



Books for Young Readers - A Bibliography of fiction and non-fiction books about labour, strikes and politics

By Nathalie Patel, Vancouver Public Library

The Centre commissioned Nathalie Patel, a children's librarian at Vancouver Public Library, to create a bibliography of children's and young adult books on labour, strikes, and politics. The bibliography contains fiction and non-fiction books and has brief descriptions of each.

Picture Books

Strike!

by Maureen Bayless

Molly and her teddy bear find an unusual and creative way to help draw attention to the strike at her mother's cannery.
Ragweed, 1994

Si, Se Puede!= Yes, We Can!

by Diana Cohn

When Carlitos's mother and the other cleaners go on strike for higher wages, Carlitos cannot think of a way to support his mother until he sees her on television making a speech, and then he gets his class to help him make a sign to show his pride.
32 Pages.
El Paso, Tex, Cinco Puntos Press, 2002.

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type

by Doreen Cronin

A great barnyard farce about animals that go on strike to demand better working conditions.
New York, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2000.

The Bobbin Girl

by Emily Arnold McCully

A ten-year-old bobbin girl working in a textile mill in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1830s, must make a difficult decision--will she participate in the first workers' strike in Lowell?
New York, Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996.

This Is a Great Place for a Hot Dog Stand

by Barney Salzberg

When Izzy decides to quit his factory job and open a hotdog stand, he finds the perfect place to sell hotdogs is on a hot, dirty, overlooked lot. Business booms thanks to Izzy's great customer service. When the business is threatened because a large developer decides to buy the lot, Izzy's customers hold protests. A happy tale about an underdog who comes out on top.
32 PagesDisney Press 1995

Toddlecreek Post Office

by Uri Shulevitz

The village post office is a special gathering place for the local people, but one day something happens to change that.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.

Boy of the Deeps

by Ian Wallace

The deeps--the coal mines of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia--are dangerous, but James is old enough now to do a man's work. He and his dad descend in the steel cage to an underground city a thousand feet below the Atlantic Ocean. There James begins to learn the coal miner's work.
New York, DK Ink, 1999.



Bibliography continued

Childrens' Fiction

East Side Story

by Bonnie Bader

A young girl and her older sister, working in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, an early twentieth-century sweatshop on the Lower East Side of New York City, join a protest to try to improve the miserable working conditions. Includes historical postscript.

72 Pages.

New York, Silver Moon Press, 1993.

Goodbye Sarah

by Geoffrey Bilson

Mary, the daughter of one of the strikers is parted from her friend, the daughter of an anti-strike neighbour, during the Winnipeg General Strike.

64 Pages Kids Can Press, 1981

Riot

by Mary Casanova

When his father engages in vandalism against non-union employees, Bryan, a sixth-grader, must decide whether to accept his father's actions or do what he believes is right.

New York, Hyperion Books for Children, 1996. 116p.

The Worst of Times

by James Lincoln Collier

When the depression strikes America, Pete Williamson's family rapidly slides into poverty. And when Pete's much-admired cousin Steve starts working as a union organizer in the battle to improve conditions for the workers, poverty turns into tragedy.

142 Pages. Lincolnwood, IL, Jamestown Publishers, 2000.

A Real American

by Richard Easton

With his older brother dead, his best friend moved away, and his father busy trying to save the family's farm in western Pennsylvania, eleven-year-old Nathan finds a friend among the immigrants who have come to work in the new coal mines.

Through the personal experiences, the labour history comes alive: the harsh, dangerous working conditions; the uprooting of the farmers; the greed of those cashing in; the aborted attempt to start a union.

156 Pages.

New York, Clarion Books, 2002.

Trouble at Lachine Mill

by Bill Freeman

During the Depression of the 1870s, two children from Ottawa find work in a Montreal shirt factory, which is troubled by poor working conditions, a ruthless foreman and striking workers.

128 Pages Lorimer 1983

Fire! The Beginnings of the Labour Movement

by Barbara Goldin

In 1911 Rose becomes involved in the struggle for better working conditions in factories when fire rips through the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, where her older sister Freyda is employed.

Viking, 1992. 54p.

Emmy

by Connie Green

In the 1920s when her father is disabled in a Kentucky coal mining accident, eleven-year-old Emmy and the others in her family do what they can to help, with her fourteen-year-old brother taking Pa's place in the mines.

M. K. McElderry Books, 1992. 152p.

Continued....



Children's Fiction continued

Strike Two

by Amy Goldman Koss

Gwen's hope of spending the summer playing softball and hanging out with her cousin Jess is ruined when her father and her uncle land on opposite sides of the local newspaper strike.

134 Pages.

New York, Dial Books, 2001.

The Streetcar Riots

by Susan Martins Miller

Richard and Anna Allerton are caught in a riot that breaks out in Minneapolis. The city's streetcar drivers are on strike, and thousands of people have filled the streets. This latest outbreak of violence between workers and business owners makes Uncle Charles and Uncle Enoch even angrier at each other.

143 Pages.

Uhrichsville, OH, Barbour Publishing, 1998.

Trouble at the Mines

by Doreen Rappaport

Rosie and her family are caught up in the Arnot, Pennsylvania, mining strike of 1899-1900, led by the union organizer Mother Jones.

T. Y. Crowell, 1987. 85p.

Missing from Haymarket Square

by Harriette Robinet

Three children in Chicago in 1886 experience the Haymarket Riot in response to exploitative working conditions.

143 Pages.

New York, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001.

Esperanza Rising

by Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labour camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

262 Pages.

New York, Scholastic Press, 2000.

On Fire

by Ouida Sebestyen

Involved in a dangerous strike in a frontier mining town in 1911, twelve-year-old Sammy finds his feelings changing toward the older brother he has always idolized.

Atlantic Monthly Press, 1985. 207p.

A Chance Child

by Jill Paton Walsh

Compelled to search for his half brother Creep who some people insist is nonexistent, Christopher locates Parliamentary Papers containing Nathaniel Creep's personal narrative of working conditions during the Industrial Revolution 100 years earlier.

Forbidden Friendship

by Judith Eichler Weber

In the 1870's in Massachusetts, Molly befriends, despite her family's disapproval, one of the Chinese workers brought in to replace striking employees at her father's shoe factory.

New York, Silver Moon Press, 1993. 75p.

Continued....



Children's Fiction and Young Adult Fiction continued

Danger at the Breaker

by Catherine A. Welch

Because of family need, an eight-year-old coal miner's son in 1885 leaves school to work at the mines, where he learns about the dangers of a coal mine on his first day on the job.

Young Adult Fiction

Ashes of Roses

by Mary Jane Auch

Sixteen-year-old Margaret Rose Nolan, newly arrived from Ireland, finds work at New York City's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory shortly before the 1911 fire in which 146 employees died.

250 Pages.

New York, H. Holt, 2002.

East Side Story

by Bonnie Bader

A young girl and her older sister, working in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, an early twentieth-century sweatshop on the Lower East Side of New York City, join a protest to try to improve the miserable working conditions. Includes historical postscript.

72 Pages.

New York, Silver Moon Press, 1993.

Up Molasses Mountain

By Julie Baker

When union members arrive to organize their West Virginia coal mining town, fourteen-year-old Clarence Henderson, shunned for his cleft lip, and his neighbour Elizabeth Braxton narrate the changes in their own lives and in the lives of everyone in their community.

209 Pages.

New York, Wendy Lamb Books, 2002.

The Winchesters

by James Lincoln Collier

Fourteen-year-old Chris, a poor relation of the wealthy Winchesters, must choose whether to be on the side of management or labour when his classmates' parents go on strike at the Winchester mill in response to a wage cut.

169 Pages

Macmillan, 1988.

Strike!

by Barbara Corcoran

A teacher's strike upsets the life of a high school student who has good friends among the teachers and a father on the school board.

158 Pages

Atheneum, 1983

The Journal of Otto Peltonen

by William Durbin

In 1905 fifteen-year-old Otto describes in his journal how he travels from Finland to America, joining his father in a dreary iron mining community in Minnesota and becoming involved in a union fight for better working conditions.

171 Pages.

New York, Scholastic, 2000.

Continued....



Young Adult Fiction continued

One Proud Summer

by Marsha Hewitt and Claire Mackay

When her father dies, Lucie is forced to work in the cotton mill in Quebec. The story of a memorable event in Canadian history - a 100-day strike that brought a town of thousands to the streets. Winner of the Ruth Schwartz Award for Children's Literature.

159 Pages

Puffin 1988

When I Dream of Heaven

by Steven Kroll

Tony Petrosino's sister, Angelina, has turned fourteen and dreams of being a teacher but her father insists she work full-time as a seamstress in a sweatshop until he arranges her marriage to the neighbourhood bully.

155 Pages.

Lincolnwood, IL, Jamestown Publishers, 2000.

Fire at the Triangle Factory

by Holly Littlefield

Two fourteen-year-old girls, sewing machine operators at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, are caught in the famous Triangle fire of 1911.

48 Pages.

Minneapolis, MN, Carolrhoda Books, 1996.

Lyddie

by Katherine Paterson

Impoverished Vermont farm girl Lyddie Worthen is determined to gain her independence by becoming a factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1840s.

New York, Dutton, 1991. 182p.

Breaker

by N.A. Perez

After his father dies, fourteen-year-old Pat is forced to work in the coal mines in his Pennsylvania town and becomes involved in the big mine workers strike of 1902.

206 Pages

Houghton Mifflin, 1988

Call me Ruth

by Marilyn Sachs

The daughter of a Jewish immigrant family from Russia, newly arrived in Manhattan in 1908, has conflicting feelings about her mother's increasingly radical union involvement.

Doubleday, 1982. 134p.

Rockbuster

by Gloria Skurzynski

In 1915, after being asked to sing at the funeral of executed songwriter and member of the international union, Industrial Workers of the World, Joe Hill, eighteen-year-old Utah coal miner Tommy Quinlan begins to accept his past and make decisions about his future.

253 Pages.

New York, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001.

Continued....



Young Adult Fiction and Non-Fiction continued

Taste of Salt

by Frances Temple

In the hospital after being firebombed and beaten by the Tonton Macoutes, seventeen-year-old Djo tells the story of his impoverished life to a young woman who, like him, has been working with the social reformer Father Aristide to fight the repression in Haiti.

179 Pages.

Orchard Books, 1992.

A Time of Troubles

by Pieter VanRaven

Having crossed the country with his father during the Depression to find work in California, fourteen-year-old Roy encounters cruel exploitation of the desperate, impoverished people pouring into the state by the Grower's Association.

180 Pages.

C. Scribner's Sons, 1990.

Non-Fiction

Labor Day

By Mir Tamin Ansary

Provides an introduction to Labor Day, explaining the historical events behind it, how it became a holiday and how it is observed.

32 Pages

Heinemann Library, 1999

Labour and Social Reform

By Mariam Bardswich and Sandra Fryer

Uses a timeline and many primary documents including photographs, newspaper articles and cartoons to highlight the history of the Canadian Labour movement to the present. A fascinating overview that will encourage the reader to do more research. For intermediate and high school.

48 Pages

Rubicon Publishing, 2002

Kids on Strike!

By Susan Campbell Bartoletti

Describes the conditions and treatment that drove workers, including many children, to various strikes from the mill workers strikes in 1828 and 1836 and the coal strikes at the end of the century to the work of Mother Brown on behalf of child workers. Each chapter, complete with original photographs, covers a different strike. A fascinating read for late elementary through high school.

208 Pages

Houghton Mifflin, 1999

Labor Day

by Carmen Bredson

Gives a very simple background to the history of the holiday for preschoolers and early elementary.

31 Pages

Children's Press, 2001

Cesar Chavez: a Photo Illustrated Biography

By Lucile Davis

Presents the life story of the Mexican American Labour leader who achieved justice for migrant farm workers by creating a union to protect their rights. For young children.

24 Pages

Bridgestone Books, 1998

Continued....



Non-Fiction continued

The Industrial Revolution (Living History Series)

Edited by John D. Clare

Describes the dramatic technological, industrial and social changes brought about by the industrial revolution in Europe and United States. Striking costumed photographs bring the text to life. For older elementary through high school.

64 Pages

Harcourt Brace and Co., 1994

The Industrial Revolution

By James A. Corrick

Discusses the industrial revolution, including its birth in England and spread to Europe and America, and its effects on society. The last quarter of the book explains the birth of the labour movement and many of its important supporters. Many original photographs. For intermediate and high school.

112 Pages

Lucent Books, 1998

Lech Walesa: the Leader of Solidarity and Campaigner for Freedom and Human Rights in Poland

By Mary Craig

Traces the life of the Polish union leader who was instrumental in gaining government recognition for Solidarity, an organization of local unions, and who won the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize.

68 Pages

G. Stevens Children's Books, 1990

The Unions

By Leonard Fisher

Traces the growth and development of the labour movement in 19th Century America. For older elementary.

62 Pages

Holiday House, 1982

Good Girl Work: Factories, Sweatshops and How Women Changed their Role in the American Workforce.

By Catherine Gourley

Discusses the girls and women in the workforce of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the reforms and movements that changed the working conditions and the nature of the work itself. Lots of original photographs. For all ages.

96 Pages

Millbrook Press, 1999

Strikemakers and Strikebreakers

By Sidney Lens

Describes the origins and history of strikes in the United States, and discusses their purpose, effectiveness and how their resolutions affect the relationship between employees and their employers. For intermediate and high school.

170 Pages

Dutton, 1985

Pay Cheques and Picket Lines: all about Unions in Canada

by Claire MacKay

Focuses on unions in Canada, with clear descriptions of working conditions that lead to their rise, benefits of unions, types and examples of strikes. Includes a timeline. For older elementary and up.

104 Pages

Kids Can Press, 1987

Continued....



Non-Fiction continued

The Role of Trade Unions

by Brigid McConville

Gives a concise history of the role trade unions have played in different parts of the world. As part of the Debates series, it looks at both the pros and the cons of various aspects of unions. Intermediate and high school.

64 Pages

MacDonald, 1986

Labour in Canada

by Desmond Morton

Part of the Focus on Canadian History Series, this traces the beginnings of the labour movement in Canada. For intermediate and up.

92 Pages

Grolier, 1982

The Industrial Revolution 1800-1850

By Pier Paolo Poggio and Carlo Simoni

Discusses the rise of technology and its results, including the rise of socialism, over fifty years in England and Europe. For elementary and up.

31 Pages

Chelsea House, 2003

Marx, Engels, and the Workers of the World

By Edward Rice

Biographies of the theoreticians whose interpretations of socialism and communism have been adopted by much of the world's population. For intermediate and up.

184 Pages

Four Winds Press, 1977

We Need to Go to School: Voices of the Rugmark Children

By Tanya Roberts-Davis

A collection of accounts, in their own words and drawings, by Nepalese children who once worked in carpet factories. Historical information about Nepal and child labour is included and a resource section for young readers provides them with tools they can use to become part of the solution. For elementary and up.

48 Pages

Douglas and McIntyre, 2001

Children of Coal and Iron

By Iain Rose and Donald MacLean

Examines the lives of children in the coal and iron industries during the industrial revolution in Scotland. For intermediate.

45 Pages

Wayland, 1996

The Industrial Revolution

By Stewart Ross

A fresh look at the Industrial Revolution using original documents. The book charts the development of power driven machinery, improvements in transport, growth of towns, and their consequences. It discusses the spread of industrialization throughout the world and explains the resulting rise of the labour movement.

62 Pages

Franklin Watts, 2001

Continued....



Non-Fiction and Miscellaneous continued

Labor Day

By Geoffrey Scott

Explains the history behind Labor Day for preschoolers and early elementary.

48 Pages

Carol Rhoda, 1982

Listen to Us: the World's Working Children

By Jane Springer

A sensitive and clear introduction to child labour; this describes its history as well as the current nature and extent of child labour worldwide. Profiles of child workers and children who work to help them are included. Addresses ways that young readers can help to combat child labour. Intermediate and up.

96 Pages

Douglas and McIntyre, 1997

Kids During the Industrial Revolution

By Lisa Wroble

Discusses how the social and economic climate of the industrial revolution affected the lives and daily activities of children. For Elementary and intermediate.

24 Pages

Power Press, 1999

Miscellaneous

Chandler's Mill (Video recording)

Directed by Joan Henson

In 1889, thirteen year old Hettie must go to work in a wool mill to help support her family. Her friend Constance decides to help form a union which would protect Hattie from the long hours and low wages that she is forced to accept. For late elementary and intermediate.

1990

Ella Jenkins and a Union of Friends, Pulling Together (Cassette and CD)

Ella Jenkins and a group of young and older musical friends introduce children to the ideas of unity, cooperation and labour unions through songs, recitations and poetry.

48 minutes Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1999