN  
SUN DISCLOSES,  
FOR THE PEOPLE HEAR US SINGING: "BREAD AND  
ROSES! BREAD AND ROSES!"

AS WE COME MARCHING, MARCHING, WE BATTLE TOO  
FOR MEN,  
FOR THEY ARE WOMEN'S CHILDREN, AND WE MOTHER  
THEM AGAIN.  
OUR LIVES SHALL NOT BE SWEATED FROM BIRTH  
UNTIL LIFE CLOSES;  
HEARTS STARVE AS WELL AS BODIES: GIVE US BREAD,  
BUT GIVE US ROSES!

AS WE COME MARCHING, MARCHING, UNNUMBERED  
WOMEN DEAD  
GO CRYING THROUGH OUR SINGING THEIR ANCIENT CRY  
FOR BREAD.  
SMALL ART AND LOVE AND BEAUTY THEIR DRUDGING  
SPIRITS KNOW.  
YES, IT IS BREAD WE FIGHT FOR—BUT WE FIGHT  
FOR ROSES, TOO!

AS WE COME MARCHING, MARCHING, WE BRING THE  
GREATER DAYS.  
THE RISING OF THE WOMEN MEANS THE RISING OF THE  
RACE.  
NO MORE THE DRUDGE AND IDLER—TEN THAT TOIL  
WHERE ONE REPOSES,  
BUT A SHARING OF LIFE'S GLORIES: BREAD AND ROSES!  
BREAD AND ROSES!

Published and Distributed by:

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P. O. Box 40099  
San Francisco, California 94140

This song, written by Prairie Fire for the International Women's Day Celebration in San Francisco in 1972, gave us the inspiration for this book. Prairie Fire has continued to write songs about the struggles of working people and oppressed people. They have just cut a record that will soon be released, and they are in the process of publishing a book of their songs. Write us for more information: Women's History Group, 507 Capp Street, San Francisco, CA 94110.

## WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE

Prairie Fire

in the cot-ton mills of PITTS-BURGH P. A. — wo-men worked for 12 hours —  
 — at twenty cents a day — so they marched out five thou-sand strong when  
 held out the scabs who would not come a long would you tell me what have wo-men done —  
 — what can work-ing wo-men do!

2 IN THE SWEATSHOPS OF NEW YORK FOR LESS THAN \$8 A WEEK  
 AND THAT PAID FOR THREAD AND NEEDLE WITH A LITTLE LEFT TO EAT.  
 SO THOSE 20,000 WORKERS WHO IN SWEATSHOPS PLIED THEIR TRADE  
 WENT OUT ON STRIKE TOGETHER  
 AND OUT ON STRIKE THEY STAYED.  
 AS FOR THIRTEEN WEEKS THEY NEARLY DIED,  
 THE WOMEN LED THE BATTLE,  
 WE'LL WIN THIS STRIKE THEY CRIED!  
 CAN YOU TELL ME, WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE?  
 WHAT CAN WORKIN' WOMEN DO?

4 IN THE ZINC MINES OF NUEVO MEXICO  
 DANGER LURKED IN TUNNELS WHERE MEN WOULD HAVE TO GO.  
 THE MEN REFUSED TO LABOR AND HELD THE SCABS AT BAY  
 UNTIL A COURT INJUNCTION SWEEPED THEIR PICKET LINE AWAY,  
 SO THE WIVES CAME AND FORMED THE LINES AGAIN  
 AND ALL THE BOSSES' EFFORTS TO DEFLATE THEM WERE IN VAIN.  
 CAN YOU TELL ME, WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE?  
 WHAT CAN WORKIN' WOMEN DO!

IN THE AUTO PLANTS OF FLINT MICHIGAN  
 THE MEN THERE STAGED A SITDOWN AND THE WIVES THERE TOOK A STAND.  
 IN THE FACE OF GUNS AND BARBED WIRE THE WOMEN CAME PREPARED,  
 WITH CROWBARS, CLUBS, AND BROOMSTICKS AND THE MISERY THEY SHARED,  
 AND FIGHTING IN THE WINTER SUN  
 THE WOMEN STOOD BESIDE THEIR MEN  
 UNTIL THE FIGHT WAS WON.  
 WILL YOU TELL ME, WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE?  
 WHAT CAN WORKIN' WOMEN DO?

5 DOWN AT FARAH IN EL PASO  
 THE BARON'S POWER WAS DEFIED.  
 WHEN CHICANO WORKERS STRUCK THERE  
 FOR THEIR RIGHTS SO LONG DENIED,  
 THE STRIKERS, MOSTLY WOMEN,  
 ROSE TO BREAK TRADITION'S CHAINS  
 COMING FORTH TO LEAD THE BATTLE  
 THAT WILL END A TYRANT'S REIGN,  
 AND THOUGH THE BATTLE THERE WILL SOON BE WON,  
 THE STRUGGLE ISN'T OVER, IN FACT IT'S JUST BEGUN.  
 CAN YOU TELL ME, WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE?  
 WHAT CAN WORKIN' WOMEN DO?

# THIS INSULTS WOMEN

*This Insults Women*

**THIS EXPLOITS WOMEN**

**THIS EXPLOITS WOMEN**

**THIS INSULTS WOMEN**

*This Insults Women*



*This Exploits Women*



**THIS AD  
INSULTS  
WOMEN**

**YIPPIE!**

**THIS EXPLOITS PEOPLE**