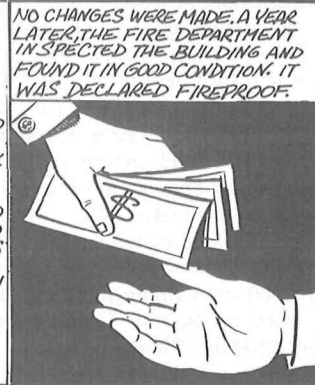


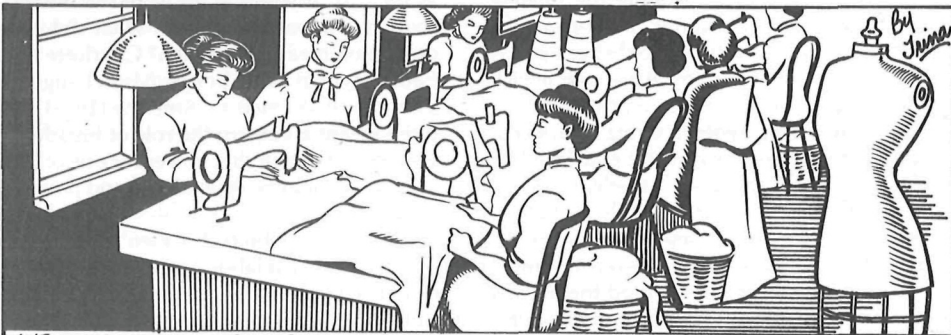


the TRIANGLE FIRE

THE TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST CO. OCCUPIED THE 8TH, 9TH AND 10TH FLOORS OF THE ASCH BLDG., ON GREENE ST. AND WASHINGTON ST., WHERE NEW YORK UNIVERSITY NOW STANDS. IN 1909, THE BUILDING HAD BEEN INSPECTED AND FIRE HAZARDS NOTED, AMONG THEM NOT ENOUGH STAIRCASES, AND A FIRE ESCAPE THAT ENDED AT THE SECOND FLOOR.

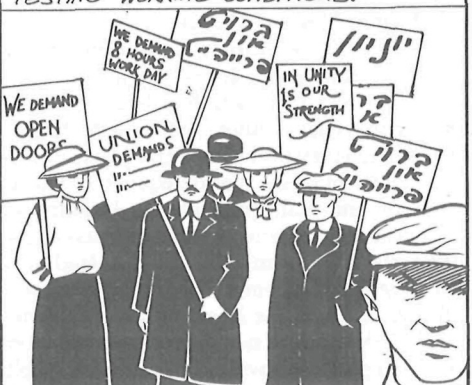


NO CHANGES WERE MADE. A YEAR LATER, THE FIRE DEPARTMENT INSPECTED THE BUILDING AND FOUND IT IN GOOD CONDITION. IT WAS DECLARED FIREPROOF.



INSIDE, ALL THE DOORS OPENED IN, AND THEY WERE LOCKED DURING THE WORKDAY TO KEEP THE EMPLOYEES FROM LEAVING EARLY, AND TO PREVENT THEFT.

THE TRIANGLE OWNERS, MAX BLANCK AND ISAAC HARRIS, HAD A HISTORY OF LABOR TROUBLE. IN 1909, 200 WORKERS WENT ON STRIKE, PROTESTING WORKING CONDITIONS.



BLANCK AND HARRIS BROUGHT IN THE POLICE. GIRLS ON THE PICKET LINES WERE BEATEN, AND CARTED OFF TO JAIL. THE I.L.G.W.U.* CALLED A GENERAL STRIKE IN SYMPATHY.



2 MONTHS LATER WHEN THE STRIKE ENDED, THE UNION HAD WON SOME GAINS, BUT NOT THE GIRLS AT TRIANGLE. BLANCK AND HARRIS WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE THE UNION. THE DOORS STILL OPENED IN AND THE FIRE ESCAPE STILL ENDED AT THE SECOND FLOOR.



4:45 PM, SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 1911, ON THE 8TH FLOOR OF THE ASCH BUILDING, A WORKER NOTICED SMOKE COMING FROM A RAG BIN.

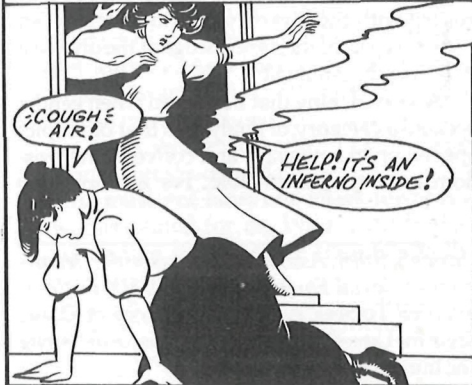


THE FIRE QUICKLY SPREADING, SUPERINTENDANT SAMUEL BERNSTEIN GRABBED THE FIRE HOSE.



WHY ISN'T THE HOSE IS ROTTEN - IT'S FALLING TO PIECES!

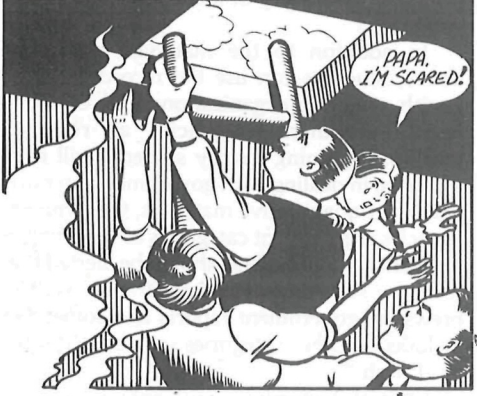
THE DOOR WAS LOCKED. AFTER MUCH SCREAMING, SOMEONE GOT IT OPEN - INWARDLY - AND IN PANIC AND CONFUSION THE WORKERS STUMBLING DOWNSTAIRS TO SAFETY.



COUGH AIR!

HELP! IT'S AN INFERNO INSIDE!

THE TO OCCUPANTS OF THE TRIANGLE 10TH FLOOR OFFICES, INCLUDING BLANCK AND HARRIS, AND BLANCK'S TWO DAUGHTERS, AGED 5 AND 12, ESCAPED TO THE ROOF.



SAVING LADDERS FROM ADJOINING N.Y.U. PUSHED LADDERS ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS AND GUIDED THE VICTIMS TO SAFETY AS THE SMOKE AND FLAMES LEAPT ABOUT THEM.



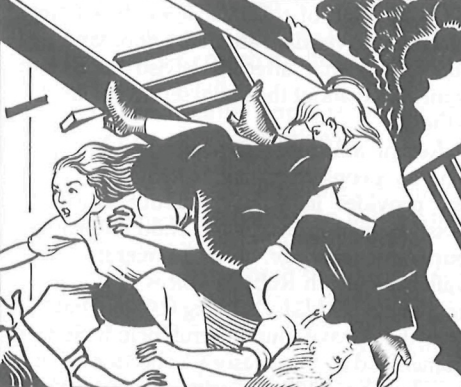
THE OCCUPANTS OF THE 9TH FLOOR WERE NOT AS LUCKY. THEY DIDN'T KNOW A FIRE HAD STARTED TILL THEY SAW THE FLAMES LEAPING IN THE WINDOWS.



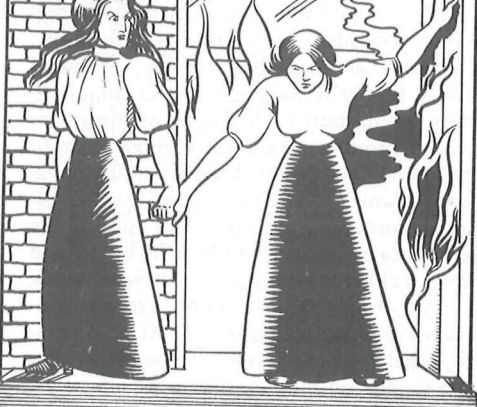
BY THIS TIME IT WAS ALMOST TOO LATE.



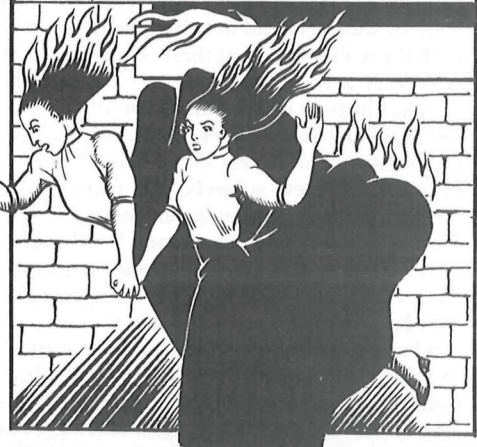
OTHERS TRIED THE FIRE ESCAPE. LOADED WITH PEOPLE, IT PULLED FROM THE WALL AND COLLAPSED, SPILLING BODIES INTO THE COURTYARD BELOW.



FOR THE REST OF THE PEOPLE ON THE 9TH FLOOR, THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO ESCAPE THE FLAMES.



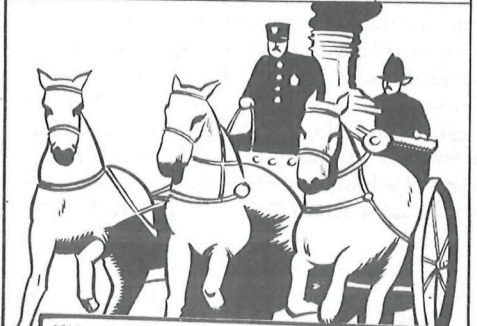
HAND IN HAND THEY JUMPED, THEIR CLOTHING ABLAZE, THEIR HAIR STREAMING UP IN FLAMES.



THEIR COMBINED WEIGHT TORE THROUGH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT NETS. WITHIN MINUTES THE STREET WAS COVERED WITH BODIES.



HOOK AND LADDER COMPANY TWENTY ARRIVED WITH THE TALLEST LADDER IN THE FIRE DEPT. IT ONLY REACHED TO THE 6TH FLOOR.



RELATIVES OF THE VICTIMS GATHERED AT THE BURNING BUILDING. BY 7 P.M. THERE WERE 20,000 PEOPLE WATCHING IN HORRIFIED SILENCE AS BODY AFTER BODY WAS TAKEN AWAY.



THE SEARCH AMONG THE BODIES FOR MISSING RELATIVES BEGAN. ALL IN ALL, 146 WORKERS HAD DIED, MOST OF THEM YOUNG JEWISH IMMIGRANT WOMEN. 7 BODIES NEVER IDENTIFIED WERE BURIED BY THE CITY.



EXCERPT FROM A SPEECH BY ROSE SCHNEIDERMAN AT A MASS MEETING HELD ON MAY 2, 1911, TO PROTEST THE FACTORY CONDITIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRAGEDY:

IT WOULD BE A TRAITOR TO THESE POOR BURNED BODIES, IF I CAME HERE TO TALK GOOD FELLOWSHIP... THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME GIRLS HAVE BEEN BURNED ALIVE IN THE CITY. EVERY WEEK I MUST LEARN OF THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF ONE OF MY SISTER WORKERS. EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF US ARE MAIMED... TOO MUCH BLOOD HAS BEEN SPILLED. I KNOW FROM MY EXPERIENCE THAT IT IS UP TO THE WORKING PEOPLE TO SAVE THEMSELVES. THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN SAVE THEMSELVES IS BY A STRONG WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT.

