

WINNIPEG GENERAL
STRIKE
1919









Prices had tripled and quadrupled during World War I

Wages had been frozen since 1914

End of war meant end of war production, competition for jobs and opportunity to lower wages

Opening of Panama Canal in 1914 further damaged Winnipeg's economy

Workers' Demands

- Motormen from Winnipeg Electric Company:
- 40% increase in wages
 - 39-47 cents/hour to 60-70 cents/hour
 - 8 hour day
 - ***Right to collective bargaining***

WOMEN'S WAGES

- \$5-7/week
- 72 hour work week
- Boarding House Rental - \$5/week

150,000 people took part in strikes across Canada in 1919

Sympathy strikes took place across Canada when the strike was called in
Winnipeg

EVENTS

- May 1 - Metal Trades go on strike
- May 6 - Unions notified of Building Council's refusal to negotiate
- May 13 - City-wide vote

GENERAL STRIKE IN CITY AT 11 A.M. TODAY

Labor Unions Vote Three to One for Walk Out--Definite Order of Strike to Develop

HOURS OF THE STRIKE HERE ARE LESSENED

The strike here today, which will close this afternoon, will be the shortest in the history of the city. The order of the strike was passed by the labor unions at a meeting held at the city hall last night. The vote was three to one in favor of the strike. The order of the strike was passed by the labor unions at a meeting held at the city hall last night. The vote was three to one in favor of the strike. The order of the strike was passed by the labor unions at a meeting held at the city hall last night. The vote was three to one in favor of the strike.

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BOULSENE IN TIGHT CLOSER AFTER REVERSES

The market today was in a tight close after a series of reverses. The price of the market was in a tight close after a series of reverses. The price of the market was in a tight close after a series of reverses. The price of the market was in a tight close after a series of reverses.

Missing Airmen Safe

Petrograd is Closely Investigated By Success Of The Expedition

The expedition to Petrograd has been successful in locating the missing airmen. The expedition to Petrograd has been successful in locating the missing airmen. The expedition to Petrograd has been successful in locating the missing airmen.

Hawker and Grieve Have Been Found

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Austria Treaty Almost Ready For Submission To Delegates

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COMMITTEE OF 1000

- A. L. Crossin - Investment Adviser
- A.J. Andrews - Former Mayor of Winnipeg,
Lawyer
- Isaac Pitblado - Lawyer
- Travis Sweatman - Lawyer
- Fletcher Sparling - City Councillor

COMMITTEE OF 1000

- Members came from Manufacturers Association and the Board of Trade, Real Estate Board, Manitoba Club, Carlton Club, Lake of the Woods Yacht Club
- Founding Meeting held at the Manitoba Club
- A.J. Andrews appointed special representative for the Government of Canada - supposed to report, but acted as de facto government

Saw themselves as legitimate successors to the barons of Runnymede who forced King John to accept the Magna Carta, therefore the Strike was a threat to constitutional authority

Wore British Flag pins as a symbol of their solidarity with stable government

Immigrants (“aliens”) had natural moral failings, therefore they were unBritish

Posed as defenders of middle class - that there is no class struggle, but handful of agitators vs. citizens

Made idealized claims about the communal identity of Winnipeggers - “everyone is a “worker”, therefore no one had claim to the name - part of their appeal to the sense of historical ideal

Claimed permission signs were a symbol of the defiance of the elected and constituted government, that babies were “dying for the lack of milk” (June 5 Winnipeg Citizen) - but did not object when James Carruthers refused to allow milk to be delivered from his creamery if he couldn't get top price for it.

PERMITTED BY

AUTHORITY OF

STRIKE COMMITTEE

Exaggerated demands of the Strike Committee

Claimed they wanted a 6 hour work day

Used red-baiting - that a Bolshevist state would be set up (Winnipeg Telegram):
that women over 18 must register at a bureau for free love and submit to the will of
any man

Food will be seized by all except those who take it by brute strength

June 1 - Winnipeg Citizen claimed “certain men from across the Atlantic, who arrived 7 months ago in Canada, selected Winnipeg” to foment revolution”

June 11 - John Dafoe, publisher of Manitoba Free Press, declared “The name of this country is Canada, not Bohunkia.”

Ed Parnell - organized “returned soldiers” march - in speeches called for a reduction in the cost of living, but had just raised the price of bread in his bakery

Inflamed rhetoric - e.g. that strikers were inhibiting the delivery of mail, when the postal workers had gone on strike

Committee of 1000 met trains in Fort William to recruit returning soldiers into the militia.

Drove them directly from the train station to the barracks

Ploy to recruit soldiers didn't work - returning soldiers in larger numbers than anticipated joined the strike - May 30 - 2000 returned soldiers marched demanding the right to collective bargaining.

Employers assigned workers who stayed on the job to the militia

Sympathetic Strikes all over North America:

Brandon

Toronto

Calgary

Vancouver

Seattle

Newspaper reporters sent from New York, Chicago, Toronto and elsewhere - Winnipeg was seen as a litmus test for all the issues that existed elsewhere.

Strike Committee called for negotiations which the City tried to facilitate with a 10-man committee. But the Committee of 1000 engineered that no negotiations would take place.

“Do not under any circumstances allow pressure from well-meaning but inadequately formed people persuade the government to make any offers of intervention with a view to settlement.” (A.J. Andrews, Tuesday, May 20, 1919)





b.P.

photo.
W.P.S.





POLICE FORCE FIRED

Instruct Civic Heads to Employ Permanent Men

Winnipeg, Jan. 11.—The Winnipeg Police Commission today instructed the heads of civic organizations to employ permanent men in their organizations. The commission said that it was necessary to do this in order to maintain the peace in the city.

URGES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PASS ALCOHOL ACT

Winnipeg, Jan. 11.—The Winnipeg Police Commission today urged the federal government to pass an alcohol act. The commission said that it was necessary to do this in order to maintain the peace in the city.

An Appeal to the Striking Soldier

Winnipeg, Jan. 11.—The Winnipeg Police Commission today issued an appeal to the striking soldiers. The commission said that it was necessary to do this in order to maintain the peace in the city.

Canadian in News List

Winnipeg, Jan. 11.—The Winnipeg Police Commission today listed a Canadian in the news. The commission said that it was necessary to do this in order to maintain the peace in the city.

Police Commission Acts When Force Demands That Ultimatum Be Cancelled

Winnipeg, Jan. 11.—The Winnipeg Police Commission today acted when force demanded that an ultimatum be cancelled. The commission said that it was necessary to do this in order to maintain the peace in the city.

Asks Veterans Not to Allow Any Wedge Between Them

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FRONT OF EXETER ST PAID FULLY

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WE WILL MAINTAIN
CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY, LAW & ORDER
DOWN WITH THE HIGH COST OF LIVING
TO HELL WITH THE ALIEN ENEMY
GOD SAVE THE KING





June 9 - Police force fired for refusing to sign oath of loyalty.

Hundreds of Special Constables hired at \$6/day - twice the discharge allowance given to veterans

given armbands and truncheons/fenceposts/bats - which many filled with lead or cement to cause greater damage

given access to horses courtesy of T. Eaton Co.

June 10 - Freight car loaded with machine guns arrives in Winnipeg

June 10 - Specials on horseback attack crowd on Portage and Main. One Special pulled from horse, two ribs cracked, but Winnipeg Citizen claims he was killed "or is dying"







June 17 - Strike leaders arrested in middle of the night, taken to Stony Mountain Penitentiary, charged with seditious conspiracy. Labour halls ransacked by Specials.

Western Labor News advises strikers to “Keep Cool - Do Nothing - We’ve Got Them Now”

Strike leaders released upon promise not to participate in strike action

PRISON BARS
CANNOT
CONFINE IDEAS





BLOODY SATURDAY

JUNE 21, 1919

- Mike Sokoloski shot and killed
- Steve Sherbanowitz shot through the legs - died of gangrene
- 34 identified as injured - people did not go to hospital to avoid arrest or deportation
- 94 arrests
- City put under military control



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WINNIPEG RIOTS

CONFRONTATION

JULY 1880

WINNIPEG UNDER GUNS OF ARMY

Warships Sent to Keep Order in Alaska Towns

Indian, Territory Whites and Eskimoes Start Strikes at Cassiar.

GOVERNOR TAKES ACTION

Provision to Deal Rigorously With Strike if Employers Don't Obey.

CONSERVATIVES ROUTED

One Big Union, Money Strikers and Soviet Government Indured.

ALL OPPOSITION HOWLED DOWN

and "Red" Organizations Kicks to Victory.

Special to the Intelligencer. JUNEAU, Alaska, June 21.—(Special Intelligencer) News from this territory received an ominous warning from the Yukon and a notice of disaster to send a message of hope to Alaska as a whole. The news of the strike was not the first of the kind, but it was the first to be so general and to have such serious consequences. The territory has a long history of strikes, but this one was different. It was a general strike, involving all the workers in the territory. The strike was led by the Alaska Federation of Labor, a union of all the workers in the territory. The strike was a success. The employers were forced to accept the demands of the union. The strike was a victory for the workers. The strike was a victory for the territory. The strike was a victory for the people.

SPECIAL DEPUTY HAD 49 QUARTS

Not Special, Development for Provision Photo 22 of 'em and How to Run 'em.

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SAMUEL GOMPERS

Re-elected President of the American Federation of Labor at Atlantic City.



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GOMPERS IS RE-ELECTED

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BAUER IS NAMED GERMAN PREMIER IN PEACE CRISIS

Dr. Hermann Mueller Chosen as Foreign Minister to Successor Kautsky.

BETTER TERMS ASKED

Embassy Addresses Allies Requesting Immediate Seat in League.

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MARTIAL LAW COMES AFTER STRIKE RIOT

WINNIPEG, June 21.—Winnipeg, strike town since May 15, is under martial law tonight. After fighting this afternoon between thousands of strikers and the city and provincial police, in which one man was killed, another injured probably fatally and more than a score hurt, Mayor Charles F. Gray formally turned over the city to the possession of the military forces.

Alleged Rioters Are Jailed.

Gen. H. D. H. Kerison announced early tonight that he has taken full charge of the situation.

Armored Cars Hold City Hall.

Ambulances from Manitoba military hospital have taken away eighteen persons who were knocked down and bruised in the charge of the red coats. Of these, only one was a stretcher case.

Silent Parade Started Riots.

The tragic events of this afternoon started not more than half an hour. At 2:30 p. m. perhaps 2,000 persons were massed on Main street with their focus at the city hall. For the most part they appeared to be strikers, with among them several hundred returned soldiers and they were congregated to witness or take part in the parade which was to be held in the city hall.

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- Strike Committee appealed for an investigation into the causes and events of the strike - received assurances from the province
- Strike Committee called an end to the strike for Wednesday, June 25, 11:00 a.m. to avoid further violence

- 119 Telephone workers, 403 postal workers, 53 firemen fired
- Many strikers blacklisted, some left Winnipeg
- Economy of Winnipeg damaged

- A.J. Andrews acted in a private prosecution against the strike leaders - billed Government of Canada for his time and was found to have diverted money to intended to be used for returning soldiers
- Six strike leaders received sentences from 6 months - 2 years in jail.

- Investigation in July and September 1919 by Manitoba Judge H.A. Robson concluded the strike was a protest against difficult living conditions, high cost of living, inadequate wages and profiteering

CANNED AND THE LID GOING ON



No room for them in busy Canada.

The Montreal Daily Star, 30 March 1920

- A.A. Heaps and James Woodsworth elected to Parliament for Co-Operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)
- William Ivens, John Queen, George Armstrong, - jailed for seditious conspiracy - elected to Manitoba Legislature while in jail, along with Fred Dixon
- John Queen - elected Mayor of Winnipeg 1935-36 and 1937-42, served in Legislature at the same time until defeated in 1941
- R.B. Russell (two years in jail) - went to work for One Big Union (OBU)
- William Johns - blacklisted, but hired by a friend in Winnipeg School Division to help in technical skills - helped develop Tec Voc which opened in 1951



WHEN THE STATE TREMBLED

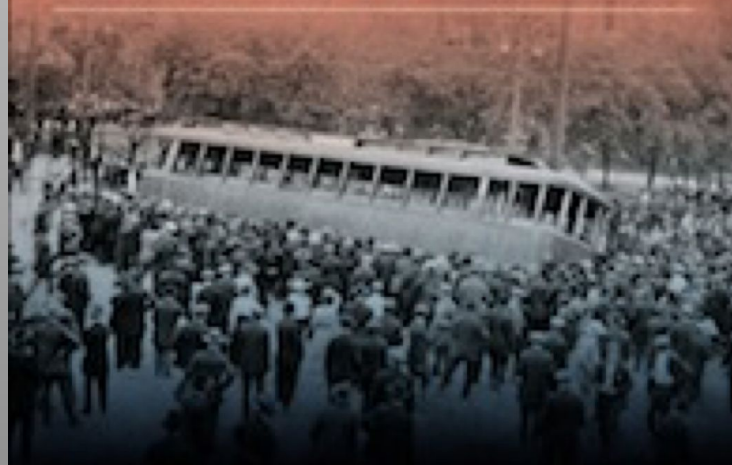
HOW A.J. ANDREWS AND THE
CITIZENS' COMMITTEE BROKE THE
WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE

REINHOLD KRAMER and TOM MITCHELL

MICHAEL DUPUIS

WINNIPEG'S GENERAL STRIKE

REPORTS FROM THE FRONT LINES



Harriet Zaidman

hzaidman@gmail.com

204 338-0578