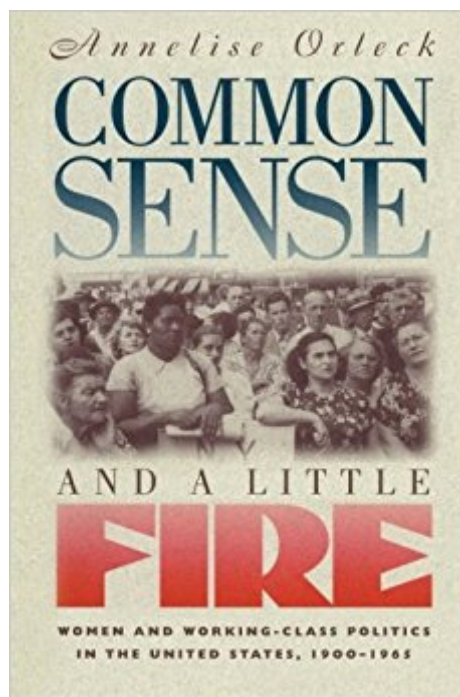




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# Common Sense And A Little Fire: Women And Working-Class Politics In The United States, 1900-1965 (Gender And American Culture)



## Synopsis

Common Sense and a Little Fire# traces the personal and public lives of four immigrant women activists who left a lasting imprint on American politics. Though they have rarely had more than cameo appearances in previous histories, Rose Schneiderman, Fannia Cohn, Clara Lemlich Shavelson, and Pauline Newman played important roles in the emergence of organized labor, the New Deal welfare state, adult education, and the modern women's movement

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The life stories of four Jewish immigrant organizers--Rose Schneiderman, Pauline Newman, Clara Lemlich Shavelson and Fannia Cohn--frame Orleck's history of women in U.S. working-class movements. All had energized their communities and garment-factory shop floors, located on New York's Lower East Side, by their early 20s and were lifelong labor leaders. Consummate organizers (Newman conceived and led the largest rent strike New York had ever seen when she was 16), they negotiated the minefields of male labor leaders' sexism, middle- and upper-class feminists' elitism and the country's anti-Semitism and xenophobia to carve out careers, forge friendships and develop a politics Orleck describes as "industrial feminism." Schneiderman's and Newman's most significant intimate relationships were with women. Orleck, an assistant professor of history at Dartmouth and herself the descendant of immigrant Jewish working-class organizers, draws on social history and on primary texts; some of the latter have only recently become accessible to

scholars. In the hands of a skilled storyteller, this material would have been gripping, but Orleck's prose is matter-of-fact and often repetitive. Luckily, the rich factual detail and the epic nature of the women's lives sometimes overcome the shortcomings of the writing. Photos not seen by PW.  
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Highly recommended. Two thumbs up."International Labor and Working Class History"Orleck's intelligent work reminds readers of a time when workers fought valiantly . . . to be represented by a union."Choice"A major contribution to twentieth-century labor history. . . . Orleck's book is rich in detail and comprehensive in analysis."Reviews in American History"An interesting and important study. "Common Sense and a Little Fire" is worth the read."Journal of American History"Substantially expands our knowledge of twentieth-century working-class women's political activity."New York History"

Good for required school reading!

I bought this book for school & it said it was used but it looks very new to me. This was a great purchase!!

This is by far one of the best history books I've ever read. Very engaging read for anyone interested in social justice, Jewish American identity and Jewish activism, community organizing, and/or labor exploitation in the US.

This book chronicles the lives of four working-class Jewish immigrant women from their common start as survivors of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire through their careers as labor leaders. These women are absolutely astounding American heroes just waiting to be discovered. In addition to her awe-inspiring subject matter, Orleck also employs a readable and interesting writing style that is true to life and avoids becoming bogged down with useless facts. This book reminded me how much one person really can make a difference simply through conviction and perseverance.

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