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**Cut From a Different Cloth: Middle-Class Women and the Men's Garment
Workers' Strike of 1910-1911**

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Abstract

The Chicago men's garment workers began a strike in late 1910 that extended through the winter into 1911 and began among women and people of immigrant backgrounds, only incorporating men once it picked up steam. The lack of uniformity among the striking workers led to a fragmented approach to the strike and eventually, middle-class women came to the aid of factory workers and took over organization of the strike. My thesis sheds light on how and why the women involved in this strike made their marks on Chicago labor history, both through their organizing and through their philanthropic work.

Cut From a Different Cloth:

Middle-Class Women and the Chicago Men's Garment Workers' Strike of 1910-1911

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HIST 495H

Professor Lind

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Glossary of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|-------|
| Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America | ACWA |
| Chicago Federation of Labor | CFL |
| Chicago Men's Garment Workers' Strike | CMGWS |
| Hart, Schaffner & Marx | HS&M |
| United Garment Workers of America | UGW |
| Woman's Trade Union League | WTUL |

“We measure our gain,/By the price we have paid”.ⁱ

Introduction

A bright morning dawns over Chicago, and a crowd of strikers and sympathizers fill the seats of King’s Stock Exchange Restaurant for a lively breakfast, pouring out their hearts to one another. The air is chilly, as it usually is in late fall, and the wind blows hard outside. Inside the restaurant, however, it is warm with the press of bodies and the fiery passion of a dearly-held cause. A half-dozen languages filter through the clamor, and the well-educated ear could catch snatches of complaints about instability, wage theft, and fines. Women in plain but carefully maintained dresses speak directly and plainly to women clad in fancy hats and beautiful lace, who listen intently. A strike over working conditions in men’s garment factories is raging in the city, and twelve of these women are representatives of a much larger contingent of workers, all pushed to a breaking point. Despite their anger, they cannot change things alone. In addition to the sheer force of tens of thousands of striking workers, they need the help of the well-positioned, established, eloquent middle-class women who can marshal their grievances into direct, purposeful demands.

This paper will be concerned with the 1910-1911 strike of laborers in Chicago’s men’s garment industry. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Chicago was a major manufacturing center for men’s clothing. The people—mostly women—who were employed in these factories were subject to many of the same working conditions that led to major strikes in New York and other industrial cities in the East: difficult hours, monotonous work, low pay, and disciplinary fees for mistakes chief among them.

The Chicago men's garment workers began a strike in late 1910 that extended through the winter into 1911 and began among women and people of immigrant backgrounds, only incorporating men once it picked up steam. The lack of uniformity among the striking workers led to a fragmented approach to the strike and eventually, middle-class women came to the aid of factory workers and took over organization of the strike. My thesis is shedding light on how and why the women involved in this strike made their marks on Chicago labor history, both through their organizing and through their philanthropic work.

Labor history and the many impacts of strikes and organization in the workforce have formed a major component of the last century of American history. The growth of industrialization through the beginning of the twentieth century gave rise to working conditions in many factories that were characterized by low wages, high turnover, and often dangerous conditions. The garment industry, which had significant footholds in New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago, was no exception. Numerous workers across decades of activism staged strikes demanding higher pay, better hours, and greater job security in a profoundly seasonal industry. The Chicago Men's Garment Workers Strike of 1910-1911 has been the subject of very little research. Most work focuses on New York City and events like the Uprising of the 20,000, a 1909 strike of shirtwaist manufacturers. Existing scholarship surrounding the CMGWS can be roughly divided into three categories: work that discusses women in the garment industry as a whole, writing that focuses on the strike in particular, and research that zooms in on a particular figure or group and their involvement with the strike. While much of the existing literature recognizes that gender dynamics played a role in

how strikers were perceived, class and socioeconomic status of those involved in the success of the strike is not part of this scholarship.

While specific conversations about the CMGWS are important to current scholarship, there are works about the garment industry before and during the twentieth century that contextualize the changes in garment work as technology and economics of manufacturing changed. Gamber's *The Female Economy* traces the rise and fall of dressmaking and millinery as a female-dominated industry.¹ Through specific examination of the city of Boston, she argues that women were able to make an independent living in those two industries beginning after the Civil War, but that ability subsided as mechanization and economics shifted from emphasizing personal relationships with clients to a model that emphasized merchandising and the wholesale economy.

While her examination of the industry's change over time in one city is interesting and raises good questions about how gender and the clothing industry are linked, the subject that is most important to a discussion of the strike is the disappearance of woman-led businesses. The firms in which the strike first began and grew were male-led, and the "more skilled" positions were held by men as well, who dismissed the strike altogether at first. While Gamber does not engage with specific strikes of the early twentieth century, she speaks generally of their impact, which is a clue to one of the weaknesses of her argument. As Helen Damon-Moore explains in her review of the text, "the book's tendency to overgeneralize from a specific

¹ Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy: the Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

body of evidence” has the effect of rendering Gamber’s observations in the universal sense.²

There was a greater move toward genteel salaried positions from women at the time, which could have rendered them similarly independent in other industries. Overall, Gamber’s writing is a useful overview of the garment industries, but her outlook comes across as an overly absolutist treatment of industries that varied across the nation and across time, with nuances that she does not address in her narrow geographic treatment.

The CMGWS is not the only garment industry strike led by young women that took place during the early twentieth century, and the article “The Girl Army” explores how a strike conducted under similar conditions in Philadelphia proceeded, to very different results. Daniel Sidorick argues that the Philadelphia strike, which ground on in a desperately cold winter for months, was elongated by a failure to recognize a union despite the firms bowing to the strikers’ other demands, was not a case of one isolated incident of young female workers displaying incredible resilience and determination. In their efforts to organize for better conditions, they were supported by upper- and middle-class women who got personally involved in a savior and activist role. Throughout the strike, Sidorick observes that the media focused on “Society woman ‘allies’” and their contributions, rather than the working-class strikers in Philadelphia³ as well as New York City, where they joined picket lines.⁴ A major component of his work is the understanding of ethnic groups within the striking workers, and he emphasizes

² Helen Damon-Moore, review of *The Female Economy*, by Wendy Gamber. *American Historical Review* 103 (1), n.p..

³ Daniel Sidorick, "The "Girl Army": The Philadelphia Shirtwaist Strike of 1909-1910." *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 71, no. 3 (2004): 325 JSTOR.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 333.

the significant part of the workforce that was ethnically Jewish, and leaned on Jewish organizations and institutions for support.

This focus on ethnic or social group and institutional assistance extends into a discussion of the strike itself, which is largely approached from the perspective of one political or ethnic group's participation in the strike. "Socialist Women and the Girl Strikers" engages with the socialist branches of the strikers' approach to raising both awareness and cash. The article heavily features articles and excerpts from the "Strike Special," produced by a subset of the striking workers to appeal to other socialists.

The strike also impacted the way ethnic groups interacted with existing social institutions, and Susan Roth Breitzer makes the argument in "Uneasy Alliances: Hull House, the Garment Workers Strikes, and the Jews of Chicago" that the 1910-11 and 1915 garment worker strikes changed the way Eastern European Jews and the Hull House interacted for the better, as Hull House was not a beacon of cultural sensitivity to Jewish people. The article does not include discussions of class and socioeconomic status in its argument, but it does acknowledge that "while women workers played a significant role in the strike, only Bessie Abramowitz would play a significant leadership role" in this strike or labor activism going forward.⁵

Two major texts that discuss the CMGWS capture it within the broader context of the garment industry or activism at the time. Carolyn McCreesh argues in *Women in the Campaign to Organize Garment Workers, 1880-1917* that female garment workers across the geographic and temporal span of the industry faced systemic obstacles in organizing for better conditions

⁵ Susan Roth Breitzer, "Uneasy Alliances: Hull House, the Garment Workers Strikes, and the Jews of Chicago." *Indiana Magazine of History* 106, no. 1 (2010): 50.

and battled gender discrimination and dismissiveness from male colleagues. While Chicago is only briefly discussed in the greater context of strikes during 1910-11, McCreesh contends that “middle-class and wage-earners alike [...] could play active rewarding roles in the trade union movement.”⁶ Sue Davidson and Joan Jensen, authors of *A Needle, A Bobbin, A Strike*, agree. One chapter of their history of the garment industry and organized labor focuses on the case of the 1910-11 Chicago strike, and in it they conclude that the young striking women sought assistance from the Women’s Trade Union League, and thus their grassroots organizing efforts were shortly co-opted by “older, well-educated, affluent allies.”⁷ Very few of those original young strikers ascended into leadership roles. These two texts support the understanding that women of all social and economic classes got involved in strikes for varying reasons.

Scholarship about the working-class women who participated in the strike is limited to a couple of figures that were particularly prominent during—and after—the strike. The two names most frequently linked with the strike’s leadership are Bessie Abramowitz and Hannah Shapiro, one of whom created a long-term career in activism, while the other was forgotten for half a century. Bessie Abramowitz Hillman, participant in the 1910-11 strike, was a powerful force for change and organization within the garment industry according to *A Power Among Them*. In part due to her marriage to Sidney Hillman, the president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, she was the only working-class member of the Men’s Garment Workers’ Strike to rise to lasting prominence in the world of union

⁶ Carolyn D. McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign to Organize Garment Workers, 1880-1917* (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), xiv.

⁷ Joan M. Jensen and Sue Davidson, eds. *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike: Women Needleworkers in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 115.

organizing. In contrast, according to Rebecca Sive-Tomashefsky in “Identifying a Lost Leader,” Hannah Shapiro, the woman widely credited with sparking the first walkouts in Hart, Schaffner and Marx, was lost to time for decades because journalists and historians wrote to their own ends as they documented a very complex and confusing series of events, omitting one thing or another by necessity. The omissions tended to be the details of the working-class perspective and experience. In her article, which makes use of interviews with Shapiro when her identity was rediscovered, Sive-Tomashefsky argues that Shapiro’s obscured role suggests the need for more scholarship into the makeup and diversity of the “workingwomen activists.”⁸

In comparison to strikes in New York City around the same time period as the Men’s Garment Workers Strike, there has been very little scholarship on the topic of labor unrest in Chicago’s garment industry. Where it does exist, it centers largely on subdivisions of the striking workers or how the Chicago strike fits into the national history of the garment industry or workplace organization. Otherwise, it focuses on the rare individual whose name lives on to the present day as a prominent member of the striking body. Scholarship acknowledges there is some link between the working-, middle-, and upper-class women that participated in the strike, and may otherwise never have met, but that confluence of identities and backgrounds has not been developed.

Over the course of the CMGWS, how did the middle-class union representatives speaking on behalf of the striking workers arrive at and express their demands? Can their involvement in the strike be connected to issues of demography (ethnic background,

⁸ Rebecca Sive-Tomashefsky, "Identifying a Lost Leader: Hannah Shapiro and the 1910 Chicago Garment Workers' Strike." *Signs* 3, no. 4 (1978): 939, JSTOR.

class, gender, etc.)? Was there a recognized connection at the time between the garment workers' strike and other strikes of the same time period across the country? What do the events of the strike reveal about the missions, attitudes, and concerns of the women who organized to assist and lead the strikers? The exploration of these questions will provide evidence to address why, in this situation, middle- and upper-class women became the successful spokespeople and organizers for thousands of young, immigrant women of diverse backgrounds and motivations.

The early twentieth century was an explosive period in labor history, with strikes across industries breaking out throughout the country and the world, leading to significant labor reform. In the garment industry in particular, a predominantly young, foreign, and female workforce doggedly pursued their goals amidst a broader push for women's rights and participation in public life. The Chicago garment worker strikes, a category in which the 1910-1911 strike belongs, were entries in a broader history of women organizing themselves to protest against perceived injustice and enact change. Women were pushing for an equal voice in government and industry, a struggle that continues to this day across the globe.

There are four main primary sources available regarding the 1910-1911 strike. Each is a document published by the strike committees at the conclusion of the events. An "Official Strike Report" includes correspondence between key players in the strike, as well as lists of donors to the cause and an account of how the strike began. The "Arrangements for Adjusting Relations Between Hart, Schaffner & Marx and Their Employees, Represented by the Joint Board of Garment Workers" enumerates the lists of grievances the strikers had, then how they were going to be addressed by the company. "Concerning the Garment Workers' Strike Report

of the Sub-Committee to the Citizen's Committee, Nov. 5, 1910" is a document from early in the strike that outlines specific grievances of strikers. When taken in combination with the "Arrangements for Adjusting Relations," it can make the difference between what the strikers wanted and what they got more clear. Finally, *The Clothing Workers of Chicago, 1910-1922* was a book published by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union in the decade after the strike, discussing the union's role in improving work conditions for the garment workers in the years after.

Previous strikes in garment factories across the country informed the strategies that the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago used to coordinate the 1910-1911 Men's Garment Workers' Strike. When the strike flared, the striking workers reached out to unions adjacent to their industry, and these unions, led largely by middle-class women, took over negotiations with firms. Within the process, two important concerns emerged: providing the best possible result for striking workers by translating their unorganized demands into clear talking points, and organizing sophisticated aid systems to provide for out-of-work strikers' families. The WTUL and other middle-class women involved in the cause were motivated by a near-missionary zeal, and believed they had sufficient competence, ability, and power, along with better connections, to ensure the well-being of the workers and their strike, and therefore the success of the union.

The success of the strike was predicated upon four distinct components of these middle-class women's involvement, which align with the four main sections of this paper. The first section outlines how the strikers had to seek their help and allow a preexisting power structure to take over the organization of the strike, as had been done in previous strikes. The second chapter describes the challenges that faced the new leadership in how to make sense of the grievances of

thousands of women, and translate their disparate demands into talking points which could be used for negotiations with the factories involved in the dispute. The third section outlines how the middle-class organizers used their community connections to fundraise. They raised significant sums to feed, house, and clothe the thousands of strikers, now without income, through a brutally cold Chicago winter. The final chapter will describe these middle-class women and the sense of self-importance that allowed them to involve themselves in a community of working-class women they would likely not have otherwise met. Their efforts at activism were built on a sense of righteousness, virtue, and competency that—in this case—ended up excluding grassroots organizers nearly completely.

“The glorious struggle/Has only begun”:

The Unions Take Over

In late September 1910, a routine pay cut of ¼ cent per piece to the menial seamstresses at Hart, Schaffner & Marx ended up as anything but normal. On September 22nd, after days of trying to reason with their foreman and management,⁹ a handful of young women walked off the factory floor in Shop 5.¹⁰ The group quickly drew more workers, as an “immediate and enthusiastic response” erupted.¹¹ Twelve became a thousand in a day, and one thousand became 40,000 in just a few weeks.¹² Despite its rapid growth, this strike was not premeditated. The men’s clothing industry in Chicago was an “entirely unorganized” sector prior to 1911, defined

⁹ Sive-Tomashefsky, "Identifying a Lost Leader," 936.

¹⁰ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 3.

¹¹ Leo Wolman et al., *The Clothing Workers of Chicago, 1910-1922*. (Chicago: The Chicago Joint Board, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, 1922), 26.

¹² *Ibid.*

by piecework and constant turnover.¹³ As “Chicago’s largest employer—even larger than the stockyards,” this strike held enormous potential to disrupt and reform the city’s organized labor landscape.¹⁴ From its sudden beginnings in the workshops of Hart, Schaffner and Marx,ⁱⁱ the strike grew through sheer “spontaneity and determination” to the point where it needed direction and leadership.¹⁵

When the nascent strike began to balloon in size, the grassroots strike leaders attempted to find an established union organization to take control and help organize the uprising. After appealing to the United Garment Workers of America, a well-known union—and the only one in the men’s garment industry—they were disappointed to find it reluctant to enter the fray.¹⁶ The “outdated craft union” only permitted “skilled” trades to become members, largely employed as garment cutters or in other traditionally male roles.¹⁷ The UGW refused to throw their support behind the girl strikers, choosing instead to let them go elsewhere for support.¹⁸ Since it was the largest union in the industry, it had the power to call a general strike of its members, but the UGW refused to do even that for nearly two weeks, “until more than 18,000 were already out.”¹⁹

When the strikers approached the WTUL, however, the response was entirely different. The WTUL was composed of “some of the most prominent citizens of Chicago” organizing for improved working conditions and organized industry around the country.²⁰ Some of the members

¹³ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 17.

¹⁴ Jensen and Davidson, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 117.

¹⁵ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 17.

¹⁶ Karen Pastorello, *A Power Among Them: Bessie Abramowitz Hillman and the Making of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America* (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 26.

¹⁷ Mari Jo Buhle, “Socialist Women and the ‘Girl Strikers,’ Chicago, 1910.” *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 1040, JSTOR.

¹⁸ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

that made up the WTUL's Strike Committee during the Chicago strike had direct experience just the year before in Philadelphia leading and coordinating a strike of female garment workers. Throughout 1910, a series of garment strikes led by women had honed their skills and proven that women were capable of organizing a walkout.²¹ When the strikers showed up on the WTUL's proverbial doorstep, it "threw itself wholeheartedly into the strike effort," throwing its womanpower and organizational framework into the fray.²² They formed eleven committees organizing various aspects of the strike effort, including categories as broad as picketing, rent, or publicity, and specific as theatre benefit events, securing speakers for Hall Meetings, and cooperation with Women's Clubs.²³ The breakfast event described at the beginning of this paper was organized by the WTUL on November 2nd, 1910, as a venue for "woman strikers to attend and spell out their grievances."²⁴

The WTUL, despite jumping at the chance to organize and assist the striking women, had very little in common with them on a personal level. The WTUL itself was constructed of a variety of representatives from unions across female-dominated industries, including boot and shoemakers, glovemakers, elevated railway clerks,ⁱⁱⁱ necktie makers, the Chicago Teachers' Federation, and even representatives from the UGW, who had previously refused to assist the strike.²⁵ A brief perusal of the names listed at the beginning of the *Official Report of the Strike Committee* reveals a full page of Western European names, at a glance entirely unrepresentative of the body of strikers, a multicultural group full of recent immigrants from Eastern or Southern

²¹ Buhle, "Socialist Women and the 'Girl Strikers,'" 1041.

²² McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 151.

²³ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 6.

²⁴ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 151.

²⁵ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 1.

Europe.²⁶ In Philadelphia, the year before, the WTUL had been involved in organizing and arbitration on behalf of the strikers. There, “the Philadelphia press focused on the aid and influence of society women ‘allies’” rather than the women who had actually left their jobs.²⁷ It was these same women that were now in charge of the Chicago strike. In Philadelphia their efforts had been unsuccessful, with the strike ending abruptly after a long, hard winter and several failed attempts at an agreement, and the Chicago strike continued the pattern.

“The power to unite/Is the victory won”:

Translating Demands into Negotiation

The strikers and their allies had built significant momentum for their strike, both politically and in the eyes of the public, but their progress did not preclude failure when all was said and done. The struggle of the strikers, so carefully managed by the WTUL, had captured the attention of the city of Chicago. Public opinion was so favorable of the strike, and solidarity so widely practiced, that some stores “found it profitable to remove labels of strike-bound houses from their garments” altogether, rather than losing a sale to a conscientious consumer.²⁸ HS&M had offered to settle in early December, but the strikers, feeling their power and upset with the terms, unceremoniously rejected the agreement. Had they accepted, the agreement required firms to only rehire workers who had not participated in violence, and they would have abandoned the other firms’ workers still on the picket line—in addition, the agreement did not contain any actual union recognition.²⁹ The firm Sturn Mayer caved to pressure and settled an agreement to

²⁶ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 1.

²⁷ Sidorick, “The ‘Girl Army,’” 325.

²⁸ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

address working conditions without union recognition on January 9th, and HS&M offered up another agreement a month after their first, on January 11th.³⁰ By the 14th it was accepted and the HS&M strikers went back to work.³¹ Despite the positive public opinion, after two failed attempts at negotiation, the CMGWS finally came to an ignominious end on February 3rd, 1911. The UGW, which had been a source of disappointment throughout the course of the strike, declared the strike over without any final agreement in place.³² This was done without any consultation of the strikers, the WTUL, or any committee or organization. It was out of desperation, with coffers strained and resources running out, termed “a hunger bargain” by the Strike Committees and the press after the fact.³³ Despite 35-45,000 total workers participating in the strike, “only [HS&M] employees operated under contract.”³⁴ This was a significant proportion, but nowhere near a complete organization of the industry.

Middle class women played a significant role in communicating the strikers’ demands to their firms. The middle-class women who headed up the strike worked with the striking workers to synthesize their grievances into demands that they could take to manufacturers. Throughout this process, they had to find a way to perform outreach—and impose order—within a diverse, disorganized group. Taken together, the striking body of workers spoke nine different languages.³⁵ Many of them spoke only the one language and lived in an ethnic enclave within the city where they had very little exposure to English, or they spoke just enough English to get a job

³⁰ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 44.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

³² McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 154.

³³ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 46.

³⁴ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 154.

³⁵ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 19.

and get by. They were “almost without exception recently arrived immigrants.”³⁶ 97% were either immigrants themselves or children of immigrant parents.³⁷ With a constituency composed of so many types of people, complaints risked getting “confused” if they were directly communicated to the firms, so the middle-class women of the WTUL served as middlemen in the strikers’ negotiations.³⁸

There were several major issues that workers reported, which middle class women synthesized into a series of demands for more humane working conditions and more transparent business practices, the first of which was for consistent wages and employment. The garment industry is still driven by cyclical, uneven demand, with spring and fall production coinciding with seasonal demand from consumers. They were “the bane of proprietors and workers alike” because firms needed far more workers during the busy seasons than the slow.³⁹ This left firms a few options: hire and fire with the seasons, and risk not being able to fill sorely needed positions when they had quotas to fill, or retain workers through the slow seasons and find ways to pay them as little as possible. Penny-pinching across the board had driven the price-per-piece through the floor for workers, even during busy seasons.⁴⁰ In addition to the need to churn out more work to maintain a livable paycheck, the rates of work expected by foremen were increasing: workers were forced to do more and more for less money.⁴¹ With an abundance of skilled immigrant

³⁶ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 19.

³⁷ Breitzer, Susan Roth. "Uneasy Alliances: Hull House, the Garment Workers Strikes, and the Jews of Chicago." *Indiana Magazine of History* 106, no. 1 (2010): 50.

³⁸ Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge, *Concerning the Garment Workers' Strike Report of the Subcommittee to the Citizen's Committee, Nov. 5, 1910*. (S.I: s.n., 1910), 5.

³⁹ Gamber, Wendy. *The Female Economy: the Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860-1930*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997): 80.

⁴⁰ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 151.

⁴¹ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 21.

seamstresses at their disposal, the firms had no problem with this model, until even their pacemakers were being outpaced and frustrated.

Compounding the frustration with the firms' unreasonable expectations for their workers, the foremen that oversaw the shop floors were vested with—in the womens' views—inordinate power with which they abused their employees.⁴² They had the power to hire and fire, and often employed that power “without cause at all,” which made the workers constantly afraid for their jobs.⁴³ In addition, with what little money the women did make, they were still not guaranteed that paycheck. Fines were imposed for using up or losing allotted materials, including thread and needles, and those fines were often levied at retail rates—making the firms money on products they bought at industrial or wholesale cost.⁴⁴ Workers were also fined for “wastage” when a piece they were working on was ruined, even if that piece had passed through a dozen pairs of hands before them—often also at the retail price.⁴⁵ This had the effect of further destabilizing their workers' paychecks, and these fines were levied at the discretion of the tyrannical foremen, who were incentivized to pinch pennies and raise quotas by being paid per piece alongside their workers. Carla Masilotti, one of the women that walked out of Shop 5 initially, is specifically quoted as saying “the boss preferred Italians, Jews, all nationalities who can't speak English. They work like the devil for less wages.”⁴⁶

In order to synthesize these three major themes they heard again and again into something they could campaign with—in the public eye and in strike negotiations—the WTUL

⁴² Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 23.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁶ Jensen and Davidson, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 122.

relied upon a few different techniques to make their demands more persuasive. They made liberal use of pitiable anecdotes, in which they referred to the strikers as girls rather than women, and they enthusiastically publicized the deaths of two strikers in the midst of the turmoil. The quotations these middle-class women, as the spokespeople of the strikers, provided to the world were used to emphasize the plight of the workers. Broken English and cherubic descriptions of the women were the norm—a “pretty girl, with big, appealing brown eyes” bemoans her plight as she says “I cannot speak out in words all those mistreatings I have” at the hands of the manufacturing firms.⁴⁷ Again and again, these women were referred to as “girls.”⁴⁸ They could be women, but their plight seemed more pitiable, and their need seemed more acute, when they were girls. However, when the middle-class women writing about the strikers reported on the men, or an unspecified or mixed-gender group, the strikers were “workers,” not “girls and boys.”^{iv} A couple months into the strike, escalating violence finally resulted in the deaths of two male strikers, despite strict guidelines for how picketers were to behave. Police violence and general brutality had been an issue for the length of the strike, but the strike rules, which encouraged walking in small groups, avoiding shouting and abusive language, and keeping your hands to yourself, were not enough to avoid many picketers’ arrests.⁴⁹ Only twelve days apart, on December 3rd and 15th respectively, Charles Lazinskas and Frank Nagreckis were shot by firm-affiliated forces on the picket lines.⁵⁰ Lazinskas’ funeral in particular was a massive event, with thousands of strikers attending in somber colors, but adorned with a striker’s button. The press surrounding the workers’ plight, combined with the brutal shootings, was sufficient to turn

⁴⁷ Breitzer, “Uneasy Alliances,” 52.

⁴⁸ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 7.

⁴⁹ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 31.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

public opinion in favor of the strike, and after the murders “there was considerably less violence.”⁵¹ Unfortunately, it was not completely eradicated. Three nonstrikers working for the garment manufacturers were killed over the course of December and January as well, bringing the total death count to five people.⁵²

“Together we suffered,/The weary weeks past”:

Sustaining the Strike

When thousands of workers making poverty wages walked out of their factories and gathered in a strike, the body of leadership had to make some quick and definitive decisions about how to ensure that the strikers did not die on the picket line. In the case of the CMGWS, the WTUL took a family-centered approach to both raising money and resources for aid and distributing that aid to strikers. The physically demanding labor of the garment factories naturally skewed the workforce to younger people, so there were many young families seriously affected by the strike. “Twelve hundred and fifty babies, ‘Strike Babies,’ were born” between September and February, and their existence proved to be very important to the way the WTUL raised aid money.⁵³ The 1,250 “strike babies” joined another estimated “5,000 infant children” the strikers already supported, making the situation even more dire in a harsh Chicago winter.⁵⁴

While the League members “collected and distributed barrels of used clothing and 1,250 baby outfits,” they also spread the word about the poor suffering mothers being exploited in factories.⁵⁵ The “Sacred Motherhood” of the striking girls was used on “appeals for financial

⁵¹ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 33.

⁵² Jensen and Davidson, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 129.

⁵³ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 35.

⁵⁴ Breitzer, “Uneasy Alliances,” 55.

⁵⁵ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 153.

aid,” which included images of “a woman nursing a baby and working on a sewing machine while several small children played among unfinished garments.”⁵⁶ By using tools like these, the WTUL built up sympathy and momentum for their strikers, and tugged the heartstrings and purse strings of those that had the ability to support them. The “immense number of strikers and strike bound families” required careful allocation of resources and drew support from a variety of places.⁵⁷ The WTUL organized a committee to appeal to landlords and provide rent relief for families involved in the strike, and the gas company serving the bulk of the strikers was “sympathetic” and agreed not to turn off gas service as a result of nonpayment.⁵⁸

The WTUL was one of the major sources of strike aid, but not the only one by any means. Other unions pitched in to provide food and housing after “the joint conference board, composed of strike leaders and representatives from the Chicago Federation of Labor, the WTUL, and the UGW, decided to distribute food rather than money to the strikers” in an early organizational meeting.⁵⁹ By mid-November, a system of commissary stores was established for the benefit of strikers, and they distributed shares of bread, coffee, and other dietary essentials to every striking family in need each week.⁶⁰ These commissaries served up to “11,000 families weekly” and kept them from starving.⁶¹ The unions also administered another major type of food-based aid. They fed the picketers at the factories lunch each day, in order to sustain them and prevent them from leaving the line to go home or go scrounge up the money needed to buy

⁵⁶ Jensen and Davidson, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 125.

⁵⁷ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 14.

⁵⁸ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 35.

⁵⁹ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 153.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

food in a restaurant.⁶² It is unlikely that restaurant dining would have been a viable option for the impoverished strikers, but the unions could not have starving picketers. Instead, they fed them.

Another very active aid organization during the CMGWS was the Chicago institution Hull House, an establishment well-known for its work with immigrants and low-income communities. Jane Addams, founder and leader of Hull House, was very willing to provide spaces and opportunities for unions and labor organizations to convene.⁶³ Her “settlement house” served as a location for committee meetings and interviews of striking workers when other places would not.⁶⁴ Traditionally, union meetings were held in public spaces with large seating capacity to accommodate representatives and general admission, but cultural norms at the time barred women from entering many of those spaces, which were mostly in bars and beer halls. Instead, they had to find other options, including private homes, outdoor venues, willing restaurants, and places like Hull House. They published a report recommending unionizing and mediation between all parties involved and offered to take part.⁶⁵ Over the course of the strike, the Hull House hosted many meetings, including one meant to organize a Citizen’s Committee for additional aid and mediation between unions, manufacturers, and the City of Chicago.^v

While the unions and Hull House advocated for people of a particular social class, there were also groups that provided aid for particular cultural subsections of the strikers as well. The high proportion of Jewish strikers prompted the Jewish Workingmen’s Conference to donate “about thirty-five thousand dollars to the relief of the strikers” on behalf of their members.⁶⁶ This

⁶² *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 18.

⁶³ Breitzer, “Uneasy Alliances,” 49.

⁶⁴ Breckinridge, *Concerning the Garment Workers’ Strike*, 2.

⁶⁵ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 29.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

was one of the largest single donations to the cause. Socialist organizations also pitched in to support the significant proportion of strikers that belonged to their numbers. Nellie M. Zeh and Mary O'Reilly, two enterprising young women, published a special edition of *The Chicago Daily Socialist* to raise money for the strikers.⁶⁷ Called the "Special Strike Extra," sales on street corners raised over \$3,000 for strikers' aid.⁶⁸ This effort was at the behest of another general union's Chicago branch, the Chicago Federation of Labor, which asked the Socialists to be the ones that "coordinated and built the logistical arm" of the strike, rather than taking over leadership as was usually their role.⁶⁹ The leaders of the Chicago Socialist organization deferred to the CFL, which served as a labor union ally to the political group. By December, the CFL—and therefore the Socialists—had abandoned their support of the strike as "a lost cause" after their initial strong support.⁷⁰

Despite the monetary momentum that fundraisers were providing, especially in the earliest days of the strike, the UGW's involvement presented a significant challenge to the progress of the strike. Its sluggish initial response continued to be slow, and even though the union failed to provide initial support, they were still represented on the strike committee with the WTUL. The UGW negotiators reached a tentative agreement in early November with HS&M, and presented it to the strikers by November 5th.⁷¹ The workers rejected it completely and unceremoniously.⁷² In the face of this unexpected rebuff, the UGW scrambled to continue providing financial support to the strikers and quickly ran out of money. The financial aid the

⁶⁷ Buhle, "Socialist Women and the 'Girl Strikers,'" 1042.

⁶⁸ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 37.

⁶⁹ Pastorello, *A Power Among Them*, 32.

⁷⁰ Buhle, "Socialist Women and the 'Girl Strikers,'" 1042.

⁷¹ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 152-3.

⁷² Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 33.

UGW was providing ceased, and the vouchers they issued, for redemption for food and essentials, were suddenly rendered valueless. In the face of thousands waiting “from early morning till late afternoon” to hear whether they would get anything in return for their vouchers, emergency fundraising by the WTUL managed to dispense \$3 for every \$5 in vouchers a striker had.⁷³ The strike faltered, but it maintained momentum. This hiccup would prove to be indicative of how closely the strikers were walking the line of starvation, but they carried on through the winter with the continued support of the WTUL.

In the midst of a demoralizing struggle for workers rights there was a secondary struggle to survive and stay warm, but with the support of a menagerie of unions and cultural institutions, the middle-class women leading the CMGWS employed a series of strategies to keep morale and motivation high. Speakers from other, stronger unions in Chicago were called in to speak to strikers and motivate them. The Chicago Teachers Union and Woman Suffrage Party of Illinois supplied the talent for many rallies, and a subcommittee of the Strike Committee was focused specifically on recruiting and organizing speaking events.⁷⁴ However, the availability of speakers did not mean all strikers could attend constant meetings. “Separate meetings became a necessity” very early in the strike due to the high proportion of immigrant workers.⁷⁵ Written communications and literature had to be published in nine different languages to ensure it was accessible to everyone not necessarily in their native language, but in at least one language they could understand.⁷⁶ The speeches and rallies also took place in several languages, but English

⁷³ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 13.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁵ Pastorello, *A Power Among Them*, 33.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

was the most common, since speakers were often drawn from a wealthier, more educated, more assimilated social class than the average CMGWS striker.

The need to maintain momentum also extended to the street, where strikers picketed in public protest against the conduct of their employers. The picket lines proved to be a battleground, and the middle-class women of the WTUL did their utmost to ensure the protests were successful at raising public awareness and putting pressure on the firms. However, this was where the manufacturers exerted the most power. “Employers received substantial outside assistance in their struggle to defeat the strikers” in the form of police, private detectives, and “thugs” who arrested troublemakers and protected strikebreakers from outbreaks of violence.⁷⁷ Between September, when the strike began, and December, when five people were killed on the picket line in a matter of weeks, the violence and danger of picketing steadily increased. “Accidental” injuries and wrongful arrests were common, and the WTUL’s Picket Committee set out rules of conduct meant to keep tensions low. In the face of the rules, “the outrageous conduct of the police and strike-breakers” was even more extreme, and it played a powerful role in swinging public opinion in favor of the strikers.⁷⁸ The striking garment workers were not the only ones on the picket lines, though. Union members and wealthier, more traditionally respectable organizers joined picket lines as well, in order to serve as respectable witnesses for those that were being assaulted or wrongfully arrested.⁷⁹ The language and philosophy from the strike organizers serving in these roles is focused on their duty to “their younger sisters,” clearly betraying a sense of superiority and maternalism among these “public spirited women,”⁸⁰ The

⁷⁷ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 152.

⁷⁸ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 30.

⁷⁹ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 152.

⁸⁰ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 10.

middle-class women who organized and led the strike actions and picket lines were well aware of the ways their privilege and respectability in the eyes of the public could be used to advance the cause of the CMGWS. However, their awareness of the ways they differed from those they served extended past their understanding of their usefulness as character witnesses in court.

“As we learn our own might,/We will win the great fight”:

Middle-Class Women’s Self-Image in Labor Organizations

The middle-class women who led the WTUL worked tirelessly to support the striking workers, and their words and actions betray how they thought and felt about the strikers: not as their equals, but as their pitiable acolytes, all of whom needed to be elevated and educated in order to reach their full potential. These middle-class women took on union organizing as a hobby and passion. Many had an industrial background as a wage worker or laborer before they married and stopped working.⁸¹ They self-identified as “a cadre of women organizers” who worked around the country to “rally strikers, revive flagging spirits, and instruct women in union organization and operation” when a new strike broke out.⁸² Their opinion of the workers demanded that they assist during strikes—an opinion which was revealed in the way they used language of pity and infantilization.

In addition to referring to the strikers as “girls,” the union organizers also surrounded female strikers in language evoking simple martyrs or folk heroes. They were “heroic and pathetic” figures, with “precious youth swallowed by commodity production” and kept from

⁸¹ Buhle, “Socialist Women and the ‘Girl Strikers,’” 1042.

⁸² McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 148.

achieving their full potential.⁸³ Despite their lack of formal education, “they looked one frankly in the face and talked the situation over with intelligence and understanding” that surprised their would-be saviors.⁸⁴ The “simple strength and power” the young women exuded would become a rallying point—their purity and earnest desire to fight for better conditions could be a goal the better educated, better connected middle class women would help them reach.⁸⁵ These middle-class women were not the only group of women working to improve working-class conditions, but they were more experienced than the Socialist women who were engaging in “their first dramatic, citywide agitation” despite having “for many years” worked on a small scale to “improve working conditions and establish ‘working-women’s organizations.’”⁸⁶ The middle-class women, due to their experience and perception of themselves as wiser, smarter, and more well-connected, saw themselves as more uniquely suited to large-scale leadership than any of the Socialist or other leaders involved in the strike organization.

The middle-class women in charge of the union response saw themselves in a particular role of mentor and teacher for the young strikers. Despite the striking women’s disparate backgrounds, the WTUL sought to enforce a standard of respectability, behavior, and attitudes that espoused “superficial middle-class notions of femininity” to which the young women were naturally unaccustomed.⁸⁷ The union organizers, such as Margaret Drier Robins, asserted their expectations for the strikers’ conduct with an arrogance that “felt like charity,” which could offend and upset the strikers.⁸⁸ Robins and the other strike leaders believed the strikers needed to

⁸³ Buhle, “Socialist Women and the ‘Girl Strikers,” 1042.

⁸⁴ Buhle, “Socialist Women and the ‘Girl Strikers,” 1047.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1042.

⁸⁷ Pastorello, *A Power Among Them*, 21.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

be taught “sympathetic communication” because it had been “dulled by non-use” by their rough lifestyle in the factories.⁸⁹ The strikers were in need of education and salvation in the unions’ eyes, and the middle-class women’s duty was to provide “the greatest service of the union to the workers”—education.⁹⁰ Their efforts were oriented toward ensuring the strikers could sustain a unionized shop, but they approached that organization in the simplest possible fashion: “the simpler the better.”⁹¹ Their simplistic approach revealed that the middle-class women who organized the unions thought of themselves as more competent and qualified than the strikers. However, they failed to understand that the strikers were “committed activists in a movement that was changing their lives, the industry, and the city” who needed the connections and resources of the unions, and not “helpless girls” who needed explanations of how to rally behind a cause or share a common goal.⁹²

In their inability to see the capability and strength of the striking workers, the unions pushed out and overshadowed the grassroots organizers who distinguished themselves early in the strike. When the strikers appealed to the WTUL for assistance, the “older, well-educated, affluent allies took charge of the proceedings” to the exclusion of the individuals who led the initial walkout in HS&M.⁹³ “A generation of new leaders” emerged from the strike, but they were not the same leaders who began it.⁹⁴ The important names which emerged from the aftermath of the CMGWS were Sidney Hillman, Frank Rosenblum, Sam Levin, and A. D.

⁸⁹ Sidorick, “The ‘Girl Army,’” 343.

⁹⁰ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 36.

⁹¹ *Official Report of the Strike Committee*, 37.

⁹² Sidorick, “The ‘Girl Army,’” 337.

⁹³ Jensen and Davidson, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 115.

⁹⁴ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 46.

Marimpietri—all men—rather than the actual instigator or Sidney Hillman’s wife, who was wholly involved in the strike as a representative of the strikers.

The first activist who was left behind by the middle-class women’s focus on union leadership over grassroots leaders was Hannah Shapiro, the young woman who is now known to have instigated the first walkout. In the initial reporting about the event, her identity was confused and obscured. She was referred to as a “little Jewess,” a “seventeen-year-old Italian girl,” and “Annie Shapiro” in different newspaper accounts and recollections.⁹⁵ In actuality, Hannah Shapiro was Russian.⁹⁶ Before she resorted to instigating a walkout, she attempted to bring her grievances over pay cuts and unfair conditions to management several times.⁹⁷ While Hannah Shapiro did not intentionally seek the limelight, she was removed so wholly from the narrative surrounding the strike that her identity was virtually forgotten until the 1970s, when her daughter urged her to come forward. The accounts which historians, journalists and labor activists have written are designed to suit their academic or persuasive purposes, but they have been “necessarily incomplete,” and often that incompleteness has excluded the leaders like Hannah Shapiro, who chose to stay private.⁹⁸ While Shapiro remained a less prominent member of the group organizing the striking workers, she was a vital component of the “workingwomen activists” who helped lead the CMGWS.⁹⁹

Another “workingwoman activist” who was pushed aside after the advent of the initial strike, although in a very different way than Hannah Shapiro, was Bessie Abramowitz. She was

⁹⁵ Buhle, “Socialist Women and the ‘Girl Strikers,’” 1046.

⁹⁶ Jensen and Davidson, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 120.

⁹⁷ Sive-Tomashefsky, “Identifying a Lost Leader,” 936.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 936-937.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 939.

also working in Shop Five for HS&M when the strike broke out, and she was a much more vocal participant in the CMGWS, as well as many other strikes in the years after 1911. Abramowitz met her husband, Sidney Hillman, during an event organized for the CMGWS, and his prominent role in union organizing pulled her firmly into the world of unions, something no other working women who participated in the strike experienced. During the strike, she was named a UGA delegate and “organizer,” serving as a mid-level leader underneath the middle-class union organizers.¹⁰⁰ She was notorious on the picket lines, known as “Hatpin Bessie” after her weapon of choice.¹⁰¹ Abramowitz was blacklisted from the garment industry in the immediate aftermath of the strike, so she temporarily moved out of the city but returned after a year.¹⁰² After the dust settled, Abramowitz was the only woman and the only former striker on HS&M’s board of arbitration.¹⁰³ Her tokenization testifies to the degree to which strikers were shut out of leadership positions, as she was virtually the only exception.

“For we struggled to grow/And we won. And we know.”:

Conclusion

The CMGWS was not a successful strike. By the time it ended, only one of the many garment factories in Chicago was unionized, and it would take two more strikes to completely unionize the city’s garment industry. The strike erupted spontaneously, but the middle-class women of the WTUL jumped at the opportunity to help coordinate the strike efforts. They took over leadership in the early days of the strike when the UGW refused, they synthesized and

¹⁰⁰ McCreesh, *Women in the Campaign*, 154-155.

¹⁰¹ Pastorello, *A Power Among Them*, 31.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 41.

translated worker demands into something that they could take to the negotiating table, and they organized aid efforts for strikers throughout a brutal winter. Their actions throughout the strike revealed the way they thought of themselves and the strikers, and each group's respective role in the protests. Throughout the strike, the strikers and organizers demonstrated a continual awareness of how the Chicago strike fit in with the history of garment industry unionization. At one point the Chicago City Club, a public affairs forum, printed "texts of successful agreements then in existence in New York and Philadelphia" in their bulletin.¹⁰⁴ Those large strikes had just taken place a few years earlier, and many of the women who worked in the high levels of the WTUL also organized aspects of the strikes in those other major cities.

In the decade following the CMGWS of 1910-1911, many more major strides toward unionization would take place in Chicago. Two more strikes, in 1915 and 1919, finally resulted in "the majority of Chicago's firms agree[ing] to deal with workers' representatives," and a major union was born.¹⁰⁵ The ACWA, a national and extremely powerful union in the century that followed, "was literally born at the Hull-House" as the brainchild of organizers like Sidney Hillman.¹⁰⁶ The advent of this union would shift power away from the UGW, which would no longer be the only union in the garment industry. In addition to the solidification of formal union power, the major outcome of the strike, in the immediate aftermath, was a "new sense of fellowship with each other" that had not existed before.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Jensen and Davidson, *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike*, 131.

¹⁰⁶ Pastorello, *A Power Among Them*, 38.

¹⁰⁷ Wolman et al., *Clothing Workers of Chicago*, 47.

The garment industry is still changing and evolving, and the industry's center of gravity in America has shifted westward over the last century. Much more American-made clothing is manufactured in California in the twenty-first century than at the beginning of the twentieth, and many of the issues that plagued the industry before are rearing their ugly heads once again. The "gendered, low-wage workforce comprised of young women considered flexible and temporary and too docile to join unions" is repeating itself, again with recent immigrants.¹⁰⁸ Just because a garment has a tag that proclaims it was Made in America does not mean it is free of sweatshop labor. The issues that the garment workers of the early 1900s fought to address are becoming problematic again, and the "new movement [...] with the women garment workers themselves at the center of the battle" will need to challenge it once more.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Sidorick, "The 'Girl Army,'" 364

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

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Endnotes

ⁱ The section headings throughout this paper are taken from a poem written at the conclusion of the strike, penned by Mary O'Reilly and originally published in *Life and Labor*, a pamphlet published by the National Woman's Trade Union League of America. It was reprinted in the Official Strike Report published by the CMGWS's WTUL, where it concludes the official account of the strike, transforming it from a disappointing conclusion to a triumphant effort at organization and solidarity.

ⁱⁱ The owners of Hart, Schaffner and Marx, Joseph Schaffner and Harry Hart, were reportedly shocked that their "modern, sanitary workshops" could be the epicenter of a strike like this. However, they were not particularly aware of conditions in their factories before the strike. The two men were more concerned with markets and merchandising than production, so they imposed conditions and practices that encouraged traditional sweatshop models, regardless of the cleanliness of the building. Everyone worked on piece rates, even the foremen, which made them push their workers to do more for less. (*Uprising in Chicago*, 127)

ⁱⁱⁱ A particularly "Chicago" union.

^{iv} This issue was one which spread across the country and strike events. During a strike just the year before in Philadelphia, one newspaper referred to a mixed-gender group of strikers as "girls and men" (*Girl Army* 333).

^v The mayor's office also established a Chicago City Council committee on the strike, composed of 3 city councilmen, the mayor, and the city clerk—5 of the most powerful politicians in the city. Their purpose was to mediate a satisfactory agreement for all parties

involved, and this committee joined the clamor of voices attempting to calm the strike and restore the garment industry to its smooth operation. When the committee met with employers, strikers, and union representatives, the WTUL was represented by “Margaret Drier Robins [who...] delivered a stirring appeal” for workers’ rights. Railing against the firm owners and their refusal to acquiesce, she attacked them for “ask[ing] for the protection of civilization while they wage a barbaric war of starvation against women, girls and babies” (McCreesh, 153-154).