

**A Teaching Manual
to accompany
The Slide/Sound Profile
"STRIKE"**

produced by: BC OVERTIME

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STRIKE

Learning Objectives

1. Students should be able to understand the collective bargaining process.
2. Students should be able to see the strike as a last resort in collective bargaining.
3. Students should be able to list reasons why strikes occur.
4. Students should be able to explain the consequences of a strike for the employer, the employees and the general public.
5. Students should understand the role of the media in strikes.
6. Students should be able to understand how unequal power and the corresponding frustration can lead to overt actions of protest.

A Teaching Manual to accompany the slide-sound profile, "STRIKE"
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Teacher's Introduction

AN EXERPT FROM THE TASK FORCE ON LABOUR RELATIONS: *TIMES OF TROUBLE: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada 1900-66* by Stuart Jamieson, p. 11-12.

Focusing . . . on the industrial scene, most of the writings that seek to explain the origins of trade unions and collective bargaining seem to follow a roughly similar line of analysis. They implicitly assume that modern industry, or the process of industrialization, necessarily generates conflict in one form or another for three main reasons, among others: (1) the inherent incompatibility of man and machine, the frustration and dissatisfaction of the variable human being having to adjust to the routine and monotonous task imposed by the machine process — these engender attitudes of hostility and willingness to engage in conflictual actions; (2) the rigid structuring of social relationships or class divisions, based on wide inequalities in wealth, income, power and authority — these are dictated by the financial and technological requirements of complex large-scale operations characteristic of modern industry and business and (3) the insecurity of individual workers in an environment of rapid technological and economic changes.

These combined effects of industrialization have motivated workers to organize into unions and engage in strikes, picketing, boycotting, and other forms of overt conflict, and employers to react accordingly.

Strikes are usually viewed as serving two constructive or therapeutic functions. First, "they clear the air" or enable workers to "blow off steam" and thus release pent-up frustrations and antagonisms generated in the industrial scene. Secondly, they settle, by negotiation and agreement, underlying issues generating hostility and conflict between contending parties over the shares of money, status or power that the industrial system provides, and they define the respective roles that each party, labor, management and government are to play in the firm or industry.

Assuming, therefore, that the underlying industrial system necessarily generates conflict, one is led to conclude that if strikes and lockouts were sharply reduced or eliminated by legal restrictions, by the overwhelming power of management vis-a-vis workers, or by the restraints imposed by representative organizations of workers and employers through collective bargaining, then one or more of several results would ensue:

- apathy and demoralization among one or both parties, with consequent loss of efficiency;
- growing dissatisfaction, tension, and hostility, with the likelihood of a major "blow-up" sooner or later;
- a higher incidence of covert, or hidden, as against overt industrial conflict as alternative forms of expression. These are manifested by, for instance: widespread tension and unrest; high turnover, tardiness or absenteeism; carelessness and conscious or unconscious sabotage; thefts of company property; and the like;
- increased participation in alternative expressions of

overt conflict, mainly outside the specific industrial context, as in aggressive or radical political action, riots and demonstrations, inter-personal and inter-group conflict, crime, violence, suicide, and the like.

It should be stressed . . . that labor unrest and overt conflict should not be viewed as arising solely in the context of labor-management relations. Government at all levels has also entered into the picture as a distinct and separate entity. Its role and impact in the labor scene have varied widely since the turn of the century. Government industrial relations policy has not been simply that of a neutral umpire between two main conflicting interest groups, nor of a mere passive tool of the more powerful vested interests. The main preoccupation of government policy throughout this period was that of preventing or settling overt conflicts, and maintaining "law and order" in terms of the official interpretation prevailing at the time. In earlier decades, when the law stressed private property rights and unions were viewed as a threat to the established order, industrial relations policies of governments tended to favor employers at the expense of organized labor. In later decades, when unions had become firmly established on a large scale despite protracted and sometimes forceful and violent employer opposition, government policy changed emphasis to exert pressure on employers to recognize and bargain with unions.

It should be observed, in this connection, that labor unrest and industrial conflict are not expressed solely by the actions of workers, organized or unorganized. Nor should the measures taken by employers and governments be viewed merely as reactions in response to actions by organized labor or other groups that are deemed to be threatening to the interests, security, status and authority of private employers or of governments. Some of the most bitter and protracted strikes in Canadian history were provoked by wage cuts or by technological or other changes imposed unilaterally by employers without prior notification to their workers. Or again on numerous occasions in Canadian history the enactment of specially punitive legislation, or the use of police or military forces in anticipation of threatening actions by organized labor groups, have been the cause of, or at least the occasions for, overt conflict. That is to say, aggressive or violent action by various labor groups has often been provoked by resentment against the use of armed forces, or the discriminatory and one-sided support provided by governments to employers. In brief, any adequate history of labor unrest and conflict in Canada over the past six decades or more has to take account of the attitudes, policies and actions of employers and governments or their representatives, as well as of organized or unorganized labor.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Some Strike Terms

- Lockout** the strike in reverse — when the employer anticipates a strike, he/she may react by "locking out" the employees. This means that the employees are not allowed to work. It is a tactic used to bring employers together against a strike.
- Picket Lines** the picket line originated from workers' gathering around the pithead of a mine to show they were stopping work until their demands were met. It then became a way to let the public and other workers know that a strike was on. Today, picket lines are limited to a certain number of workers who take turns on picket duty. When a picket line is up, members of other unions who are not on strike will not cross it.
- Rotating Strike** a strike organized in such a way that only part of the employees stop work at any given time, each group taking its turn.
- Strike** a stoppage of work by employees, for the purpose of compelling an employer to agree to terms or conditions of work. Except in special cases, strikes are legal when a collective agreement (contract) is not in force.
- Sympathy Strike** a strike by workers not directly involved in a labor dispute, used to show labor solidarity.
- Wildcat Strike** this is an illegal strike called by workers without instruction from union leaders. The wildcat strike is often in reaction to the slowness of the grievance procedure, which is used to settle problems that arise on the job. For example, if a union member is fired unfairly, the union and the employer come together to try to settle the dispute. Usually the union must hire a lawyer, and the whole procedure is very costly and may take months and months. As a protest, the workers may call a wildcat strike, which will force the problem to be dealt with much more quickly.

Other Kinds of Job Action

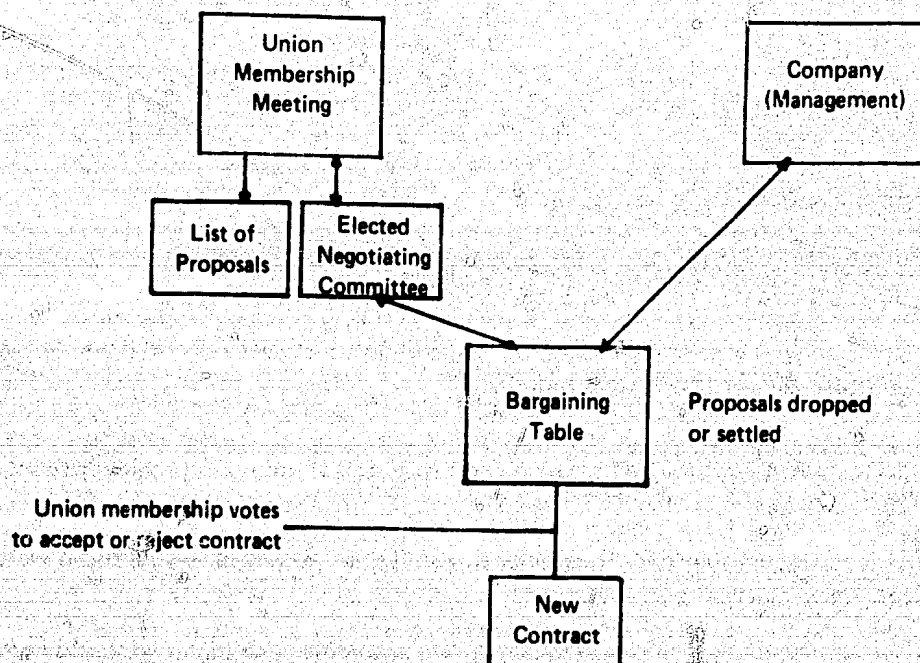
- No Overtime** this usually occurs when contract negotiations are going on. Workers make a group decision not to work any overtime, because often when a company anticipates a strike, it will call for a lot of overtime to try to stockpile production to compensate for production lost during the strike.
- Sit-Down** this occurs when workers refuse to work but stay on the job premises. It is illegal and rarely used anymore, but it does produce almost immediate results. In the early part of this century, the sit-down was widely used by the Industrial Workers of the World, who had a slogan "sit down and watch your pay go up."
- Slow-Down** this is another way to bring pressure upon the employer to settle contract demands. Workers simply work more slowly.
- Work-to-Rule** over the years of a company's existence, various rules and regulations are formed which are often impractical. In the normal work situation, workers either bend or ignore some of these rules to work efficiently. When workers are on a work-to-rule campaign, they follow all rules and regulations to the letter. This action, in the extreme case, may cause the work place to grind to a halt.

Some Labor Terms

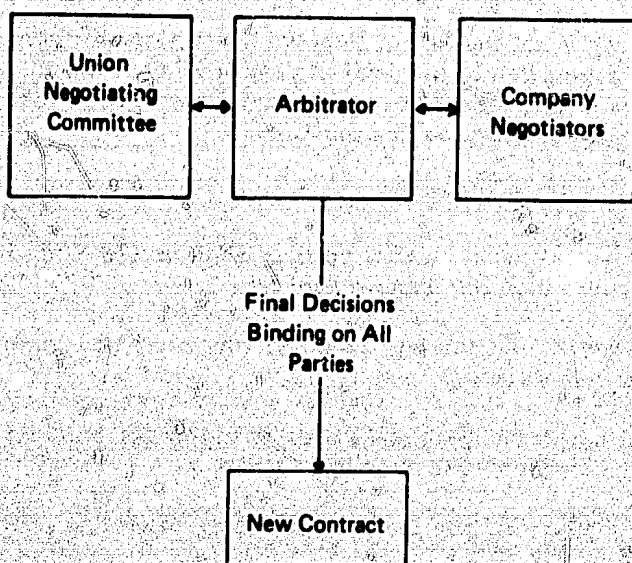
Arbitration	a method of settling disputes through the intervention of a third party whose decision is final and binding. This third party can be either a single arbitrator or a board consisting of a chairperson and one or more representatives. Arbitration is often used for settling major grievances and for settling contract disputes. Voluntary arbitration is that agreed to by the union and the employer through their own decision. Compulsory arbitration is imposed by law. Governments sometimes impose it to avoid a strike or to settle a strike.
Certification	the official recognition of a union as a bargaining agent. When a group of workers decide they want to form or become part of a union, they first must gain support from a majority of workers, then apply to the labor relations board for certification. Once certified, the group may carry out collective bargaining with employers.
Collective Bargaining	a method of determining wages, hours, and other working conditions through direct negotiations between the union and the employer. Normally, the result of collective bargaining is a written contract between the union and the employer, outlining terms of employment. The contract is usually made for one or two years, at which point negotiations between the union and employer take place to determine a new contract. It is at this point when the new contract is being negotiated that a strike may take place legally.
Conciliation and Mediation	a process that attempts to resolve labor disputes by compromise or voluntary agreement. By contrast with arbitration, the mediator, conciliator or conciliation board makes recommendations that are not binding, and the union or employer is free to accept or reject the recommendations. The conciliator is often a government official; the mediator is usually a private individual called in by mutual choice of the union and employer.
Grievance	a complaint against management by one or more employees or by a union, concerning a breach in the contract or some other injustice. The grievance procedure for solving a dispute varies according to what is laid out in a contract. Sometimes a grievance may be settled by the shop steward and the foreman, and other times, it reaches a point where arbitration becomes necessary.
Injunction	a court order or order from a labor relations board, restraining an employer or union from committing or engaging in certain acts.
Labor Relations Board	a board set up under provincial or federal labor legislation to administer labor law, including certification of unions and investigation of unfair labor practices.
Shop Steward	a union official who represents a specific group of union members in union duties, grievance matters and other employment conditions. Shop stewards usually work alongside the members they represent.

Collective Bargaining Process

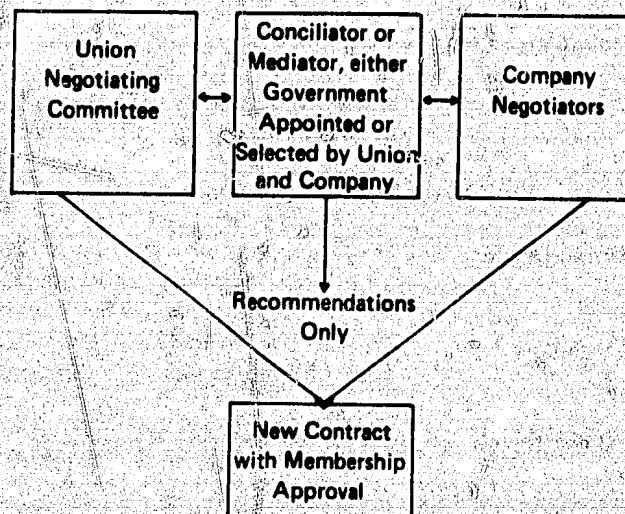
BASIC NEGOTIATING



BINDING ARBITRATION



MEDIATION OR CONCILIATION



A strike vote may be taken at any point after a contract has expired. A strike may be called any time after the vote, providing that 72 hours' notice is given. NOTE: the exception to this is in the case of binding arbitration, where the arbitrator's decision is final, and a strike may not be legally called.

Strike! A Role Play

There is trouble at the CONCO smelter. The owners of the smelter and the leaders of the smelter workers' union are negotiating and can't agree on a new contract. The deadline is very close, and the possibility of a strike is real.

Choose people in your class to play these six parts: smelter owner, smelter supervisor, smelter vice-president, union leader, union vice-president, and union shop steward.

THE FINAL MEETING OF MANAGEMENT AND UNION

Owner: We've been talking about this for months, saying the same things over and over again. We just can't give you what you're asking for.

Union Leader: But our demands are fair. We're not worried about ourselves only; the whole town is in danger unless we get this place cleaned up.

Smelter Vice-Pres.: You're asking for too much. Do you know how much it would cost to install all this pollution-control equipment? It would put us out of business and then where would you and the town be?

Owner: Look, we've had a bad year. Installing some of this equipment would mean we couldn't possibly give you a raise as well.

Shop Steward: A bad year! What do you mean? We had so many orders coming in we could hardly keep up with them.

Smelter Vice-Pres.: We may have had more orders, but our costs were a lot higher. The more you demand, the worse it is for you in the long run. We just won't be able to keep up.

Union Vice-Pres.: Your profits are skyrocketing, and we've got the figures to prove it. It's time you gave the workers a fair share. We're only asking you to use some of your profits to make this smelter a safe place to work and this town a good place to live. And remember, the cost of living goes up for us too — we need that increase to feed our families.

Smelter Supervisor: I'm in there working with you, and it's safe enough for me.

Union Leader: How can you tell what the harmful effects might be after years of work here? We need a full-scale investigation by medical authorities, and then we want results.

Owner: We can't agree to these demands. They all cost too much money. Why don't you come back in a few weeks with some reasonable demands?

Union Vice-Pres.: Reasonable! We're willing to discuss our demands, to make a few compromises, but you! You won't even consider them. It's looking more and more like a strike.

Smelter Supervisor: The whole town depends on this smelter's staying open — you'd only be cutting your own throats.

Shop Steward: I think the people here are willing to put up with a little hardship to see blue sky and clean water again.

Smelter Vice-Pres.: You're making a big mistake. We can outlast you and keep the smelter operating too. Not everyone's in your union.

Union Leader: This has gone far enough. The smelterworkers will not work without a contract. Tomorrow we take a strike vote.

WORKERS' DEMANDS

1. An 8% raise. (This is within the anti-inflation guidelines.)
2. A cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) clause in the contract — for every 1% increase in the consumer price index, there will be a 1% increase in wages with a 6% trigger over the year. (The trigger means that the adjustment will not take place until the consumer price index has increased by at least 6%.)
3. A major campaign to stop the smelter's pollution. The smelter has been dumping waste into the river and poisonous fumes into the air. Equipment must be installed to cut down this pollution.
4. A medical investigation into the hazardous effects on workers' health caused by working with lead and zinc.
5. An increase in the safety equipment allowance (for buying special boots, goggles, etc.) from \$50 to \$75 a year.
6. Increased holiday time: three weeks after one year; four weeks after five years; six weeks after ten years.
7. A more effective ventilation system to be installed in the inside working area.
8. A two-week advance notice of a worker's shift change.

LOOKING AT DEMANDS

The vote was taken, and a strike is now on. The workers are on a picket line around the smelter. The smelter is still operating, but production is not up to its usual rate. The company is using management and any other nonunion workers at the smelter to keep it going. What is the strike all about? What is the union asking for? Look at the list of demands the union is making. They know they will not get all of their demands. They will have to compromise, to settle for less than they are asking for. The smelter owners have not agreed yet to any of the demands. This strike is bad for the smelter, the workers, the union and the town. Your class must find a way to settle the strike. Take a second look at the demands. Divide your class into two groups: Management (the smelter owners) and union leaders.

Union Leaders: You hold a meeting to take another look at the demands. Decide which ones are most important to you, which ones you can give up until some time in the future, and which ones you will be willing to compromise on. Make a list, putting the demands in order of priority.

Management: You also hold a meeting to look at the demands again. Decide which ones you can agree to, which ones you will not agree to no matter what, and which ones you will compromise on. Keep your decisions on a list. You will need it later.

LET THE PUBLIC KNOW

Union Members: One of the best ways to let the public know the reasons for the strike is through your picket signs. Write out your picket signs. Make sure they tell people why you are on strike.

Management: You want to tell the people of the town your side of the story. Buy a full-page ad in the town newspaper. You must write the ad to win people to your side. Make the ad as interesting as you can; use drawings or photos if you want. Remember to think about the benefits the smelter gives the town.

A RADIO SHOW

The strike has been on for one month. How is it affecting the town when almost half of the population is employed at the smelter? What do people think of the strike? Pretend that you live in the town, and you are listening to a radio program about the strike and its effects. Choose people in the class to play the following roles: radio interviewer, a waitress in a cafe close to the smelter, a clothing-store owner, a waiter in the local beer parlor, a housewife whose husband is on strike, a nonunion worker who is still working at the smelter.

The interviewer should ask the people what they do and how the strike is affecting their lives.

OTHER AREAS AFFECTED BY THE STRIKE

Here are six other places. First decide if the strike will or will not affect them and then explain why.

1. a large grocery store in town
2. the CONCO smelter in Eastern Canada
3. the town newspaper
4. the town gas station
5. the Canada Manpower center in the town
6. the town high school.

TIME TO NEGOTIATE

The union and management have agreed to call in an arbitrator, a person who will listen to both sides and try to get them to settle the strike. The arbitrator will try to get both sides to compromise and then will tell both sides what they must do. All decisions by the arbitrator are final. This is called binding arbitration. Your class must hold a meeting to try to settle the strike. Choose someone to be the arbitrator. Choose five people to represent union and five people to represent management. Go over each demand one by one. Use your lists of which demands are important and which are not. Try to reach an agreement on each demand. Some of the demands may be thrown out entirely, some might be compromised, and some might be won. The arbitrator will conduct the meeting and settle all arguments. Do not take more than ten minutes for each demand. After you have settled all eight demands, the strike will be over. The workers will return to work.

INJUNCTIONS

In this section, we will look at two strikes in which court injunctions were used.

An injunction is an order from the court to stop unlawful action. In the case of strikes, it is usually the company or establishment being struck that asks for a court injunction to stop a strike.

There are two kinds of injunctions.

One is the *ex parte* injunction, which is carried out by only one of the parties in conflict. For example, management will go to the courts *without notifying the strikers* and ask for the injunction.

A *regular injunction* is carried out with the knowledge of both parties. Changes in the B.C. Labor Code have made the use of court injunctions in labor disputes very rare. Today, the Labor Relations Board has exclusive jurisdiction over labor disputes. If action that is contrary to the labor code occurs the Labor Relations Board may issue a cease and desist order, which has the same effect as a court injunction.

One area where court injunctions may still be used in B.C. is in the case of employees under federal jurisdiction, such as transport workers or postal workers. In this instance, employers may still go to the Supreme Court of B.C. for injunctions.

The first example in this section is an interview with a waitress involved in a strike at Denny's restaurant.

The second example uses newspaper clippings about the Lenkurt Electrical Strike in Burnaby and an excerpt from an appeal to the court made by one of the men arrested in the strike. When you are reading them, look for the differences in the way the two strikes were handled, by both the workers and the employers.

The Time Denny's 24-Hour Restaurant was Closed

An Interview with a Waitress

Q. Tell me about the conditions or problems that led up to the Denny's strike.

A. On a Friday afternoon, a staff meeting was called by management. A new woman had been brought up from Los Angeles who was supposed to whip all the waitresses into shape in Vancouver. So first off we were really angry about the staff meeting, because we weren't going to be paid for it, and they usually lasted about three or four hours. Some of us were working graveyard shift, and that was our sleeping time. We called up Labor Standards, and they said we had to be paid for it, so we went back and said, "you have to pay us for this time." They said, "Well, if you want to be paid then you punch in." They made it clear that only those people who were angry enough to punch in their cards were going to be paid. That made some of us mad.

At the meeting, we (the night shift) hadn't realized this, but the day-shift women had gotten together beforehand and had a discussion and picked a spokeswoman to tell management that some of the waitresses were being *mauled*, is the word they used, by some of the assistant managers, that they were constantly being pinched and slapped. As soon as Gail brought that up, she was cut off, and she was told that if anybody had problems like that, they were to go as individuals to this new personnel person from Los Angeles. Gail tried several times to say that this was a really serious problem and that a couple of the women were really fed up, but she didn't get anywhere. So obviously they had several grievances that were just not going to be discussed, even though supposedly, this was the purpose of the whole meeting. They told us at that meeting that a hair style that some of us had been wearing — we had long hair and we'd do it in a bun at the nape of the neck — made us look like grannies. They went on and on. They wanted us to report for duty ten minutes before our scheduled hour; we were to be on the floor so there would be a smoother transition between shifts; we were, of course, to stay ten minutes after so that the next shift could take over. I asked if there was to be overtime for those 20 minutes, and they said no. So it was just a whole lot of grievances, and actually, it wasn't wages that sparked the strike at Denny's; it was mainly working conditions.

Q. How did the strike actually start?

A. Over the weekend, it was really, really busy, and nobody had a chance to talk to each other. On Monday, one of my friends came home and told me that there was a picket line outside of Denny's restaurant where I worked. I thought, what the hell is happening? I went down there, and found that all the day shift had just walked off the job. They just organized it, and at noon, they all walked off with the exception of, I think, just two people (there were about twelve waitresses on that shift.) The organizers (there were about four of them) had been met outside by their husbands and boyfriends who brought down the picket signs, which I guess they had all made up that weekend. Actually most of the picket signs were attacks on the assistant manager, that they would go back to work if they got rid of this assistant manager. And there were a couple of signs that said things like DO WE NEED A UNION? with a big question mark. They didn't really want to have a union, but they thought that if they walked off the job, people would really listen to their grievances; before we knew it, most of the staff were respecting the day shift waitresses' picket lines.

Q. Do you think they realized the legal implications of walking out like that, and had they tried to contact anybody about unionizing?

A. No. None of the waitresses had talked to anybody about unionizing Denny's. A couple of their husbands worked in unions, and they had talked a bit about it to their stewards, but the women had never approached anybody. I don't think they had any idea about the illegality of what they had done. I remember when I went up, I said "We could be fired for this; we could all be fired for this!" They said "Are you going to respect this picket line or not?" They were actually prepared to be fired when they walked off the job.

- Q. Were they prepared for a long strike?
- A. I think they thought that it would be over as soon as they went out. Denny's has a policy that it's never been shut down since it opened; it's a 24-hour restaurant, and they've been open for three years. The waitresses thought, ah ha, we'll just shut the place down for a couple of hours. Management came out and said, "Ok, at five o'clock we're shutting down and you can come in and we'll discuss it." And everybody said, "great; that's just what we wanted, finally they're going to listen to us." Then they came out at five o'clock and said that they'd only talk to us one at a time. Everybody was really upset and said that we would only meet with them if it was as a group. They refused to meet with us, so the strike was on. One of the things that happened was that the day shift didn't realize the support that they were going to get from the other shifts. I think they were all prepared to quit, but they were going to go out in style.
- Q. Once the strike was on, was there any way management could keep the restaurant open, or was it shut down?
- A. No, the thing that happened was that they started to hire people off the street. People would go in for something to eat, and the next thing you knew, you'd look up and they'd have a uniform on. Plus the managers' wives and girlfriends came down and started waitressing, but our picket line was really, really effective. We cut their business in the first week by about 80%. So even though they managed to keep the store open in terms of having people in there who could cook food and wait-ress, they didn't have any customers.
- Q. How did the strike proceed from there?
- A. We kept the picket line up round the clock, and even though we were a bunch of crazies who weren't in a union, we managed to stop deliveries like bread and milk. Once they realized we were really serious about this and there was no way they were going to get rid of us, they went to court and got a court injunction against us which specifically named about sixteen waitresses. It said we were immediately to cease and desist, because ours was an illegal strike, as we weren't in a union and there are all sorts of government regulations that regulate strikes, like 72 hours' notice and things like that. We just hadn't abided by any of them; we just walked out, so they got an injunction really easily. All of those named in the injunction left the picket line, because it would have meant a contempt of court charge if we hadn't. A couple of us involved in the Working Women's Association contacted them about support pickets, and they took over the picketing at the restaurant.
- Q. Did you take any other action beside that one picket line?
- A. We started leafleting and picketing other Denny's stores. Several times they tried to open a new store, and each time they announced the opening in the paper, there was a mass picket there, so it didn't get opened for quite a while. We also picketed the Coquitlam store that was under construction as part of a shopping mall, and we shut down the whole construction site. Also we were organizing a whole boycott campaign on Denny's. We approached other unions individually to pass motions of boycott, and we picketed day and night for about three months, but the problem was the illegality of the strike. One of the things that was really exciting was that we were a bunch of waitresses, we had no union experience whatsoever, no experience of the law whatsoever, we just got fed up and walked off the job and yet two months later, Denny's called us for negotiations. They offered us \$1,000 apiece to stop picketing and call off the boycott campaign, and it was a unanimous vote to refuse it. We didn't want severance pay; we wanted our jobs back. So when management decided that they weren't going to beat us by buying us off and offering us money, they went right back to the courts and got contempt-of-court charges, which I don't think they wanted to do because they didn't like the publicity that was going on. They finally nailed five of

us, and we went to court; the judge was very, very, very angry. It was about a half hour decision, and he said that we were clearly in contempt of court, that it was a clear violation of the injunction, that he was really angry at people's flagrant disregard for the law but that, he felt Denny's lawyers had not properly identified us. He was actually really angry at Denny's lawyers for being so sloppy; after yelling at them, he dismissed the case against the five people without prejudice. He said that we were committing an illegal act and that Denny's should go out and get proper identification and bring us before the courts again; it would be a minimum jail sentence of six months for anybody that appeared in his court again on that charge concerning the Denny's strike. So by this time, because of the contempt-of-court charges, we'd lost a lot of our key picketers and key organizers, because they could just not be seen around the picket line, and also the waitresses had to get other jobs right away. We decided after about three months that we should call off the picket line, so we did.

Q. And none of the people who went out on the picket line ever got their jobs back at Denny's?

A. No, we never got our jobs back, but the exciting thing was that a lot of the women who were involved in that strike, the waitresses anyway, thought that it was a real victory; we had really shown Denny's that it could be done and that we would all be better prepared for it next time. We made some really serious mistakes in the beginning, like the spontaneity of walking off the job when there were things we could have done that would have assured us more legal rights.

Q. Was there a feeling that there was a need to join a union for the next time? Did people feel they could still do things on their own?

A. No, there's no doubt about it. People were saying, next time we'll do it right; we'll join the union first. As soon as we were out on strike, the strategy was that we get our jobs back and the minute we step inside the door, we sign union cards. The thing was that we should have done that before we went out. Even if we had signed union cards, applied for certification, not waited to be certified, but gone out on strike, we would have had more legal rights; as it was, between the courts and Denny's, we just couldn't withstand it.

The Lenkurt Electric Strike

Some Newspaper Clippings

Mounties, Pickets Scuffle at Lenkurt Plant Protest

RCMP officers scuffled with jeering pickets outside the Lenkurt Electric plant in Burnaby early today as organized labor staged a mass demonstration against the company. About 200 pickets paraded outside entrances to the plant in the 7000 block Lougheed Highway and handed out pamphlets urging employees not to report for work.

RCMP ACTION

The scuffling started when most employees ignored the picket lines and tried to drive into the plant.

Seven carloads of RCMP officers fought to clear a path as the pickets shouted at the car drivers and pounded their vehicles.

There were no arrests.

An RCMP spokesman said: "We're here to clear traffic and protect life and property. That's all we're interested in."

A company spokesman, Ben Metcalfe, said none of the employees who drove through the picket lines was injured.

However, one man, identified as Clarence Sartorius, of Langley, had his shirt torn by a picket who reached through his car window.

Metcalfe said one car driven by a girl was slightly damaged by the picketers.

JOINT PROTEST

The pickets said today's demonstration was organized jointly by the B.C. Federation of Labor, the Vancouver and District Labor Council and Local 213 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The demonstration began about 7 a.m., apparently to head off employees scheduled to report at 8 a.m.

Most of the scuffling occurred at the entrance in the 2900 block Bainbridge. A

copy of a court injunction prohibiting picketing was posted there, but it was ignored by the pickets, and Metcalfe said the firm was not insisting that police enforce it.

"It would be a matter of arresting about 200 people," he said.

SHERIFF'S MEN

Sheriff's officers were also on the scene attempting to serve individual pickets with copies of the injunction.

The pickets tore them up as they were handed out and shouted down the sheriff's officers when they tried to read them aloud.

Labor leaders at the scene included Paddy Neale, secretary of the Vancouver Labor Council; Art O'Keefe, business agent of Local 213, IBEW; Craig Pritchett, Longshoremen's Union; Tom Clarke and Doug Evans of the International Woodworkers of America; Bill Stewart of the Marine Workers Union; Lorne Robson of the Carpenters Union; and Les McDonald of the IBEW.

PICKETS MEET

The picket line was removed about 9 a.m., and pickets adjourned to the IWA Hall for a meeting.

Neale said after the hour-long meeting that only about 60 production employees reported for work at the Lenkurt plant today.

"Our intention is to shut down the plant — then maybe they'll talk to us," he said.

"If necessary, we'll have another picket line out there Thursday — a bigger one."

PLEA TO PETERSON

Neale said the meeting decided that another attempt should be made to set up a meeting with Lenkurt officials and that Labor Minister Leslie Peterson should again

be asked to intervene in the dispute.

Today's incidents were the latest in a dispute that began April 28 when 257 Lenkurt employees walked out to protest the company's overtime policy.

All are members of the electrical workers' union. A total of 168 union members stayed on the job.

MEN FIRED

The 257 who walked out were fired after ignoring a company directive that they return or be dismissed. About 50 have since been rehired.

A remaining 375 employees are nonunion clerks and management staff.

Today's picketing followed rejection by the workers Monday of a back-to-work settlement signed by the company and Angus MacDonald, president of Local 213 of the IBEW.

The settlement would have meant loss of seniority for the workers, although they were promised there would be no discrimination as a result of their work stoppage.

The B.C. Federation of Labor also refused to endorse the settlement, which was worked out at a meeting from which O'Keefe was excluded.

May 11, 1966
The Vancouver Sun

Nine Arrested in Strike Clash

Violence Grips Lenkurt 2nd Day

Singing and chanting pickets battled with RCMP today as violence flared outside the Lenkurt Electric plant in Burnaby. Two union leaders, six other men and woman were arrested and taken to RCMP headquarters in Burnaby. Police said they would appear in court later today.

Worst Scene in Years

The scene outside the Lenkurt plant was the worst on Vancouver area picket lines in several years. Demonstrators punched, kicked and shoved police officers who attempted to break them up. No one was seriously hurt, although several people were bumped by cars attempting to enter the plant in the 7000 block Lougheed Highway.

One man feigned serious injury and lay in front of a car for several minutes, but got to his feet and moved away when RCMP officers questioned him. At least 200 pickets were deployed at entrances to the eight-acre plant site, and about three dozen RCMP were called out.

In Victoria, Deputy Labor Minister William Sands said

today the Lenkurt dispute "seems to have moved beyond the realms of the department's powers. Judging from the reports I've received on what went on this morning, events seem to have moved beyond our realm," said Sands.

Asked if his department intends to step into the dispute at a ministerial level, Sands said only that conciliation officer Jack Laffling has been working "around the clock" in an effort to mediate the dispute.

Picketing outside the plant started at 7 a.m. for the second straight day, as organized labor continued efforts to win back the jobs of about 200 who quit working April 26 and were subsequently fired.

First Line Wednesday

The picket line was thrown up Wednesday by a joint committee of the B.C. Federation of Labor, the Vancouver and District Labor Council and Local 213 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Pickets jostled with RCMP officers Wednesday outside a plant entrance on Bainbridge Avenue.

It appeared today that violence would be averted when police designated a rear entrance off Greenwood Avenue as a public road and prevented pickets from sealing it off. Many employees not involved in the dispute poured into the plant in their cars until about 8 a.m. when a

number of pickets stormed through RCMP lines and blocked the road. While other pickets milled across the entrance, singing *Solidarity Forever* and chanting *We Shall Overcome*, five police constables grabbed one union leader and dragged him out of the melee. Three officers pinned him to the ground while two others handcuffed him and brushed aside other pickets who attempted to come to his rescue. The union leader lay on his back for several minutes on the rain-soaked grass beside the road until a police car was brought up to take him away. The picketers roared their approval as the man went limp and had to be hoisted to his feet.

The Vancouver Sun, May 12, 1966

Police Infiltration Claimed at Plant

A union official said Friday that at least six plainclothes RCMP officers mingled with labor demonstrators when violence erupted at the Lenkurt Electric plant in Burnaby on Thursday. Doug Evans, business agent with the International Woodworkers of America, said he saw the six Mounties at Burnaby police headquarters and recognized them from the demonstration.

Evans said one of the jailed demonstrators saw the Mounties changing into their uniforms in the locker room and heard them laughing and singing *Solidarity Forever*, the labor movement's anthem.

SINGLED OUT LEADERS

Evans said the plainclothes Mounties stayed back in the crowd of union men finding out who the loudest of the demonstrators were, then passing it on to uniformed RCMP while pretending to jostle them.

Supt. Fred Bloxham, officer commanding the Burnaby RCMP detachment, declined comment today when asked if Evans charges were accurate.

"I couldn't say — not at this time, anyway," Bloxham said. Evans said that when he saw an IWA member arrested, he left the demonstration and went to the RCMP headquarters.

"I was standing at the counter trying to find out about bail when three men came in the front door," said Evans.

'RECOGNIZED THEM'

"I recognized them from outside the Lenkurt plant, but when they saw me they turned their heads and hurried upstairs. When the officer at the desk would not let me see the men in jail, I went out to find a phone and call a lawyer. Three more were coming up the stairs. When they saw me, they turned around and nipped under the stairs. When I was walking toward the telephone booth I turned around and saw them peeking around the corner watching me."

Nine persons arrested in the demonstrations are accused of obstructing officers or assault or both.

The Vancouver Sun, May 14, 1966

An Excerpt from an appeal to the court made by one of the men arrested in the strike

I am before this court today to appeal against an unjust conviction and sentence for an act of fraternal support rendered a group of fellow trade unionists on strike at Lenkurt Electric Company on the mornings of May 11 and 12, 1966.

I am a worker and a trade unionist with a strong belief in justice. What impelled me to appear at the plant gates of this company on these mornings was a desire to help the 257 workers, who had been unjustly fired by the company, to get their jobs back.

Surely that is not unnatural. This court must know that the Lenkurt Electric Company treated union demands for a new collective agreement with an attitude bordering on contempt. It knows too that union and management reached an understanding assuring no overtime would be worked while negotiations were in progress, but the agreement was violated by the company on April 26 when its president, C. Hunter, unilaterally cancelled it.

In the course of rendering his decision in this case on September 19, 1966, Mr. Justice James MacDonald stated: "As was foreseeable, bitterness and antagonism resulted."

Company Violated Compact

The first act by the workers was to walk off the job April 27 in protest of the company's arrogant and most unethical violation of the no-overtime compact.

Two days later, the company dismissed 257 production workers and in so doing, exposed its antilabor bias. It went further during ensuing days, refusing to rehire the workers on honorable terms, insisting those it deigned to re-employ lose seniority and pension conditions established over many years.

Lenkurt Electric Company of Canada is one outpost of a huge United States corporation, General Telephone and Electronics of New York, whose total assets at December 31, 1965, were \$3,783,488,000 and which, a year earlier, ranked 28 among the world's largest corporations.

Lenkurt Electric is a wholly owned subsidiary of this giant company which also controls British Columbia Telephone Company.

Episode Engineered

I mention these facts because I firmly believe the whole Lenkurt episode was engineered to strike a blow at the B.C. trade union movement and its 1966 wage demands. I say so because major B.C. employers formed the Commercial and Industrial Research Foundation earlier this year with a view to uniting their policies in the labor field. The chairman was and so far as I know, still is J.E. Richardson, president of B.C. Telephone and its governors read like a Who's Who of B.C.'s top industrialists. Since Lenkurt and B.C. Telephone are one and the same company, the connection between Commercial and Industrial Research Foundation and the events at Lenkurt Electric are clear to me and many other trade unionists.

I have since learned that two injunctions were issued during the early days of that dispute aimed at preventing the fired strikers from demonstrating to win their jobs back on respectable terms.

When the labor movement decided to call demonstrations at the plant on May 11, I felt the action was not only necessary, but overdue. I felt it was my duty to the workers who had been so ruthlessly treated, and to all workers of the province, including the members of my own union, who could not help but be affected by the outcome of this dispute.

I only regret that the Lenkurt Company was able to defeat its employees and other trade unionists, including me, in our attempts to secure at least a degree of economic justice for a group of workers with long and faithful records of service to the firm.

Workers Would Have Won

Left to the normal course of events between two protagonists in the labor arena, I am sure that in this case justice would have finally triumphed and the Lenkurt Company forced to take a reasonable position.

In my opinion, the injunctions issued in this case, which banned any form of picketing or other show of support for the victimized Lenkurt workers, virtually guaranteed the company victory over its employees.

I regard injunctions issued to employers in labor disputes as direct intercession on behalf of the employer.

Moreover, I believe there is nothing in Canadian law that compels a court to issue an injunction in any labor dispute.

The courts have discretionary power in the matter of issuing injunctions in labor (or any other) disputes. They have chosen to use that power on the side of the employer virtually without exception.

Contrast to Britain, U.S.

I do not have legal training, but I do know the difference between an *ex parte* injunction and one issued on notice. I do not have details on more recent studies but I do know that Prof. A.W.R. Carrothers, in "The Labor Injunction in British Columbia," a study covering the period 1946 to 1955, said that 68 of 75 injunctions applied for were granted, and of these, 63 were granted *ex parte*, 51 of them in the precise form in which they were prepared. A dozen of these *ex parte* orders bore a notation of the judge granting leave to file the order in the court registry after the registry was closed to the public — indicating an undue concern with the interests of the employers.

A more recent study by the B.C. Federation of Labor shows that in the years since Prof. Carrothers' book appeared, nearly four times as many injunctions — 297 — were applied for in the districts of Vancouver, New Westminster, Cranbrook and Kamloops. Only 23 were actually denied. Of 239 applied for *ex parte*, 186 were granted, 51 modified, and only two denied. Most of the injunctions (254) dealt with picketing only.

This strikes me as a legal procedure revealing almost an anxiety to intervene in labor disputes on the side of the employer.

Somewhere along the line, our judicial process in this regard has taken a right angled turn from that of England and the United States.

Not Used in Britain

Prof. Carrothers in the first paragraph of the introduction to his book says that, "But although the (English) Trade Disputes Act of 1906 limits the civil liability of trade unions, the incidence of the injunctive remedy has been curbed without the aid of legislation specifically restricting its use. The injunction today (1956) is as a matter of practice rarely used in labor cases."

John Fray in his book *The Labor Injunction*, states, however, that "The facts are then that but two injunctions were issued against striking workmen in England, the first of which was repudiated and condemned by the Lord Chancellor when passing upon another case, upon the ground that a court of equity had absolutely no jurisdiction in such a case; and the second was reversed by Parliament itself."

"American courts of equity therefore have no valid precedents to guide them, the facts being that the injunctions granted in America in connection with industrial disputes are in direct disregard of the precedents of the highest Chancery Court and the British Parliament."

Outlawed in U.S.

The United States in 1932 enacted the Norris-LaGuardia Act in which, Prof. Carrothers states, lies "the basic restraint on the use of the injunction in labor-management disputes in the United States . . ."

A Canadian law professor, Donald Brown, a graduate of Osgoode and Harvard, wrote recently in the *Commentator* that the propriety of injunctions in labor disputes in the United States and the controversy surrounding them were "finally laid to rest . . . by the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932."

Aid to Strikebreaking

I am firmly convinced they are instruments of injustice fashioned and utilized to further the interests of employers and business and to limit and restrict those of working people and the unions that represent them.

An injunction that restricts picketing or goes so far as to stop picketing in a labor dispute is merely opening the door to scabbery and facilitating strike-breaking. It is helping the employer and hindering labor.

The issue might well be a grievance or any other number of matters involving the livelihood of the workers. Longshoremen picketed in defiance of an injunction at Squamish last year because it was the only recourse left to them if they were to protect jobs which were (and are now) rightfully theirs.

Had they failed to defy the injunction ordered in this case, they would have lost those jobs.

And this is the pattern in some degree in every case. For the union and the workers to accept and obey a given injunction is to concede the loss of their case however just it might well be.

The employer, on the one hand, is fighting and conniving for a few extra dollars' profit, but the worker is struggling to earn a livelihood and to live and work a little less onerously.

Anachronistic Law

We are told that injunctions are a two-way street. Nonsense.

Unions have nothing to gain from injunctions; everything to lose. Injunctions are purely an employer device. If I may paraphrase Anatole France, "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids all men to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, to steal bread, and permits them to apply for injunctions — the rich as well as the poor."

For the trade union movement to accept injunctions in labor disputes is to accept the right of the courts to determine their wages and working conditions — and indeed whether or not they will have a job as at Lenkurt — merely on the application of an employer.

It is unfair, unjust and something I have opposed and will continue to oppose by word and deed.

John Stanton, who has served as legal counsel in a great many labor cases in British Columbia, in a paper presented this summer to the B.C. Section of the Canadian Bar Association, noted that ". . . in the eyes of far too many people, the injunction neither does justice nor gives the appearance of doing it. On the contrary, it is an inept, unsophisticated and basically ineffective way of dealing with economic and social problems, often of great magnitude."

Canadian law professor Donald Brown has described the labor injunction as "an anachronism which has no place in modern industrial society. Theoretically, its purpose is to maintain the status quo until a full trial is held; as a practical matter, it undermines the strike, thereby eliminating further court proceedings."

Right to Livelihood

I am not a legal authority but a working man. My income is wholly earned by my own labor. That is the lot of most working men.

I feel I have the right to earn a decent livelihood and have always been willing to work for the pay I have received.

As a working man, I have only my union to depend on as a means whereby I and my fellow workers can have a job at a fair rate of pay and under reasonable conditions.

I have been involved in negotiations with my employer and in some cases in strikes over what I felt I should be paid and what the employer was willing to give.

That is a continuing struggle that goes on throughout society under certain rules, many of which are heavily weighted in favor of the dominant group in our society — the employers.

When the courts step into this conflict through the issuance of injunctions, they are siding with the employers and in so doing, convince me and other working men that they are not dispensing justice but are, indeed, promoting injustice.

Conscience Dictated Course

In the case at hand, I acted according to the dictates of my conscience and in the tradition of trade union solidarity that seeks to help those unable to help themselves.

I feel that common decency, consideration and concern for one's fellows must put every fair-minded citizen on the side of the Lenkurt workers.

That is where I was. That is where I am.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Denny's management want to deal with the waitresses individually?
2. What mistakes did the Denny's waitresses make?
3. Can you think of other ways the waitresses could have settled their grievances?
4. Do you think it is fair that striking people can be arrested? Why or why not?
5. Do you think court injunctions or cease-and-desist orders are necessary in labor disputes? Why or why not?

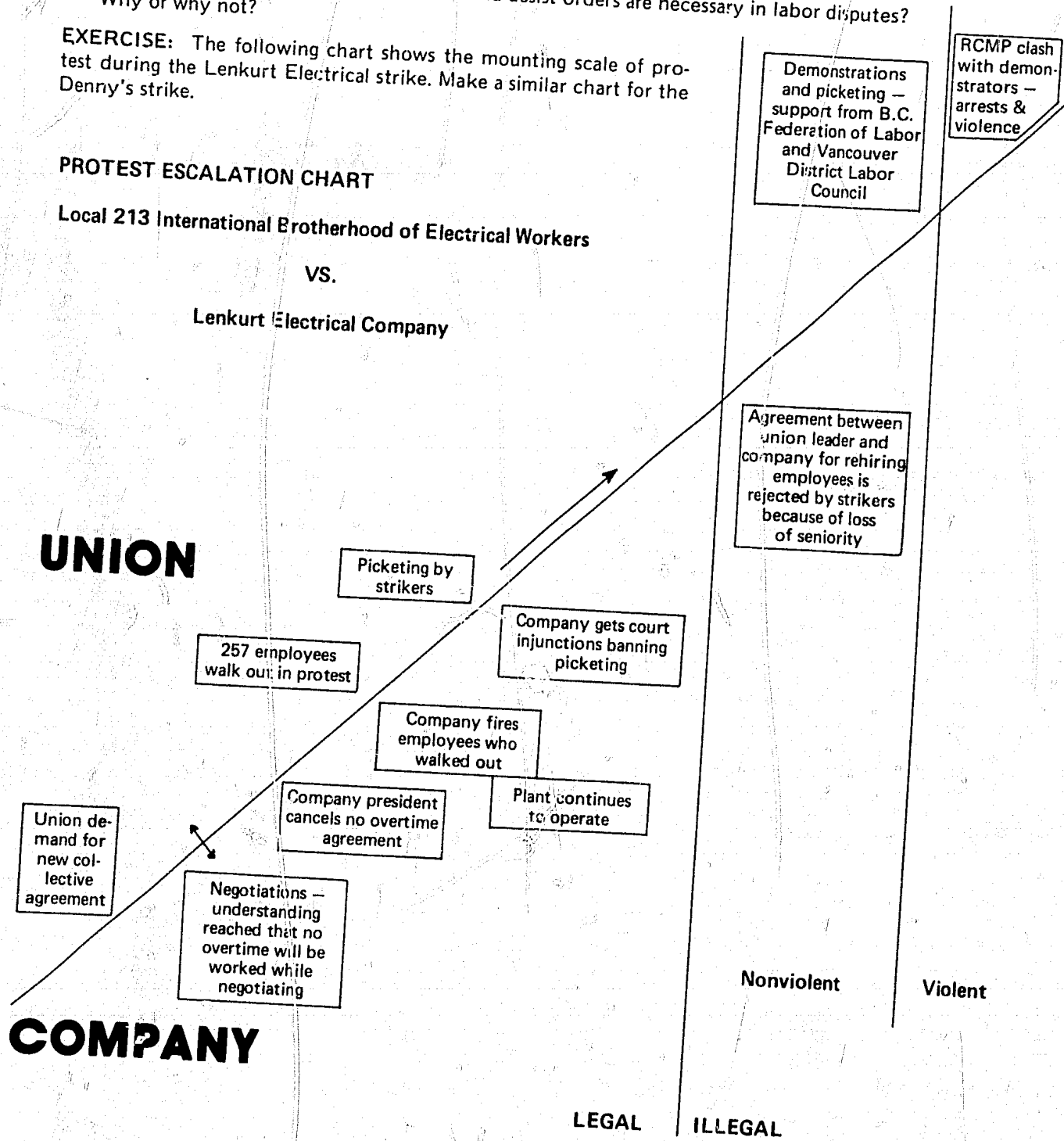
EXERCISE: The following chart shows the mounting scale of protest during the Lenkurt Electrical strike. Make a similar chart for the Denny's strike.

PROTEST ESCALATION CHART

Local 213 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

VS.

Lenkurt Electrical Company



A STRIKER'S STORY

During strikes, the people involved: strikers, management, government, strikebreakers, and sometimes the whole community, often act unreasonably. The greatest cause for this is the economic threat a strike brings.

Whether the strike is for improved working conditions or for higher wages, money is always lost.

The company loses money when production is either stopped or slowed down; the strikers lose money, because strike pay is never equal to the wages they are losing; and the community often loses money, because a strike affects other businesses in the area.

When strikers are risking their jobs and their livelihood for needed improvements in working conditions, when they have been on strike for a long time and have little money to support themselves and their families, it is not surprising that they sometimes act with violence when they see strikebreakers working against them. It is also not surprising that the company reacts violently when it sees this threat to its profit.

The following is a story from a strike in which many people acted unreasonably. When you read it, think about how much this strike affected San Engler's life, not only during the strike and the trial, but for many years to come.

Sam Engler:

"Later on, after the '23 strike, I was blacklisted. I got involved, and I was quite innocent of what I was charged with.

We had been on strike for about a month and some of our more rough characters decided that they were going to have a gang go down one day and chase all the strike-breakers off the Great Northern Dock. So they had a meeting on the Powell Street Grounds. The spokesman for the group said that we were going down . . . but, he added, they didn't want any married men to take part because if any married men were involved they were going to have to look after their families, and they didn't want any hardship for the families. So all the married men were to go home. But I can remember that I and a young fellow like myself called Beaver, decided that we would go down to the CPR tracks to see what happened since we couldn't go down with the crowd. It was raining; so Beaver and I pulled our Souwesters down over our heads so people wouldn't recognize us and we went down to the CPR tracks. Followed the tracks down behind Bowman's Cartage Company to watch these guys go across the tracks to beat up and chase these guys off the dock.

One of the longshoremen . . . took Beaver and I, when he saw us on the tracks, to be strikebreakers. And this fellow had a piece of pipe in his hand and he banged me over the head. Split my head open. As soon as he recognized me after he hit me on the head, he called a couple of other fellows and said: "I have made a mistake and hit one of our own men. Sharkey Abbott has his car parked right by Bowman's Cartage. Let's get Sam up to Sharkey's car and take him to the General Hospital and get him stitched up. He has a bad cut on his head." So they got me up to Sharkey's car on Powell Street. I can remember that a policeman was standing on the other side of the street. When he saw the blood running down my face and us Sharkey started to take me to the hospital, he jumped on the running board of the car and said "Take this man to the police station." So they drove me to the police station. When they took me into the station, the desk sergeant said "This man is badly hurt. He needs medical attention. What have you charged him with?" "I haven't charged him, but it seems he had been in a fight and I thought that I had better bring him in for questioning." "This man needs medical aid" he said to Sharkey, "take him to the General Hospital and get him fixed up."

So they got me outside and got me in the back of the car and the alarm went that there had been a raid on the Great Northern Dock and they came running out to the car and pulled me back in and held me for investigation. Because I was a longshoreman they figured that I was one of the men who had been in this riot. So they locked me up. Put me in jail. The warden, he got a bandage and put it on my head. Had my head tied up so I wasn't bleeding too bad and then they locked me up in jail. I asked the jailer for permission to phone my wife, and he agreed. She immediately guessed that I had been

arrested. I told her I would be getting out on \$2000 bail and that Jimmy Mulroy was putting up his house for bail. So I was released that night and of course my name was in the papers. The neighbours wouldn't talk to my wife the next day when they read the headlines: LONGSHOREMAN BRUTALLY ATTACKS DOCK WORKERS, \$2000 BAIL. She felt despondent that I had been in trouble. But actually I wasn't involved in the fight at all. I was just mistaken by one of our longshoremen who hit me on the head. And so I was blacklisted by the employers.

When I went on trial and appeared in court, a young fellow got up in the witness box and fabricated a whole story about me. He told the Judge that he had seen me down on the dock with a piece of pipe in my hand and that I was hitting the men; that I was brutally attacking them. He told a bunch of lies, because I never got across the CPR tracks. The fellow who was giving the evidence against me was Charlie Clark. The last time I appeared in court people told my wife that if any of the men in hospital who had been badly beaten died, there was a possibility of me being charged with manslaughter. My wife used to sit in court every day. She was just a young girl and she was scared to death that they were going to charge me with manslaughter, based on the lies of that witness.

But at my third court appearance, Gerry McGeer, the ILA lawyer, started questioning this witness, Charlie Clark. He knew the fellow was lying because he was contradicting his own statements. Gerry said to him in Cross examination, "All the time that you have given evidence in this court you have changed your story I don't know how many times. Now I put one question to you, young fellow, and I want a truthful answer. You swore to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. I don't believe that you ever saw this man before in your life until you saw him in the Police Station. Now this is the question and I want a truthful answer. Assuming that some of these men in the hospital are badly hurt and could die of their injuries, your evidence and testimony could convict this young man of manslaughter. I want the truth and nothing but the truth for this court."

The witness started to cry and the Judge said to him: "You swore to tell the truth and nothing but the truth." Then he confessed, "I was told to say this. Truthfully I never saw this man before in my life until I saw him in the Police Station. I was told to say this because somebody was responsible for this riot and we figured that he was one of the men who was in this riot."

So the judge called me up to the witness box and I will never forget this; he pulled his glasses down on his nose and he asked me if I went to the dock with a piece of pipe in my hand. I answered no, that I just wanted to go and see what would happen. "Sonny boy, you know we have had three weeks to go into your history. You have a pretty good record. If I judge you correctly, you didn't have anything to do with the trouble on the waterfront. Case dismissed."

But you know, the representatives of the stevedoring com-

panies were all in the court room. So when the strike was over I filled out an application to go back on the docks. I had to go and see Major Crombie. He had my whole history in front of him. "I'm sorry, but the employers figure that you are an undesirable character to be on the waterfront. We don't need men like you on the docks anymore. We figure you are a trouble maker. There is no use you making application to get back on the docks." That didn't discourage me. I said to my wife, "This is the only thing I know, Mom. I don't want to go

to sea again. I am going to do my best to get back on the docks and prove I was innocent of whatever the employers have branded me."

This is what I went through for five years. I would go from dock to dock. Coastwise. I would work all the little Coastwise boats and my average take-home pay was around \$15 to \$18 a week. I will never know to this day how my wife could manage to keep things going. We had three boys then. It was just a real scramble until about '28 or '29."

from *Man Along the Shore*

© Local 500 ILWU Pensioners, p. 52-54

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the young witness testify that he had seen Sam Engler down at the docks with a piece of pipe in his hand? What does this tell you about the power of the company?
2. What does the newspaper headline tell you about the treatment of striking workers by the press?
3. How would the strike have affected your life if Sam Engler were your father?

STRIKES AND THE MEDIA

WHAT YOU SEE, READ AND HEAR ABOUT STRIKES

The treatment of strikes by the media, in the newspapers, on television, and on radio, has a great impact on a strike's outcome, because it is through public support or rejection that many strikes are won or lost. One problem with this dependence on media is that bias is always involved, and bias makes it extremely difficult for the general public to get a fair and accurate account of the dispute.

Another problem is that the public's first knowledge of a dispute comes when the strike actually occurs, and, all too often, the events leading up to the strike are not given in detail.

The grievances, the collective bargaining process and the tremendous expense to the union is information that may take second place to the excitement of a picket line or the inconvenience to the community.

Employers are well aware of the power of the media. The following quotes are found in a management strike handbook.

"Public sector strikes are not won or lost at the negotiating table or on the streets. They are won by the persuasive ability of the union or management with the community.

Whichever party is able to convince the voters that their position is correct holds the key to winning the strike."

"Public relations is probably the least thought of and the most needed facet of management's counter strategy to a strike.

Management has to have a public relations expert on its team, with facilities for himself and the media. In dealing with the media, the manager has to forget about his personal perceptions of the problem and instead deal with the needs of the community in such a way that he reaches local community members with the message that the agency's position is based on service to the community needs along with fairness to the employees."

The Winnipeg General Strike

In Canada's history, the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 is a good example of the important role that the press played in forming people's attitudes toward the strike. The Winnipeg General Strike grew out of two ordinary strikes, one involving the building-trades union, and the other, metal trades workers at three metal shops. Both strikes had similar demands. The Builders' Exchange (a management group) said that, while it was prepared to deal with individual construction craft unions, it would not recognize the Building Trades Council, which was co-ordinating the demands of all the separate unions. The Metal Trades Contractors (another management group) also refused to bargain with the Metal Trades Council. As a result, the issue became the right of the workers to bargain collectively through union structures of their own choice.

When the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council learned of the employers' refusal to deal with the two councils, it called for a general sympathetic strike. A vote was taken among trade unionists, and the decision was made to hold a general strike on May 15, 1919. That day, the whole industrial and commercial activity of Winnipeg ground to a halt. The essential services such as milk deliveries, waterworks and fire protection were maintained at a minimum level. At its high point, the strike involved as many as 35,000 workers out of a total population of 175,000.

The strike became a confrontation between the strikers and a committee representing the business interests of Winnipeg, the Citizens' Committee of 1,000. The committee, supported by the federal government, made it clear that there would be no bargaining of any kind unless the general strike were called off.

The strikers organized a series of demonstrations to protest the arrest on June 17 of their leaders. A "silent parade" held on June 21 was attacked by special police, mounted police and units of the militia and regular armed forces. One person was killed, and dozens were injured.

With opposition from the federal government, the Citizen's Committee and finally armed forces, it was impossible to continue the strike; it was called off on June 25, 1919. During the strike, the Citizen's Committee launched a massive propaganda war against the strike. The result was that "the role of newspapers in the strike, both local and national, was almost uniformly hostile to the general strike. Only the *Toronto Star* seemed to have any sympathy for, and appreciation of, the plight of the workers in the immediate post war era. It is evident, however, that editors across the country were badly frightened by the strike in its early stages. Only when it became clear that there was no violent revolution taking place in Winnipeg, was there any rational discussion of the factors involved. Even then, collective bargaining was the only issue which received any judicious consideration. Otherwise, Canadian readers were given distorted and sensational editorial sermons on Bolshevism, aliens and radical labor."¹

The following are articles taken from newspapers across Canada at the time of the general strike.

¹ Gen. Editors: David P. Gagan, Anthony Rasporich
The Winnipeg General Strike
Holt Reinhart & Winston of Canada Ltd.
1973, p. 12

■ **THE UNION JACK vs.
THE RED FLAG**
The Star, Montreal
May 21, 1919

THE REAL ISSUE

The real fight at Winnipeg is not between labor and capital now, but between loyal labor and Bolshevism.

There is no doubt that the majority of the men on strike believe they are fighting for the rights of labor against oppression. There is no doubt that the great majority of those in the ranks of Canadian Labor who sympathize with their comrades out West are of the same mind. But the evidence is indisputable that the Winnipeg situation is drifting into the control of hands that are red with revolution — into the hands of fanatical men who are not working for a fairer deal for labor or for a closer co-operation for the common good of Labor and Capital, but for a complete overthrow of existing institutions, industrial, social and political; for the hauling down of the Union Jack and the hoisting of the red flag of Bolshevistic dictatorship.

Under this overshadowing menace the initial issues of the Winnipeg labor dispute have been clouded and obscured. This is particularly unfortunate from the labor standpoint as, viewed from this distance, the Metal Trade strikers had a case which enlisted a good deal of public sympathy, chiefly because of the statement that the employers had refused to negotiate with them. The official demands on which the settlement of the strike still hinges — recognition of the union and reinstatement of the strikers — are certainly not big enough to warrant the great public hardships this strike is involving. But the issue precipitated by these claims has grown so far beyond them that citizens are forced to take sides in the trouble on the broader issue without regard to the justice or injustice of the original dispute.

This is a British country based and developed on the broad principles of British democracy. The vast majority of its people are loyal to the British flag and British institutions. Admitting the existence of industrial and social

inequalities and evils, they recognize that in British democratic principles, properly applied, a proper remedy may be found. Their goal is the co-operation of all classes in the community for the common good. They will resent and oppose proletariat dictatorship as strongly as Prussian dictatorship. They have not fought this war for freedom to submit at the end of it to a tyranny as bitter as that which they have overthrown.

Representatives of the Federal Government are in Winnipeg today. They should have been there a week ago. If the strikers can still be brought under the control of their sane majority of moderate folk and will confine the issue of the original quarrel, it is the duty of this Government to bring the original parties together, even if they have to use force to do so. But if the Bolshevik element controls there can be no compromise. Its chosen weapon is the sword, and by the sword it must perish, lest the whole country be maddened with this ages-old and oft-exploded heresy and go roaring down the heights which heretofore we have climbed, backward down to the sea of national ruin.

■ **DO NOT USE BLACK PAINT**
The Star, Toronto
May 23, 1919

It is satisfying to learn that the issue of dictation or usurpation of power by strikers is disappearing from the Winnipeg situation. It is likely that the opponents of the strikers were unduly sensitive on this point, having in view what has happened in Russia; but it was wise to withdraw the permit signs if they were likely to be misunderstood. The strikers say they were intended merely to protect those members of the unions who by permission remained at work, and so to facilitate the distribution of milk, bread and other necessities and prevent hardship. But with so much talk of Soviet and Bolshevism in the air it is well to avoid even the appearance of evil.

It is becoming more and more clear

that the issue is not Bolshevism or any attempt to usurp the government of Canada, but a dispute between employers and employed on the questions of wages, hours, recognition of unions, and collective bargaining. A strike covering a wide range of industries of course causes great public inconvenience. But what is the remedy? If it is lawful for one set of workers to strike shall it be made unlawful for two or a dozen to strike? The difference of course is that when a strike is general or of very wide range the matter becomes one of national importance, and the Dominion Government may be warranted and even in duty bound to take strong measures to effect a settlement.

Those employers who hold out against collective bargaining — that is, negotiating with unions which have members working in various establishments — are clearly wrong, and their position cannot be maintained. Collective bargaining is the inevitable result of the modern concentration of industry, and to oppose it is just as extreme as to propose the abolition of organized capital. The organization of labor and the organization of capital are the hard facts of the situation, and must be recognized.

The conflict is of course unfortunate, and we all hope that a settlement may be effected as soon as possible. At the same time nothing is to be gained by exaggerating the evil, painting the situation black, and making Winnipeg look like Petrograd. As a matter of fact, a great deal of restraint and good temper have been shown, and the people of Winnipeg are entitled to credit for their conduct in a trying situation.

Bolshevism is not wanted in Canada, but the name should not be fastened upon labor men who repudiate it. In the early history of this country advocates of responsible government were called rebels, and the temper of moderate reformers must have been sorely tried by the unjust reproach. Let not the mistake be repeated in these days when responsible government in industry has become a practical problem demanding solution.

■ MUZZLING THE
WINNIPEG PRESS

The Whig, Kingston
May 26, 1919

The action which did most harm to the cause of the strikers in Winnipeg was the muzzling of the public press. The executive of the strikers' organization explained that it was necessary at this time to muzzle for a few days the enemies of freedom and truth. This explanation has led some of the thinking people to at once conclude that the cause of the strikers was a weak one, and collapse soon followed.

Those men who are in touch with public affairs are naturally amazed at this attitude of the striking element. The public press has, with a very few exceptions, always been found on the side of truth and freedom. The freedom of the press is one of the most valuable and jealously guarded institutions of the British Empire. The press has always fought consistently for the liberty and freedom of the people. The press has always been the first to espouse and support any righteous or just cause. The press is the only channel through which the strikers could have made their case known to the public and through which they could have gained that very essential factor, public sympathy. But they had the mistaken idea that they could ride roughshod over the rest of the populace, and the result was failure.

This failure was largely the result of the muzzling of the newspapers of Winnipeg. Had the cause of the strikers been a just one, they would have found no stronger supporters than the press. Canada has been fortunate in that its newspapers are inspired by motives of the highest type. Patriotism is dominant, but it is tempered with a determination to ensure that the people of our nation shall have everything that is necessary to their comfort and well-being. Any movement which is for the betterment of living and working conditions will always meet with approval and sup-

port. The strikers claimed that their movement was for such a purpose, but they closed up their most efficient mouthpiece. The result should be a lesson that the press of Canada must be free and untrammelled, that it must bow to the wishes of no party, and that it must be kept as it is now, the moulder of public opinion and the mouthpiece of all causes which are worthy and just.

■ FRANTIC PATRIOTISM

Western Labor News, Winnipeg
May 24, 1919

When you have nothing to say; just yell. Such was the advice once given to a politician.

When the reciprocity election was on a few years ago, similar advice was given to (the late) Colonel Glen Campbell by the Conservative party. Glen had expressed himself favorably to reciprocity between Canada and the U.S.A., and when the party decided to oppose it, he asked: "What argument shall I use against it?" Their reply was significant, namely: "Don't argue. Flap the flag."

The "Winnipeg Citizen" has come to the flag flapping stage. The strikers are orderly. Their demands are admitted to be reasonable. The Allied governments have declared for them in toto. So there is but one thing to do. Flap the flag. Wear one in your button hole. Call the strikers Bolsheviks. It isn't quite clear what a Bolshevik is; so that is a good expression to use. Then too, "Our Institutions" is a good mouth filling word, so it cannot be quoted too often. It is a fine thing to defend "institutions." No one can be found who oppose this; so a "Soviet government" must be discovered by the Citizen — "By permission of the Strike Committee."

These inane vaporings of "The Citizen" are too absurd to merit much attention from thinking people so we shall not waste much time or space on them. But there are two reasons why

they ought to be noticed.

The first is that there are a few people who seem to share the frenzy of the self appointed group behind the "Citizen." It is called a Citizens (?) Committee of 1,000 (?). We are prepared to accept the responsibility of saying that it neither represents the citizens, nor is it composed of 1,000 persons. It represents the Greater Winnipeg Board of Trade, and the Manufacturers' Association. It represents very few outside these. Its number may be counted any day as the little group leaves the Industrial Bureau. This group of men have SOMETHING TO PROTECT so it creates an imaginary "revolutionary soviet" as its straw man; and then sets to work to overthrow it by calling citizens meetings and church gatherings to form a volunteer militia.

Not One Case of Disorder

They cannot point to a single case of disorder. This in spite of the fact that over 30,000 persons have been on strike for a week; and in spite of the fact that provocative moves have been made for the express purpose of bringing the thing to a head by causing trouble; and still further, in spite of the publication of "The Citizen" filled daily with the bitterest venom and innuendo — without permission of the strike committee.

We say, in spite of these things, they have not been able to incite one single case of disorder, so at their meetings, held for recruiting, the speakers "have information which they are not at liberty to divulge" that would prove the immediate necessity of having an adequate militia.

At this point we respectfully draw the attention of the "The Citizen" to the fact that the only disorder in this city at this time is in the brains of the group behind its own vaporings. We agree that in that direction there is much disorder, and, as a consequence, we understand clearly why they "are not at liberty to divulge the nature of the information" they have.

■ THE ONE BIG ISSUE

The Winnipeg Citizen

May 22, 1919

[This paper issued WITHOUT permission of the Strike Committee]

THE ONE BIG ISSUE — is NOT, shall Trades form Unions — it is NOT collective bargaining

BUT — IS EVERY INDIVIDUAL DISPUTE BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE TO CONTINUE TO DISRUPT THE LIFE OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY?

That, fellow-citizens, is the ONE BIG ISSUE, and it must and will be solved now by the community as a whole, once and for all.

The whole city is throbbing with indignation at being "PERMITTED TO LIVE" by a coterie of five men at the Labor Temple.

So strong is the feeling that delegation after delegation has appeared before the "Citizens Committee of One Thousand" urging immediate action.

The people of this city are not going to be forced into the position of taking sides with employer and employee.

They are not against organized labor as such. But they strenuously object to having their bread shut off, their milk shut off, their water supply threatened, their mail stopped, at the will of five individuals who do not represent constituted authority.

NO GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS HOWEVER WISE IN NEW THEORIES ARE GOOD ENOUGH TO DICTATE TO THEIR FELLOW BEINGS.

SETTLE THE TROUBLE NOW OR GO THROUGH WORSE ON JULY FIRST.

THE DECENT MEN IN LABOR

CIRCLES WERE MISLED INTO THIS STRIKE DON'T BLAME THEM.

HAS IT OCCURED TO YOU THAT WINNING, VEITCH, ROBINSON AND COMPANY ARE DRAWING THEIR PAY WHILE YOU WALK STREETS.

IS CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY OR THE BOLSHEVIKI TO RULE WINNIPEG?

LET US SETTLE "THE ONE BIG ISSUE" ONCE AND FOR ALL.

WINNIPEG REFUSES TO LIVE "BY AUTHORITY OF STRIKE COMMITTEE."

SHALL BABIES STARVE AND INVALIDS SUFFER "BY PERMISSION OF THE STRIKE COMMITTEE"?

■ "OUR CAUSE IS JUST"

Western Labour News, Winnipeg

May 21, 1919

Never have the workers of Winnipeg had so much confidence in their cause as today. Never has there been such unanimity as to absolute necessity of settling once and for all the two points at issue, namely:

1. THE RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, and

2. THE RIGHT TO A LIVING WAGE.

Let us take the case of the men who first came on strike to try and enforce their demands.

We reproduce from the Western Labor News of May 2nd, the statement as it affects the Building Trades Strike as it affected, at that time, some 1,400 workers:

Wages only 18 per cent Higher than in 1914 — Cost of living up 80 per cent. — Bosses say Demands of men reasonable and necessary to maintain

standard of citizenship — But others must take responsibility for increase men demand. — Blanket Increase of 20 cents an hour.

All workers including the Building Trades Council went on strike on Thursday morning, May 1st, after holding in the Convention Hall of the Industrial Bureau, the greatest meeting in the history of the Building Trades Council. The vote was 1,199 for strike to 74 against.

A.E. Godsmark secretary of the Building Trades Association states that "the firms have reached the limit of their ability to pay with the proposal they had submitted to the men." The following figures do not bear out his contention. The fact is, that, while building expenses have increased 35 to 40 per cent, during the war, the wages of the men have increased on the average of all trades involved only 18 per cent. An increase of only 18 per cent in wages while the cost of living has increased 80 per cent, proves both the justice of the present demands of the men and their lack of responsibility for the added cost of building construction.

The average increase offered by the master builders is 15 1/3 per cent, while the men are determined on a flat increase of 20 cents per hour, or approximately 32 per cent on present prices. This still leaves them considerably worse off than before the war. This is the reason the bosses themselves admit that the claims of the men are reasonable and justified. But, they say, other persons than the builders must bear the responsibility of increasing the cost of construction. The defence of the worker is that he is worthy of his hire and he must have a living wage.

The 1935 General Waterfront Strike

Another example of the differing views held by people of the media comes out of the 1935 general waterfront strike in Vancouver. Although tensions were building up between the waterfront workers' union and the Shipping Federation over union dispatching and distribution of surplus work, the issue of this strike became the handling of unfair cargo from Powell River. In May of 1935, the waterfront workers union sent a man to organize the longshoremen there. Powell River was a company town with no union, and it had been company policy to hire casuals (men not steadily employed by the company) to load newsprint onto ships. These casuals formed a union and demanded wages equal to Vancouver longshoremen. The company retaliated by refusing to hire casuals for dock work — instead they would use regular company employees. The new union regarded this as a lockout and declared a strike. With the strike on, all ships from Powell River were placed on an unfair list, and Vancouver longshoremen refused to unload them. The Shipping Federation then declared a three-year agreement with the waterfront workers union, signed in October 1934, at an end. In effect, it locked the union out; the strike was on.

The strike turned into a bitter contest. The company used scabs to continue the work, and police were used to protect the scabs and keep pickets off the docks. One demonstration at Ballentine Pier was attacked by the police, and at least 28 people were injured in the bloody battle that ensued. Many arrests of union leaders and strikers took place, and this, combined with the strike's dragging on for six months without success, caused the strike to disintegrate.

The following articles appeared in two Vancouver newspapers during the strike:

Editorials

THE VANCOUVER SUN

Since 1886 Vancouver's Most Useful Institution

Robert Cromie Owner and Publisher
Herbert Sallans Editor

Read that you may receive not only
facts but the significance of those facts

MONDAY JUNE 17, 1935

A DECLARATION OF WAR

The appeal of Ivan Emery last night for volunteers to go down on the docks Tuesday afternoon and use violence against the men who are loading and unloading ships is nothing more nor less than a declaration of war against the people of Vancouver.

The basic cause of this strike is that there are about five men registered for every stevedoring job. It is the old story of technology displacing workers. And it is common all over the North American continent.

It is a story that this newspaper has been trying to tell and impress for months and years.

What Ivan Emery is trying to do is inflict the grief of a continent on this Vancouver community.

This strike leader rails and raves about the "rights" of his particular workers.

What they mean by "rights" is the right to go down on the docks and maul the fellows who are trying to keep the business of the port going.

What about the rights of the families that depend upon continuous waterfront jobs for a livelihood? Have they no rights?

What about the rights of Vancouver business men who must have a functioning port or close down their businesses and thus bring unemployment and misery to their employees?

What about the rights of Vancouver fathers and mothers who can only feed their families when supplies are readily available through the waterfront?

Vancouver has patiently tried to understand this waterfront strike.

But when fellows like Ivan Emery urge violence and talk glibly about "rights" and then deny for the majority of the community the right to live normally, they challenge common sense and decency.

Ivan Emery's is an out-and-out declaration of war against organized labor, against organized society, and particularly against the peace-loving people of Vancouver.

Vancouver people cannot do other than deal with it as such.

B.C. Worker's News

VAN 'SUN' HELPS ATTEMPT TO SMASH LONG SHOREMEN'S STRIKE

VILLIFIES EMERY,
PREPARING FOR
'FRAME-UP'

Waterfront Workers'
Wives Cancelling
Subscriptions to 'Sun'

VANCOUVER, June 17 — The mendacity of the Vancouver 'Sun' was again shown in its reaction to the great meeting of the Longshoremen in the Arena Sunday night. In a leading editorial next day it endeavored to work up a lynch spirit against the strikers and against Emery in particular.

Despite the absence of anything in its own account of the meeting and its (partly) verbatim report of Emery's speech, it editorially charges him with advocating violence, and otherwise lies and distorts his utterances.

What Emery Really Said

Speaking of the proposed effort to talk to the strike-breakers, Emery expressly declared that no violence was intended but the demonstration would show whether the Shipping Federation and the police, which have been put at its disposal by the state and the city, would resort to violence.

The editorial then proceeds to "explain" why scabs are working on the waterfront. It is not a dispute between the bosses and the workers at all, according to the venal capitalist rag, but is because "technology" is causing five men to be available for every single job. No one will deny that machinery, and the speed-up are throwing millions of workers out of employment. And according to the "Sun," the workers must as a consequence, submit without a struggle or murmur to any slave conditions and coolie wages the bosses may impose.

Boss Ideas of "Rights"

The "Sun" then talks about "rights" — the rights of the strikebreakers but not a word about the rights of the regular longshoremen. "What about the rights of the families that depend upon continuous waterfront jobs for a livelihood?" it howls. Yes, what about the rights? The inference the "Sun" seeks to convey is that the scabs are the genuine residents of Vancouver, while the striking longshoremen are transients. The reverse is the case. Whilst there are a few Vancouver men with families who are so degraded as to scab, and a few more who are so weak as to be coerced by the Relief Office cutting off their relief because they will not accept "available" (scab) work, the great majority of the scabs are recruited from the lower dregs of society, from the underworld and the gangster element.

Living "Normally"

On the other hand, the strikers are almost exclusively resident of Vancouver and have been for many years. The strikers are charged with denying to the majority of the community the "right to live normally," meaning the right to accept the dictates of the Shipping Federation to destroy the painfully acquired right of the workers to organize into unions of their own choosing in order to protect their interests against a rapacious profit-hungry exploiting class.

The Normality of Scabbery

Let us remind the "Sun" that in so far as the waterfront was concerned, the majority of the community were living normally up until the day that the Shipping Federation locked out the longshoremen and if they are not living normally now they can place the blame on the waterfront bosses where

it properly belongs. But in the "Sun," which is only serving the gang that gives them full-page ads, "living normally" means open shop, scab labor and the destruction of the organized labor movement.

The lying of the "Sun" reaches a high point when it states that Emery's speech was an "out-and-out declaration of war against organized labor." Every one present at the meeting at which Emery made the speech which the "Sun" referred to, and thousands who were not present, know that the "Sun" lied shamelessly, deliberately and maliciously.

The Frame-Up

Every speech made at the meeting, and especially the speech of Emery, as a plea for the defense of organized labor. Were not the speakers, every one, well known members and leaders of organized labor? And yet the pen prostitutes of a venal press have the impudence to set themselves up as the champions and defenders of organized labor, scribbling their tripe with one hand, while stuffing the money received from the fascist vigilante Citizen's League into their capacious pockets with the other. The alarmist lying and slander of the "Sun" synchronizes with the threat of McGeer to prosecute Emery. It fits in with the legal frame-up that is in course of preparation against the strike leaders in an effort to break the strike.

The editorial in the "Sun" was not an isolated effort. It was a part of the concerted and well prepared plan to smash organized labor on the Pacific Coast. The workers will not be surprised or dismayed by the lying alumnations of the "Sun" or any other venal sheet. Realizing just what the attack of the Shipping Federation, backed by that monster of its own creation, the Fascist Citizen's League, and all the forces of the capitalist state, including the boss-controlled press, means the workers and many who are sympathetic to their just cause will rally to the support of the struggling waterfront workers.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss how you can get accurate information from newspapers.
2. How do you account for the differing views of the 1919 strike in various Canadian newspapers?



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