

# Why Do People Unite?

Rose Schneiderman and the Labor Movement

Discovering American Jewish History Through Objects

## 01 MISHNAH PIRKEI AVOT

If there is no flour, there is no Torah; if there is no Torah, there is no flour.

אם אין קמח, אין תורה; אם אין תורה, אין קמח.

Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 3:21

## 02 BREAD AND ROSES

— What is the significance of “bread” and of “roses?”

What the woman who labors wants is the right to live, not simply exist.... The worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too.

Rose Schneiderman, 1912

## 03 INDUSTRIAL POINT OF VIEW

The machines are so wildly noisy in the shop / That I often forget who I am. / I get lost in the frightful tumult — / My self is destroyed, I become a machine. / I work and work and work endlessly — / I create and create and create / Why? For whom? I don't know and I don't ask. / What business has a machine thinking?

Morris Rosenfeld, “The Sweatshop,” early 1900s

## 04 PROMINENT TRADE UNIONIST

— If Newman and her female coworkers had lived in Milwaukee, do you imagine they would have attended Schneiderman's speech? Why or why not?

Despite inhuman working conditions, the workers, including myself, continued to work for this firm. What good would it do to change jobs since similar conditions existed in all garment factories of that era? ... One gets to know the people you work with. You are no longer a stranger and alone. You have a feeling of belonging which helps to make life in a factory a bit easier to endure.

Pauline Newman to Michael and Hugh [Owens], May 1951

## 05 THE WOMAN WORKER

The manufacturer has a vote; the bosses have votes; the foremen have votes; the inspectors have votes. The working girl has no vote. When she asks to have the building in which she must work made clean and safe, the officials do not have to listen.

Clara Lemlich, “The Inside of a Shirtwaist Factory”, Good Housekeeping, Volume 54, Number 3, 1912

## STREET MEETINGS 09

What do the people do when the courts are reluctant to intervene and the other branches of government have failed them for so long? A political or social movement can oftentimes accomplish more than any lawsuit, and it can certainly do so more quickly.

Joshua Weishart, “The Ripple Effect of the West Virginia Teachers' Victory,” 2018

## ADMISSION FREE 08

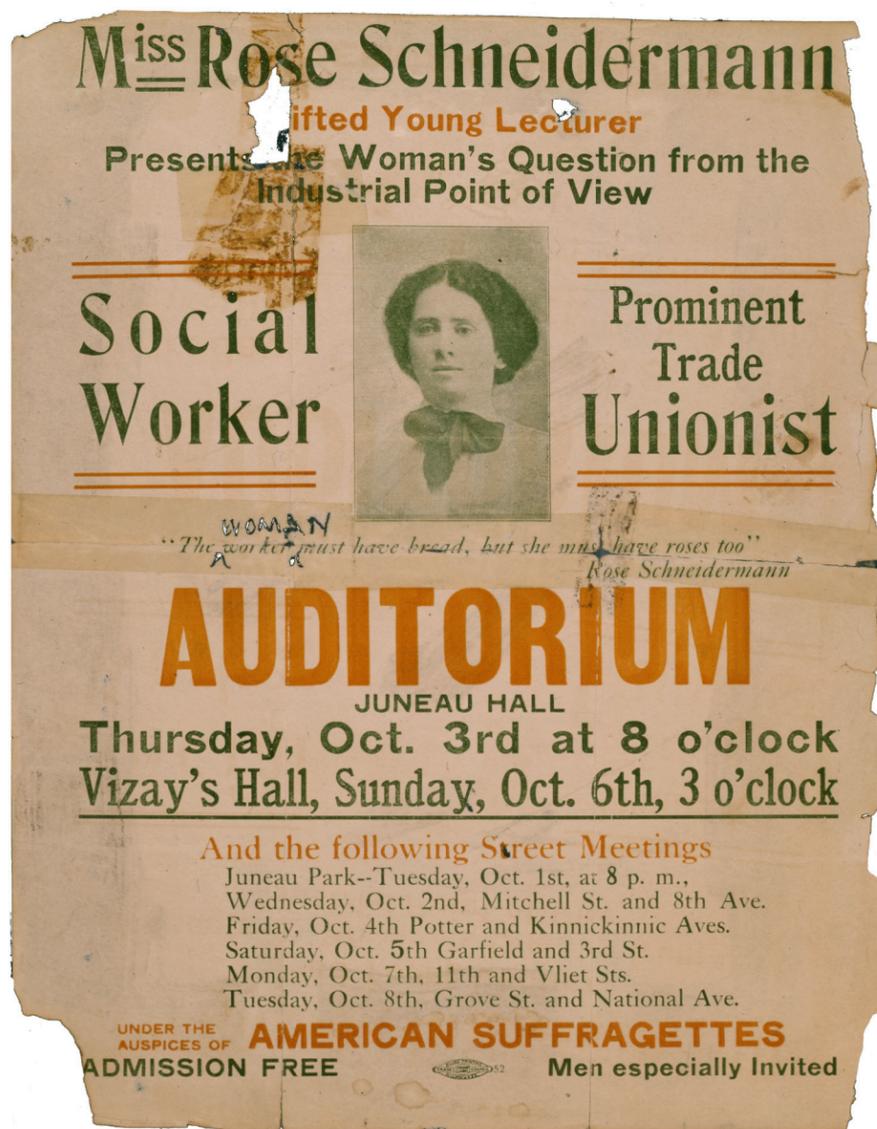
The teachers' unions also assume that a union contract is a benefit for everyone, and that certainly is not the case. Unions collect dues from these folks even though the contract may be a detriment to their personal interests.

Mike Antonucci, “Five Common Teachers Union Arguments That Rely on Half-Truths,” 2017

## AUDITORIUM 07

If you worry about crime, you can either have 10 percent more cops on the beat or 10 percent more neighbors knowing one another's first name, and all of the evidence suggests that it's the neighbors knowing one another's first name that has a greater influence on crime rate.... The effect of social connectedness

— What role do groups play in your life? What role do you play in these groups?



Poster, “American Suffragettes,” New York, New York, 1912  
Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Archives

on your physical survival is about as great as whether you smoke or not.

Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 2000

## INDIVIDUALISM 06

The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. To be your own man is a hard business. If you try it, you'll be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself.

Rudyard Kipling, 1935