

**Coalition of Labor Union Women
16th Biennial Convention
Orlando, Florida
September 7 - 10, 2011**

SUPPORT THE TRIANGLE FIRE MEMORIAL

March 25, 2011 was the Centennial anniversary of the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. A memorial was held at the site of the fire, the Asch Building at 23-29 Washington Square East at Greene St. in New York City, as well as many other events relating to the fire. Around the country communities came together to remember and honor those lost.

The Triangle Waist Company owned by Max Blanck and Isaac Harris, the "Shirtwaist Kings," occupied the top three floors (8 - 10) of the building, today part of New York University. The shirtwaist was a ready-made blouse popular at the time, made famous by the "Gibson Girl."

On Saturday March 25, 1911 a fire broke out on the 8th floor, fueled by flammable materials and dust, the fire spread quickly. Most of the 500 workers in the building that day were immigrant women, many in their teens. Some escaped before the elevator failed and the stairs became engulfed in flames. More than 60 jumped from windows rather than die in the fire and smoke. At least 24 died when the poorly maintained fire escape collapsed.

In the end 146 people, mostly women (129), died as a result of the fire.

The owners were acquitted of manslaughter and returned to business as usual. Civil suits, 23 in total, on behalf of the families were settled for \$75.00 per victim. Public horror and outcry did result in the establishing of worker safety and work condition reforms as well as stronger unions in the garment industry. Every year since the tragedy, labor and social activists have labored to keep the memory of this event alive. The only memorial to the victims of the fire is an 18 x 24 inch plaque on the Washington place side of the building.

In March 2009 the Triangle Fire Remembrance Coalition was launched to coordinate educational, commemorative and memorial activities revolving around the centennial anniversary. (www.rememberthetrianglefire.org) Discussion by members of the Triangle Coalition indicated that there were numerous entities who felt a more appropriate memorial should be built and that our work was not done. An open call was put out to artists and a committee of interested parties chose Janet Zweig to design the memorial. A Memorial Committee was founded on March 26, 2011 to work on designing and building a lasting memorial that remembers not only the victims of this infamous fire but also the social conscience and action their suffering inspired.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

CLUW and its chapters will support the Triangle Fire Remembrance Coalition's efforts to build a permanent memorial to honor the memory of those who died from the fire, to affirm the dignity of all workers, to value women's work, to remember the movement for worker safety and social justice stirred by this tragedy, and to inspire future generations of activists.

CLUW will contribute to the Triangle Fire Memorial to honor our sisters and brothers who paid with their lives that ours might be better, and also to honor those who continue to work towards justice for all working people.