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*Review of Protest & Popular Culture: Women in the U.
S. Labor Movement, 1894-1917*

Bonnie Brennen

Marquette University, bonnie.brennen@marquette.edu

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Bonnie Brennen was affiliated with Virginia Commonwealth University at the time of publication.

Triece, Mary E. *Protest & Popular Culture: Women in the U.S. Labor Movement, 1894-1917*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2001. 304 pp. \$30.

Protest & Popular Culture is a theoretically informed cultural analysis that explores the relationship between the labor and suffrage movements and the popular media at the turn of the century. In her persuasive critique, Mary Triece focuses on the use of rhetorical strategies by popular media to perpetuate race, class, and gender inequalities and contrasts these messages with strategies of resistance constructed by female workers. Ultimately, her materialist, feminist approach offers readers valuable insights into ways that women's groups challenge prevailing ideologies and create cultural ties.

What makes this book especially noteworthy to media historians is its extensive use of creative primary sources to explore the ways popular media presented women's issues as well as to document the relationships between working-class women and middle-class suffragists. *Protest & Popular Culture* focuses on three turn-of-the-century time periods during which issues of class and labor received prominent attention in the press. For Triece, the Pullman strike of 1894-1895 is an important time period to study because middle-class con-

cern for working-class issues increased and suffragists formed an alliance that crossed class boundaries. She also focuses on 1903-1904, because during these years women became active in the labor force and labor activists gained considerable public attention. The final time period, 1909-1917, was a pivotal era of labor unrest; it was a time when thousands of women planned and participated in a variety of labor strikes throughout the United States.

Much of *Protest & Popular Culture's* analysis is based on the upper-class publication *Atlantic Monthly*, the muckraking middle-class magazine *McClure's*, and three popular mail-order magazines, *Comfort*, *Home Life*, and the *People's Home Journal*. Scholars rarely study these mail-order magazines, which had low subscription rates of about twenty-five cents per year and targeted working-class readers with limited disposable incomes. Triece's examination of popular magazines illustrates how rhetorical strategies, such as naturalization, universalization, and domestication, have been used effectively to maintain class-based differences, gain consensus, and eliminate dissent. During the late nineteenth century and the early

twentieth century, she suggests that popular magazines used rhetorical strategies to target readers and actively create the notion of the female consumer.

Protest & Popular Culture also includes a nicely documented history of female labor activists who played a central role in labor uprisings at the beginning of the twentieth century. In an effort to highlight the voices of female workers, Triece draws on a variety of labor-related speeches, diaries, and letters from the Women's Trade Union League and Industrial Workers of the World. With these materials, she shows how labor leaders focused on issues of class conflict in order to create a class-based collective identity among female workers. Her focus on female workers provides a nuanced understanding of how women incorporated and co-opted popular media messages in an effort to challenge the dominant order and to create their own community.

Bonnie Brennen
University of Missouri