



## \_\_\_The Seattle General Strike of 1919\_\_\_

For six days in February 1919, the first “general strike” in American history paralyzed the port city of Seattle, Washington. Two weeks earlier, the shipyard workers had gone out on strike for higher wages to accommodate rising postwar prices. In an act of solidarity, thousands of Seattle workers from over one hundred local unions joined the strike on February 6 as the labor press urged unity and insisted on orderly protest. City newspapers predicted chaos and condemned the strike as a Communist (“Red”) threat to American freedoms—a potent and immediate anxiety fueled by the 1917 Communist revolution in Russia. (Coverage of the strike often shared page-one headlines with news of Communist military activity in Europe.) On February 11, the unions voted to end the sympathy strike; union cohesion was weakening, and the American Federation of Labor had urged the General Strike Committee to end the strike before the labor cause was seriously harmed. Yet the Committee claimed victory in maintaining order modeling a new form of labor protest. The newspaper coverage in this collection samples pro- and anti-strike positions through headlines, editorials, letters to the editor, cartoons, political cartoons, and more. It is compiled from the extensive materials of the Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights Project of the University of Washington. For further study, see the online collection STRIKE: Seattle General Strike Project, at [depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/](http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/).

### ● PRO-STRIKE

labor newspaper: *SUR: Seattle Union Record*

- “All Seattle Unions Are Asked to Strike,” *SUR*, 1-25-1919
  - “The Strike—Pro and Con—by Readers of the *Star*,” *SS*, 2-1-1919 ●
- “Boys Cheer in Passing Strike Headquarters,” *SUR*, 2-1-1919
- “Wives of Men Asked to Help,” *SUR*, 2-1-1919
- “Sixty Thousand to Respond to Call,” *SUR*, 2-3-1919
- “On Thursday at 10 A.M.,” *SUR*, 2-4-1919
- “To the Men and Women of Labor!” *SUR*, 2-6-1919
- “Now See What *You* Can Do,” political cartoon, *SUR*, 2-6-1919
- “They Don’t Understand,” poem, *SUR*, between 2-6&11-1919
- “‘The Strongest Bond . . .,’ [Solidarity],” political cartoon, *SUR*, 2-11-1919
- “Shipyard Strike to Be Continued,” *SUR*, 2-11-1919
- “When the Smoke Clears Away,” *SUR*, 2-11-1919

### ● ANTI-STRIKE ●

general circulation newspapers: *SS: The Seattle Star*  
*ST: The Seattle Times*  
*PI: The [Seattle] Post-Intelligencer*

- “To the Unheard Workers of Seattle,” *SS*, 2-1-1919 ●
- “Root Cause of the Strike,” *Business Chronicle*, 2-1-1919 ●
- “How Coming General Strike Will Affect Seattle’s Food, Light, Heat, and Traffic,” *ST*, 2-3-1919
- “Stop before It’s Too Late,” *SS*, 2-4-1919 ●
- “Under Which Flag?” *SS*, 2-5-1919 ●
- “The Issue,” *PI*, 2-6-1919 ●
- “Not in a Thousand Years!” political cartoon, *PI*, 2-6-1919 ●
- “Even the Strike Has Its Funny Side,” cartoon, *ST*, 2-9-1919 ●
- “Strike to End at Noon Today,” *PI*, 2-11-1919 ●
- “Our Flag Is Still There,” political cartoon, *PI*, 2-11-1919 ●
- “Getting Right,” *SS*, 2-13-1919 ●

# All Seattle Unions Are Asked to Strike

Seattle Union Record, January 25, 1919, excerpts

At 3 p.m. Thursday the conference committee of the Metal Trades Council [shipworkers union] issued the following appeal to the strikers:

“Inasmuch as there is no intimation [suggestion] on the part of the employers that they are making any attempt to run an open shop, we urge upon the workers the absolute necessity of conducting themselves to a perfect orderly manner. We stand for the maintenance of law and order, and hope to conduct an orderly strike until our just demands are granted.”

*open shop*: a factory or other workplace that does not require union membership for employment

With cheers for the solidarity of labor, and without a dissenting vote, the Central Labor Council last night resolved to ask every union to go on a general strike in support of the workers in the shipyard industries. . . .

As explained by Chairman A. E. Miller of the metal trades strike committee, Business Agent Von Carnop, Delegate Jack Mullane and others, the plan is for “mass action and mass results.” Unless the shipyard strike is sooner settled, each union will formulate its own demands on its own employers, every Seattle worker will go out and none will return to work until all return together.

“There are 22,000 workers employed in the shipbuilding industry,” said Hulet M. Wells in a speech frequently interrupted with cheers, “and it comes pretty near being the basic industry in this city. The life of it pulses through every industry in the city. It affects the workers in all the industries. The question has been asked, why should the weaker industries aid in this strike? The answer is, there is no industry in the city but stands to gain by the success of this strike.

“The real reason for this strike is to help the poorest paid workingmen. In spite of all that has been said, the highly paid workers in the shipyard are very few.

“Seattle is one place where a universal strike can be pulled off with success. I am confident that the shipyard workers could win alone. But if they did, all the little labor-hating bosses in the city would say, ‘They don’t know how to handle their men. I can handle my men all right.’ But if we win with a universal strike, every union in the city will get the benefit of the victory.”



Library of Congress

Seattle waterfront, photograph, 1917 (detail)

# To the Unheard Workers of Seattle

Paid advertisement, Young Business Men's Club of Seattle

*The Seattle Star*, February 1, 1919, excerpts

May we say at the outset that this message is from an organization of young businessmen of Seattle to their fellow coworkers who are unionized? . . . We take pride in our city, and we are willing to undergo a great deal to make it day by day a better place to live in.

We realize that is idle to talk to the man whose mind is gangrened with the poison of Bolshevism [Communism], who would tear down the pillars of our government and drag everyone, regardless of his talents and ability, down to his lowest level of ignorance and lawlessness. But we are certainly convinced that to the overwhelming majority of union workers, anarchy and lawlessness is just as abhorrent and unspeakable as it is to us who are not unionized, and it is to YOU WHO ARE UNIONIZED AND WHO ARE READY TO REASON HONESTLY AND THINK STRAIGHT THAT WE ADDRESS THIS MESSAGE.

We are on the threshold of an impossible and inconceivable situation. The sponsors of this article cannot sit by supinely [i.e., passively] when the citizenship of Seattle faces a condition so fatal to Seattle, without protest. A complete closure of Seattle's industry, the tying up of means of transportation, of delivery, indeed, the complete cessation of those activities necessary to the well-being of us all, is wantonly threatened.

A Sympathetic Strike! Surely the term is misleading and [ \_\_\_ly] out of place. A strike of well-paid men and women from these activities vital to our very civic life—not in support of a plan of underpaid and mistreated workers for decent working conditions and a living wage, but to sustain the demands of the highest paid workers in the city for YET ADDITIONAL PAY. Truly, it is time for cool-headed leadership and a display of common sense.

. . .

The feeling is widespread that a false issue has been forced upon this community. The shipyard workers and the men in the contract shops who are affiliated with the Metal Trades [shipworkers union] are well paid. Surely this cannot be denied when their wage scale is the highest in the United States, and in excess of the earnings of men in other occupations, now asked to strike with them to enforce their demands. Is there any industry in Seattle that has not experienced the loss of its employees attracted to the shipyards by the high wages? Not the rank and file [general membership] of organized labor, for where is an expression direct from them upon the matter at issue? The conclusion is unavoidable that the blame falls upon the radical minority who control labor's representatives and the meetings from which the voice of organized labor is supposed to emanate demanding a widespread strike to cripple the very industries upon which the future growth of Seattle and the well-being of its people depend.

THE CITIZENRY OF SEATTLE ARE OUT OF SYMPATHY WITH THE PURPOSE OF THIS STRIKE. THEY DO NOT PROPOSE TO SIT IDLY BY, SEEING THE INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY OF SEATTLE RUINED, AND THE COMFORT AND WELL-BEING OF THEIR FAMILIES THREATENED WITHOUT INSISTING THAT EVERY LAWFUL MEANS BE USED TO INSURE THAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS UNJUSTIFIABLE AND SO-CALLED SYMPATHETIC STRIKE BE THWARTED.

**YOUNG MEN'S BUSINESS CLUB, SEATTLE**

## The Strike—Pro and Con—by Readers of the *Star*

Letters to the Editor, *The Seattle Star*, February 1, 1919, excerpts

In order to demonstrate the impossibility of supporting a family on the average shipyard wage, “A Shipyard Worker” has submitted a weekly household expense statement.

“We are a family of four—a boy, age 12, a girl 9, my wife and myself,” he writes.

“The following is our average living expense for one week:

Table (13 cents per meal a person)	\$10.08	Sunday paper	.07
Rent	*[8.56]	Carfare	.60
Fuel	1.54	Working clothes	.60
Light	.28	Shipyard hospital fee	.10
Liberty Loan payment and insurance	.44	Income, average wage:	25.52
<i>Star</i> [newspaper]	.12	Surplus:	3.13

This worker continues: “If I do not have to lay off on account of a holiday or sickness or accident, I still have \$3.13 a week for the profiteers that remain. In addition I must keep the children in school and clothe the rest of us on the balance. We have cut out all movies and entertainments.

“I am one of the 70 percent of shipyard employees who makes \$4.64 [?/illegible] a day who stayed on the job during the war at a personal loss, and am now out on strike for a decent living wage to support my family.

### WHY NOT A COURT TO SETTLE WAGE DISPUTES?

Editor, *The Star*:

The United States entered the European war because the nations over there could not carry on their war without injury to us.

The nations of the world have come to rub elbows to such an extent that the rights of others apparently not convened must be respected.

For the same reason, the innocent public always gets it in the back when capital [i.e., industry, business] and labor fall out.

And for the same reason it behooves this innocent third party now to insist upon a remedy which will so far as may humanly be done obviate [prevent] the danger of third persons being hit by stray brickbats.

When you and I differ over the location of our boundary line, we have no right, either one of us, to forcibly take what we want one from the other. We go to court. And there is then, laws being observed, no danger of our mutual neighbor being shot. . . .

I repeat, then, the same question first above.

Our rabid high-strung union labor friends will answer at once “Why, any such court will be CONTROLLED, meaning of course, by the CAPITALISTS.”

And so may our judges of the courts we now possess. Yet who would dispense with them altogether? None save the anarchists, who despise all restraint, who are criminals at heart.

\* Illegible in microfilm. The figure of \$8.56 represents the total of \$22.39 minus the total of the other entries.

# Boys Cheer in Passing Strike Headquarters

## Wild West Members Say They Will Not Be Used to Scab

Seattle Union Record, February 1, 1919, excerpt

The strike headquarters in the Collins building were loudly cheered by a company of the Three Hundred and Forty-sixth Field Artillery of the second United States Army [“Wild West” division], a part of the famous Ninety-first Division, as it marched through Seattle Thursday on the last lap of its triumphant homecoming from the battlefields of France.

Library of Congress



Poster, U.S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corp., ca. 1918

University of Washington Library



Seattle Union Record, March 8, 1919

A large colored poster showing a soldier, a sailor, and a worker arm in arm, with the motto, “Together We Win,” was held up at a window while the men passed by a member of the strike committee.

### Not with Employers

“If the employing class thinks that they are going to use soldiers to scab on the workers now that the war is over, they are greatly mistaken,” said members of this company when interviewed later in the day.

*Scab: a person who continues to work while other employees are on strike*

“Believe me,” said one sturdy young soldier, “we’ve been doing a lot of hard thinking and quite a lot of talking among ourselves on our way home. We’ve heard the talk that’s going round that the employers figure on using us to lick the unions, but we’re not going to stand for it. The boys all say that they entered the army to fight the kaiser [German emperor] and not to fight our brothers in this country. They can throw us in the ‘can’ [jail] before we’ll do that. Some of the old regulars might be used against the workers, but the drafted men never will. And when we get out of the army nearly all of us will be ready to fight on the side of organized labor.”

### Heard about Strike

This man explained that there might be a few in his regiment who would be willing to scab on the workers, but that they would be very few. Most of the soldiers who had come from the cities, he said, would be eager to join the soldiers’, sailors’, and workmen’s councils as soon as they were discharged from the service. He stated that they had heard that these councils were being organized and had talked about them long before they reached Seattle. When they were half way across the country they heard of the Seattle strike.

# Wives of Men Asked to Help

## Hope Lodge Appeals to Strikers' Wives to Stand Firm

*Seattle Union Record, February 1, 1919*

Addressed to the wife of the striking shipyard worker at Hope Lodge, the following communication has been prepared for circulation by the machinist union:

“You are the wife of a working man. The best part of your husband’s life has been spent in grinding toil for you. Through the bitterness of winter nights, through the heat of summer days, he has gone into the merciless treadmill of capitalist industry to wrest therefore, with his bare hands, a living—for you. While he has suffered abuse, and galling injustice at the hands of the masters of industry—he has tolled on day and day with mute lips—for you.”

“These masters of industry have now attempted to condemn both you and your husband to the miseries of life-long toil for a pittance that is not a living wage. In the richest part of the richest nation on earth their greed would stunt the bodies of thousands upon thousands of little children with undernourishment. They would blight the budding minds of your babies with the awful pall of ignorance that poverty brings.”

“The manhood in your husband has swelled within his breast. He has flung back his manly answer—NO. He has struck. When he laid down his tools his thoughts were all of you. Full well he knew that the hardships and miseries of a strike would fall most heavily on you. Of himself he did not think. The masters know this well, while they protect their own families from any sign of want with the profits they have wrung from your husbands’ toil, they hope to make him yield though his fear of seeing you suffer. On this they base their hope of driving him back to work at their own terms—to crack the cruel whip of capitalism over his head forevermore.”

“The eyes of the working class of America today are turned to you. On you they base their hopes, their fears. Stand by your man in this his hour of trial. Fight by his side in the age-long fight for freedom. Courage, hope—it is always darkest before the dawn. Already a new day is breaking overseas, be brave, and the vicious wolves of want will be forever driven from the doors of the homes of the working class.”

Museum of History and Industry, Seattle



Meals served in city’s union halls for striking workers

University of Washington Library



Wives of city leaders providing meals for policemen and other law enforcement personnel

# Real Cause of the Strike

## Is It to Loot the Union's Treasuries?

Edwin Selwyn, editor, *Business Chronicle* [Seattle], February 1, 1919  
reprinted in *The [Seattle] Post-Intelligencer*, February 1, 1919, excerpts

### AN UNJUSTIFIABLE STRIKE

There is here no question involved of “oppressed” workers compelled to resort to strike as a last means of securing justice. None of the principles which Organized Labor holds to be fundamental, such as the right to organize, collective bargaining, the 8-hour day, the standards of working conditions which they themselves have set up, have been violated by the employers. No effort has been made from any direction to take away from them any of the “rights” to which, rightly or wrongly, they have been taught they are entitled, regardless of what the rest of the people of this country have or have not, or can or cannot do. . . .

### COERCING THE GOVERNMENT

These Seattle and Tacoma shipyard workers—whom are they striking against?

In reality the United States Government.

Not satisfied with this, a Bolshevik [Communist] labor leadership seeks to entangle all other Labor Unions by calling a general strike against—whom?

Not alone the employers, against whom they have no grievance other than that they are employers, but, in furtherance of the Bolshevik conspiracy, against the general public.

That is to say, every agency that provides the elemental necessities of life, even down to food and heat and light, is to be paralyzed—for what?

To coerce the Government and to cow [intimidate] the people. . . .

### WHY THE LEADERS WANT A STRIKE

. . . .  
The men—some of them are beginning to think they are dupes—are wondering when the labor leaders are going to “split the pot.” Strikes are usually called when the Union treasury is full. The money usually disappears during the ensuing fracas. Who gets it? Although free speech—if it is conservative speech—is suppressed at Union headquarters, it is becoming quite free outside, and already the idea is advanced by union men themselves that one purpose of the labor leaders in calling all these strikes at this particular time is to loot the Union treasuries. . . .

### THE REMEDY

As to whether the Closed Shop should be superseded by the Open Shop\* as a remedy for Seattle’s industrial plight—there is yet a question. But one thing is certain: it is only under the Closed Shop that such an anarchistic leadership could retain control of the Unions and commit the crimes against public welfare of which it is guilty.

Labor Unions may have a place in the industrial scheme of things. But if Labor Unions permit themselves to be made tools for getting under way a Bolshevik revolution to overthrow the Government of the United States, then the Labor Unions should not be allowed among American institutions.

It is decidedly up to the loyal citizenship within Union membership to clean house, depose a seditious leadership, replace the foreigners with Americans, and get right with the principles of true Americanism.

It is decidedly up to the United States Government to deport all alien enemies.

Let Seattle and Tacoma formulate a solidified Public Sentiment that will—and can—save these two cities from industrial ruin, financial depression, and social disruption.

\* Closed/Open Shop: workplace in which workers must belong to a union according to the union agreement with the employer (closed shop), or must not be union members by requirement of the employers (open shop). Unions favor a closed shop policy, while industrial employers, in general, prefer an open shop policy.

# Sixty Thousand to Respond to Call

*Seattle Union Record, February 3, 1919, excerpts*

At 10 o'clock next Thursday morning 60,000 organized workers in the city of Seattle will stand shoulder to shoulder in the first general strike that has ever been successfully inaugurated in the history of this country. Insolently and contemptuously, Mr. Charles Piez and his labor-snubbing shipping board\* threw down the defiant gauntlet which has now been taken up with a firmness of resolution and a solidarity unmatched in the annals of the American labor movement.

The workers of the [Pacific] Northwest believe that they have been flouted and fooled by Piez and his fellow labor-baiters, that they have been deceived and betrayed by the politicians, both state and federal, and they have resolutely grasped the only weapon over which they have any direct control, determined to make a fight that will demonstrate whether or not they have the power to secure the justice that has been denied them by industrial barons and bureaucratic despots.

## NEGOTIATIONS FAIL

In proof of these statements, the officers of the Metal Trades Council [shipworkers union] point out that they were unable—after long months of patient waiting—to get a square deal from the Macy board,† that they exhausted every means at their disposal to have their grievances peacefully adjusted, that they were given permission by Piez and his associates to deal directly with the employers, and that as those employers stubbornly refused to grant a living wage, the shipyard workers by a referendum vote—subsequently endorsed unanimously by all locals [unions] at their meetings—decided to strike.

Recognizing that this fight vitally concerned the rank and file [general membership] of all the workers, the Central Labor Council called for a general strike as the most effective way of reaching a decisive conclusion to the conflict. By an overwhelming majority, practically all the unions in the city endorsed the strike and authorized three representatives from each local to meet as a general strike committee and finalize the plans for the most epoch-making industrial struggle that the country has ever known.

From 8 a.m. till 9 p.m. Sunday, in the Labor Temple [main union hall], delegates from 110 unions discussed the whole situation and laid their plans. All decisions were made with one voice and a remarkable unanimity was demonstrated throughout the meeting. . . . Tremendous cheering greeted the treble [three-item] announcement that by a big majority the streetcar men had voted to quit, that the longshoremen's [waterfront workers] union had decided to strike in spite of its international officers, and that, for the first time in its history, the typographical union had joined in the general strike movement.



Workers at city's largest shipyard, n. d. (detail). In the Seattle "general strike," non-shipyard workers struck in solidarity with the shipyard workers.

\* Piez was head of the U.S. Emergency Fleet Corporation, a federal agency formed during World War One to regulate private shipping for the war effort.

† The Shipbuilding Labor Adjustment Board (informally named after its chair), formed in 1917 to settle wage and other labor issues during wartime,



# How Coming General Strike Will Affect Seattle's Food, Light, Heat, and Traffic

*The Seattle Times*, February 3, 1919

**H**ere's how the threatened strike would affect food, heat, light, streetcars, telephones, and other important features of life in Seattle:

**FOOD, INCLUDING MILK, MEAT AND BREAD**—Retail grocery stores and meat markets will remain open until present stocks are sold. These cannot be replenished and no deliveries will be made because teamsters [truck drivers] will strike. Milk will be supplied to hospitals and babies, only, through central stores of larger dairies. No deliveries will be made. Bakers' Union has not yet voted on strike order. Certain restaurants will be maintained by union labor.

**ELECTRICITY**—According to the best information today, the proposed general strike next Thursday will not deprive Seattle residents of electric lights in their homes or on the streets. This matter was among those discussed at the general strike conference yesterday and it is understood that committees will be appointed to arrange for the operation of the lighting end of the municipal light and power department.

**GAS**—The gas situation depends on the engineers and firemen. Gas workers have voted not to strike but they cannot operate the gas plants if the engineers and firemen strike.

**COAL AND WOOD**—Sufficient supply of fuel on hand to last Seattle for 30 days, unless weather sets in. Teamsters have voted to strike, however.

**TELEPHONES AND TELEGRAPH**—Limited service on telephone, about one third of operators being union members. Telegraph service will be limited to emergency messages.

**STREET CARS**—Transportation service will be tied up. Motormen will take their cars to the barns at 10 o'clock Thursday morning.

**SCHOOLS**—Uncertain whether open or closed during period of strike. Depends upon action of school janitors, firemen, and engineers, who may petition main committee of Central Labor Council for exemption from strike in order that schools may have heat to run.

**LAUNDRY**—Laundries will be closed, but efforts to supply hospitals with clean linen will be made.

**BARBER SHOPS**—All shops, including Japanese shops, will be closed and patrons will be forced to wield their own safety razors.

*Seattle Times/University of Washington Library*



Machine gun unit organized in the Seattle police force before the strike

*Museum of History & Industry, Seattle*



Strikers stockpiling groceries in preparation for the city shutdown

## ON THURSDAY AT 10 A.M.

There will be many cheering, and there will be some who fear.

Both these emotions are useful, but not too much of either.

We are undertaking the most tremendous move ever made by LABOR in this country, a move which will lead—**NO ONE KNOWS WHERE!**

We do not need hysteria.

We need the iron march of labor.

### LABOR WILL FEED THE PEOPLE.

Twelve great kitchens have been offered, and from them food will be distributed by the provision trades at low cost to all.

### LABOR WILL CARE FOR THE BABIES AND THE SICK.

The milk-wagon drivers and the laundry drivers are arranging plans for supplying milk to babies, invalids and hospitals, and taking care of the cleaning of linen for hospitals.

### LABOR WILL PRESERVE ORDER.

The strike committee is arranging for guards, and it is expected that the stopping of the cars will keep people at home.

A few hot-headed enthusiasts have complained that strikers only should be fed, and the general public left to endure severe discomfort. Aside from the inhumanitarian character of such suggestions, let them get this straight—

### NOT THE WITHDRAWAL OF LABOR POWER, BUT THE POWER OF THE WORKERS TO MANAGE WILL WIN THIS STRIKE.

What does Mr. Piez of the Shipping Board care about the closing down of Seattle's shipyards, or even of all the industries of the northwest. Will it not merely strengthen the yards at Hog Island, in which he is more interested?

When the shipyard owners of Seattle were on the point of agreeing with the workers, it was Mr. Piez who wired them that, if they so agreed—

### HE WOULD NOT LET THEM HAVE STEEL.

Whether this is camouflage we have no means of knowing. But we do know that the great eastern combinations of capitalists **COULD AFFORD** to offer privately to Mr. Skinner, Mr. Ames and Mr. Duthie a few millions apiece in eastern shipyard stock.

### RATHER THAN LET THE WORKERS WIN.

The closing down of Seattle's industries, as a MERE SHUTDOWN, will not affect these eastern gentlemen much. They could let the whole northwest go to pieces, as far as money alone is concerned.

**BUT**, the closing down of the capitalistically controlled industries of Seattle, while the **WORKERS ORGANIZE** to feed the people, to care for the babies and the sick, to preserve order—**THIS** will move them, for this looks too much like the taking over of **POWER** by the workers.

Labor will not only **SHUT DOWN** the industries, but Labor will **REOPEN**, under the management of the appropriate trades, such activities as are needed to preserve public health and public peace. If the strike continues, Labor may feel led to avoid public suffering by reopening more and more activities.

### UNDER ITS OWN MANAGEMENT.

And that is why we say that we are starting on a road that leads—**NO ONE KNOWS WHERE!**



Seattle Union Record, February 6, 1919



Anna Louise Strong, socialist editor of the *Seattle Union Record*. Her editorial "No One Knows Where!" (left) was reprinted in the Feb. 5 *Post-Intelligencer* and in labor publications nationwide.

Images: University of Washington Library

**GENERAL STRIKE PLANS GOING AHEAD** --SEE PAGE 2

**The Seattle Star** NIGHT EDITION  
TWO CENTS IN SEATTLE

FULL Licensed Wine of the United Press Association.  
COMPLETE Service of the Newspaper Enterprise Association.

VOLUME 21, NO. 200  
THE GREATEST DAILY CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST  
PUBLISHED AT SEATTLE, WASH., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1919  
SEATTLE, WASH., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1919  
Weather Forecast: Clear, with occasional showers, light to moderate winds, and a few snowflakes.

# STOP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

This is plain talk to the common-sense union men of Seattle.

You are being rushed pell-mell into a general strike. You are being urged to use a dangerous weapon--the general strike, which you have never used before--which, in fact, has never been used anywhere in the United States.

It isn't too late to avert the tragic results that are sure to come from its use.

You men know better than any one else that public sentiment in Seattle--that is, the sentiment of the ninety per cent of the people who are not directly involved in the wage dispute of the shipworkers--*is against a general strike.* You know that the general public doesn't think the situation demands the use of that drastic, disaster-breeding move. *You know, too, that you cannot club public sentiment into line, and you know, too, that no strike has ever been won without the moral support of the public.*

The people know that there is a decent solution of the issue at stake. And the issue at stake is merely a better wage to the average unskilled worker in the shipyards. To a large extent public opinion is with these unskilled workers now, but public opinion will turn against them if their wage issue brings chaos and disaster upon the whole community unnecessarily. Seattle today is awake to the fact that she is on the brink of a disaster, *and Seattle is getting fighting mad.* The people are beginning to visualize the horrors that a general tie-up will bring. They see the suffering that is bound to come and *they don't propose to be silent sufferers.*

Today Seattle resents this whole miserable mess. Seattle resents the insolent attitude of the shipyard owners; Seattle resents the verbosity of Director General Piez, whose explanation does not explain; and just as emphatically resents the high-handed "rule or ruin" tactics of the labor leaders who propose to lay the whole city prostrate in a vain attempt to show their power. Let us not mince words. A general strike cannot win unless one of two things happens. Either the ship owners and Piez must yield or else the workers must be able to control the situation by *force.* The latter method no doubt would be welcomed by the agitators and the babblers of Bolshevism. But the latter method is bound to be squelched without much ado, and you decent union men of Seattle will be the sufferers then. *A revolt--and some of your leaders are talking of a revolution--to be successful must have a country-wide application. There isn't a chance to spread it east of the mountains. There isn't a chance to spread it south of Tacoma and today fifty per cent of the unions of Tacoma have turned down the proposition for a general strike.*

Confined to Seattle or even confined to the whole Pacific coast, the use of force by Bolsheviks would be, and should be, quickly dealt with by the army of the United States. These false Bolshevik leaders haven't a chance on earth to win anything for you in this country, *because this country is America--not Russia.*

The Seattle Star, February 4, 1919

FULL Lined Wire of the United Press Association.  
COMPLETE Service of the News-paper Enterprise Association.

# The Seattle Star

NIGHT EDITION  
TWO CENTS IN SEATTLE

THE GREATEST DAILY CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST  
Published by Edward Star, since May 5, 1916, at the residence of Edward, West, north 100 feet of Duane Street S. 1916.  
SEATTLE, WASH., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1919.  
Weather Forecast: Partly Cloudy, High 40, Low 25.

## UNDER WHICH FLAG?

The general strike is at hand. And more, a general SHOWDOWN is at hand—a showdown for all of us—a test of Americanism—a test of YOUR Americanism.

As The Star stated yesterday, this is no time to mince words. A part of our community is, in fact, defying our government, and is, in fact, contemplating changing that government, and not by *American methods*. This small part of our city talks plainly of “taking over things,” of “resuming under *our* management.”

We call this thing that is upon us a general strike, but it is more than that. It is to be an acid test of American citizenship—an acid test of all those principles for which our soldiers have fought and died. It is to determine whether this is a country worth living in and a country worth dying for. The challenge is right up to you—men and women of Seattle.

*Under which flag do you stand?*

The Seattle Star, February 5, 1919



“Not in a Thousand Years!” Feb. 6, 1919



“Our Flag Is Still There,” Feb. 11, 1919

The [Seattle] Post-Intelligencer

# The Issue

The [Seattle] *Post-Intelligencer*, February 6, 1919, excerpt

**T**ODAY is raised the issue between American democracy and the organized forces of revolt, insurrection, and rebellion.

The issue is no longer in doubt; the leaders of revolt are openly proclaiming that the shipyard dispute is only a pretext, that it is camouflage. It is not a strike; it is a delirium-born rebellion.

Officially and in the name of organized labor it is planned to harass, bully, and starve this community of 400,000 souls into a state of hysterical helplessness, until the United States fleet corporation is so sorry for us that it will yield to the demands of the workers in one industry. We are to be pummeled, choked, and bludgeoned until our cries for mercy reach across the continent to Washington. And thereafter we will be permitted to exist under the benign direction of the soviet government. Rubbish!

Seattle will not be terrorized; Seattle will not beg for mercy; Seattle will not submit to any dictatorship, either in the name of organized labor or the soviets controlled by native or imported Bolsheviki [Communists]. The gulls will be rummaging in the ash heap where Seattle once stood before American citizenship submits to any such infamy.

There is no right or justice or even common decency in the strike, and nine-tenths of the strikers know it. And furthermore there is no common sense in it.

The hair-brained [*sic*] radicals who think they are starting a revolution in the United States are the only ones among the strikers who have anything resembling a policy. Others want to show the economic strength of labor, to have labor square off, put up its fists and display its muscles; others want to show the solidarity of labor, as if anybody had ever questioned it.

What will be the situation in Seattle next Thursday? What will it be a week from next Thursday? Do the strikers think that their fellow citizens will be running around with their hands up in the air, while the strikers are enjoying the ease and delights of a vacation? If they do, then this boasted superior intelligence of the American workingman is a myth. . . .

We have urged with all the reason and persuasion at our command against this suicidal strike—apparently to no purpose. The strike is here. Organized labor has recklessly tossed its destiny into the hands of a set of fanatical extremists who are not labor leaders but political revolutionists. The folly has been committed and the consequences cannot be avoided.

The strikers will lose. They will lose first because no inner organization can defeat the organized society of the United States; and they will lose because a general sympathetic strike is self-defeating and self-destructive. No one doubts that the strikers can make trouble, destroy property, and cause the loss of lives. The Kaiser did that on even a greater scale [in World War One]; he carried on a campaign of frightfulness for fifty-one months. But organized society is today debating his fate while he sits shivering, waiting for the verdict.

No organized society will win this strike, which is a revolt against not only society but against the American Federation of Labor, and many a union man who went into it against his better judgment will regret this Thursday morning as long as he lives.



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Crowds gathering on first day of the general strike, February 6, 1919

# To the Men and Women of Labor!

Seattle Union Record, February 6, 1919

## THE HOUR HAS STRUCK!

You have ceased your daily labors as a protest against insufficient wages paid to your fellows.

You have quit your accustomed toil to lend your voice against the vicious prostitution of power on the part of the Emergency Shipping Board. Through its pernicious meddling a deadlock has resulted where an adjustment would, no doubt, have been arrived at.

## YOU WANT TO WIN.

Your only chance to win is your willingness to—

## OBEY ORDERS!

You have delegated to certain committees the duty of managing this strike.

This delegation of duties to these committees means that you have promised to OBEY ORDERS issued by those committees. Unless you do this, your right is lost before it is begun.

The first and prime essential to the successful product of any strike is ORDERLY OBSERVANCE OF THE LAWS OF THE LAND.

If the least show of disorder is permitted to creep into the conduct of the men and women on strike, then the struggle WILL BE LOST.

The person who permits himself or herself to be put into any mode of conduct that will not square with what is commonly considered lawful and orderly produce is a SCAB of the worst possible kind.

## YOU WANT TO WIN!

## SHOW YOUR LOYALTY TO THE CAUSE OF LABOR BY—

**STAYING AT HOME;**

**AVOID CONGREGATING IN CROWDS;**

**AVOID DISCUSSION THAT MAY LEAD TO DISORDERLY DISPUTES:**

**OBEY ORDERS!**

**REMEMBER—THAT THIS IS YOUR CITY AND THAT YOU HAVE STAKED YOUR REPUTATION AS A GOOD CITIZEN AND A GOOD UNIONIST ON THE OUTCOME OF THIS STRUGGLE.**

Any show of disorder will result in chaos and will surely lead to defeat.

**Thirty-eight thousand shipyard workers have been on strike for two weeks without a single case of violence being reported.**

The members of the general labor movement would pattern after the shipyard workers—and they will.

Let us make of this great strike an occasion for display of discipline that finds its expression in implicit and ready obedience to the orders of the committees and all lawful authority having this strike in hand.

**STAY AT HOME!**

**BE QUIET!**

**OBEY ORDERS!**

**AND THE STRIKE IS WON!**



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Seattle Union Record, Feb. 11, 1919

EVEN THE STRIKE HAS ITS FUNNY SIDE ❖ ❖ By SLAYMAKER



MY DEAR, AREN'T YOU AFRAID TO BE ON THE STREETS?

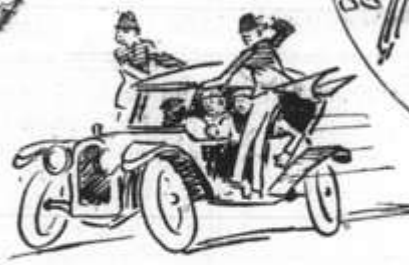


THE OUT-OF-TOWN PAPER



THE MOVIE MAN "SHOTS" THE STRIKERS

WHERE ON! WHERE ARE THE TRAFFIC COPS?



DAME RUMOR WAS ON THE JOB

The Seattle Times, February 9, 1919

# They Can't Understand

"Anise," *Seattle Union Record*, between February 6 and 11, 1919\*

What scares them most is  
That NOTHING HAPPENS!  
They are ready  
For DISTURBANCES.  
They have machine guns  
And soldiers,  
But this SMILING SILENCE  
Is uncanny.  
The business men  
Don't understand  
That sort of weapon.  
It comes  
From a DIFFERENT WORLD  
Than the world THEY live in.  
It is really funny  
And a bit pathetic  
To see how worried  
and MAD  
The business men are getting.  
What meetings they hold,  
What WILD RUMORS  
They use  
To keep themselves  
STIRRED UP.  
Yet MOST of them  
Might be real pleasant  
HUMAN BEINGS  
Except that life  
Has separated them  
Too much from common folks.  
It is the SYSTEM  
of industry

That makes them sullen  
And SUSPICIOUS of us,  
Not any NATURAL depravity.  
It is the system  
That trains them to believe  
In the words of our  
Beloved Ole,<sup>†</sup>  
That they can bring in  
Enough ARMED FORCE  
To operate our industries.  
But how many  
MACHINE GUNS  
Will it take to cook  
ONE MEAL?  
It is your SMILE  
That is UPSETTING  
Their reliance  
On ARTILLERY, brother!  
It is the garbage wagons  
That go along the street  
Marked "EXEMPT  
By STRIKE COMMITTEE."  
It is the milk stations  
That are getting better daily,  
And the three hundred  
WAR Veterans of Labor  
Handling the crowds  
WITHOUT GUNS,  
For these things SPEAK  
Of a NEW POWER  
And a NEW WORLD  
That they do not feel  
At HOME in.

\* Reprinted with no date in *The Seattle General Strike: An Account of What Happened in Seattle, and Especially in the Seattle General Strike, February 6 to 11, 1919*, issued by the General Strike Committee, n.d., ca. 1919.

† Ole Hanson, mayor of Seattle.



## Strike to End at Noon Today

The [Seattle] Post-Intelligencer, Feb. 11, 1919, excerpts

## Shipyard Strike to Be Continued

Seattle Union Record, Feb. 11, 1919, excerpts

### Workers Turn Down Order for Walkout to Show Solidarity

Thousands Resume Occupations Ahead of Time Scheduled  
by Leaders and Refuse to Quit Jobs a Second Time

Although Seattle's general sympathy strike does not end officially until noon today, streetcar employees and some of the other craftsmen who returned to work Sunday and Monday [Feb. 9-10] will continue at their posts, regardless of the edict of strike officials calling upon unionists now at work to quit and lend dignity to the end of the walkout.

### RADICALS ARE IGNORED

Resolutions calling off the sympathy strike were passed by the general committee, comprising delegates from all unions now on strike, at 12:45 o'clock Monday afternoon. During the afternoon efforts of strike leaders to again call out streetcar men, barbers, and other unionists now working proved futile.

### DEVELOPMENTS IN STRIKE SITUATION

. . . Calling off of sympathy strike does not affect shipyard strike, which will still be continued. . . .

Conclusion of sympathy strike will return about 25,000 unionists affiliated with Central Labor Council to their jobs. About 5,000 had returned to work Monday morning.

### Shipworkers Have Not Yet Compromised

Will Remain Out until They Can Obtain a Living Wage

### GENERAL MORRISON IS KEPT IN DARK

Committee Interviews Officer with Satisfactory Results

There is not the least sign of discouragement or wavering among the metal trades union [shipworkers]. The machinists held a big meeting Monday night and the rank and file [non-leader membership] declared their determination to continue the fight with the utmost vigor.

The conference committee of the Metal Trades Council met with Maj.-Gen. J. F. Morrison [commander of federal troops in Seattle] Monday afternoon and discussed every detail of the strike situation. . . .

### General Misinformed

The general's desk was piled high with direct actionist [i.e., radical] literature issued by unauthorized agencies, but not a single copy of the *Union Record* was in the room. Although he had been supplied with copies of every pamphlet, poster, and publication that has been circulated in Seattle during the strike, the general said that he had never heard of the *Union Record*, which convinced the committee that an effort had been made to keep him misinformed.

**STRIKE CALLED OFF!**

WALKOUT TO END TUESDAY AT NOON

—For Late Details See Page 2

**The Seattle Star** FINAL EDITION  
TWO CENTS IN SEATTLE

VOLUME 21, NO. 295  
THE GREATEST DAILY CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST  
SEATTLE, WASH., MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1919

**NO COMPROMISE!**

## When the Smoke Clears Away

Seattle Union Record, Feb. 11, 1919, excerpts

The biggest result of the Seattle General Strike is already achieved. And that result has been the new spirit shown in working together among the workers. Men of many unions have given days and nights to unpaid activity on behalf of labor. Japanese have thrown in their lot with American workers. Industrial Workers of the World have sent offers to discipline most severely any of their members who might be found "starting trouble," declaring that they intend to show the American Federation of Labor that they can cooperate in a general strike without causing trouble. And in return their [union] cards have been recognized, with others, in the eating places [union-sponsored centers for striking workers]. . . .

When the smoke of battle clears away, there will be much to learn from our experience. Seattle has had the first general strike in the history of our country. We have used a weapon with which we were all unfamiliar. The details of our experiences will be a textbook for the labor movement of the country, to study what can and what cannot be successfully done in a General Strike. Some of the problems raised by a General Strike will be discussed during the coming week in the *Union Record*.

But one thing we wish to emphasize. Our enemies hoped that we would not answer the call to go out [strike], one hundred percent, except where the Strike Committee gave exemptions in the interests of public safety and health.

Our enemies hoped next that we could be incited to riot and be put down by martial law. We ourselves heard young ladies wishing to see streets running with blood. But it has been the universal testimony that no strike has ever been conducted with so little disorder and with such extreme quietness.

The Seattle Star, February 13, 1919

## Getting Right

After a long absence the voice of Americanism was heard in the Labor Temple last night.

It was not a particularly strong and lusty voice, but it was nevertheless refreshing.

In the same hall where a week ago Bolsheviks and revolutionists ran amuck, B. H. Nauman last night drew the line between American labor men and the un-American.

"The Bolsheviks, the I. W. W. and the revolutionists will no longer be tolerated on this floor," he declared. "If you want to change your form of government the way to do it is with the ballot. Our constitution provides the regular means whereby this can be done."

A week ago had Mr. Nauman uttered those words he would have been hailed as a man among men, not only by 90 per cent of Seattle's labor men, but by all the rest of Seattle.

Seattle's American labor men have been waiting for some leader to speak out just as Mr. Nauman spoke out last night. All Seattle has been waiting for that, too.

These words were applauded in the same hall and by the same men where a week ago last night the Bolshevik crowd barely failed in putting thru a resolution declaring for the confiscation of property in Seattle.

The change is significant. It indicates that Seattle labor does not propose to have itself discredited and defeated by the loud-mouthed radical minority.

It indicates that labor will clean house, that it will reaffirm its Americanism and that it will forever outlaw the Bolsheviks, the I. W. W., the revolutionists and the un-American.

And that is what Seattle is waiting for now.

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SEATTLE GETS BACK TO NORMAL  
End of Strike Sets Wheels Turning at Top Speed

NIGHT EXTRA FOR INFORMATION  
ON ALL SUBJECTS—FOR COPY  
OF ALL INFORMATION AT  
THESE NUMBERS OR BY  
Call Main 300

MEMBER ASSOCIATED PRESS  
The Seattle Daily Times

AN AMERICAN PAPER  
FOR  
REAL AMERICANS

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The Seattle Times, February 11, 1919