

= The Girl Strike Leader =

The Girl Strike Leader is a 1910 American silent short drama produced by the Thanhouser Company . The film deals with labor relations when Hal Stephens disguises himself and works in a factory he was given by his father . As a laborer , he falls in love with a young working girl named Lou and protects her against a manager . Lou leads a strike when wages are ordered to be cut by 10 % , but the strikers return to work on the verge of starvation . Lou , who resists , is saved by Hal who assumes control , restores the wages and removes the previous manager .

The film may have been inspired by the real 1909 strike of the New York City shirtwaist makers , but the strike ended without settlement . The scenario is bears the hallmarks of the successful dime novels with an improbable resolution . Released on July 8 , 1910 , the film has received attention for presenting labor issues , but the film is presumed lost .

= = Plot = =

Though the film is presumed lost , a synopsis survives in The Moving Picture World from July 9 , 1910 . It states : " Hal Stephens , a wealthy young man , devotes all his time to enjoying himself , thereby earns the disapproval of his staid old father . The elder Stephen sees the young man start off on an auto trip with some gay friends , and decides to call a halt . He notifies his son by telegram that it is time he went to work , and presents him with the factory . This arouses the merriment of his friends , but Hal declares that he will buckle down and go to work . He tells his father , however , that he desires to start incognito , and the father consents . Hal enters the factory and goes to work as an ordinary laborer , his identity being unknown to all . He meets Lou , a young working girl , and falls in love with her . The manager of the place , one Conners , tries to make love to Lou , and Hal protects her . There is an order put up reducing salaries 10 % , and Lou induces the others to strike rather than to submit . The strikers , starved out , finally return to work , with the exception of Lou , who is defiant to the end . Hal finds her weeping on the steps of her home and tells her of his love . She agrees to marry him . After she has accepted him , he leads her to the factory , announces his identity , assumes possession , and restores wages to the old scale , after having discharged the rogue Conners . "

= = Production = =

The writer of the scenario is unknown , but it was most likely Lloyd Lonergan . Lonergan was an experienced newspaperman employed by The New York Evening World while writing scripts for the Thanhouser productions . Michael S. Shull , author of Radicalism in American Silent Films , 1909 @-@ 1929 : A Filmography and History , believes the scenario was inspired by a New York City shirtwaist makers strike that began in the winter of 1909 . The strike would end without settlement , but it would be dramatized by Theresa Malkiel , a labor activist . The fictional autobiography written by Malkiel , The Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker , was serialized in New York Caller a socialist paper . The film director is unknown , but it may have been Barry O 'Neil . Bowers does not attribute a cameraman for this production , but two possible candidates exist . Blair Smith was the first cameraman of the Thanhouser company , but he was soon joined by Carl Louis Gregory who had years of experience as a still and motion picture photographer . The role of the cameraman was uncredited in 1910 productions . The only credit known for the cast is that of Mrs. George W. Walters in the role of a poor factory worker . Other members cast may have included the other leading players of the Thanhouser productions , Anna Rosemond , Frank H. Crane and Violet Heming .

= = Release and reception = =

The single reel drama , approximate 1000 feet long , was released on July 8 , 1910 . Theaters in Indiana and Pennsylvania were among those which advertised the film , one specifically focusing on

the film having dealing with " the labor question " . A review in The Moving Picture News was contained detailed praise of the film 's relevance and success in portraying the subject . The reviewer states , " This film strikes home The situation has been lived in New York City . The strike and its miseries are not forgotten . Whoever arranged the story had a big , tender heart and knew what appeals to the masses . The glee with which the superintendent 's discomfiture was hailed by the audience spoke volumes . We wish some of the pictures were not quite so vividly black and white . Mayhap the tenseness of the situation hit the cameraman . Be that as it may , one thing is certain - there is no melodrama , but scenes out of real life . " While the reviewer in this case refers to the scenario being drawn from real life , the happy ending is termed as a fantasy by reviewer in The Moving Picture World who states , " [It is one] of those pictures which thrill one despite their improbability . It may go in stories but never in fact , that an owner of a factory marries one of his girl employees , and a strike leader at that ... "

Nan Enstad , author of Ladies of Labor , Girls of Adventure : Working Women , Popular Culture , and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century says that the film relied on the dime novel formula as much as the labor @-@ capital conventions to depict its story . Kay Sloan , author of The Loud Silents : Origins of the Social Problem Film , confirms that the simplified plot of the film is of the dime novel order . Barbara Antoniazzi , author of The Wayward Woman : Progressivism , Prostitution , and Performance in the United States , 1888 ? 1917 , highlights that the girls are striking against the actions of Connor instead of the owner and that Lou is portrayed as attractive , defiant and virtuous . Steven J. Ross would cite this film as the first in a list of films that would progressively depict female labor activists as the agent of justice in contrast to the gender biases of film makers .