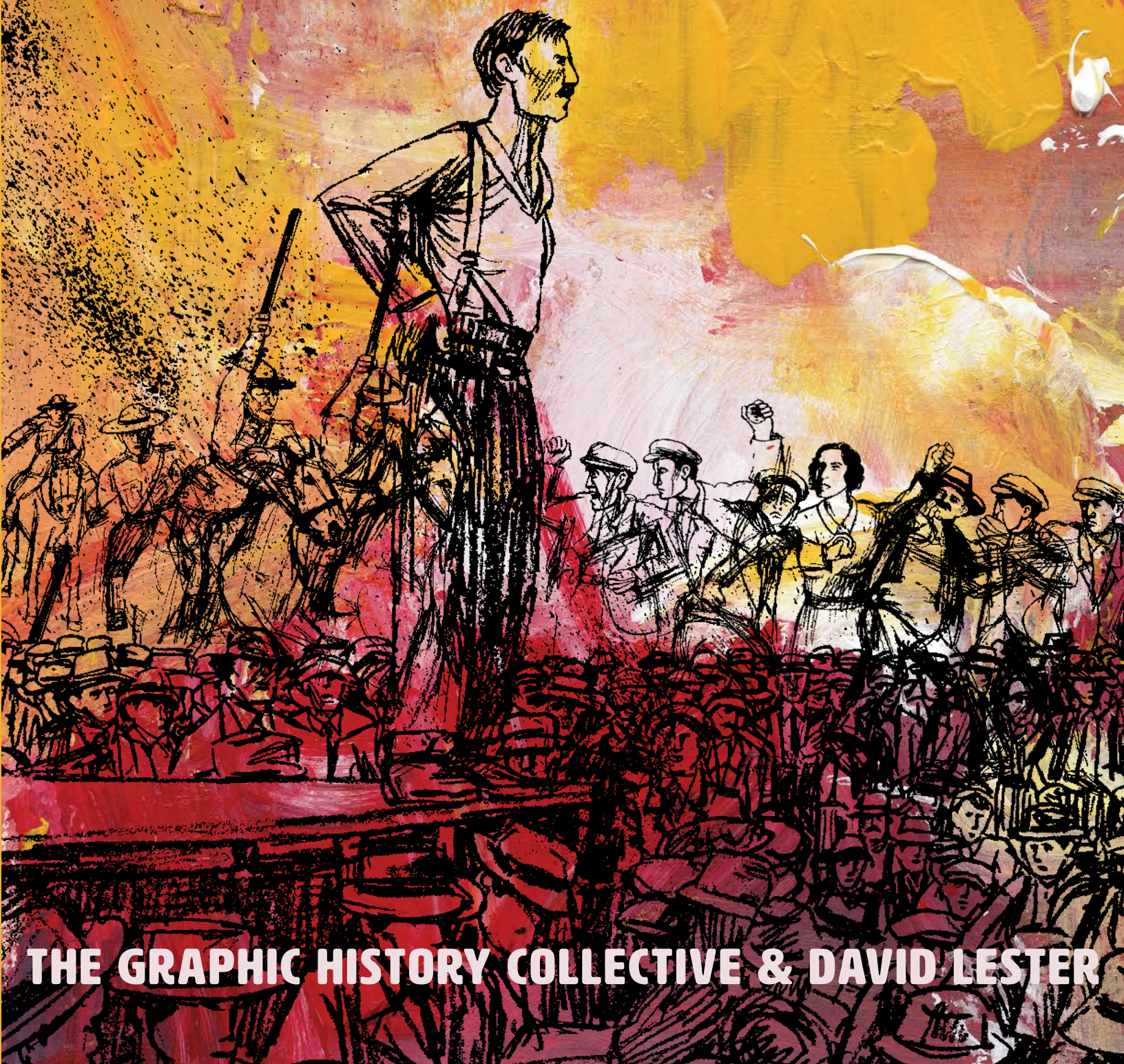


1919

A GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE



THE GRAPHIC HISTORY COLLECTIVE & DAVID LESTER

1919

A GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE

“1919 captures the intensity and vibrancy of the Winnipeg General Strike. This book is a must-read for history buffs, comic fans, and everyone seeking a more just world.”

—**Candida Rifkind**, professor of English, University of Winnipeg

“This is one of the most important books of our time to educate people about the history of our city and the labour movement.”

—**Basia Sokal**, president, Winnipeg Labour Council

“They live in our imaginations still: those remarkable days when workers in one of Canada’s largest cities seized power and dared to dream of an egalitarian, post-capitalist society. 1919 is a stirring, vivid portrayal of the Winnipeg General Strike that makes it come alive again for a new generation.”

—**Ian McKay**, author of *Reds, Rebels, Radicals and Reasoning Otherwise* and L.R. Wilson Chair in Canadian History, McMaster University

“1919 is fantastic! The lessons of the Winnipeg General Strike, an event at once local, national, and international, come alive in these pages and highlight how women workers defied gender and class expectations to join working-class men in seeking a fairer economic, political, and social system.”

—**Linda Kealey**, author of *Enlisting Women for the Cause*

“1919 uses radical art and history to remind us that in Winnipeg, as elsewhere, the status quo is not a foregone conclusion as long as we choose to organize and resist.”

—**Chris Hannah**, vocalist and guitarist, Propagandhi

“Read this book. Share it. Learn from the truth it shares and think about the questions it raises. And then ask some of your own, like: ‘When do we do it again?’”

—**Monique Woroniak**, Winnipeg librarian, co-founder of groundworkforchange.org

“Imaginative and deeply moving, *1919* is a triumph. It presents the multifaceted story of the Winnipeg General Strike by drawing on historical research to pay attention to class, gender, race, and politics. This book is the perfect introduction to the events of 1919.”

—**Mark Leier**, author of *Red Flags and Red Tape* and professor of history, Simon Fraser University

“This is a rigorous, thoroughly engaging, and dynamic recounting of the Winnipeg General Strike, one of the most dramatic episodes of labour unity and activism in Canadian history. This is a timely and important work—the Winnipeg General Strike offers many valuable lessons in labour solidarity directly relevant to activists today.”

—**Rhonda Hinthner**, author of *Perogies and Politics* and professor of history, Brandon University

“This is a wonderful project that will help activists today understand the character of class struggle in Winnipeg and beyond.”

—**Cy Gonick**, founder of *Canadian Dimension* magazine

“An engaging and easy way to learn about Canadian labour history that reflects today’s ongoing struggle for fair wages and working conditions.”

—**Kevin Rebeck**, president, Manitoba Federation of Labour

“*1919* is a timely reminder that the struggles of working-class people intersect with the fight against the oppression of Indigenous peoples, women, and people of colour. We are allies in struggle and structural change happens when we fight together—united.”

—**Althea Balmes**, Kwentong Bayan Collective

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BETWEEN THE LINES
Toronto

1919

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PREFACE

REVISITING THE WORKERS' REVOLT

History is an important resource for people who want to change the world. Working-class history in particular—the experiences, stories, and struggles of ordinary working people—is a useful organizing tool. Understanding past labour battles can help workers develop successful tactics and strategies to improve their lives and build a better world today. Looking backwards can clarify the way forward.

This does not mean that we should simply reproduce the past, though. Class struggle is not so straightforward. Even if replication were possible, it would not be advisable. The Winnipeg General Strike is a case in point. The six-week general sympathetic strike that saw 35,000 workers walk off the job ultimately ended in defeat. The strike was violently crushed by police, in collusion with state officials and business leaders. Still, we can learn a lot from the Winnipeg General Strike. As labour and feminist activist Madeleine Parent once noted, “Every labour battle teaches a worker how to fight. . . . Nothing is ever completely lost.”¹ This comic book revisits “the workers’ revolt” in Winnipeg to highlight a number of important lessons that activists can lean on and learn from today as they fight for radical social change.²

Firstly, mounting a mass strike takes a lot of hard work and organization and an awareness of the local character of class struggle. In Canada, 1919 was a momentous year of class conflict—the “now hidden, now open fight” between bosses and workers.³ Though the Winnipeg General Strike may have

caught some bosses and state officials by surprise, it was not a spontaneous revolt; it did not come out of nowhere. Strikes had been a common occurrence in Winnipeg since the 1890s. The big strike in 1919 was the “open”—more obvious—part of class conflict. But to understand the strike’s root causes, we must connect it to the longer “hidden” history of colonial and capitalist development and class polarization in Winnipeg going back at least to the 1870s. We need to understand the complicated composition of Winnipeg’s working class, from Métis and Eastern European labourers to British metal workers and labour leaders. Workers today can benefit from a better understanding of the history of the labour movement and labour struggles in their community. We all make our own history, but not in conditions of our choosing. If we want to win, we need to better understand our past and present conditions and adapt our strategies of struggle accordingly.

Secondly, solidarity is key to organization. Then, as now, people disagreed over what caused the Winnipeg General Strike. At the time, some newspapers declared the strike to be a revolutionary plot to overthrow the state and abolish capitalism. It was not. It was also not simply a fight for collective bargaining. In reality, a multitude of grievances coalesced into a larger workers’ revolt, as people from different backgrounds joined the strike for different reasons and participated in different ways. Solidarity played a decisive role. The strike started with 11,000 unionized workers, but the number of strikers soon swelled to 35,000. The increase was due to thousands of non-unionized workers—many of them recent immigrants and women historically shut out of the labour movement—joining the strike. For a whole host of reasons, working-class Winnipeggers from different walks of

1 Noreen Shanahan, “Madeleine Parent and me,” *Rampant with Memory*, <https://rampantwithmemory.wordpress.com/2012/04/05/madeleine-parent-and-me>.

2 Craig Heron, ed., *The Workers’ Revolt in Canada, 1917–1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

3 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New

York: W.W. Norton and Company), 473.

life stood in solidarity with one another and used the general strike—the collective withdrawal of labour power—to try to address divergent demands together, as a union of working people. As the city ground to a halt, as the phones went silent, the streetcars stopped, and the lights turned off, workers started to understand their power and the saying, “Labour creates all wealth, all wealth belongs to labour!” One hundred years later, harnessing the power of solidarity and organizing as a class of working people across differences, such as race, gender, and skill, can help revitalize the workers’ movement today.

Lastly, the Winnipeg General Strike reminds us that bosses and the state are not on the side of working people. In 1919, state officials and employers used their power, especially control of the press and courts, to try to divide workers and contain the strike. In an effort to undercut the strike’s leadership and delegitimize the strike, they labeled the strikers “enemy aliens” and “foreign radicals” and even arrested many of them on dubious charges and tried to deport them. Ultimately, a group of politicians and business leaders marshalled their power to crush the strike by authorizing violent police attacks on strikers

and their supporters, culminating in “Bloody Saturday.” On Saturday, 21 June 1919, the Royal North-West Mounted Police and special constables brutally attacked strike supporters peacefully assembled in the streets for a silent parade. The events of Bloody Saturday, so powerfully portrayed by David Lester in the following pages, are a stark reminder: the working class and the employing class have nothing in common, and the state is not afraid to bloody its hands to protect the interests of capital. Working people must rely on each other and work together to create a new, more just world from the ashes of the old.

This comic book does not seek to simply celebrate the Winnipeg General Strike. Rather, on the occasion of the strike’s centenary, it revisits the workers’ revolt in Winnipeg to introduce new generations to the many lessons working-class history holds for workers today. Learning these lessons can help reenergize our efforts to build a better world. Reflecting on the past can help working people today understand not only where we have been and where we are going, but also where we want to go and how we can get there together.

The Graphic History Collective

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Comics are collaborative projects. The Graphic History Collective (GHC) would like to thank the many people who helped make *1919: A Graphic History of the Winnipeg General Strike* possible.

The GHC is a not-for-profit arts collective. For us, solidarity is not just a winning strategy in class struggle. It is our artistic methodology. In taking seriously the idea that we can accomplish more by working together, we prioritize collaboration. The power of solidarity is thus illustrated in multiple ways throughout the following pages. As GHC members, we volunteer and share our artistic, writing, and administrative skills. Nevertheless, comics take time and energy to produce, and many people generously contributed knowledge, labour, and funding to this project. Most importantly, we recognize that this comic book would not have been completed without David Lester's incredible talent and artistic labour. *1919* is the product of a creative partnership between David and GHC members Sean Carleton, Robin Folvik, Kara Sieviewright, and Julia Smith. Special thanks to David for creating the beautiful cover art.

We are grateful to Jeff Taylor, the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL), the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike Centenary Committee, and the academics, activists, and researchers who offered their support and feedback during the production process. Jeff and the MFL ensured that the artist and writers received

compensation for their work. We thank Wendy Atkinson, David Camfield, Adam Gaudry, Adele Perry, Kevin Rebeck, Sharon Reilly, and David Thompson for their expertise and insightful suggestions on early drafts of the project. As well, thanks to Jim Naylor for offering helpful comments on the storyboard and writing the book's introduction. We also thank all of the authors listed in the bibliography for their historical scholarship, which helped us better understand the Winnipeg General Strike.

We also want to acknowledge the people at the heart of this project: the strikers who bravely walked off the job and staged one of the longest and largest work stoppages in Canadian history. In producing this project, we drew heavily from sources created by strikers, such as newspapers, interviews, and the strikers' own history of the strike, *Winnipeg 1919*. Working-class Winnipeggers viewed and experienced the strike in different ways based on their own positions and backgrounds. We hope that the inclusion of strikers' views and voices provides a sense of their perspectives on the strike. We wanted to show that workers are important agents of social change and that our actions can change the course of history.

Lastly, we thank Between the Lines, and specifically Amanda Crocker, for working with us and supporting our vision of changing the world with comics.

The Graphic History Collective

INTRODUCTION

THE WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE AT 100

When people think of the Winnipeg General Strike, one image that often comes to mind is an overturned streetcar. In some ways, this is not surprising. The famous photograph of a streetcar being tipped on the afternoon of “Bloody Saturday,” 21 June 1919, the strike’s violent climax, has become one of the most iconic images of the strike. A tilted bronze and glass streetcar has even been constructed as a permanent art installation on Winnipeg’s Main Street to mark the centenary of the strike.

In other ways, however, focusing on the overturned streetcar as the symbol of the strike, as many popular accounts do, is misleading and directs attention away from the real purveyors of violence on “Bloody Saturday.” On that day, the Royal North-West Mounted Police and the private “specials” used the tipping of the streetcar as pretext to viciously attack strike supporters, killing two and wounding dozens more, in an effort to break the strike. And it worked. In 1919, government officials, in consult with powerful capitalists, used violence to crush Winnipeg workers’ challenge to the status quo. Although “Bloody Saturday” is an important and dramatic event, we must not reduce the Winnipeg General Strike to the state’s violence on that one afternoon. There is a bigger story to focus on, one that this comic book by the Graphic History Collective and David Lester beautifully illustrates: the story of astounding working-class solidarity and determination that was at the heart of the six-week strike.

To better understand the events recounted in the following pages, a brief introduction is necessary. The Winnipeg General Strike started in the spring of 1919 as a dispute between workers in the metal and building trades and their employers over workers’ rights to bargain collectively, by industry rather than as individual unions, with employers. This issue quickly set off an explosion of worker frustration with low wages

and high rates of inflation and unemployment after World War I. Other unions soon voted overwhelmingly to strike in support of their comrades, and when they walked off the job the strike spread to thousands of unorganized workers. Large numbers of returned soldiers also began to march in support of the strike. Employers sought to undermine this solidarity by fueling ethnic hatreds, arguing that the strike was led by “enemy aliens,” and by appealing to an ethnocentric patriotism, declaring the strike a “revolution” against tried-and-true British democracy.

Winnipeg’s political and business elites formed an anti-strike organization, the Citizens’ Committee of One Thousand, in part, to further foment divisions amongst workers and defeat the strike. They had every reason to believe such anti-labour tactics could work. The city’s unions were mostly skilled and “British” in character; they generally did not include the large population of Eastern European immigrants. Also, a few months earlier ugly crowds had assaulted immigrants in the city, claiming they were threatening jobs. The war helped fuel this anger. Some people of British origin who had readily gone off to fight for “freedom,” “democracy,” and the British Empire in the battlefields of Europe felt that workers who had stayed behind were “foreigners” and “slackers.” Immigrants became easy targets for returned soldiers who faced an uncertain economic future as they struggled to find jobs.

Astoundingly, attempts to turn workers against each other during the strike mostly fell flat. Racism did not disappear entirely, of course, but solidarity won the day. The thousands of non-unionized workers who joined the strike were largely the same immigrants the Citizens’ Committee demonized. Also, the returned soldiers seemed to divide along class lines. Large numbers of rank-and-file soldiers stood by their civilian fellow workers on strike. This is what made it a general strike: this was not just an uprising

of a minority of workers who had been able to form unions, but a revolt of the city's working class more or less as a whole. Winnipeg workers, whether skilled or unskilled, men or women, immigrant or Canadian-born, rose as one.

Why? Part of the story is Winnipeg's own history of rapid growth and industrialization, the glaring social chasm between the sprawling immigrant slums of the North End and the palatial homes of the city's wealthy, along with an economic elite that had bitterly fought unionism. But other factors also played a role. The war had deepened the social divide. Working people died by the millions in the trenches while wartime shortages drove up prices everywhere. Workers in Canada, as elsewhere, struggled to put food on the table while bosses, the barons of finance and industry, raked in vast profits in the booming wartime economy. Governments claimed to be fighting a war for freedom and democracy, but clamped down on criticisms of unfairness and social inequality at home. Civil and political rights were severely curtailed. It seemed to many that "Kaiserism"—autocratic rule in Germany—had reared its ugly head in Canada.

To encourage military recruitment and boost support for a bloody war that seemed to continue without end, consuming more lives every year, the government appealed to a spirit of sacrifice. Civic and church leaders spoke of a "new era" of peace and progress that would follow the great tragedy of war. While this language promoted vague hope for a better future, developments elsewhere provided more concrete inspiration. In 1917, Russian workers overthrew the tsar and withdrew Russian soldiers from the war. In 1918, an uprising of German workers helped bring World War I to a close. Across Europe, working people appeared to be seizing control of their own destinies. In North America, too, workers were organizing and striking as never before. In February 1919, 65,000 workers in Seattle, Washington walked off the job to protest poor wages and working conditions. Canadian workers were similarly rising into action, with huge strike waves even before the war ended.

All of this provided a context of hope that perhaps, through struggle, it was possible to change the

world—to challenge what was increasingly understood as capitalism's reign of poverty, exploitation, and militarism. This was the radical message Winnipeg's labour and socialist leaders put forward to roughly 1,700 people who gathered at the Walker Theatre in December 1918 to discuss what could be done in the city. As Winnipeggers rang in the new year, 1919, workers were primed for a fight for a better future. In May 1919, as strikers shut down the city and thousands joined the struggle, it became clear that workers' frustration, anger, hope, and growing belief in their strength as a class made for a powerful concoction.

After six weeks, though, the strike was broken by the violence of "Bloody Saturday," but not before it sent panic through the ranks of Canadian capitalists and politicians. From Victoria, British Columbia to Amherst, Nova Scotia, general and near-general strikes broke out in dozens of towns and cities prompted by solidarity with Winnipeg and by local workers' own grievances. How far it would spread and how it would end were far from clear. Fearing the spread of socialism and participatory democracy, municipal, provincial, and federal officials colluded with local elites assembled anonymously in the Citizens' Committee to undermine and crush the strike. The strike ended on 26 June 1919.

Nevertheless, the Winnipeg General Strike proved to be a profoundly politicizing event. During the strike, many workers, used to being disconnected and isolated from one another in the daily grind of capitalist production, gathered freely in open-air meetings at Victoria Park to listen to music and political speakers and to discuss the most recent strike developments as detailed in the daily strike bulletin. Workers revelled in a spirit of participatory democracy much deeper than they had ever known. Organizing the strike—and keeping it going for six weeks—showed workers their capacity to be more than cogs producing profit for their bosses.

The political consciousness strikers developed in 1919 fundamentally shifted the political landscape in Winnipeg and beyond in the years and decades afterwards. Whatever the outcome of the strike itself,

strikers were determined to have a greater say in the future. The strikers' opponents were equally determined to prevent that kind of broader empowerment. Some of the immigrants arrested in the suppression of the strike were slated for deportation under a quickly revised immigration act. The most articulate and public "British-Canadian" leaders were tried in the courts, not for their actions during the strike, but for their ideas. Charged with seditious libel and conspiracy, their political beliefs were put on trial with the aim of discrediting, and even criminalizing, the socialist ideas that were growing in popularity at the time.

The city's legal elite made sure that most of the defendants were convicted, although the prosecution's victory rang hollow. Of those charged, five were elected in the provincial and federal elections that followed—three while still in prison. Although the avenue of the general strike tactic closed for the time being, working-class Winnipeggers chose other routes, following the lead of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the Communist Party, and the One Big Union in struggles that followed. A dynamic left-wing political culture that had its roots before the general strike now grew even richer as workers turned out in droves to speakers, plays, concerts, and marches—and to the ballot boxes. The election maps of the city portrayed a stark contrast between working-class neighbourhoods where the ILP (later the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and the Communist Party held sway and wealthier areas where Conservatives continued to rule.

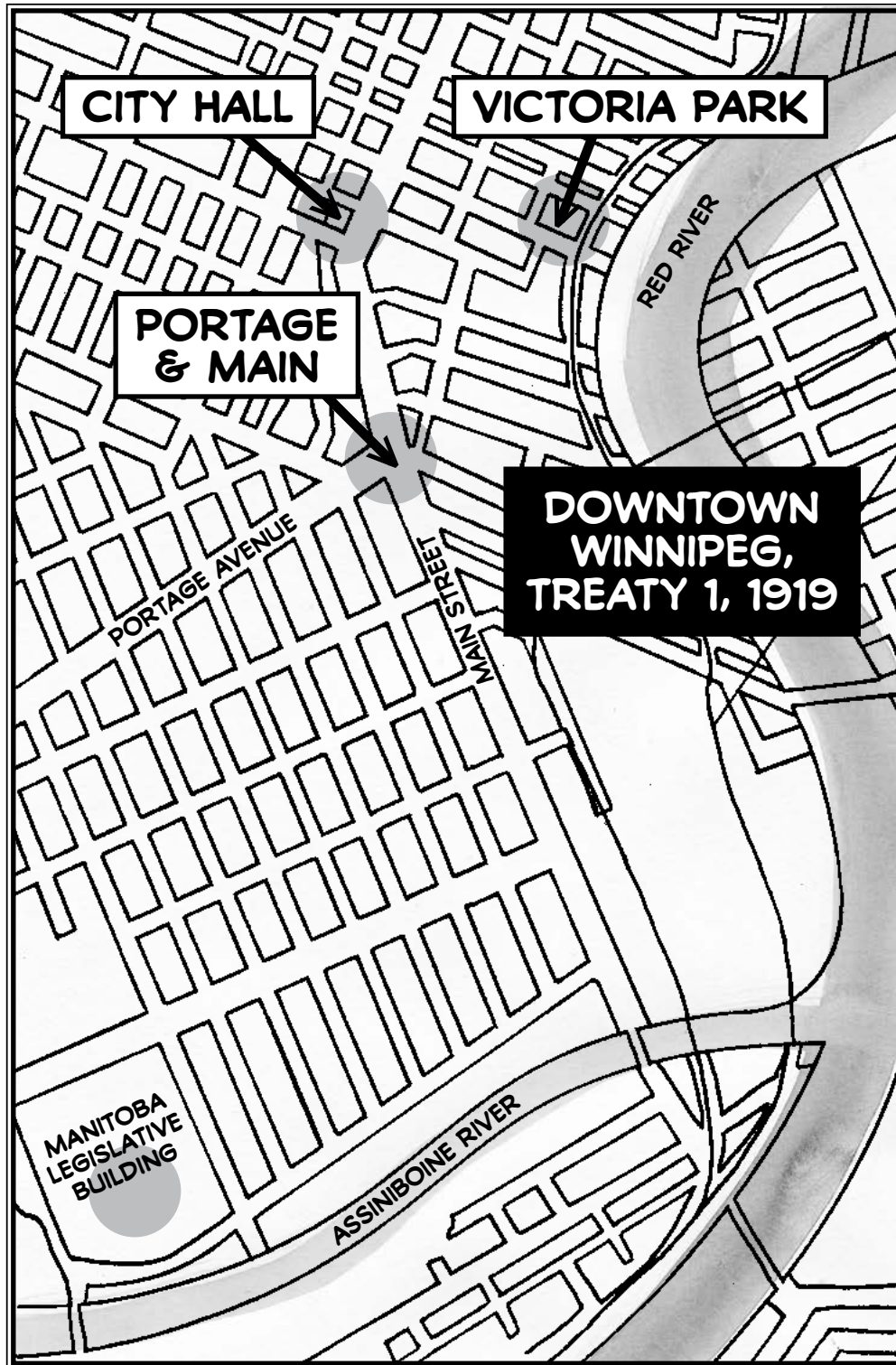
Winnipeg labour maintained its militancy in the years that followed the strike. In the midst of the Great Depression, as relief camp workers mounted the famous On-to-Ottawa Trek, the federal government's decision to attack the trek in Regina in 1935 was motivated, in large part, by a fear of the deep well of support that awaited the trekkers in Winnipeg. At the end of World War II, a new wave of labour militancy forced governments to finally concede a degree of union security through the certification of unions, mandatory collective bargaining, and dues check-off. Labour paid a price for these gains, though. The

"post-war settlement" between labour, capital, and the state that was established in the 1940s was a double-edged sword. No doubt with an eye to the experience of Winnipeg, governments banned sympathy strikes and imposed harsh penalties—fines and imprisonment—for violations. To this day, general strikes are effectively outlawed. Nevertheless, workers in Canada mounted mass strikes in 1972, 1976, and in the 1990s. The attempts to constrain workers' ability to use their solidarity in a general strike stems from the state's fear of the kind of workers' power displayed in 1919.

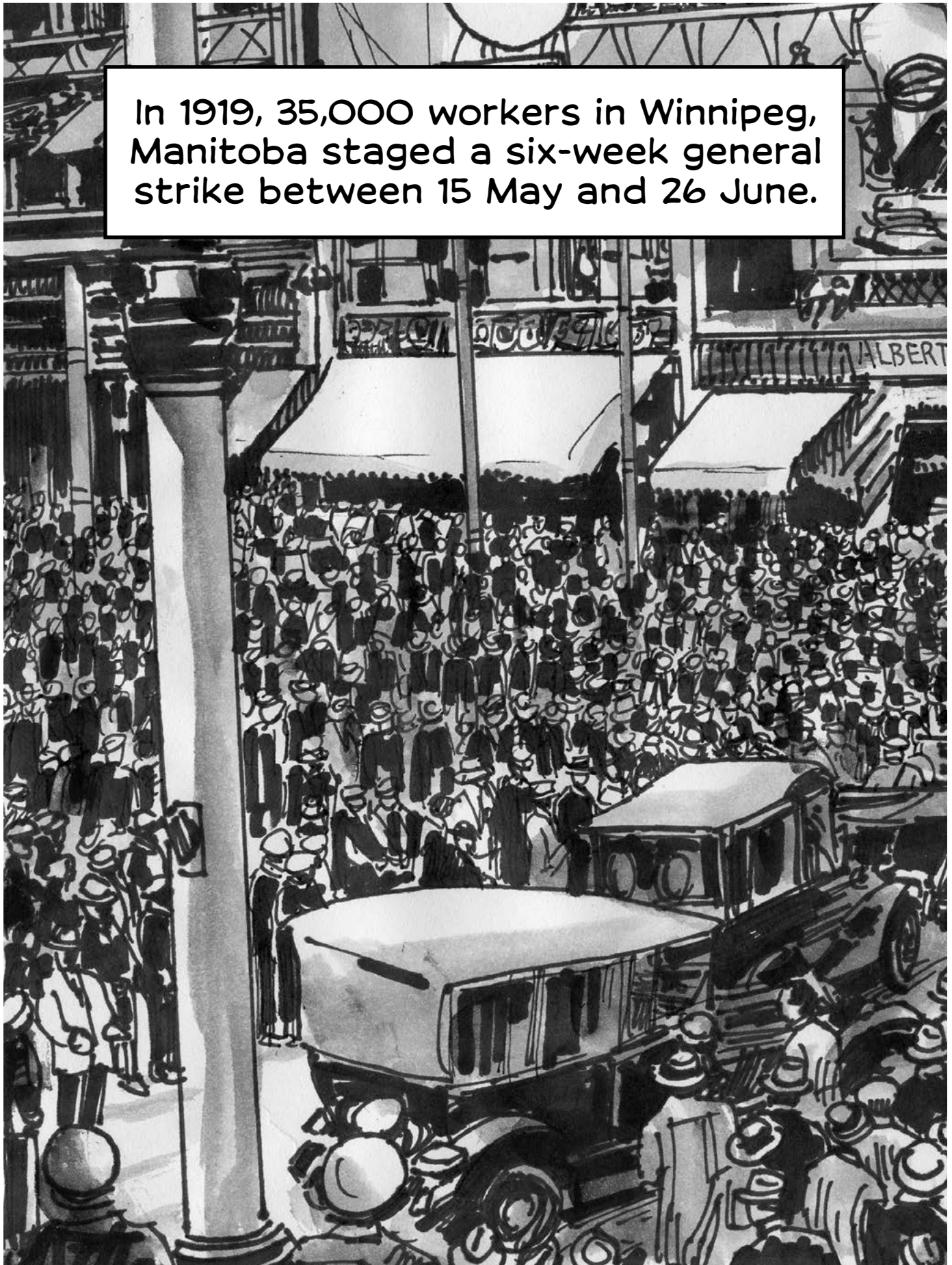
The general strike also made an indelible mark on Winnipeg's culture. Although the geography of the strike was complicated, the labour revolt came to be associated with the city's North End, where Eastern European immigrant communities, segregated by prejudice, poverty, and language, were invigorated by the strike and flourished. For decades, local halls rang with Ukrainian mandolin music and Yiddish speeches celebrating the general strike and the struggles that followed. Having North End roots became a badge of pride in Winnipeg. In the one hundred years since the strike, much has changed. The same North End community is now largely comprised of Indigenous peoples, who have borne the brunt of uneven colonial and capitalist development in Canada. At the same time, much remains unchanged. The people who live in the neighbourhood are still proud of their heritage and strengths. And the community is still poor. Such neighbourhoods, and the broader labour movement, are still fighting many of the same battles as in 1919. Economic hardship, social exclusion, and workplace exploitation continue today in Winnipeg as elsewhere.

This important comic book sheds new light on the story of how a working-class movement became a beacon for social change, how deeply-rooted prejudices began to be challenged, and how courage, audacity, and unity shook Winnipeg's and Canada's elites. A century later, these illustrated pages give us much to think about and see anew.

James Naylor
Professor of History
Brandon University

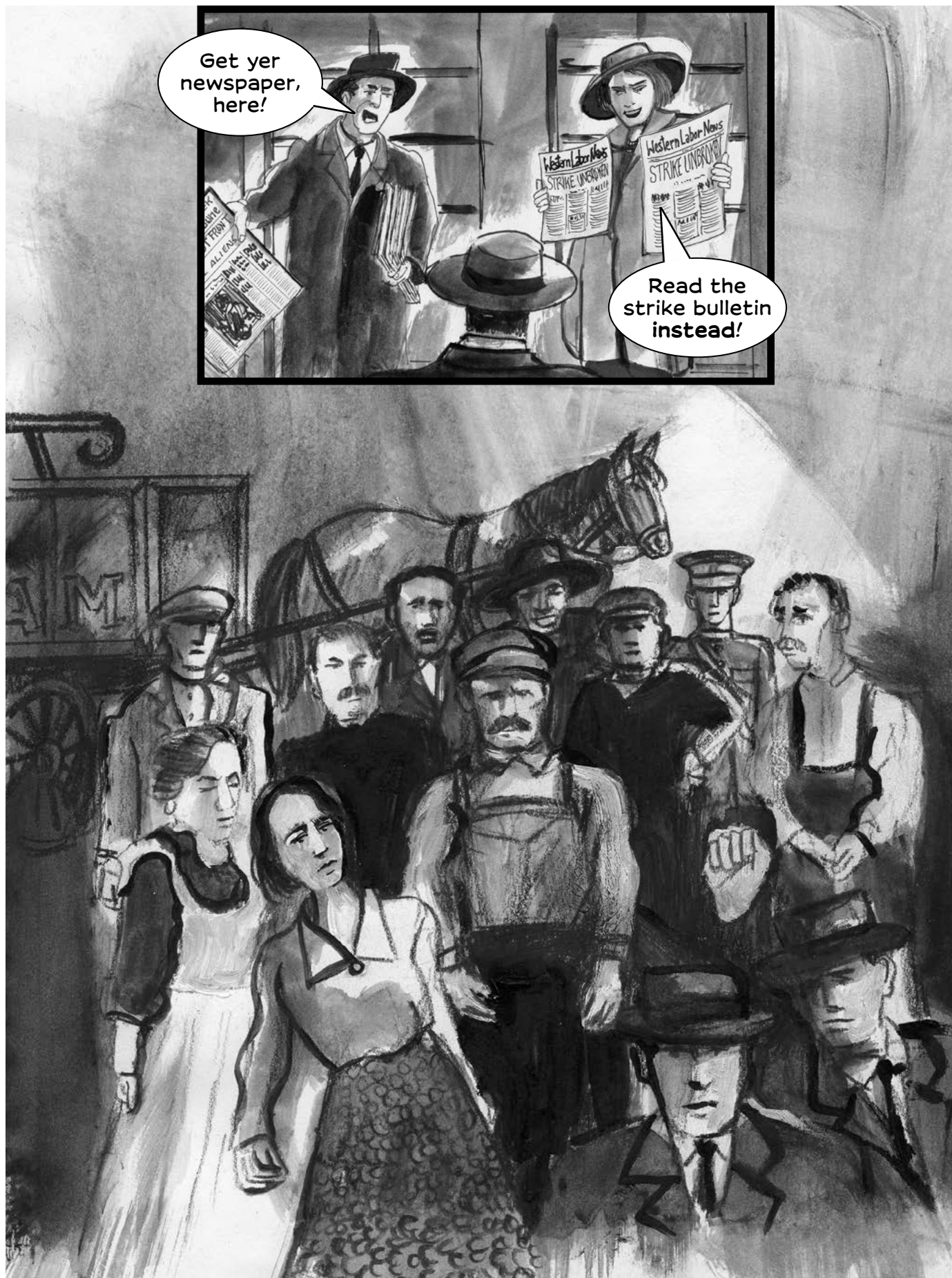


In 1919, 35,000 workers in Winnipeg, Manitoba staged a six-week general strike between 15 May and 26 June.





Workers from a variety of industries walked off the job - they went on strike - to demand collective bargaining rights, higher wages, and more power for working people.

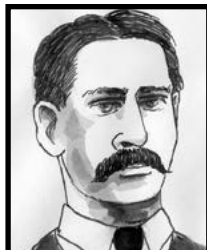




George Armstrong,
carpenter, strike leader



Helen Armstrong,
strike leader



Roger Bray, soldier,
strike leader



Fred Dixon,
strike leader



Edith Hancox,
shopkeeper, organizer



Abraham Heaps,
alderman, strike leader



William Ivens, newspaper
editor, strike leader



R.J. Johns,
machinist, strike leader



William Pritchard,
organizer



John Queen,
alderman, strike leader



R. B. Russell,
machinist, strike leader



Mike Sokolowski,
tinsmith



J.S. Woodsworth,
newspaper editor



Daily World

The strike caught the attention of the world. Newspaper headlines in Canada stoked fears that the workers' revolt was a revolutionary plot by foreign agitators and extremists.

The Montreal Star

**THE WORKERS
HAVE DECLARED
WAR**

The Post, Sydney, NS,
May 22, 1919

**FOREIGNERS:
THE ROOT OF
THE TROUBLE**

The Telegraph, Quebec,
May 21, 1919

**IS THE STRIKE
"REVOLUTIONARY"?**

The World, Vancouver,
May 27, 1919

**THE UNION JACK
VS. THE RED FLAG**

The Star, Montreal, May 21, 1919

ORGANIZED BOLSHEVISM IN WINNIPEG

The Telegraph, Quebec, May 19, 1919

**WINNIPEG
STRIKERS ARE NOT
REVOLUTIONARIES**

The Sun, Vancouver,
May 19, 1919

**EXTREMISTS ON
BOTH SIDES**

The Star, Toronto, May 27, 1919

Vancouver Daily Sun

THE TORONTO DAILY STAR

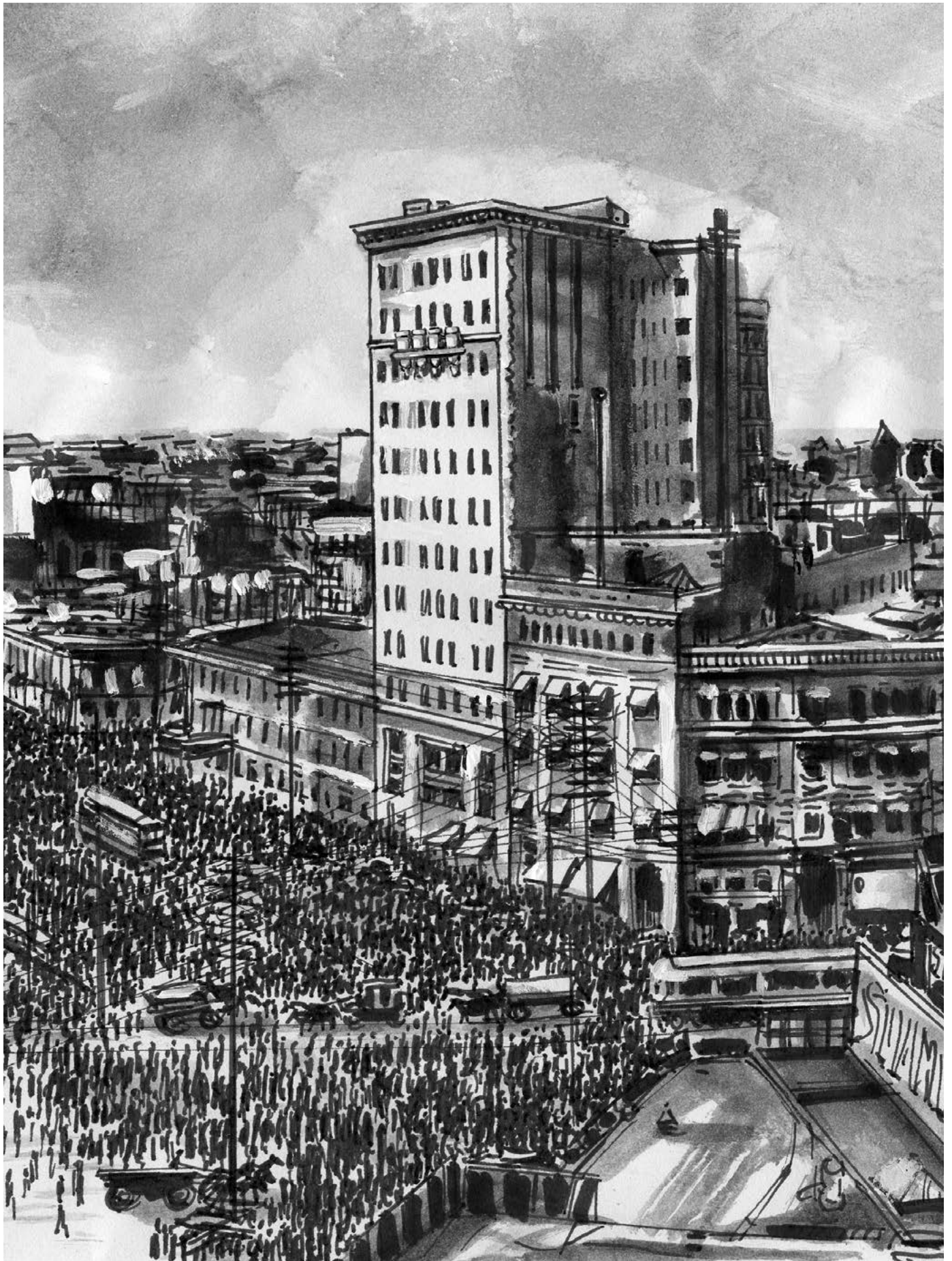
For many workers, the strike was a way of expressing their frustration with growing social inequality and demanding change.



People participated
in the strike in
different ways and
for different reasons.
Together they brought
the city of Winnipeg
to a standstill and
demonstrated
the power of
working people.

Although the state
intervened to defeat the
Winnipeg General Strike,
it remains one of the
longest and most
significant strikes in
history. 100 years later,
the conflict continues
to hold important lessons
about class struggle
and solidarity that can
help guide our efforts to
build a better world today.





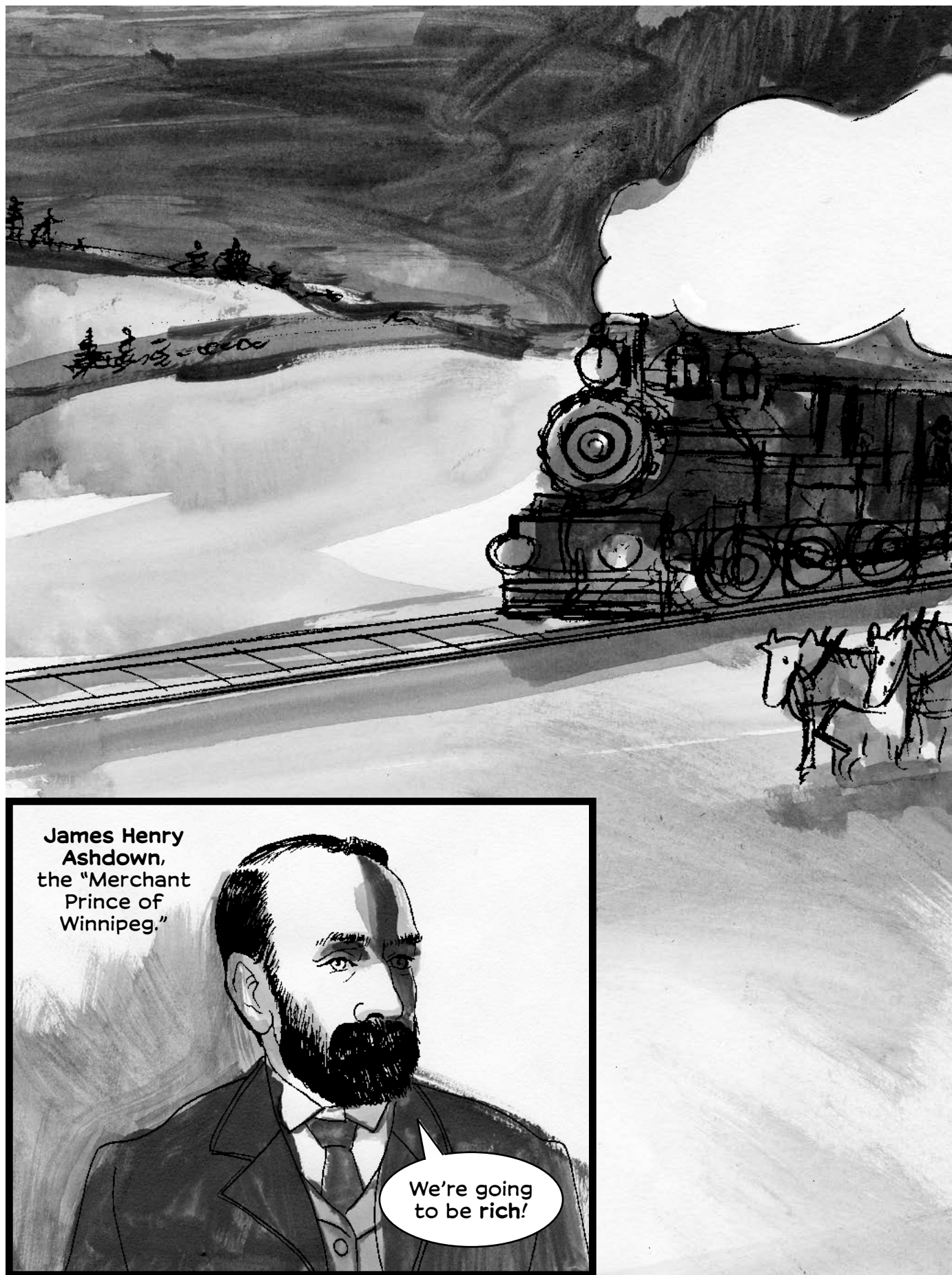
The Winnipeg General Strike was part of a longer history of conflict in what is today known as Canada.



In the aftermath of the 1885 North-West Resistance (three conflicts between Canada and different Métis, Cree, Assiniboine, and Saulteaux communities and their allies), the Canadian government...



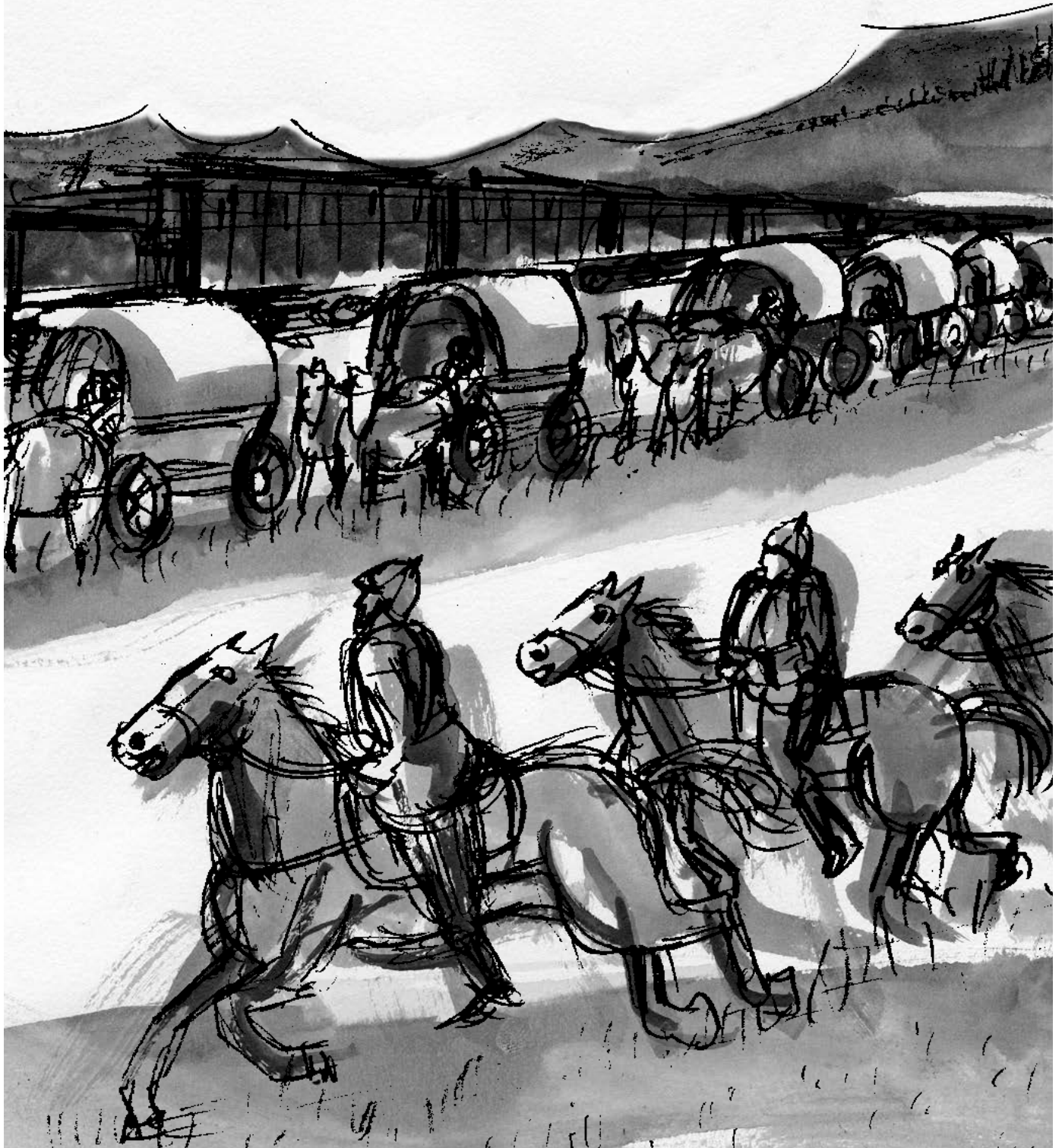
...continued its nation-building project of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their lands and encouraging settlers, especially immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, to head west.



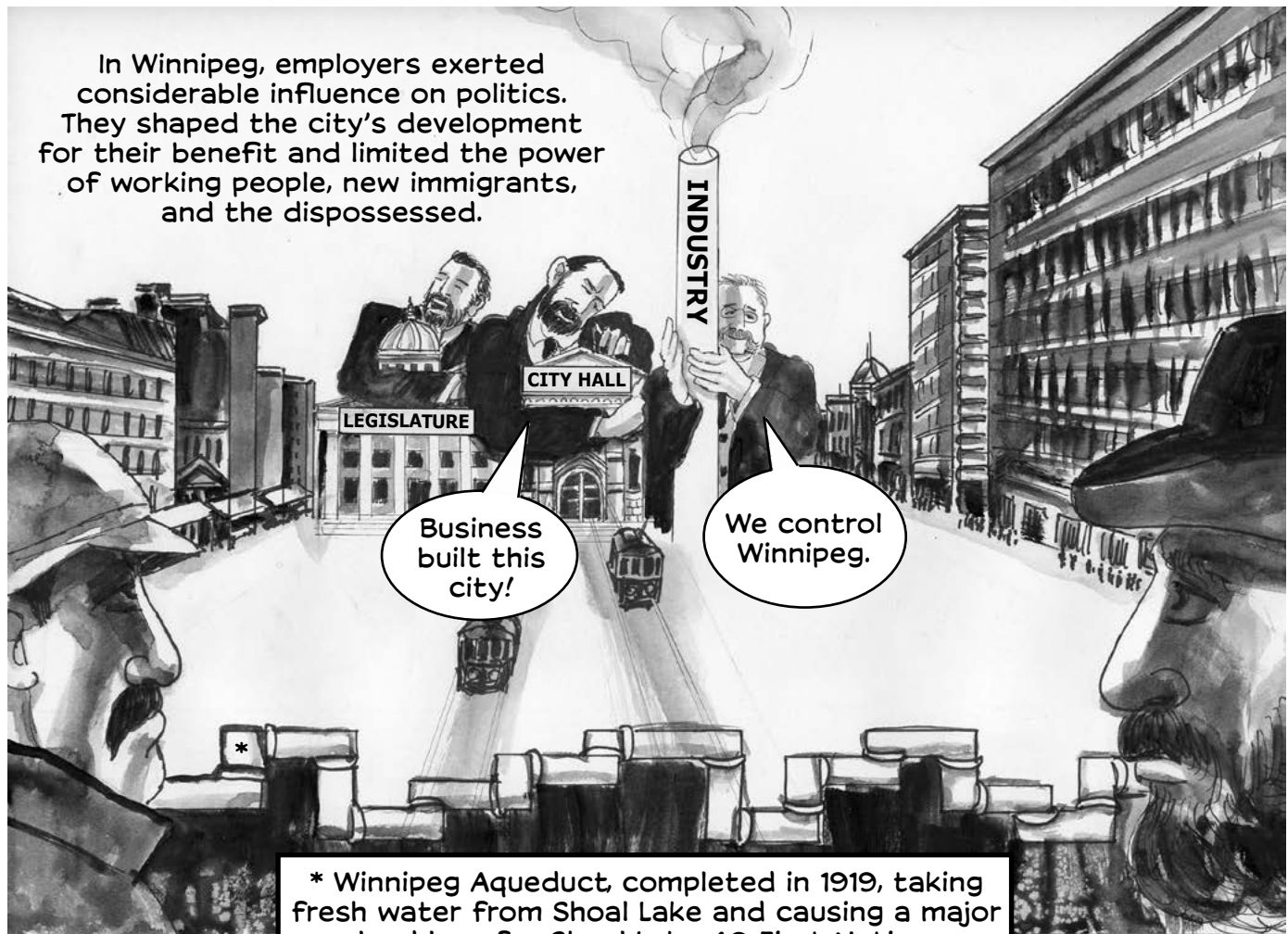
James Henry
Ashdown,
the "Merchant
Prince of
Winnipeg."

We're going
to be rich!

By the early 1900s, a number of aggressive businessmen—some of whom fought against Louis Riel and the Métis—had come west to pursue industrialization and capitalize on cheap land and resources.



In Winnipeg, employers exerted considerable influence on politics. They shaped the city's development for their benefit and limited the power of working people, new immigrants, and the dispossessed.



* Winnipeg Aqueduct, completed in 1919, taking fresh water from Shoal Lake and causing a major land loss for Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

As the gap between the rich and the poor widened, industrial Winnipeg became increasingly polarized.

1. The North End:

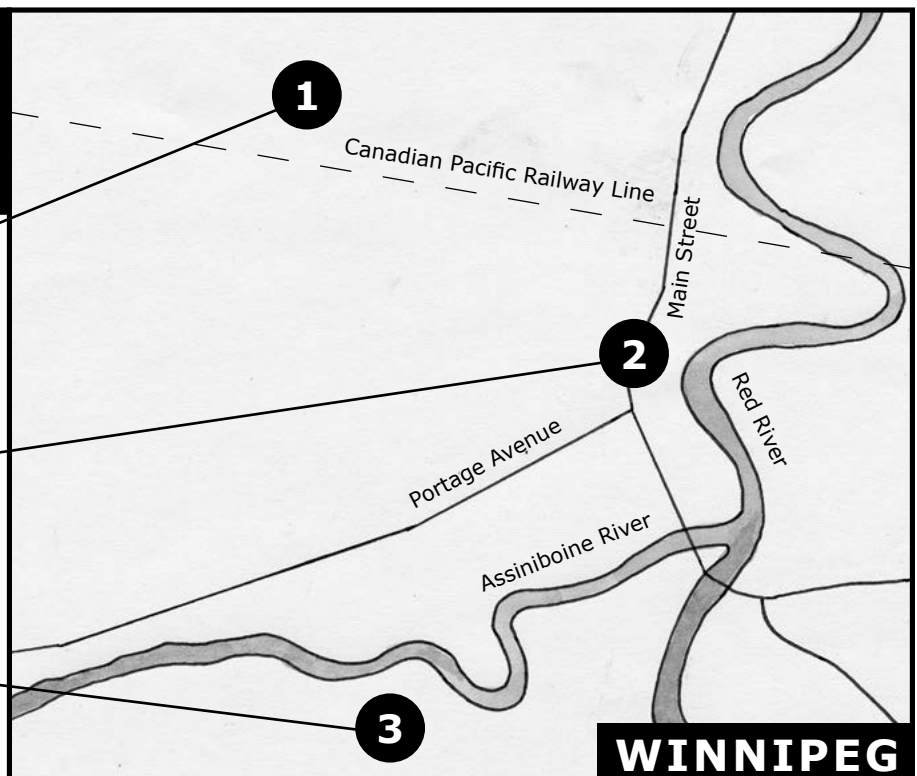
working-class, immigrant neighbourhood

2. Downtown

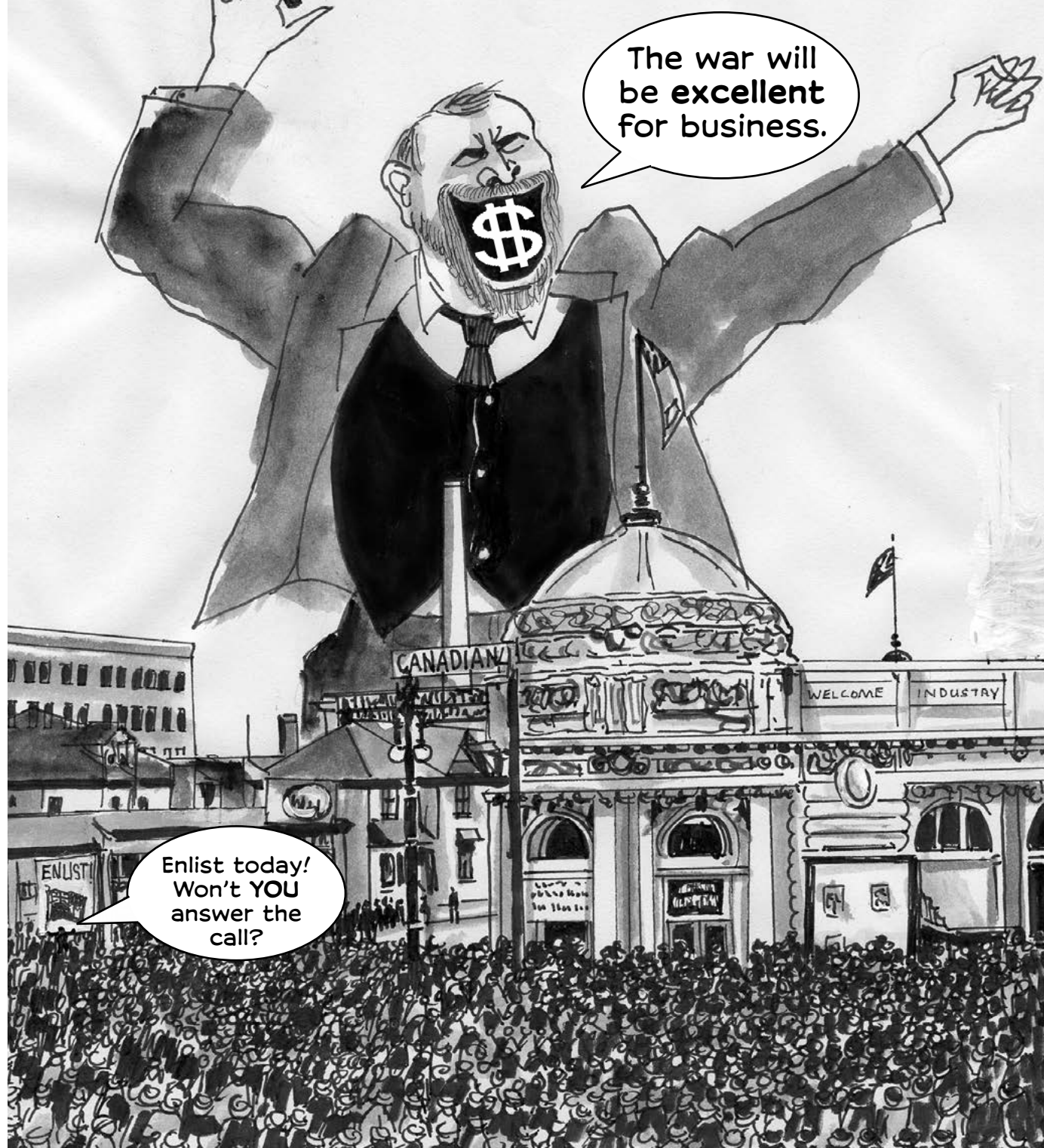
Winnipeg: scene of the conflict

3. Crescentwood:

bourgeois neighbourhood



World War I intensified class tensions. The government conscripted young men, many of them working-class, to fight in Europe. Capitalists stayed at home and made record profits from the production of war-related materials.





Soldiers hoped their sacrifices would bring about a more just and equal society after the war.



This is a senseless, imperialist war.*

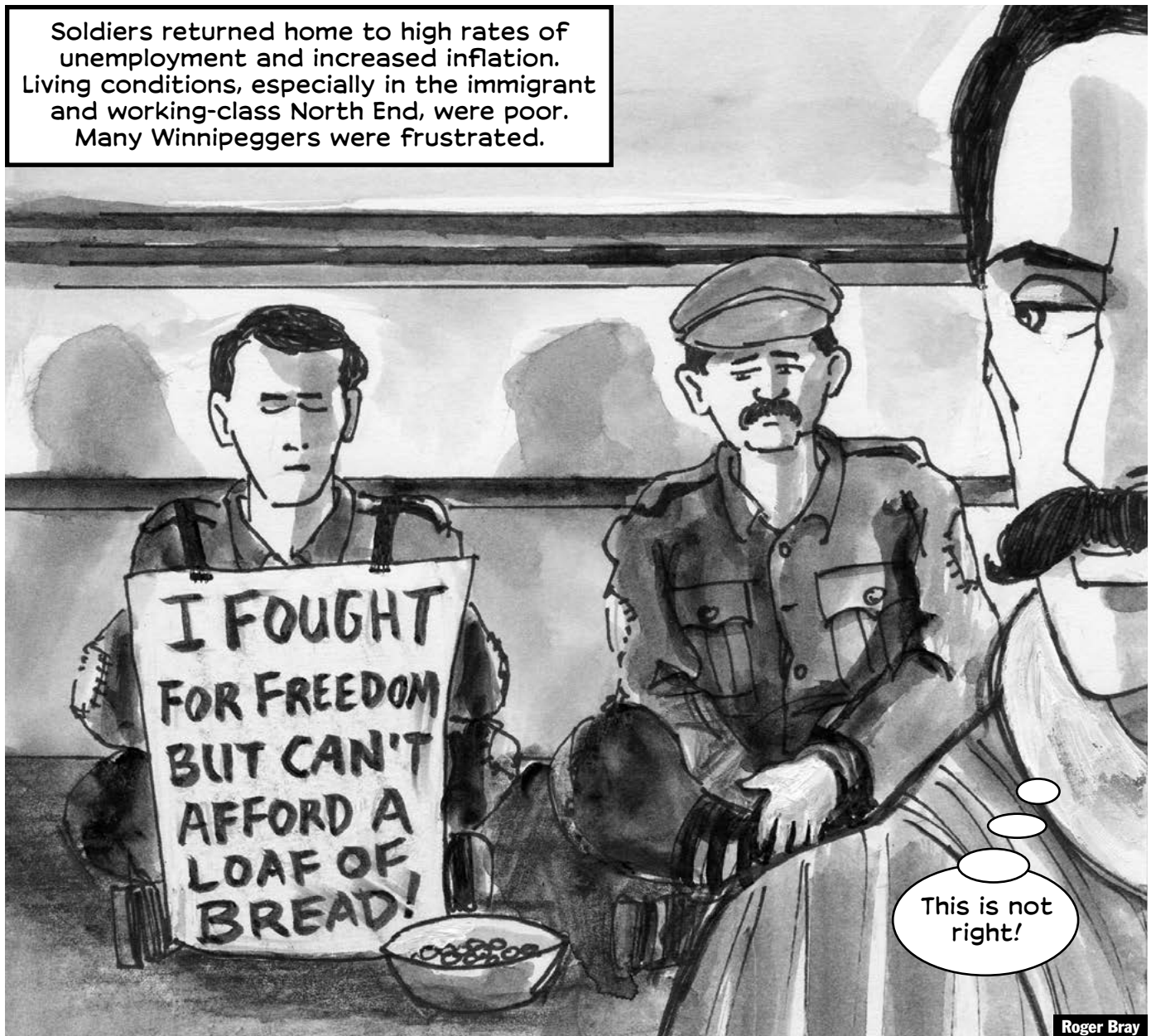
We'll be rewarded for our service. You'll see.

*Roger Bray





Soldiers returned home to high rates of unemployment and increased inflation. Living conditions, especially in the immigrant and working-class North End, were poor. Many Winnipeggers were frustrated.



Meanwhile, international events offered inspiring examples of working people organizing for change.



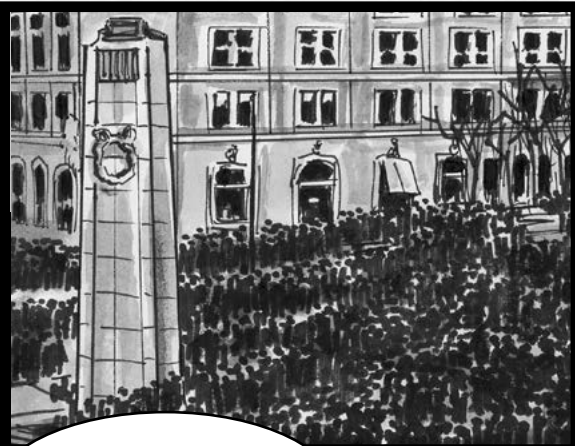


Russian Revolution (1917)

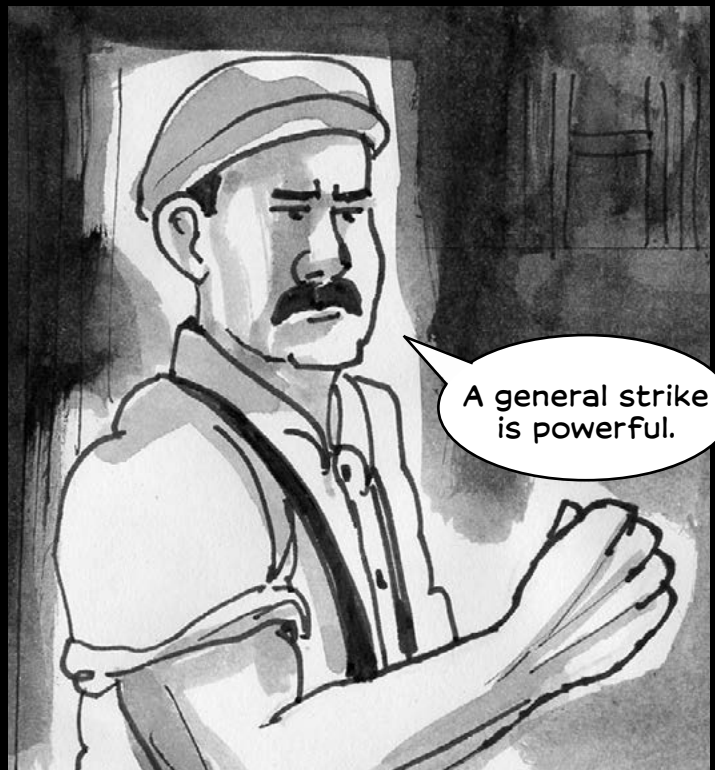
German Revolution (1918)

Seattle General Strike (1919)

Closer to home, workers in British Columbia launched one of Canada's first general strikes on 2 August 1918 to protest the killing of labour organizer and draft evader **Albert "Ginger" Goodwin**.

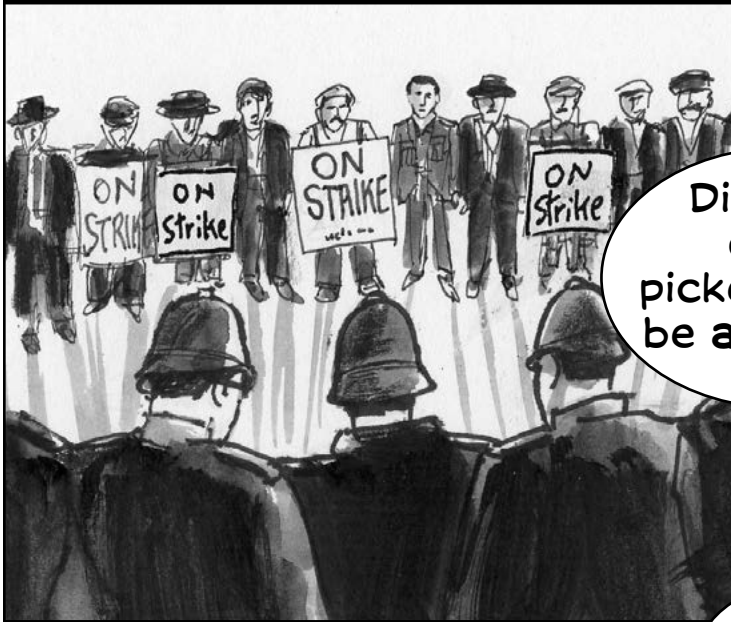


Did you hear about the big strike in Vancouver?



A general strike is powerful.

In Winnipeg, workers were also learning about the power of a general strike. In 1917, labourers had struck several industries to get concessions from employers, but they were defeated when the government granted injunctions against picketing.



Disperse
or all
picketers will
be arrested!



We need
reinforcements!



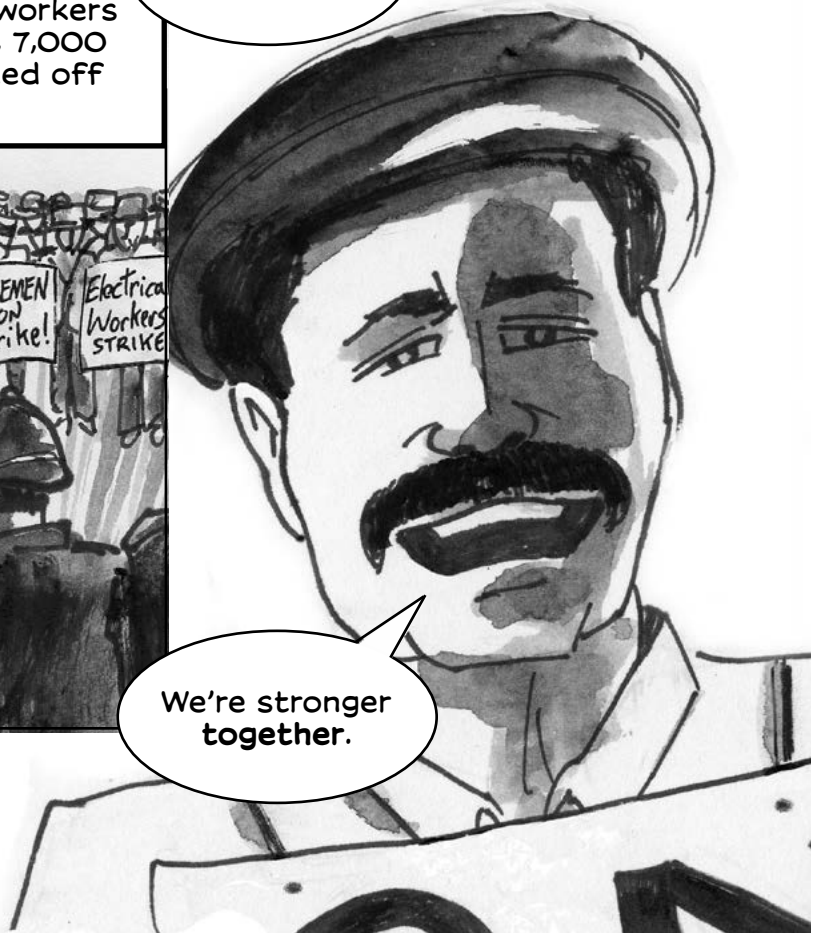
In April 1918, when unionized city workers went on strike for higher wages, 7,000 workers in other industries walked off the job in solidarity.



You can't
arrest us all.



We're stronger
together.



The strike pressured the government to reach an agreement with city workers and demonstrated the power of a general sympathetic strike. Workers learned that if they wanted to win they needed to work together.



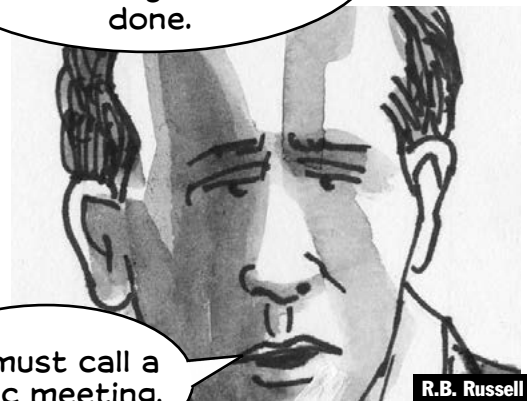
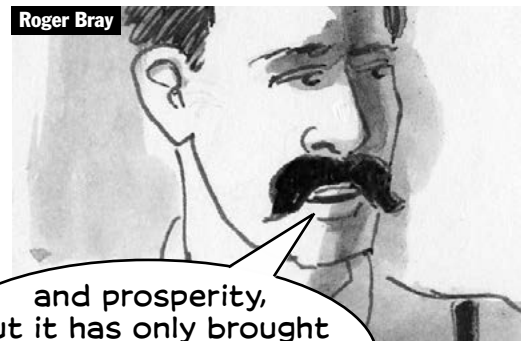
As the war ended, these lessons and workers' frustrations with inflation, war profiteering, and international events came together in a series of three meetings.



The end of war was supposed to bring peace...

and prosperity, but it has only brought more misery for workers. Something must be done.

We must call a public meeting.



R.B. Russell

In December 1918, the first meeting was held by the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council (TLC) and the Socialist Party of Canada at the Walker Theatre.



We, citizens of Winnipeg...

R.B. Russell

in mass meeting assembled, hereby protest the sending of further military forces to Russia, and demand that the allied...



troops already there be withdrawn, thus allowing Russia to work out...

its own political freedom without outside intervention.



Fred Dixon



William Ivens

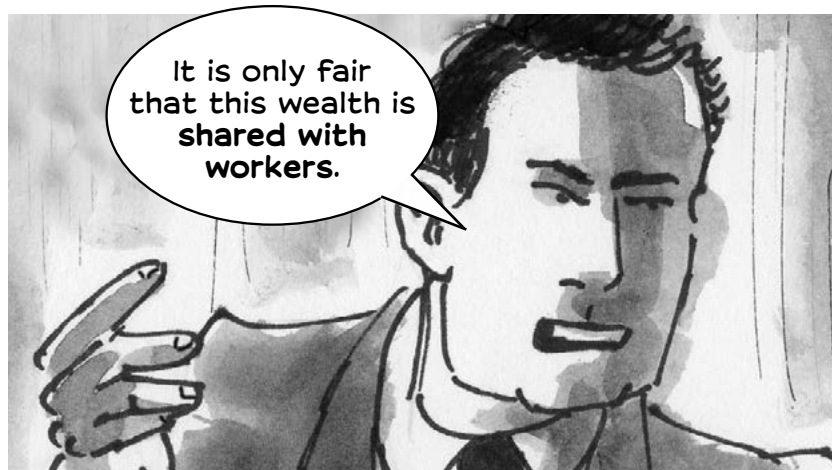


George Armstrong

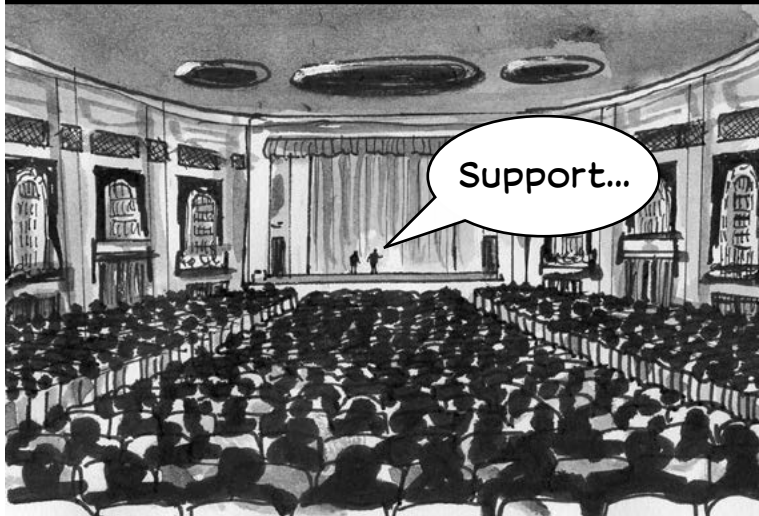


John Queen

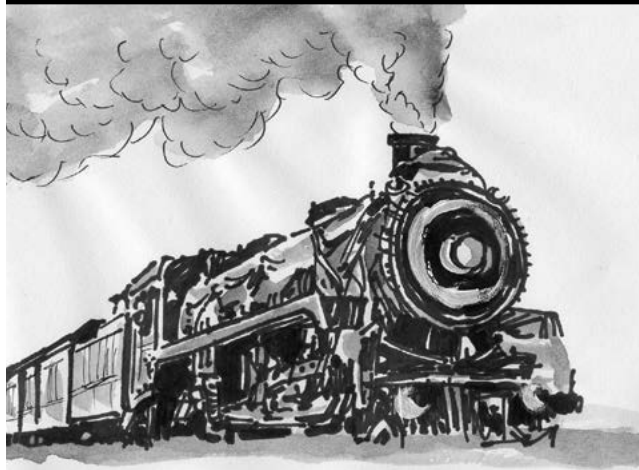
A few weeks later, in January 1919, the Socialist Party of Canada organized a meeting at the Majestic Theatre to continue the conversation and discuss a number of issues, including war profiteering.



In March, 240 delegates from unions across Western Canada, including **R.B. Russell**, **R.J. Johns**, and **George and Helen Armstrong**, attended the Western Labor Conference in Calgary to discuss a number of labour and left-wing issues.



By spring 1919, when the Winnipeg delegates returned home, workers in the city were ready for revolt.



In April, negotiations between employers and workers in the building and metal trades broke down when employers refused to recognize newly created councils representing all unions. Bosses preferred to bargain with each union individually, but workers now knew the strength of bargaining collectively.



On 1 May, International Workers' Day, building trades workers went on strike to demand union recognition and collective bargaining rights. The following day, metal trades workers did the same.

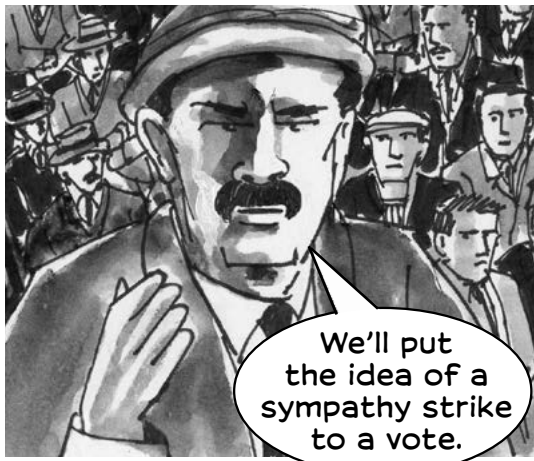


Recalling the success of the 1918 general strike, on 6 May representatives from the building and metal trades asked the TLC for support.

We need your help!



The council endorsed the workers' demands and asked unions affiliated to the council to vote on whether to stage a general sympathetic strike.



At a meeting on 13 May, partial results presented to delegates demonstrated overwhelming support for the strike from workers in a variety of industries.

Partial Strike Ballot Results

	For	Against
Boilermakers, 126	124	26
Boilermakers, 529	82	0
Boilermakers, 566	152	0
Boilermakers, 451	101	8
Carmen, 550	656	26
Carmen, 6	133	10
Carmen, 371	706	68
Blacksmiths, 147	113	8
Blacksmiths, 61	121	6
Railway Clerks, 613	91	14
Railway Clerks, Unity	126	15
Municipal Employees, Winnipeg	173	86
Municipal Employees, Assiniboia	28	3
Municipal Employees, St. Boniface	14	0
Firemen, City	149	6
Firemen, St. Boniface	14	0
Police, City	149	11
Waterworkers	44	9
Electrical Workers	22	8
Bakers and Confectioners	272	2
Retail Clerks (partial vote)	450	10
Lithographers	28	2
Printing Pressmen	50	21
Bookbinders	37	24
Sleeping Car Porters	67	2
Caretakers	133	5
Upholsterers (partial vote)	11	8
Stationary Engineers, 498	182	4
Brewery Workers	152	22
Flour Mill Workers	58	34
Machinists, 122	269	75
Machinists, 189	80	0
Machinists, 457	138	1
Machinists, 484	292	7
Machinists, 863	106	15
Mill Hands, 172	283	5
Carpenters, 343	371	4
Postal Workers	250	19
Pipe Fitters, 479	181	10
Plumbers, 254	60	0
Sheet Metal Workers, 420	56	2
Cooks and Waiters (partial vote)	278	0
Garment Workers	143	27
Motion Picture Operators	26	0
Moulders	59	1
Patternmakers (partial vote)	4	0
Tailors	155	13
Teamsters	611	3
C.B. of R.E. (Transcona Stores)	17	1
C.B. of R.E. (Transcona)	112	4
C.B. of R.E., 67	78	3
Jewelry Workers	70	6
Plasterers, 34	72	0
Other votes	31	1
Other votes	62	6
Other votes	118	1
Other votes	21	1
Other votes	56	2

8,667 * 645 *

*In the end, 11,000 voted in favour.

In a press release, the council announced the strike was on.

Every organization but one has voted in favour of the general strike.

T.L.C.

The biggest strike in the history of Winnipeg will take place on Thursday 15 May, at 11:00 a.m.

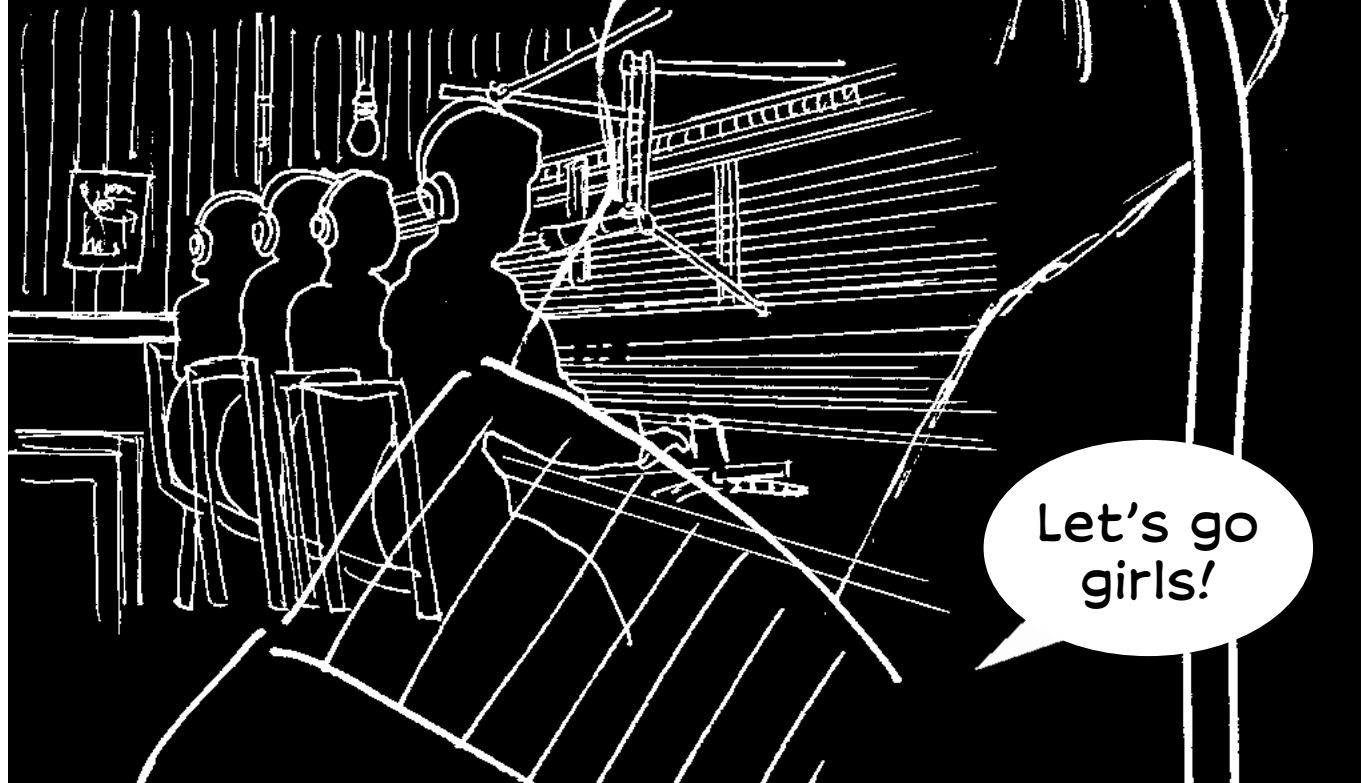
No exceptions are anticipated in this strike.

All public utilities will be tied up in order to enforce the principle of collective bargaining.

Though the strike was set to begin on Thursday, 15 May at 11:00 a.m...

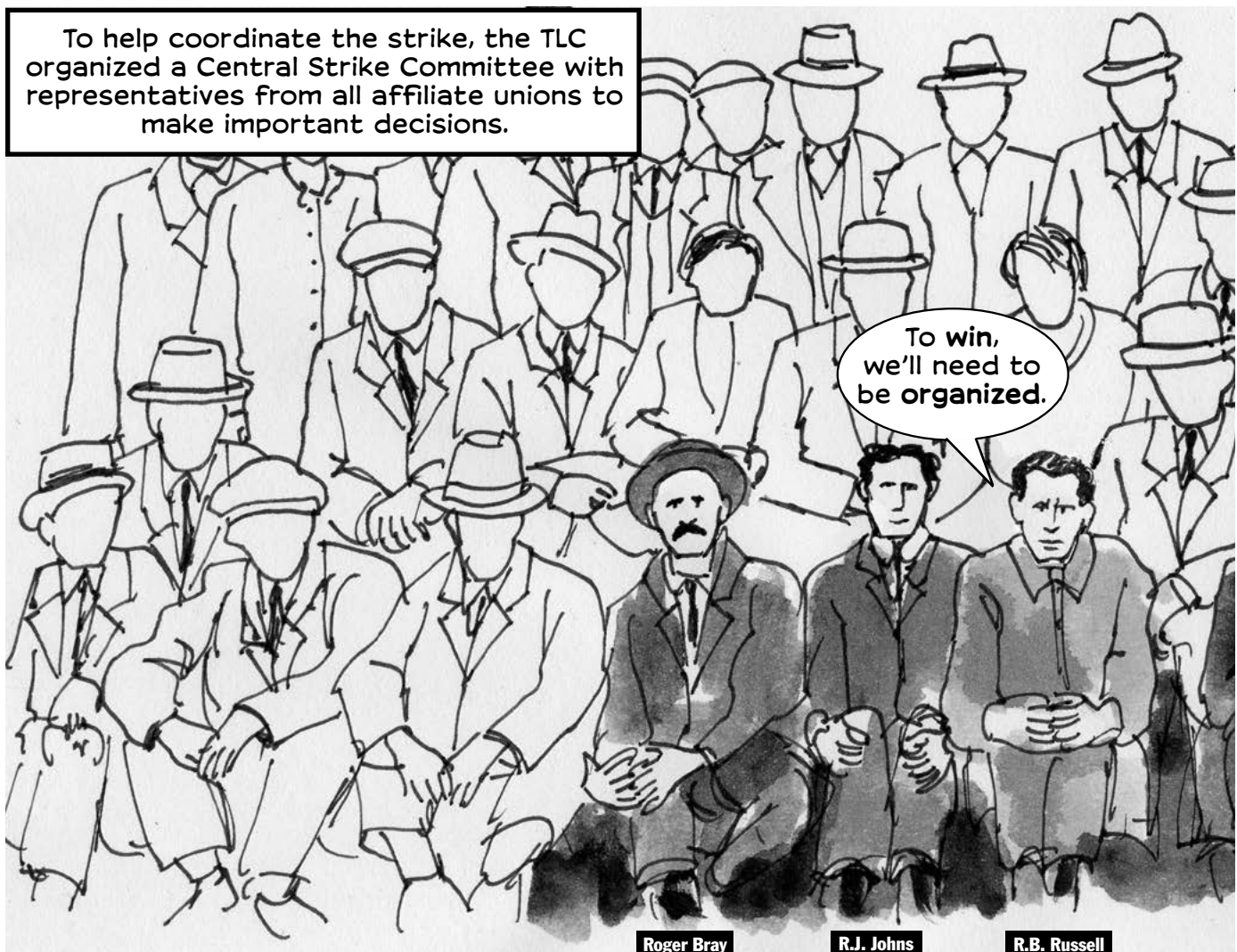
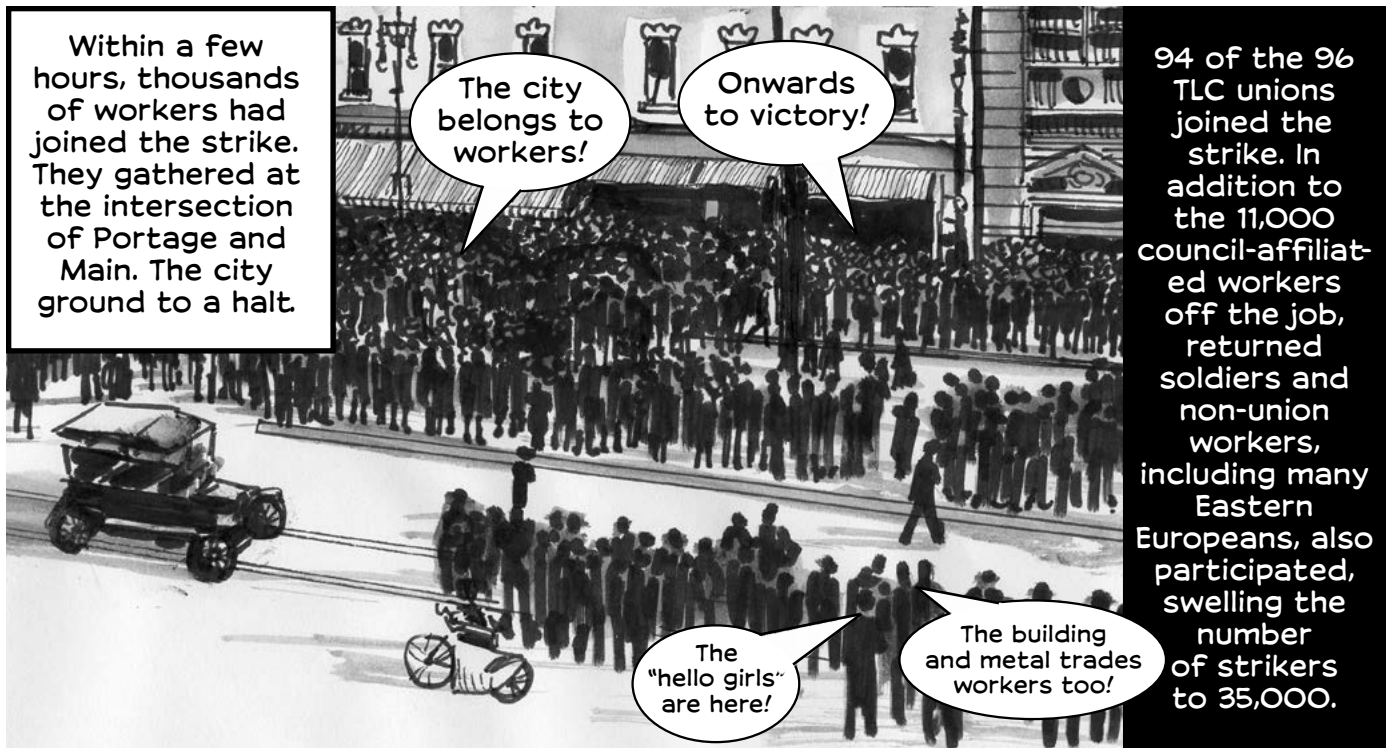


...at 7:00 a.m., telephone operators, known as "hello girls," didn't show up for their shifts, cutting telephone communication in the city.





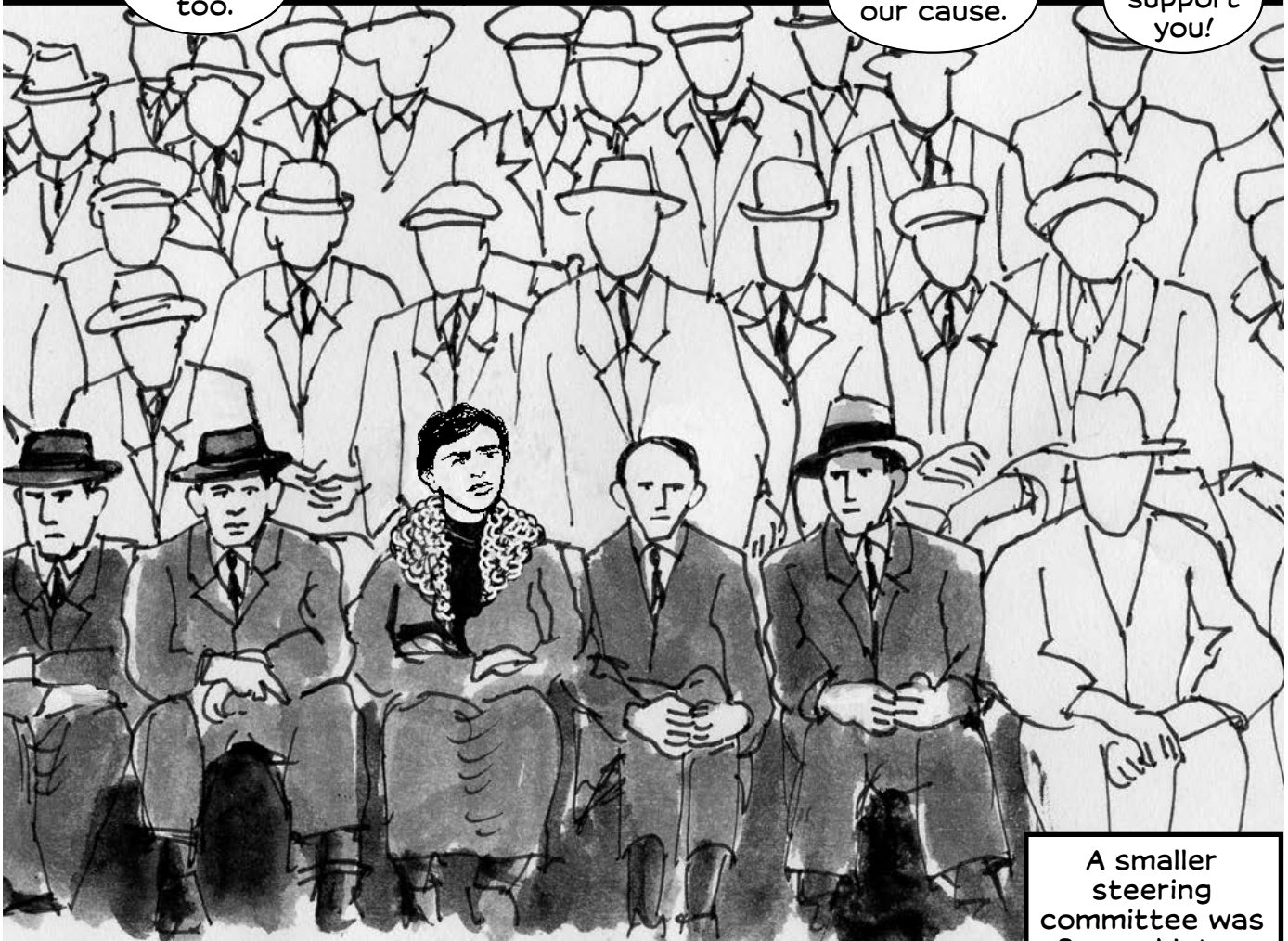
At 11:00 a.m., workers
from a variety of industries
walked off the job.



The strike committee decided that some essential services should continue, but only with permission. Special signs protected workers from being mistaken as scabs, or strikebreakers.



Though the police overwhelmingly supported the strike, the Strike Committee asked them to stay on the job to keep the peace and prevent government officials from placing Winnipeg under martial law.



A smaller steering committee was formed later.

George Armstrong Abraham Heaps Helen Armstrong John Queen William Ivens

Strikers also set up a Press Committee and, with William Ivens as editor, published a daily bulletin to update people on the strike.

Western Labor News

SPECIAL STRIKE EDITION

Published by the Strike Committee, Labor Temple

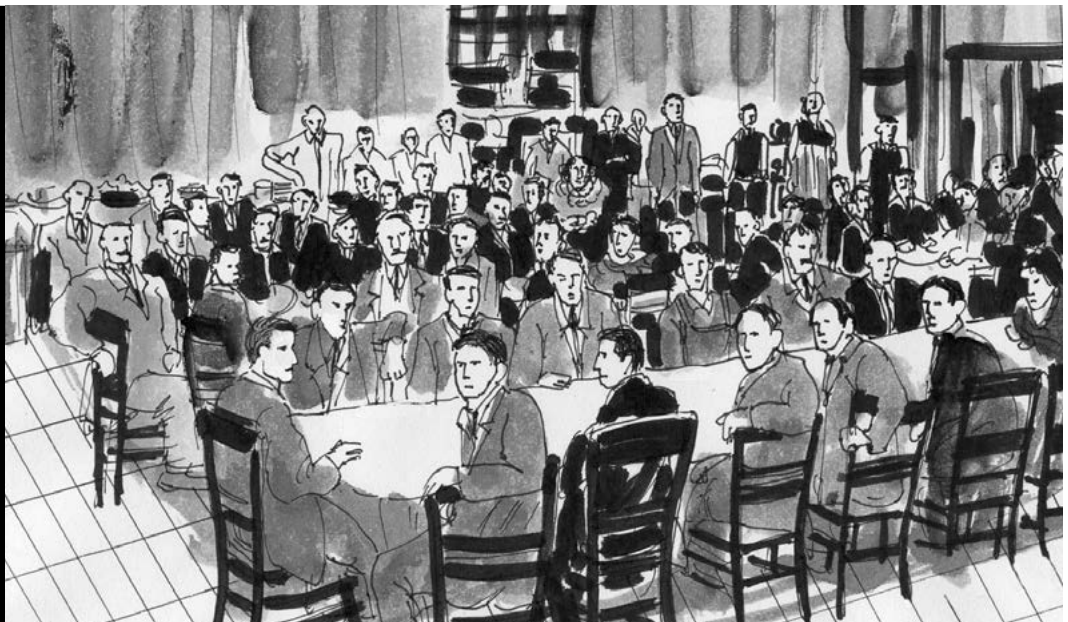
Winnipeg

Winnipeg Mon. Morning June 1st

May 26th, 1919

No matter how great the provocation,
do not quarrel. Do not say an angry
word. Take everything to the Central
Strike Committee. If you are hungry
go to them. We will share our last crust
together. If one starves we will all
starve. We will fight on, and on, and on.
We will never surrender.

Not everyone supported the strike. The most powerful opposition group was the Citizens' Committee of One Thousand, a secretive anti-strike organization that represented business interests. Its headquarters was the Board of Trade building downtown.



The Citizens' Committee, led by lawyer A.J. Andrews, supported employers, discredited union leaders, and recruited scabs, or replacement workers.



THE WINNIPEG CITIZEN EXTRA

Vol. 1 May 21, 1919. Published in Winnipeg in the interest of the Citizens. No. 3

The One Big Issue in the Winnipeg "Strike" is Plain
THE PEOPLE MUST CHOOSE
Between This ←————→ And This



The Alien Enemy



The Flag

That is the symbol of law and order in this country; that guarantees to every man, woman and child in this country the right to live; that represents the authority which now enables the people of Winnipeg to get the necessities of life "without" persecution of the strike competitors."

It is the duty of every citizen to support the law and order in this country; and to support the authority which now enables the people of Winnipeg to get the necessities of life "without" persecution of the strike competitors."

In its newspaper, *The Winnipeg Citizen*, the committee used racism to smear the strikers, suggesting that the strike was the work of foreign radicals trying to overthrow the government.

Representatives of the committee argued that employers should refuse to bargain until the strike was over.



As news of the strike spread around the world, the federal government felt compelled to respond.

Parliament, Ottawa, Ontario

"Clean Out the Bolsheviks"



Prime Minister Robert Borden

"Winnipeg is a warning to the rest of Canada."

"The Government must act..."

with a strong hand to save the day."*



*Toronto Times, 20 May 1919

Winnipeg train station

Mr. Andrews!

Borden sent Arthur Meighen, acting Minister of Justice, and Senator Gideon Robertson, Minister of Labour, to Winnipeg to try to contain the revolt. They arrived on 22 May and were greeted by Andrews.

Minister Robertson. Minister Meighen. Welcome to Winnipeg.



The two officials met with the Citizens' Committee and local and provincial officials to discuss how to end the strike. They refused to meet with the strikers.



Gentlemen, the strike must be defeated!



On 26 May, Meighen appointed Andrews the representative of the federal Department of Justice in Winnipeg. It was becoming clear whose side the state was on.



Meanwhile, strikers continued to organize large open-air meetings, Labor Church services, and social events to boost morale, share information, and keep the strike going.

Roger Bray

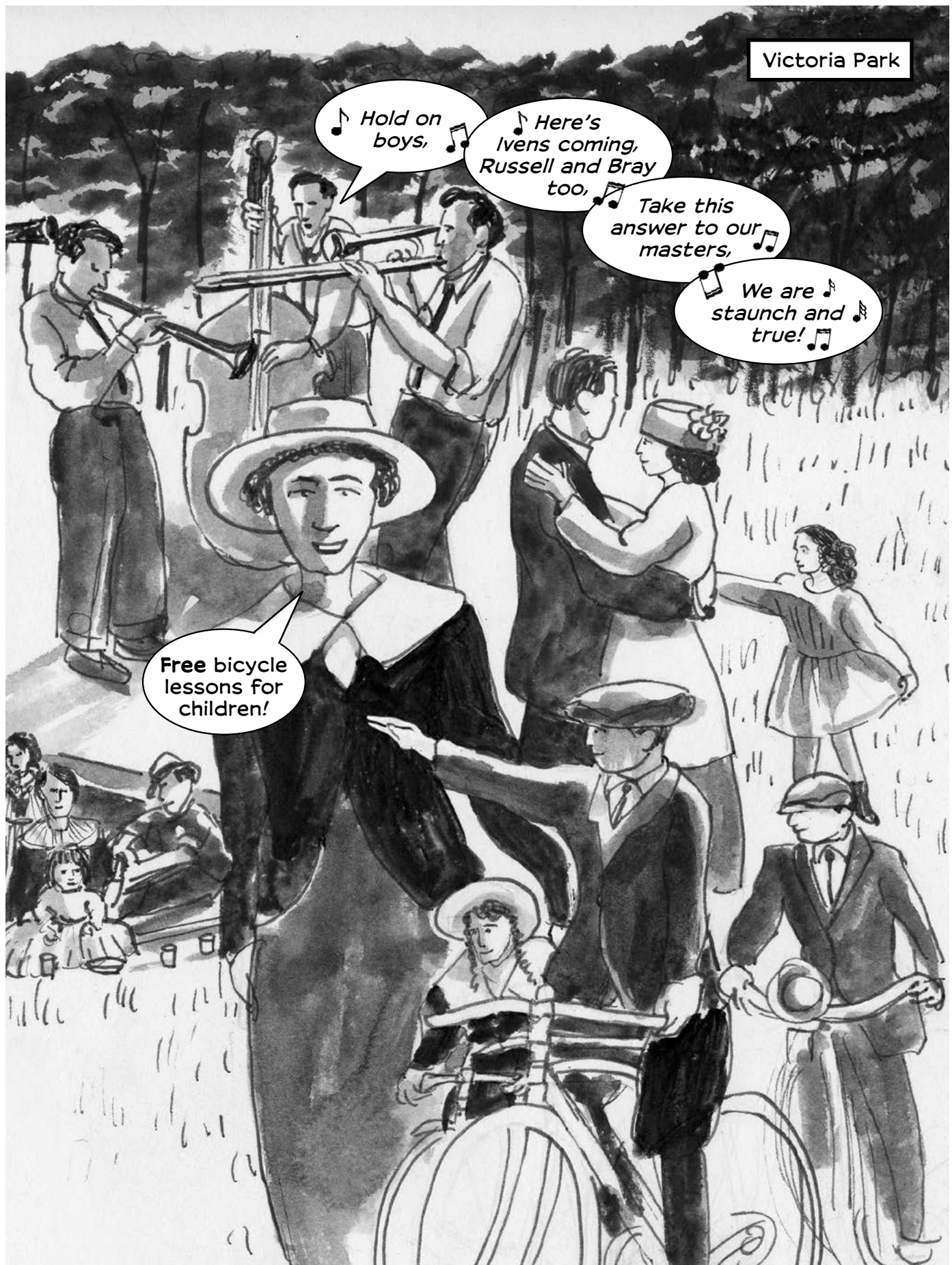
ONWARDS to victory!

With the war, last year's influenza, and now this hot weather during the strike - it's too much.

We must keep going!

Edith Hancox

Helen Armstrong



Victoria Park

Hold on boys,

Here's Ivens coming, Russell and Bray too,

Take this answer to our masters,

We are staunch and true!

Free bicycle lessons for children!

Although the Strike Committee played a key leadership role, many other activists and groups of workers helped the work along.

Edith Hancox of the Women's Labour League addressed the Victoria Park crowds.



Helen Armstrong



We're doing all we can to support the strikers.

Helen Armstrong, the leader of the Women's Labour League in Winnipeg, opened a dining hall to feed strikers. She raised money to help female workers pay their rent.

Women also organized dances.

Though racism still divided parts of the labour movement, John Arthur Robinson and members of the Order of Sleeping Car Porters (Black workers barred from white railway unions) joined the strike in its early days and donated to the strike fund.

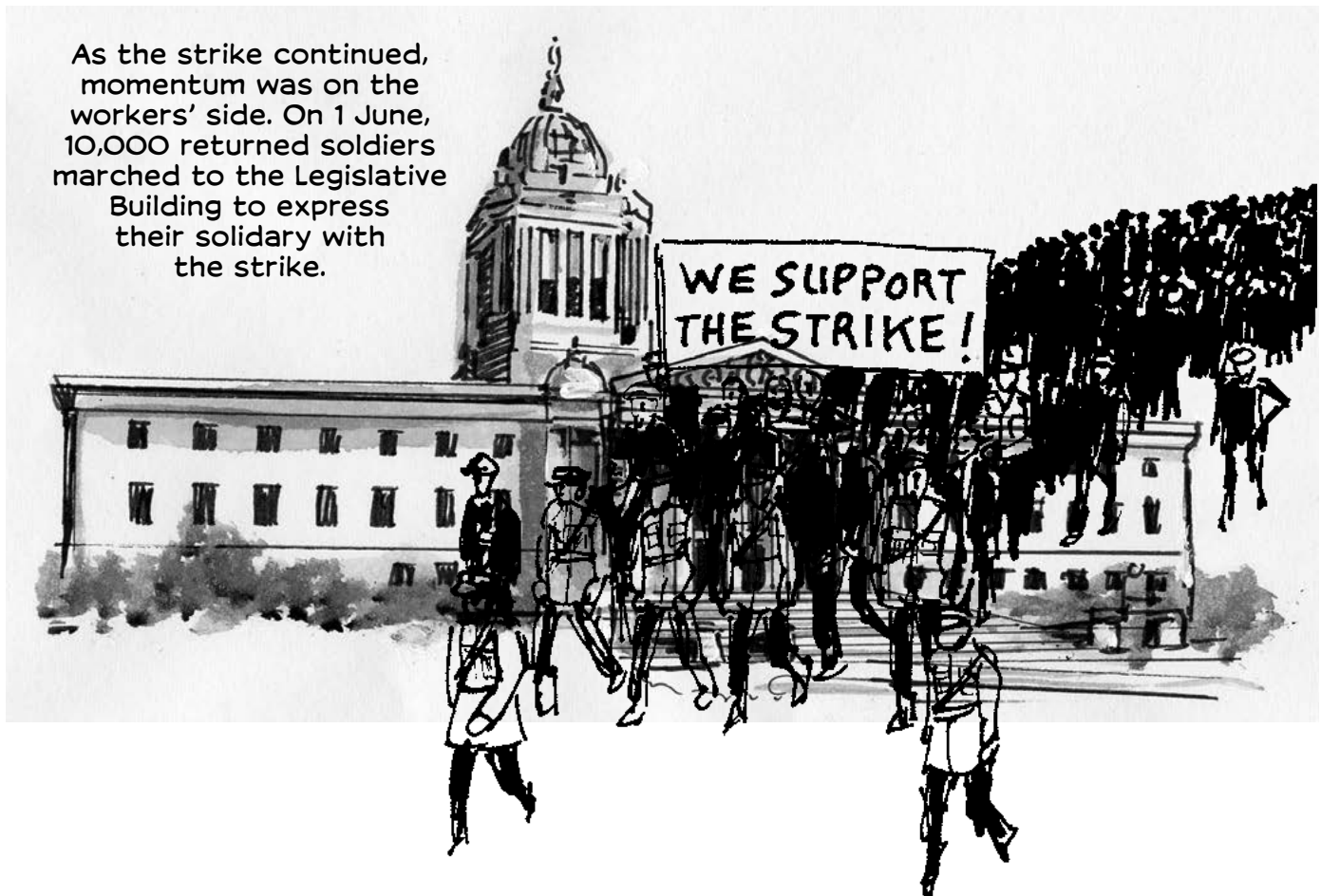
George Armstrong and John Arthur Robinson



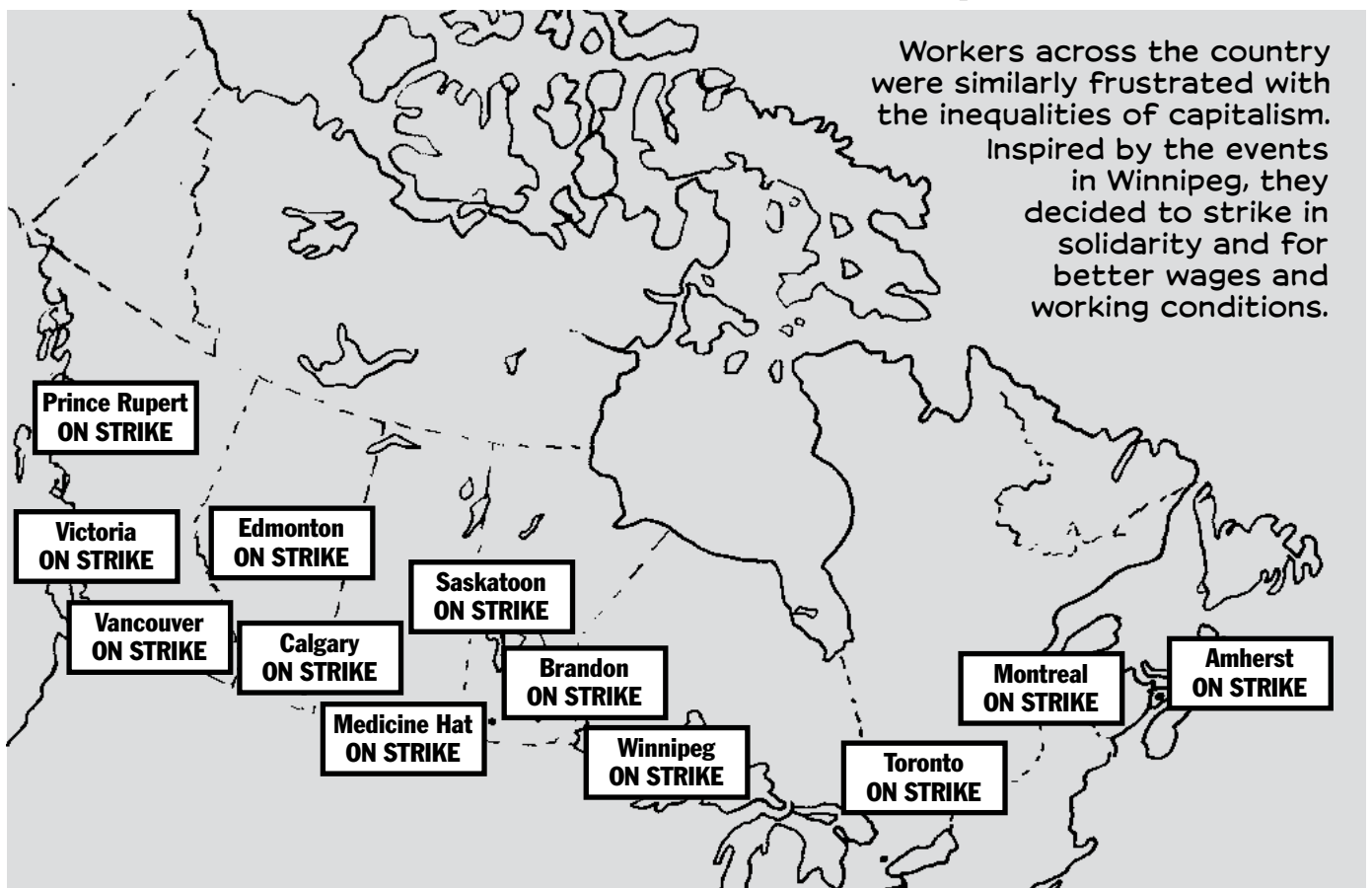
After spending time in Vancouver, activist and former minister **J.S. Woodsworth** returned to Winnipeg to show his support and speak to strikers in Victoria Park.



As the strike continued, momentum was on the workers' side. On 1 June, 10,000 returned soldiers marched to the Legislative Building to express their solidarity with the strike.



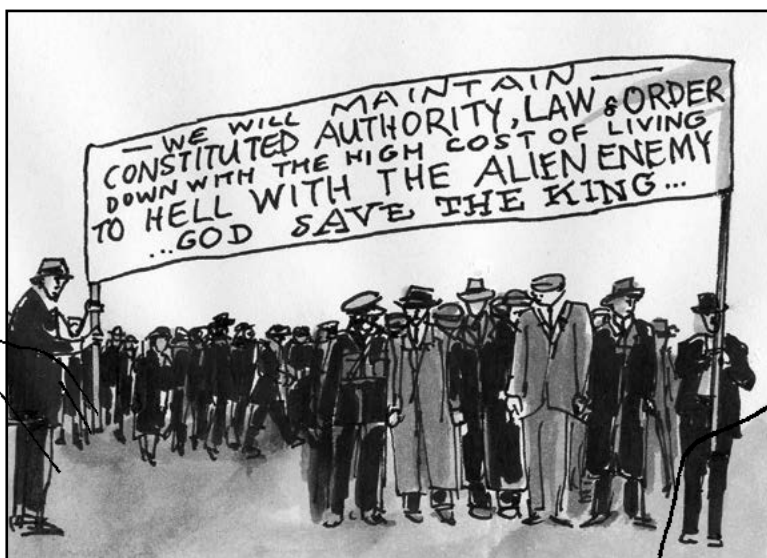
Workers across the country were similarly frustrated with the inequalities of capitalism. Inspired by the events in Winnipeg, they decided to strike in solidarity and for better wages and working conditions.



To curb the strike's growing power, the Citizens' Committee, in association with Justice Minister **Meighen**, Senator **Robertson**, Manitoba Premier **Tobias Norris**, and Winnipeg Mayor **Charles Gray**, continued to try to divide workers, insisting that the revolt was the result of foreign communist agitators.



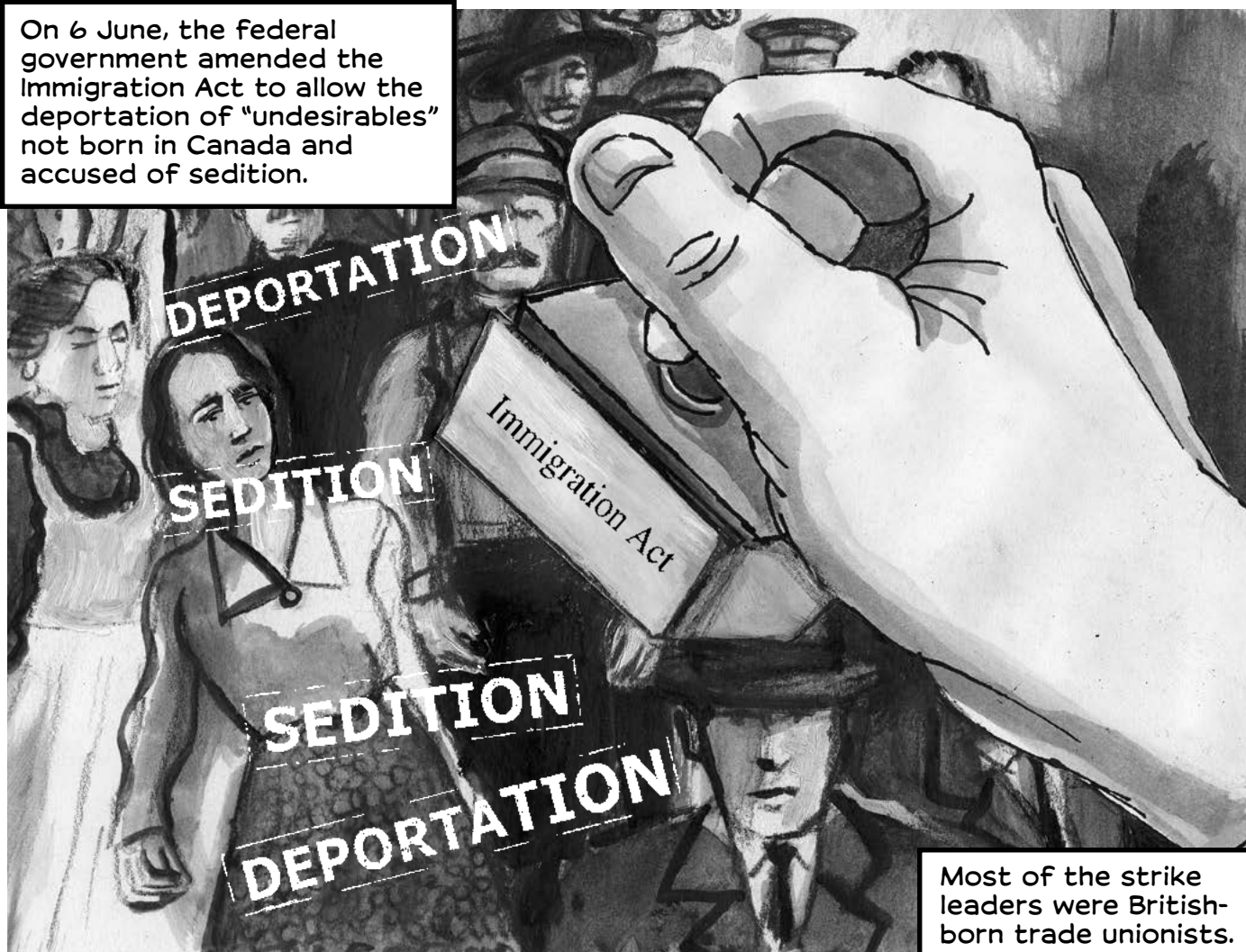
Premier Tobias Norris



Mayor Charles Gray

Some middle-class soldiers believed this to be true and organized anti-strike parades.

On 6 June, the federal government amended the Immigration Act to allow the deportation of "undesirables" not born in Canada and accused of sedition.



Most of the strike leaders were British-born trade unionists.

On 9 June, the city dismissed the entire Winnipeg police force. The Citizens' Committee recruited "special constables" to take their place.

Many of the recruits were returned soldiers who opposed the strike and used their new powers to crack down on strikers.



In the early hours of 17 June, the Royal North-West Mounted Police raided the homes of strike leaders, arrested them, and took them, along with a handful of token "enemy aliens," to Stony Mountain Penitentiary, twenty kilometres north of the city.



R.B. Russell

Six leaders – Russell, Armstrong, Bray, Ivens, Heaps, and Queen – were to be tried for sedition and deported. The state's divide-and-conquer strategy was meant to render the strike leaderless.

Many people were angry at the state's heavy-handed tactics. Though Mayor **Gray** had banned parades, pro-strike returned soldiers gathered on 20 June and called a "silent parade" for the next day to protest.



Preparing for conflict, the mayor issued a proclamation on the morning of Saturday 21 June.



Now's the time to end the strike.



A handful of strikers are no match for the Mounties and special constables.

Charles Gray, Mayor

Arthur Meighen,
Minister of Justice

Gideon Robertson, Minister of Labour

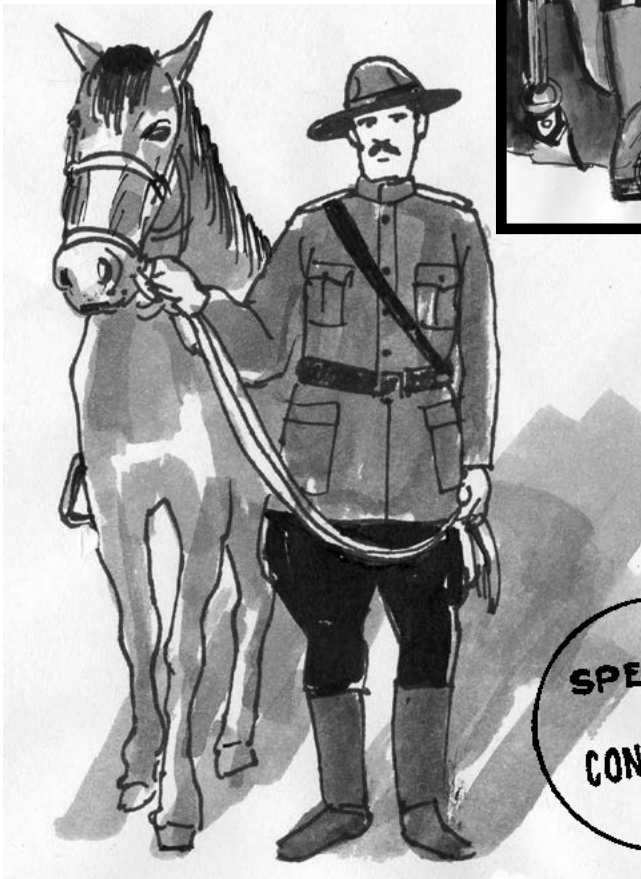
A.J. Andrews, Citizens'
Committee of One Thousand

We'll use the army if we have to.

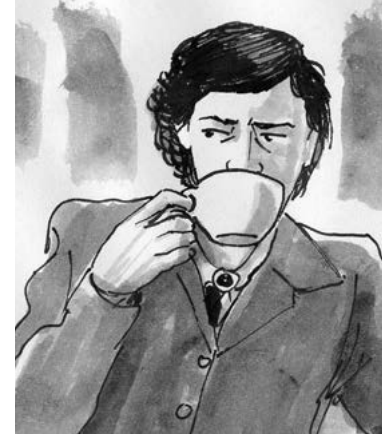
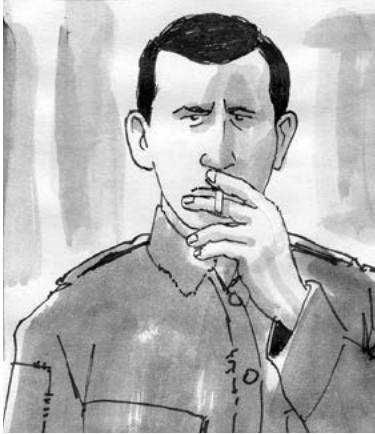
We must show the workers who's really in charge.

21 June 1919

9:30 AM



11:00 AM

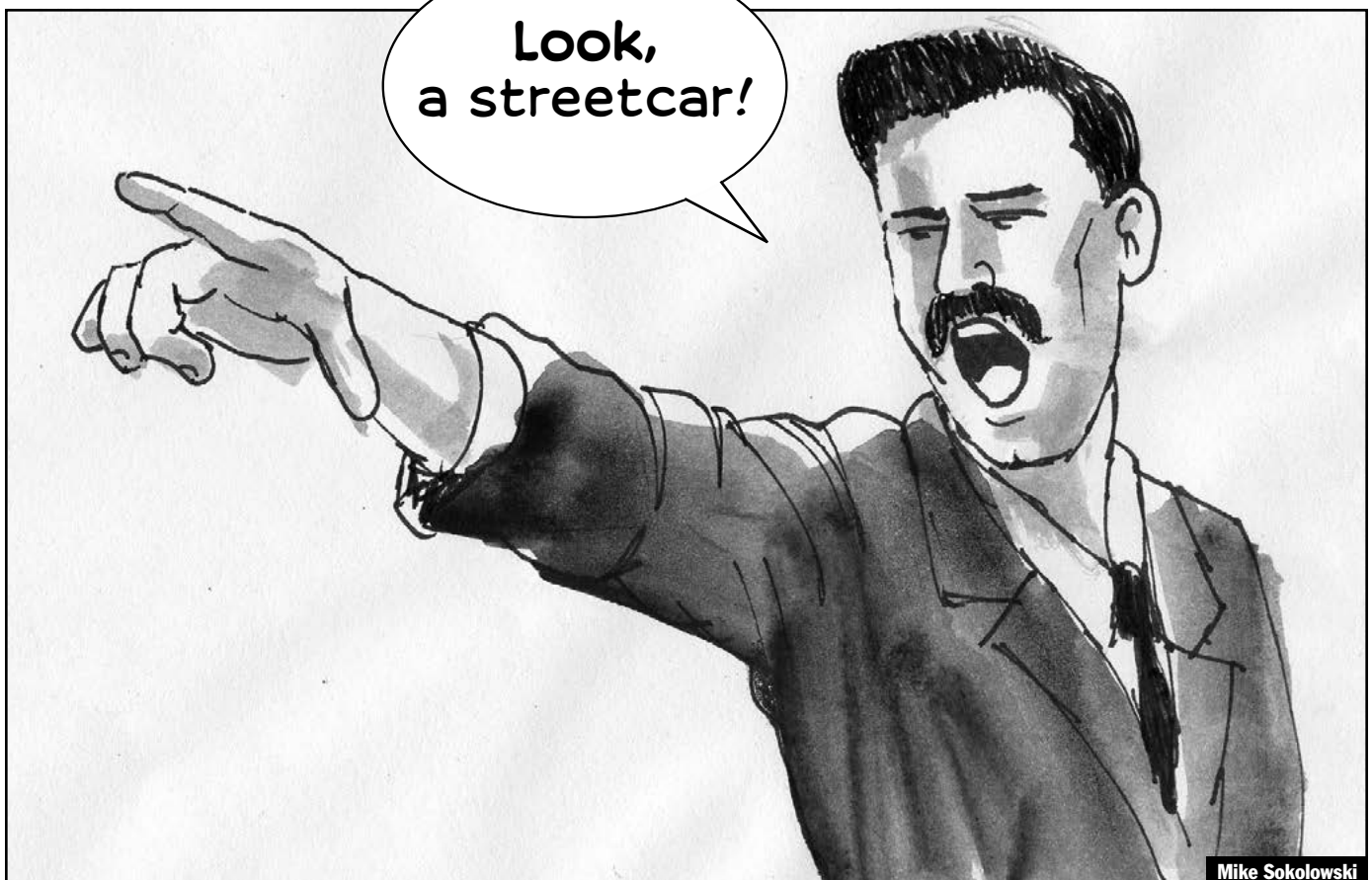


2:20 PM

Portage and Main



**Look,
a streetcar!**



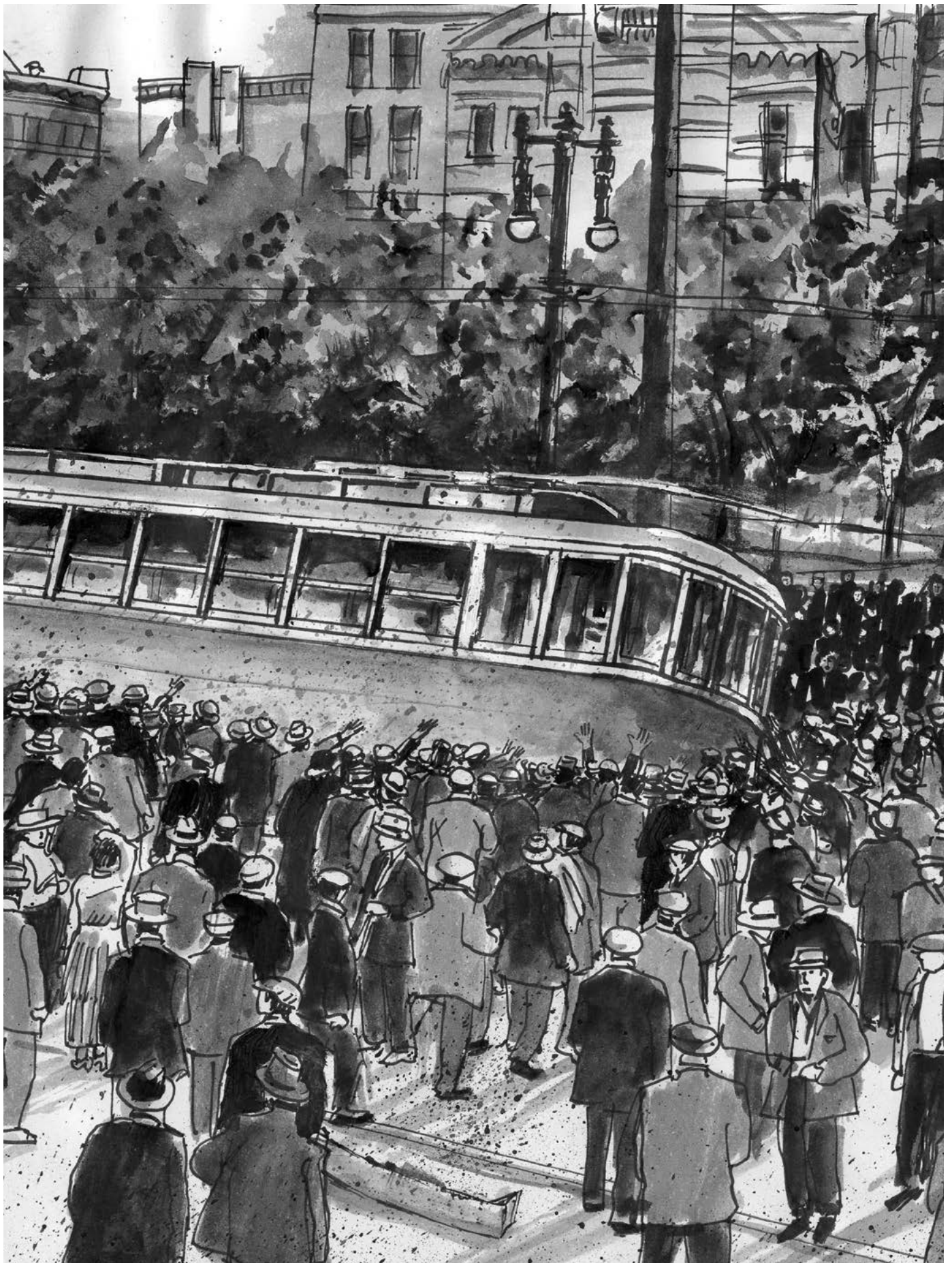






2:25 PM





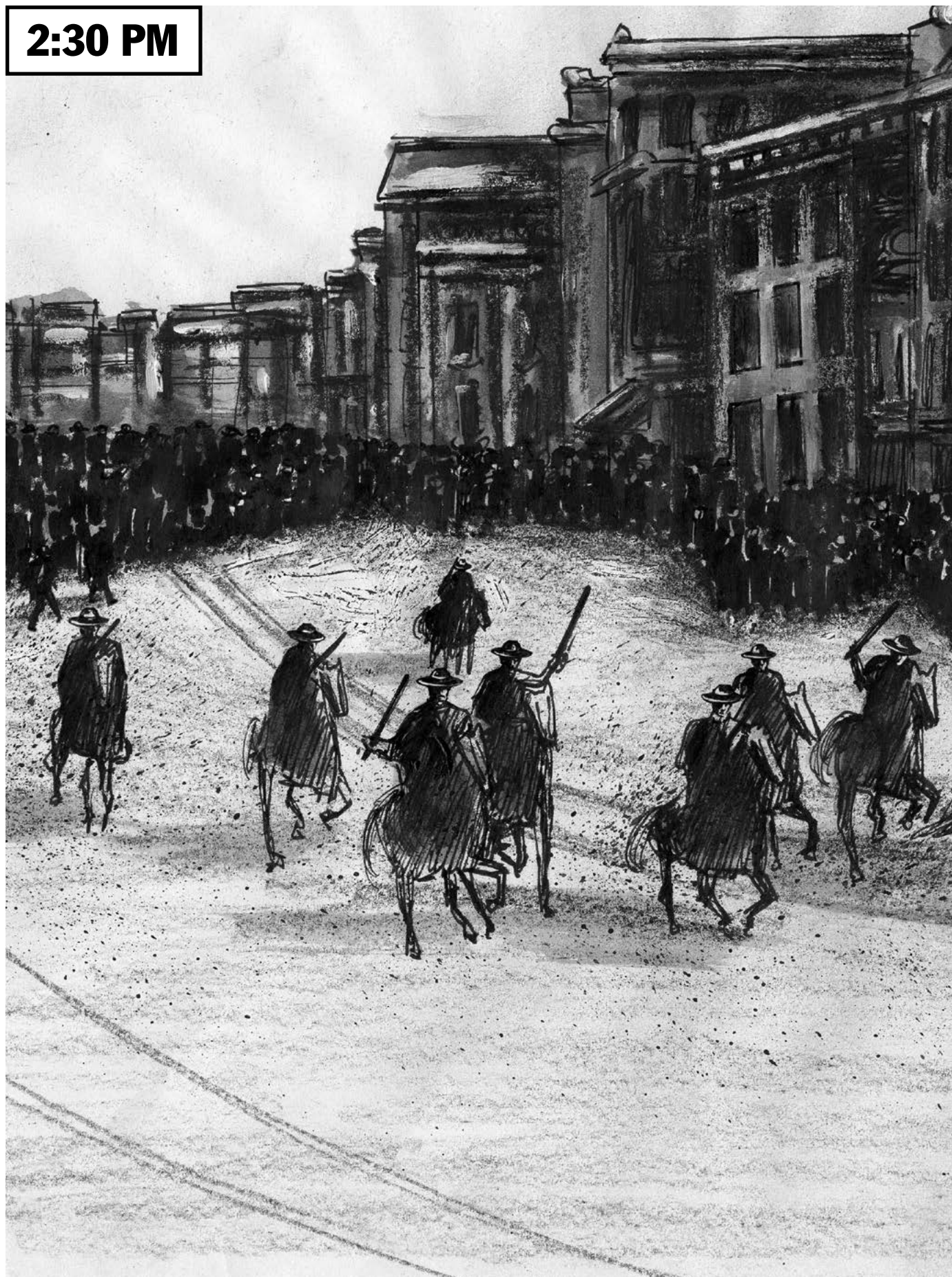
2:28 PM

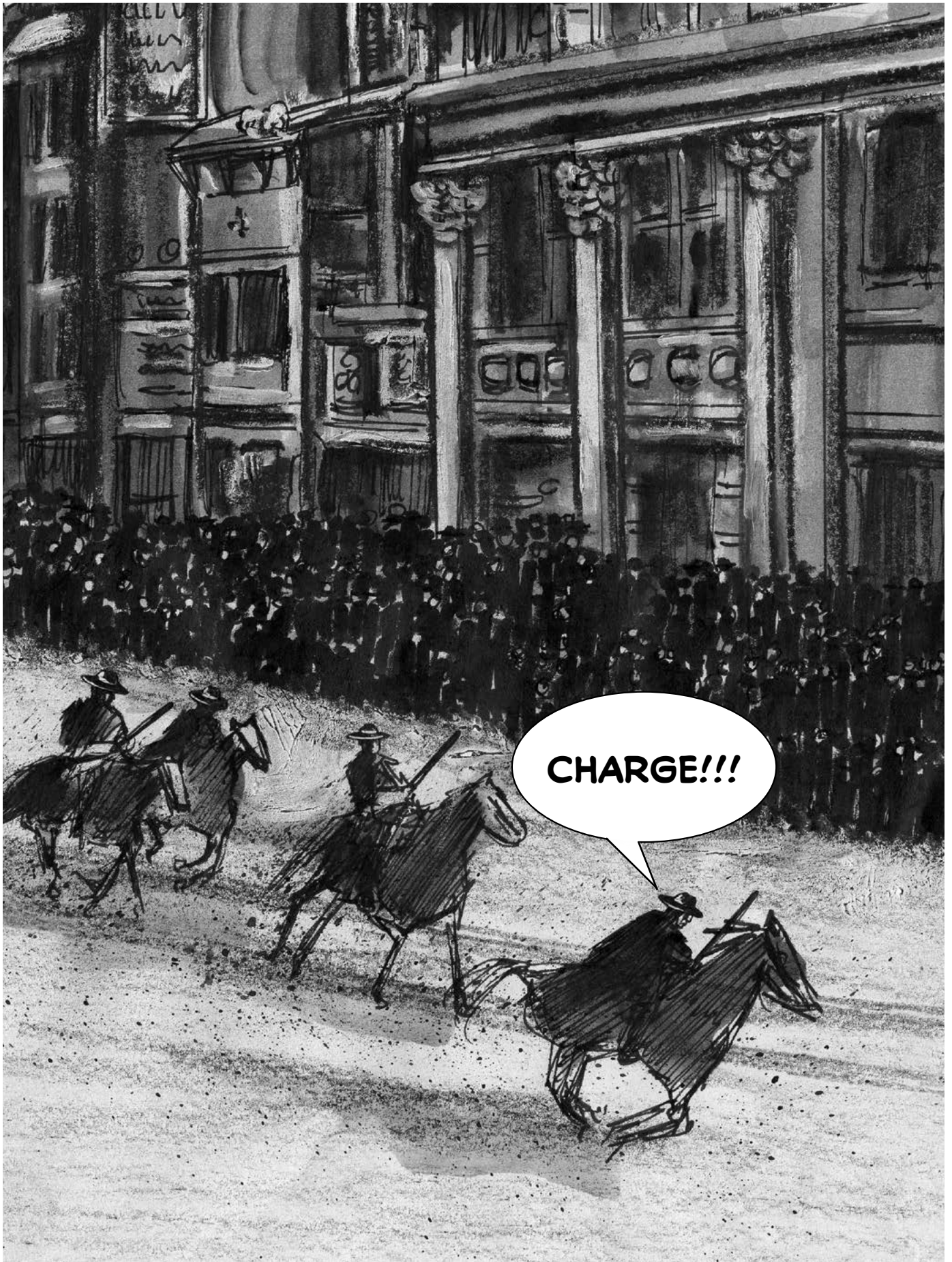




The streetcar is set on fire, possibly by scabs, possibly by strikers.

2:30 PM









2:35 PM

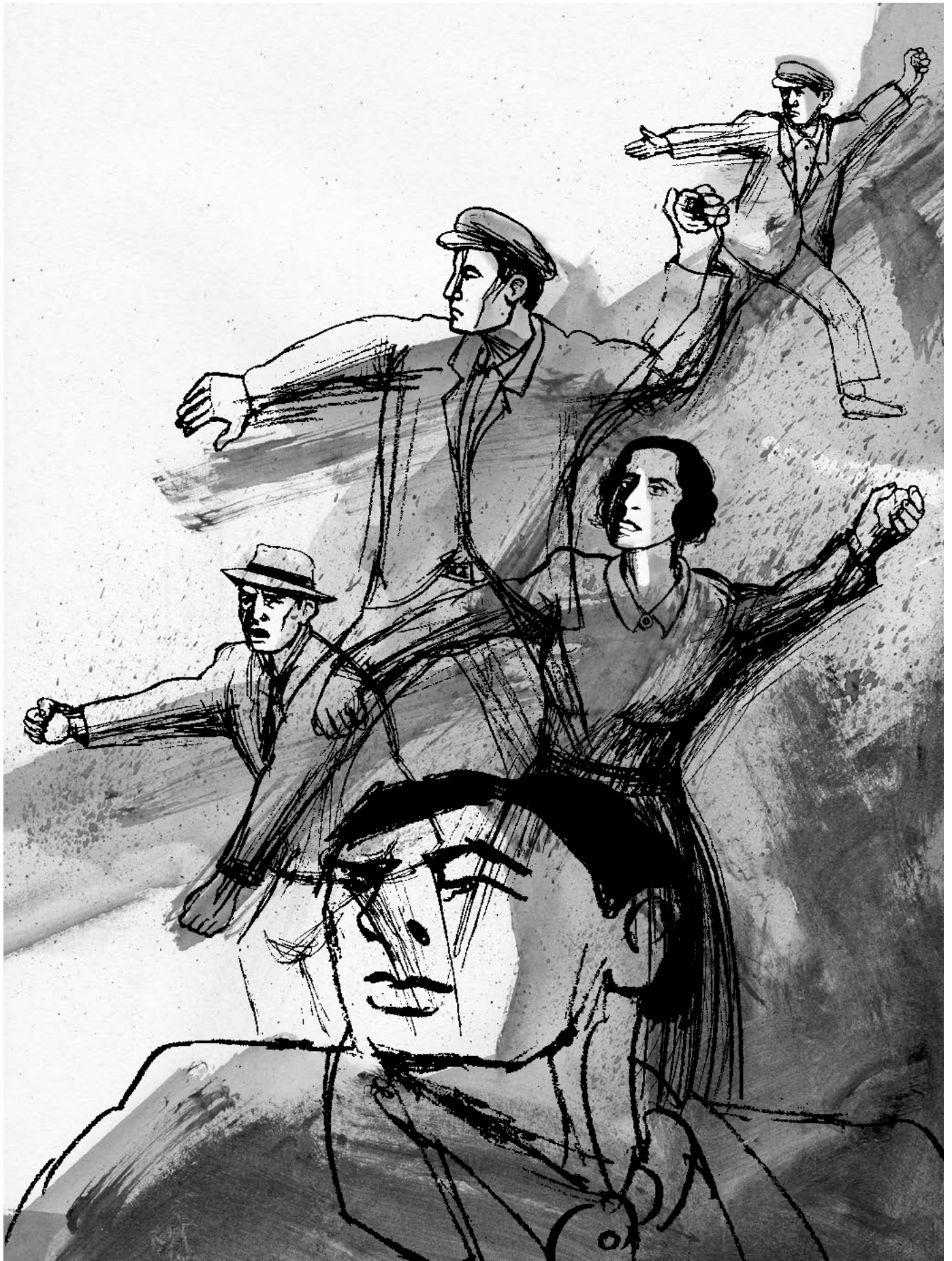












2:55 PM











The police shot and killed Mike Sokolowski. They also shot Mike Schezerbanowicz in the legs. He later died of gangrene infection.



3:35 PM



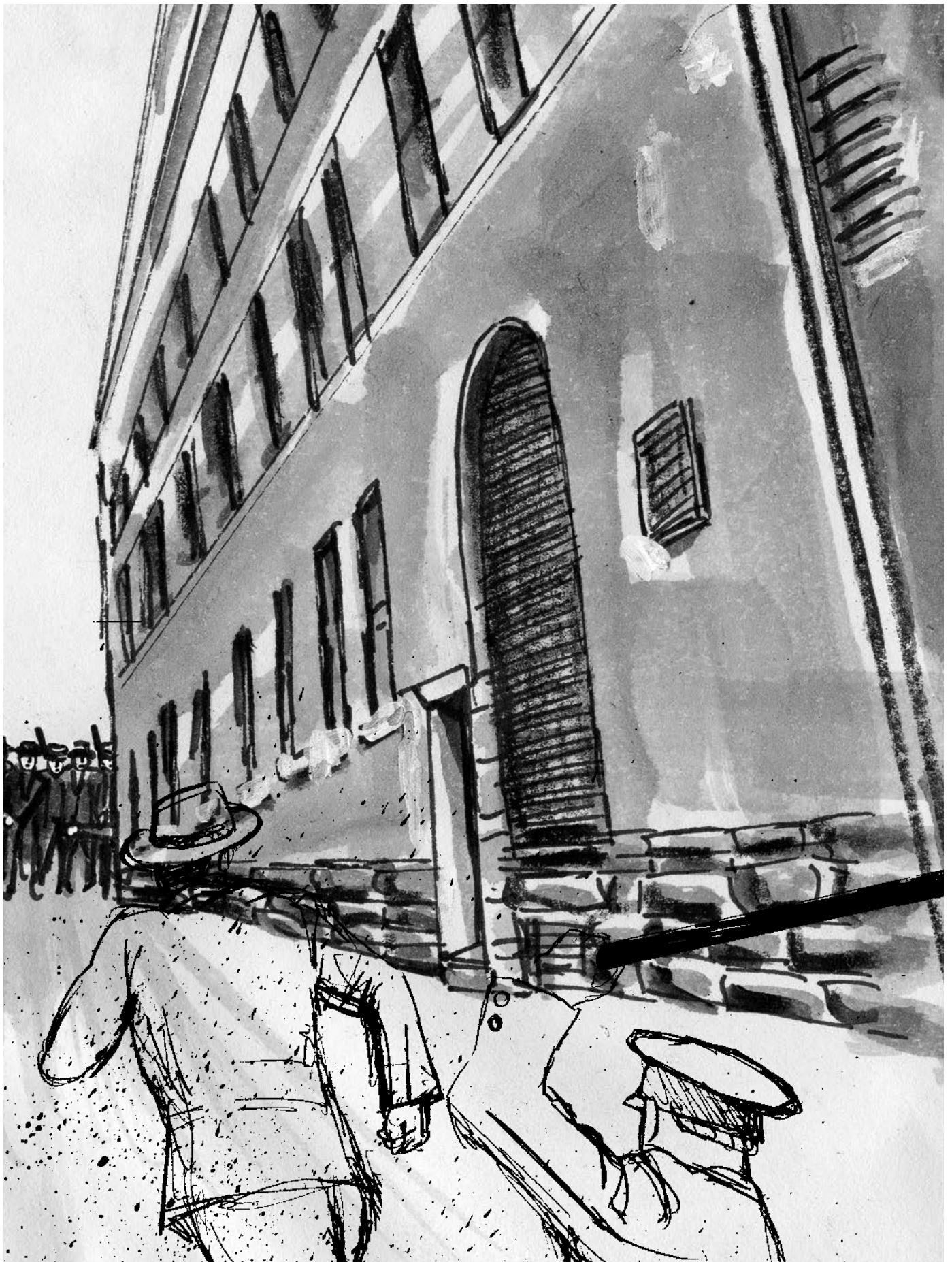






Specials cornered and attacked strikers in Hell's Alley, a lane between James and Market Avenues.



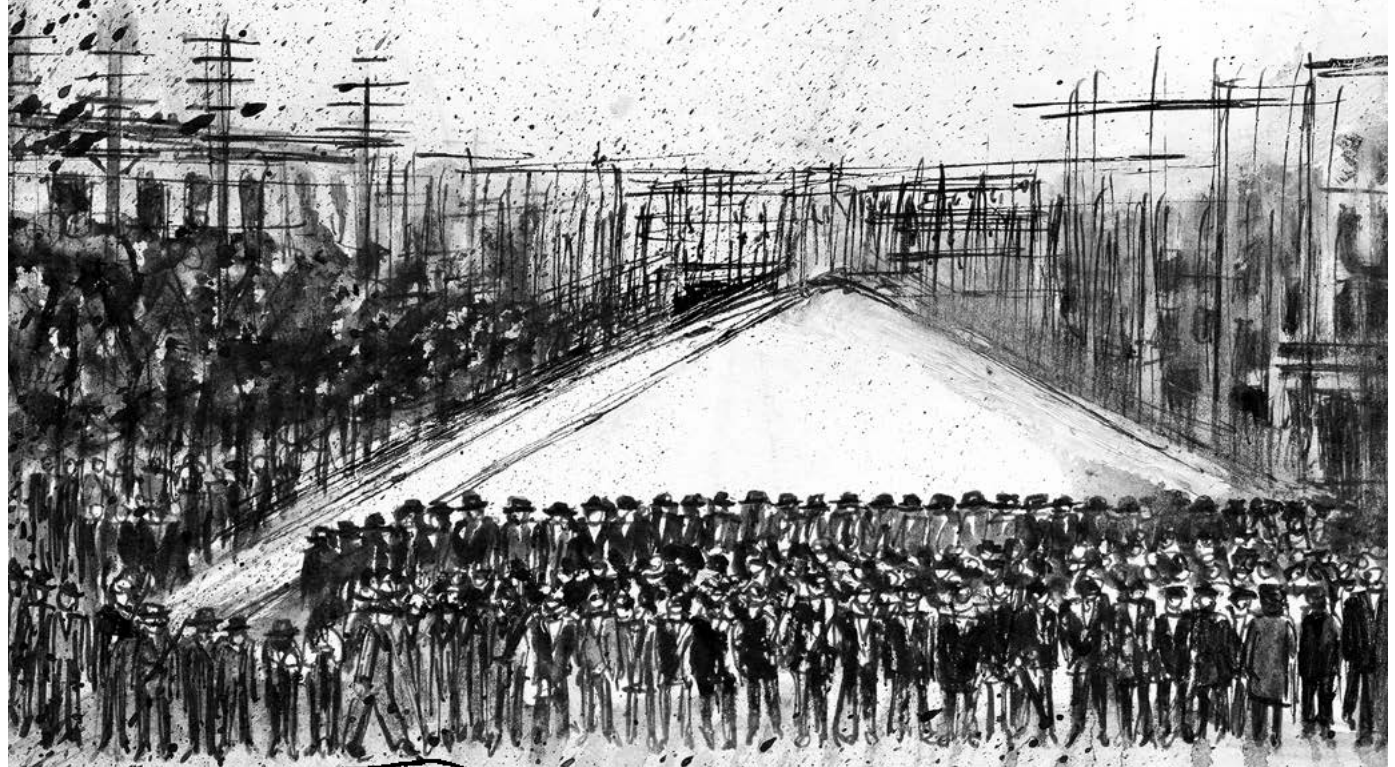




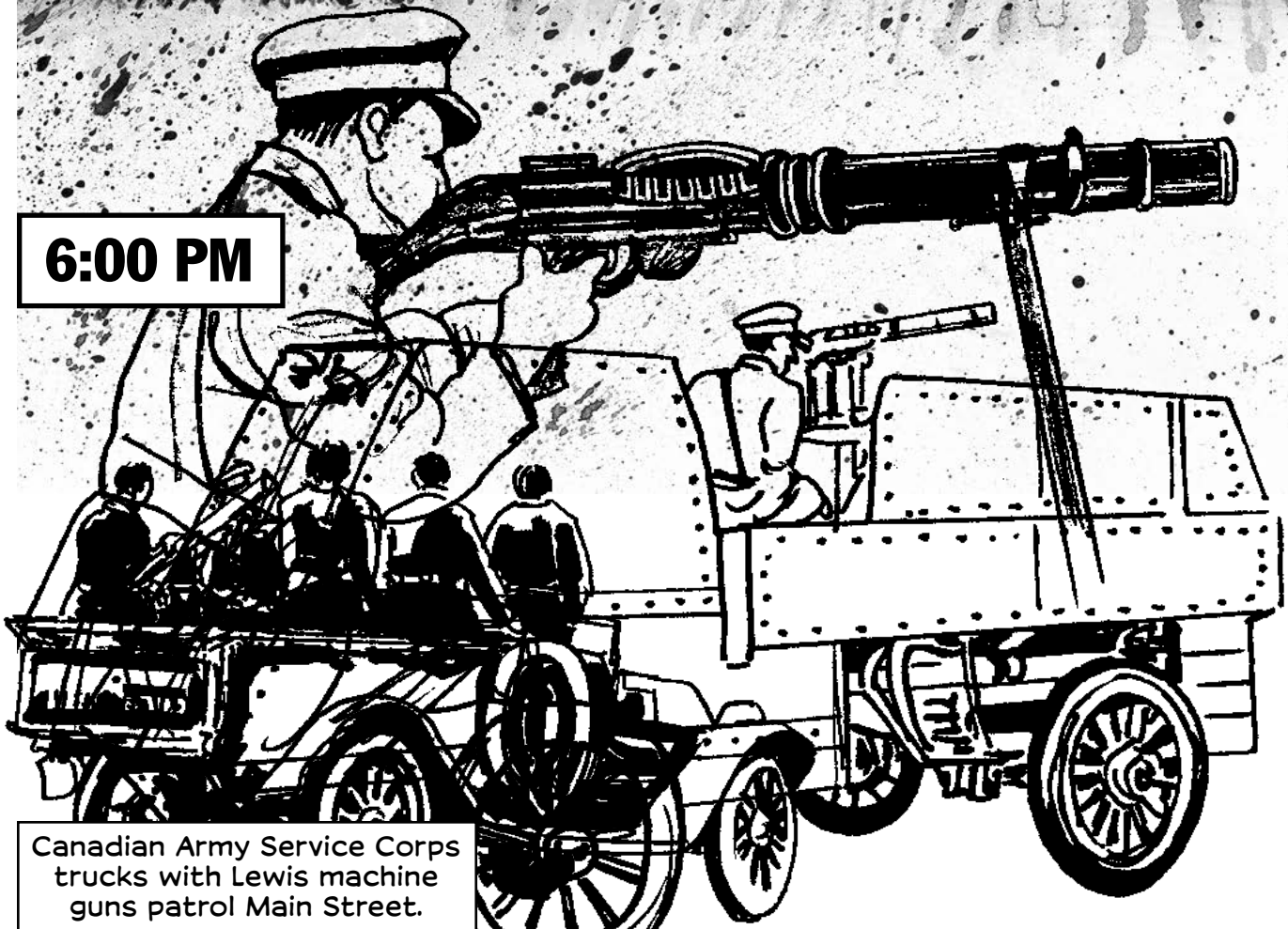


4:00 PM

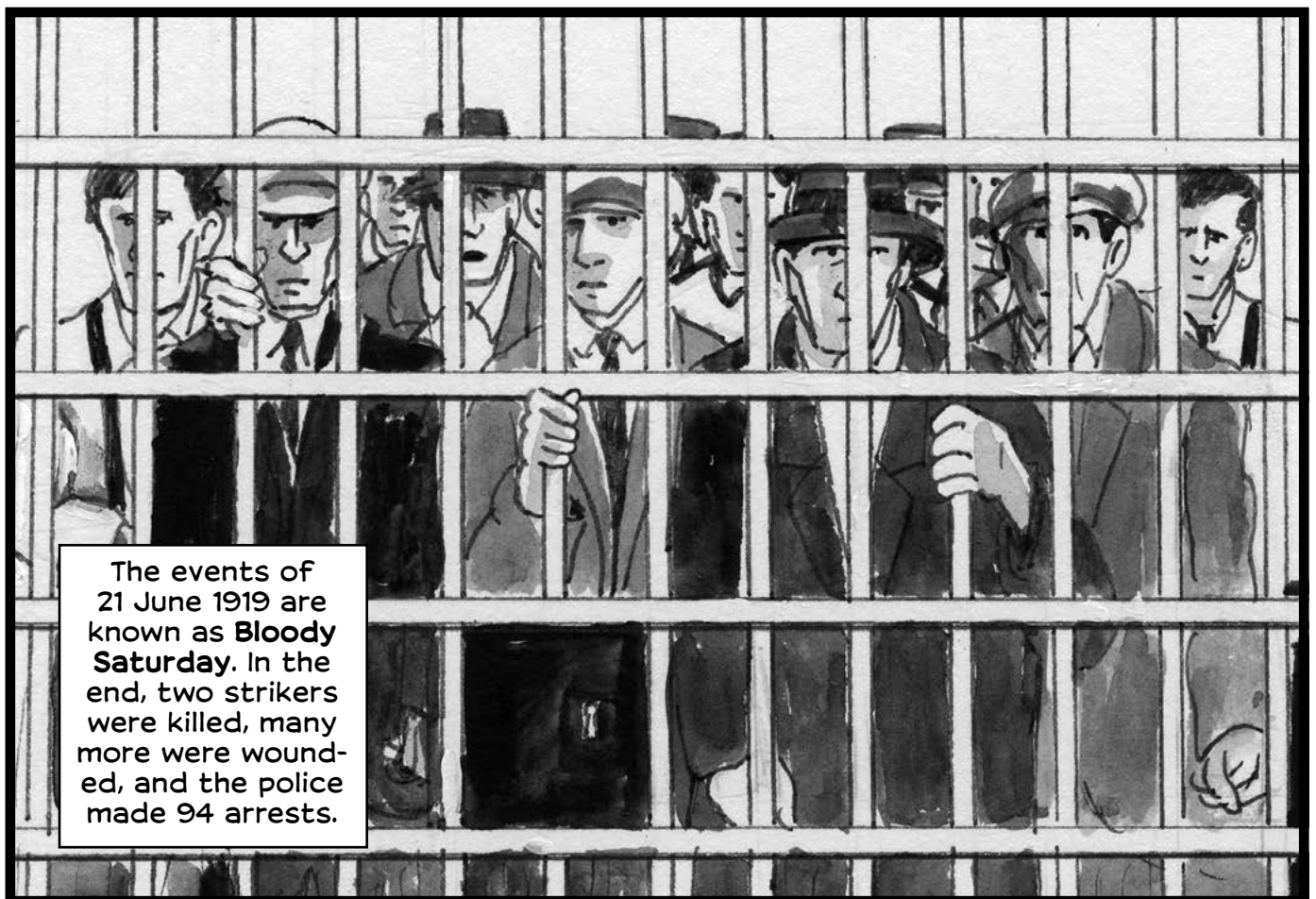
Special constables take control.



6:00 PM



Canadian Army Service Corps trucks with Lewis machine guns patrol Main Street.



In the days following, the police arrested more strike supporters. They arrested J.S. Woodsworth and Fred J. Dixon for their roles as editors of the *Western Labor News*, *Western Star*, and *The Enlightener*.

Western Labor News

SPECIAL STRIKE EDITION No. 32

Published by the Strike Committee, Labor Temple.

Price 5 cents.

Winnipeg, Man., Monday, June 23rd, 1919.

STRIKE UNBROKEN

KAISERISM WILL NOT WORK

BLOODY SATURDAY

the human rights they have fought to defend, and they are especially incensed by the murderous assault of the mob upon an unarmed crowd. One man, recently returned, said: "They treated us worse

Kaiserism in Canada

R.N.W.M.P. MAKE GORY DEBUT
CITIZENS SHOT WITHOUT WARNING
CITY UNDER MILITARY CONTROL
RETURNED MEN INCENSED
STRIKERS MORE DETERMINED.

One is dead, thirty or more, the "silent" returned men to

...if she who Germany shall have! Saturday is a ... of the criminal ... of the blood of ... who think ... But we call the murderers

- R.N.W.M.P. MAKE GORY DEBUT
- PEACEFUL CITIZENS SHOT WITHOUT WARNING
- CITY UNDER MILITARY CONTROL
- RETURNED MEN INCENSED
- STRIKERS MORE DETERMINED.

THE ENLIGHTENER

Published by The Press Committee

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Wednesday, June 26th, 1919

No. 1

General Sympathetic

STRIKE CALLED OFF

For Thursday
At 11 a.m.

CONDITIONS: The Provincial Government have appointed a Commission to make a thorough investigation regarding re-instatement of all Workers.

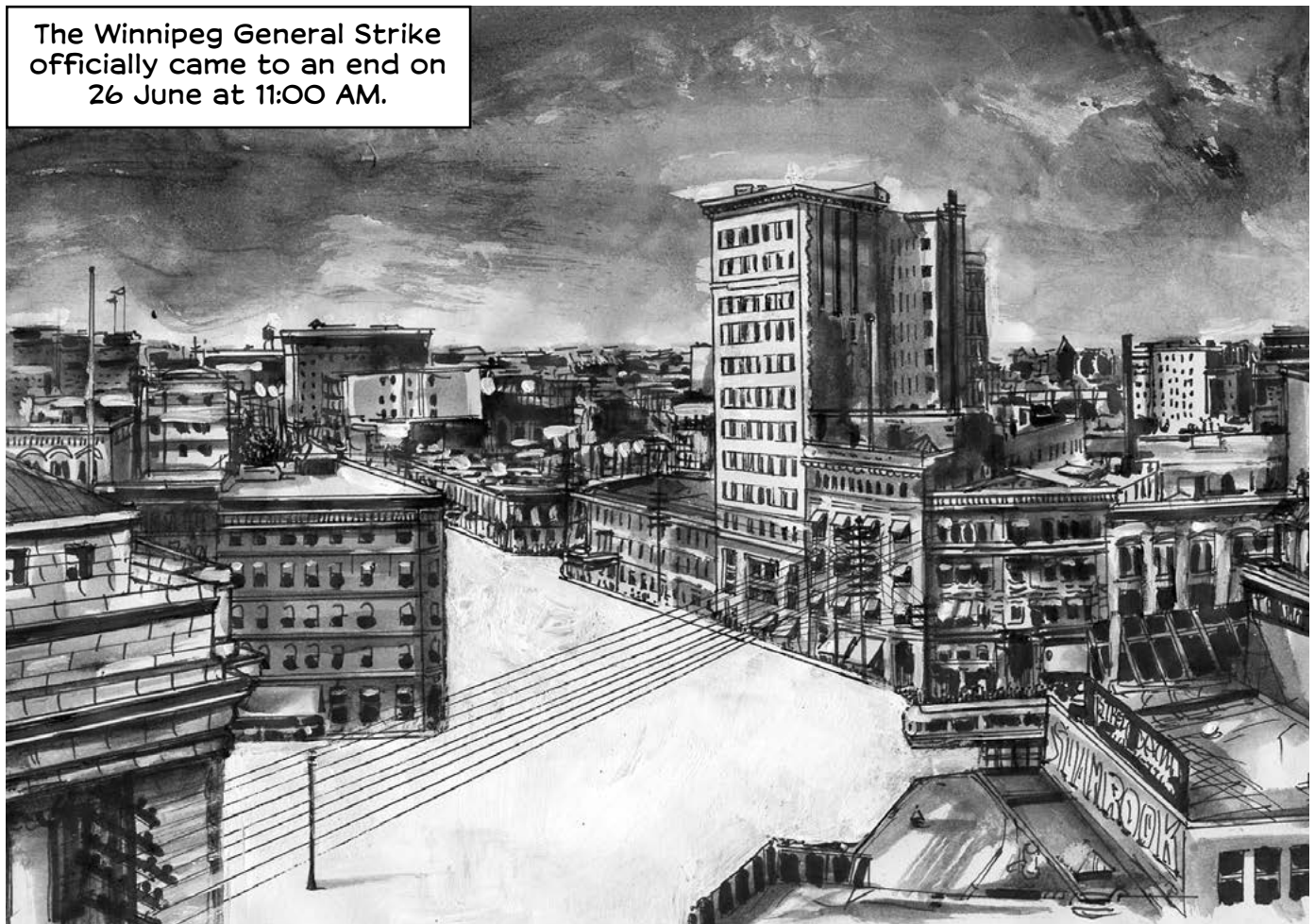
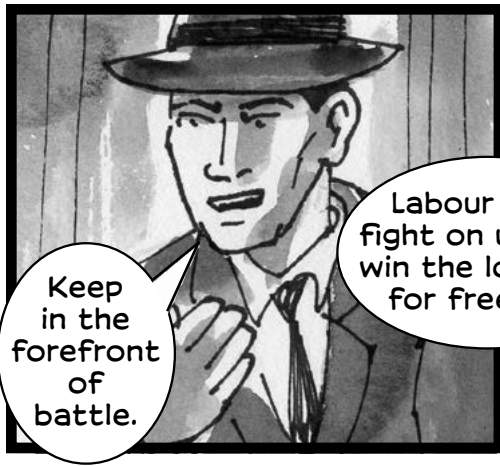
In the face of violent state repression, the Strike Committee decided to call off the strike on 25 June.

We must get ready for the next fight...

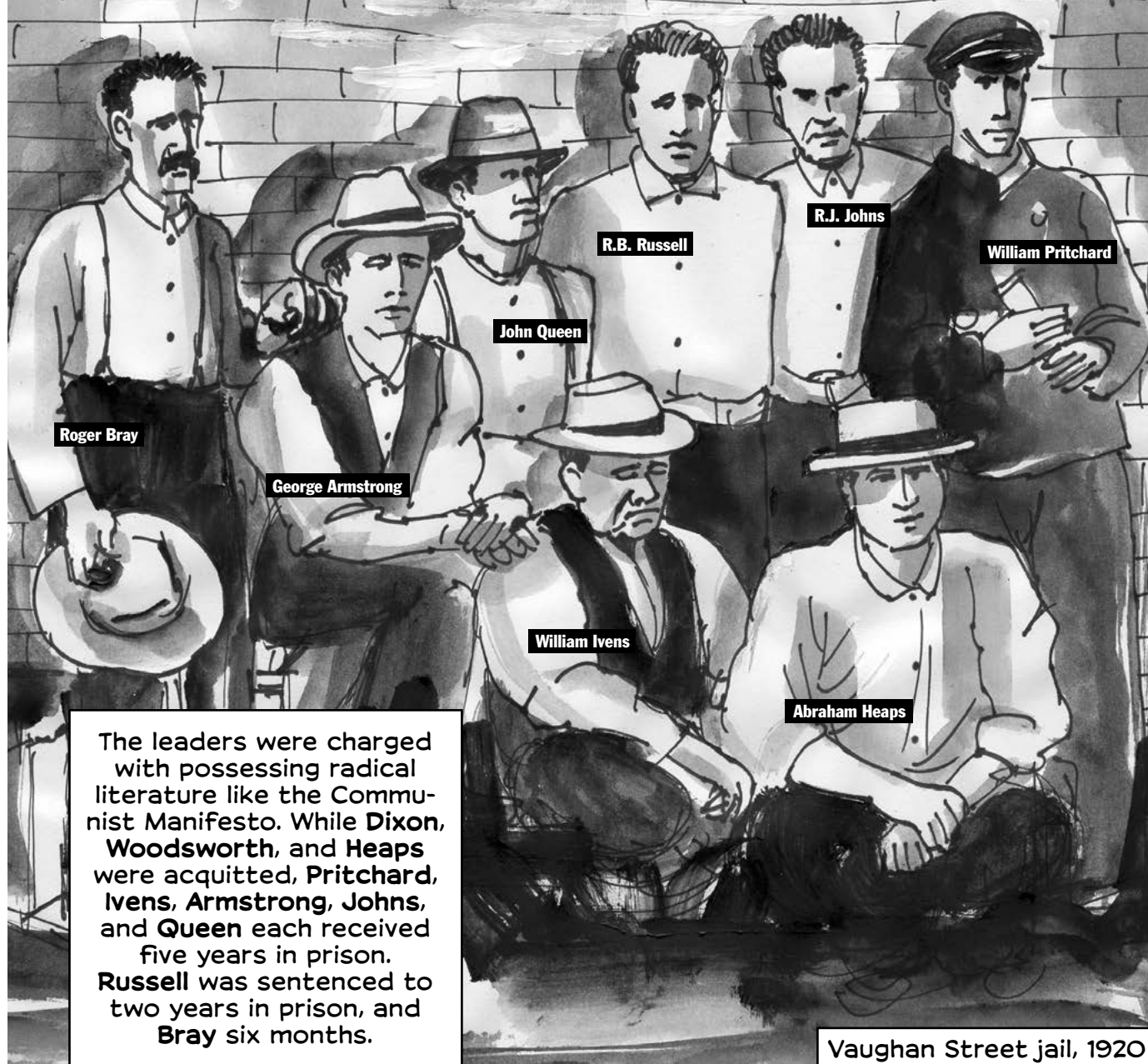


Don't slink to the rear and be slaves.





With the strike defeated, the struggle shifted to the courts. **Andrews**, of the Citizens' Committee, prosecuted the jailed strike leaders, not for their actions but for their socialist ideas. Winnipeggers were outraged and protested in the streets.

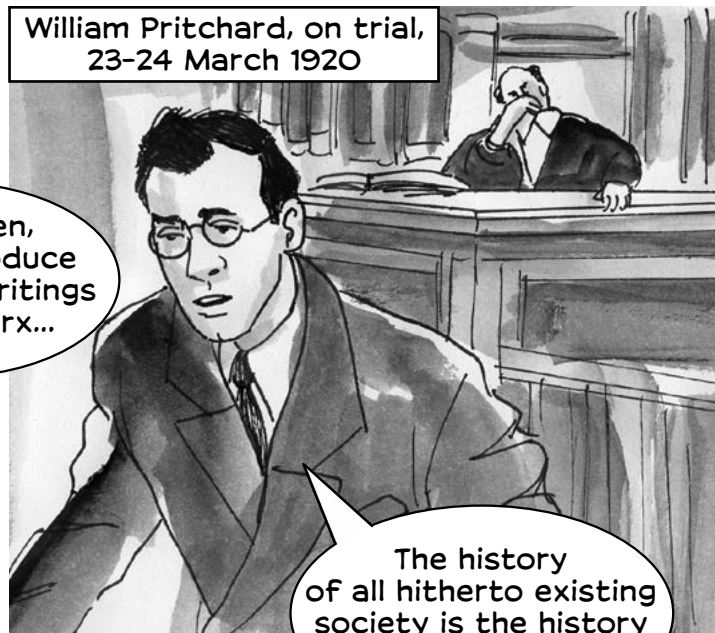


Though the state tried to criminalize their ideas, leaders used the trials to spread their message further.



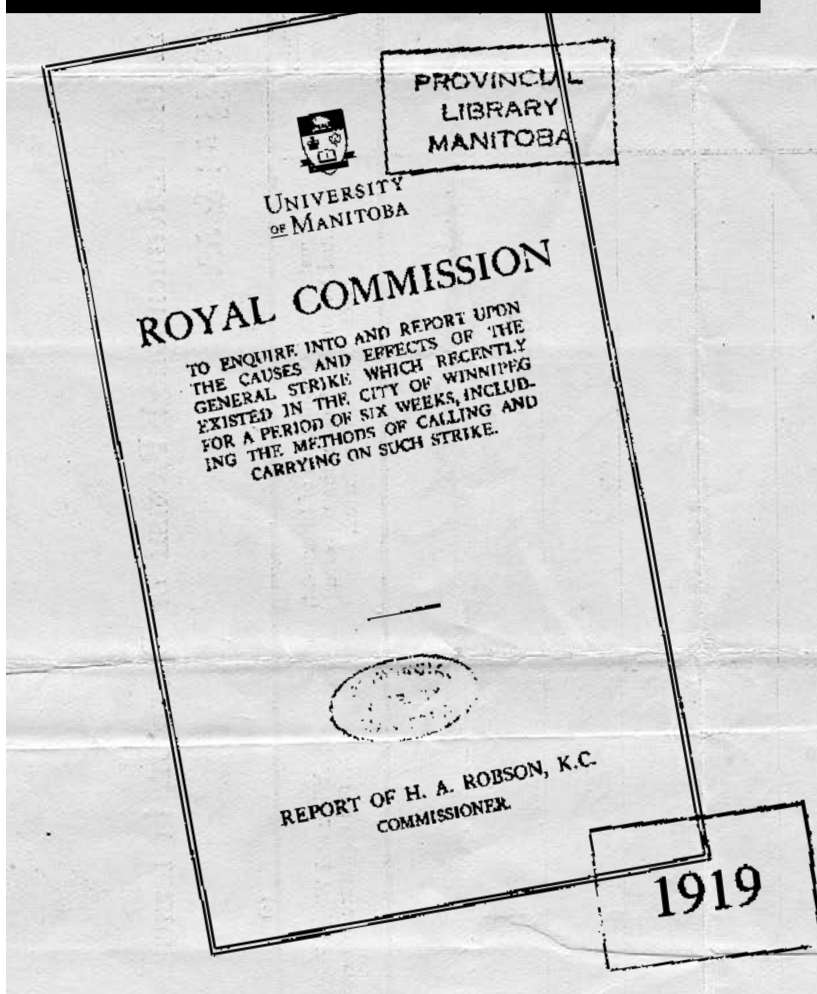
Gentlemen,
let me introduce
you to the writings
of Karl Marx...

William Pritchard, on trial,
23-24 March 1920



The history
of all hitherto existing
society is the history
of class struggles.

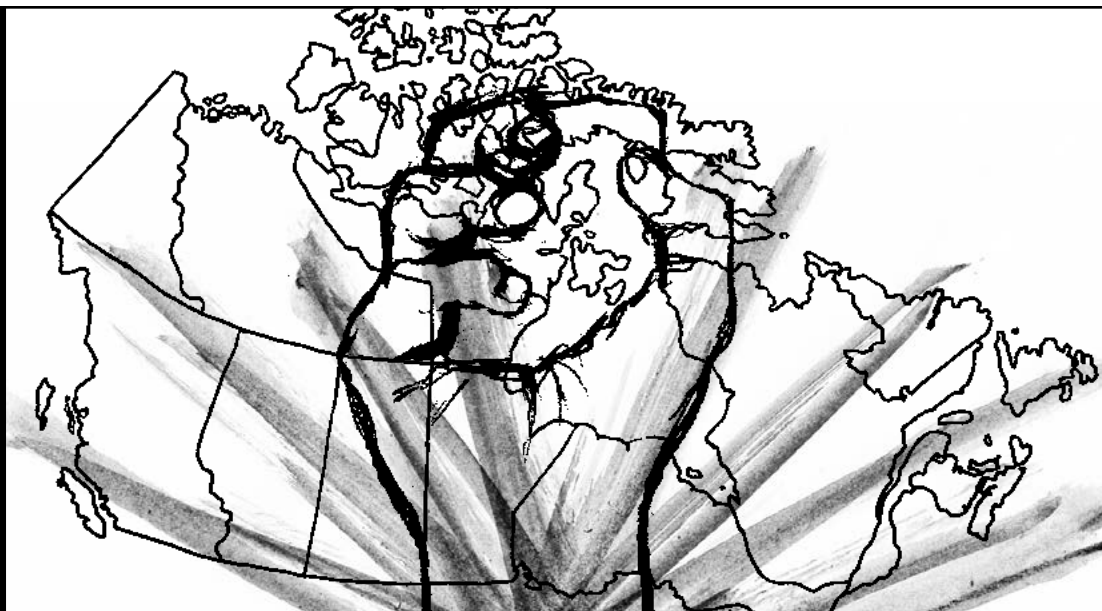
A Royal Commission called by the federal government to look into the Winnipeg General Strike later determined that the strike was about addressing the demands of workers, not an attempt to overthrow the government.



“There is only one thing that the workers have to thank the capitalist for, and that is that they have tightened the screws up so much that they are awaking the worker up to the fact that he is the most important factor and that until we produce for use instead of profit this unrest will still prevail. Let the workingman, the one who produced, have control and then we shall see the light of a new dawn.”

— Resina Asals,
Regina Women's Labour League,
testimony at the Royal Commission

In the years and decades afterwards, new leaders and political groups tried to build on the strike's momentum and carry on the struggle for a better world for workers in Winnipeg and elsewhere. The strike's ripple effects are still felt today.



WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE

Workers fought for trade union rights, like collective bargaining.



Jailed leaders **Armstrong, Ivens, Queen, and Dixon** were elected to the Manitoba Legislature. **Woodsworth and Heaps** were elected to the House of Commons.

Some people joined the Communist Party and organized workers across the country.





One hundred years later, the Winnipeg General Strike means many things to many people. Its legacy is complex.

Winnipeg Free Daily

LOGIN CREATE ACCOUNT REVOLT CONTACT US



ALL SECTIONS SOCIAL CHANGE ARTS & LIFE REVOLUTION SPORTS CANNABIS OPINION HOMES RADICALS CLASSIFIEDS UNIONS JOBS OBITUARIES

TOP NEWS

May 1, 2019

Winnipeg
8°C Sun with cloud.
Perfect for activism!



THIS AFTERNOON:
19°C Sunny

THIS EVENING:
14°C Sunny

FULL FORECAST

THIS JUST IN

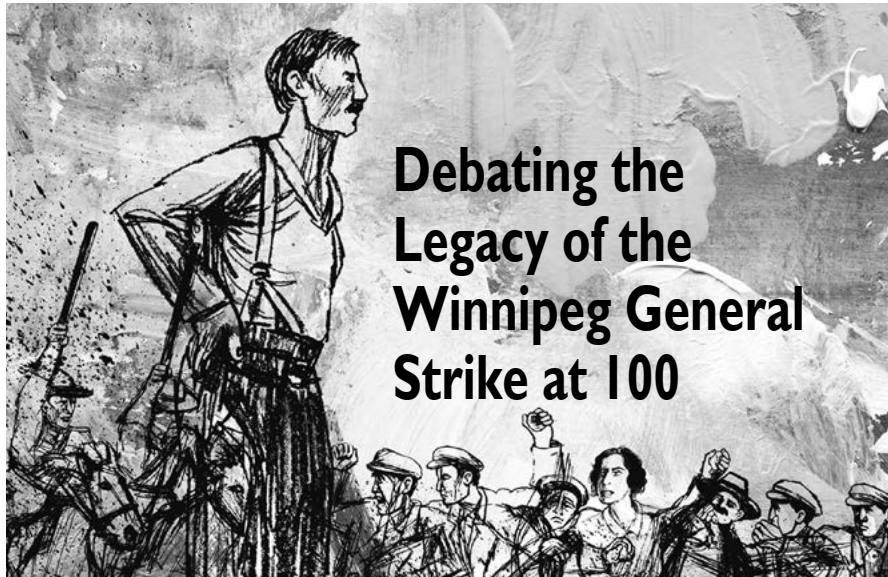
Jets Favoured to Win Stanley Cup

New Graphic Novel Published
About Winnipeg General Strike

The Importance of Treaty Education

Workers Call for Strike Action
Against Racist Employer

Winnipeg Pride Parade
Keeps It Political



Debating the Legacy of the Winnipeg General Strike at 100

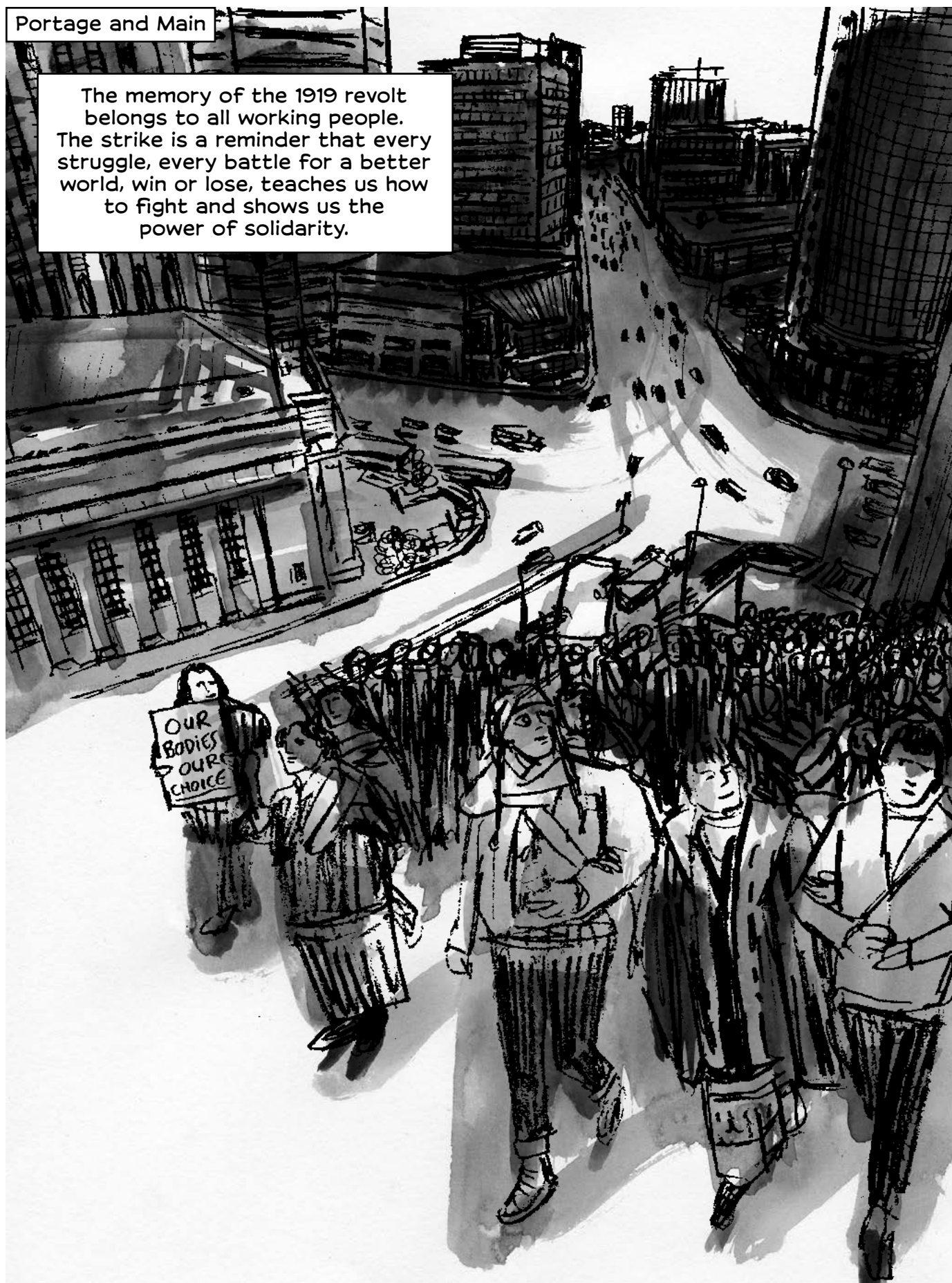


The strike is an inspiring example of working-class solidarity. It was a moment when thousands of people fought together for a more just and equal society.

Labour
creates all
wealth!

All wealth
belongs to
labour!

The memory of the 1919 revolt belongs to all working people. The strike is a reminder that every struggle, every battle for a better world, win or lose, teaches us how to fight and shows us the power of solidarity.





THE ART OF LABOUR HISTORY

NOTES ON DRAWING 1919

It's early morning in East Vancouver, summer of 2018. A steaming cup of coffee rests beside my drawing table. My mind is in the past—99 years ago, in Winnipeg, to be precise. I stand, looking down at a watercolour painting on the table. In my hands I hold a toothbrush and a knife, my artistic tools of the trade. I am ready for another day of work on *1919: A Graphic History of the Winnipeg General Strike*.



I have been illustrating *1919* on an extremely tight deadline, completing 93 pages in 53 days—about the length of the Winnipeg General Strike. I often work 10-12 hours a day. The summer has been a series of heat waves, in Vancouver as elsewhere, and my apartment is cooking at 32 degrees Celsius. The city, like much of Western Canada and the United States, is under a smoke advisory due to devastating wild fires. The world is burning, literally and figuratively. It feels like I am forging *1919* out of the fire. This intensity is playing out on the pages I am producing.

Today, I am illustrating the events of “Bloody Saturday,” 21 June 1919. In talking with members of the Graphic History Collective before starting the project,

we decided to make an aesthetic connection between the violence of World War I and the brutality of class war in the streets of post-war Winnipeg, especially during the Bloody Saturday sequence. Many strikers and strike supporters, in fact, were returned soldiers and likely would have made a similar connection.



This idea, of *drawing* parallels between different kinds of war, has been a catalyst for me to illustrate the sequence of Bloody Saturday as if I were a war artist. I consulted the “war” art of Otto Dix and the anti-war art of George Grosz, Kathe Kollwitz, and Nancy Spero. I also looked carefully at the ultimate document of an artist bearing witness to war, Goya’s *The Disasters of War*. The horror depicted by these artists was not the same as that inflicted during Bloody Saturday, of course. But the parallel remains: of the state using men in uniforms to suppress the people. A truncheon is still a truncheon.

For further visual reference, in addition to the wealth of historical photographs from the Winnipeg General Strike, I drew inspiration from images of police and the military charging crowds on horseback,

such as the attacks during the civil rights marches in Selma, Alabama in 1965, the British miners' strike of 1984, the anti-WTO Battle in Seattle in 1999, and in Montreal during an anti-police brutality demonstration in 2013. I want to convey the timelessness of conflict for justice in varying forms.

In the end, I have made over 100 raw sketches for the Bloody Saturday sequence. I did not concern myself about whether the drawings were proportional or even finished. They are meant to be in the moment. Unlike the carefully planned drawings in the bulk of 1919, these "war" drawings are frenzied and crude, and rendered as if in the panic of fleeing as the sound of horse's hooves get closer.

That is what I am trying to convey this morning, standing with a toothbrush and knife. I have already slathered watercolour paint on the line drawings, now I need to complete the art with the splatters of dirt, dust, screams, and blood.

I squeeze black watercolour paint from a tube into a dish. I dip the toothbrush in a bottle of water and then grind the brush in a circular motion into the paint. Holding the toothbrush over the drawing I drag the knife over the bristles and paint sprays out onto the drawing, in a combination of fine mist and blobs. In places, I drag the toothbrush into the wet paint leaving a trail of raw lines on the drawing. I repeat this method over each page.

The horror of Bloody Saturday is the climax of the Winnipeg General Strike, but it is not the full story, as



1919 makes clear. Nevertheless, the state's crackdown on strikers, supported by capitalists and the Citizens' Committee, is a reminder for workers today that society was—and still is—structured to serve the interests of capital.

Art bears witness to the injustices of the world and, in reflecting on the pain and struggles of the past, offers hope in working together for a better present and future. Art can aid the momentum of progressive social change, and that is what keeps me going this morning. I am trying to capture and convey the inspiration and spirit of solidarity in class conflict. That is the art of labour history.

David Lester

August 2018

THE CHARACTER OF CLASS STRUGGLE IN WINNIPEG

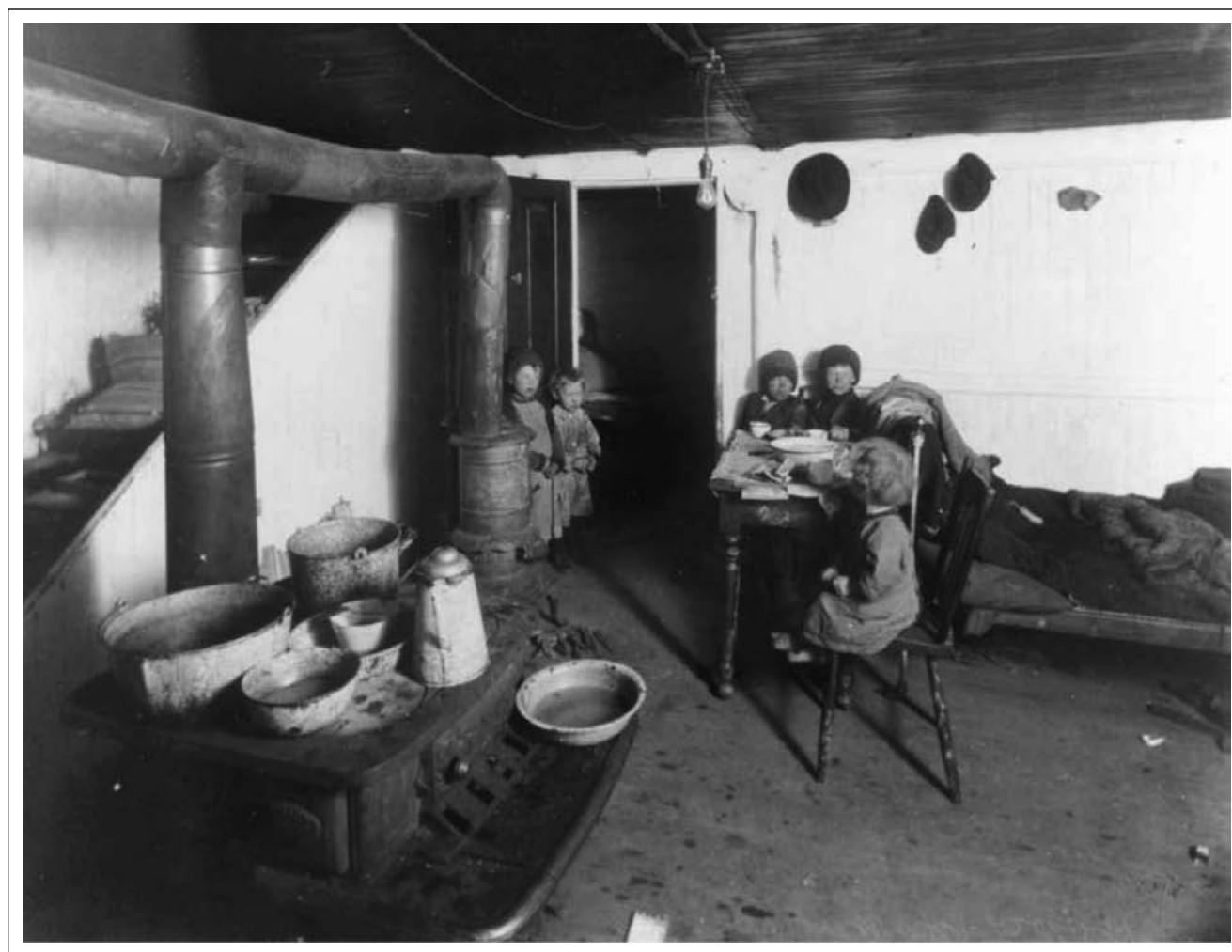
A PHOTO-ESSAY

There exist a number of historical photographs that depict Winnipeg's working-class life in the early twentieth century and that detail many of the events and people involved in the 1919 general strike. In making *1919*, we drew inspiration from these images. Below,

we present a select few to offer readers a different kind of visual reference for the character of class conflict in Winnipeg. We thank Sharon Reilly for her research, which made this photo-essay possible.



1. "New Jerusalem," Corner of Dufferin and King streets, North End, Winnipeg, circa 1904. This poor immigrant neighbourhood was home to many Jewish families. *Archives of Manitoba. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.*



2. Young children inside slum dwelling, North End, Winnipeg, circa 1916.

Archives of Manitoba. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.

3. James Henry Ashdown's residence, Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, circa 1915.

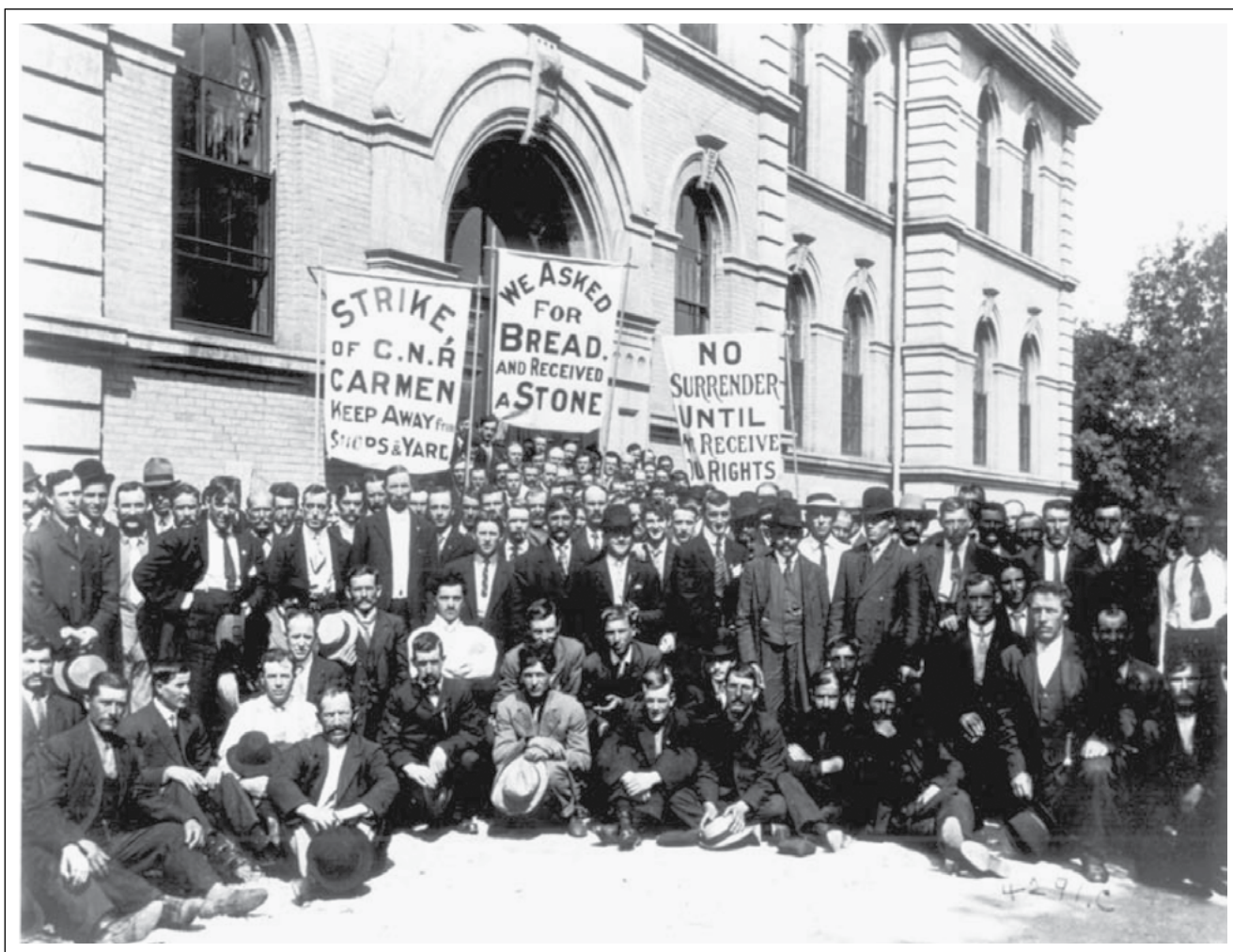
Archives of Manitoba, J.H.G. Russell Collection, 101. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.





4. Domestic servants employed at one of Winnipeg's wealthy homes, circa 1915.

Archives of Manitoba. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.



5. Canadian Northern Railway Carmen's Strike, 1914.

Archives of Manitoba, L.B. Foote Collection. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.



6. Winnipeg Strike Committee.

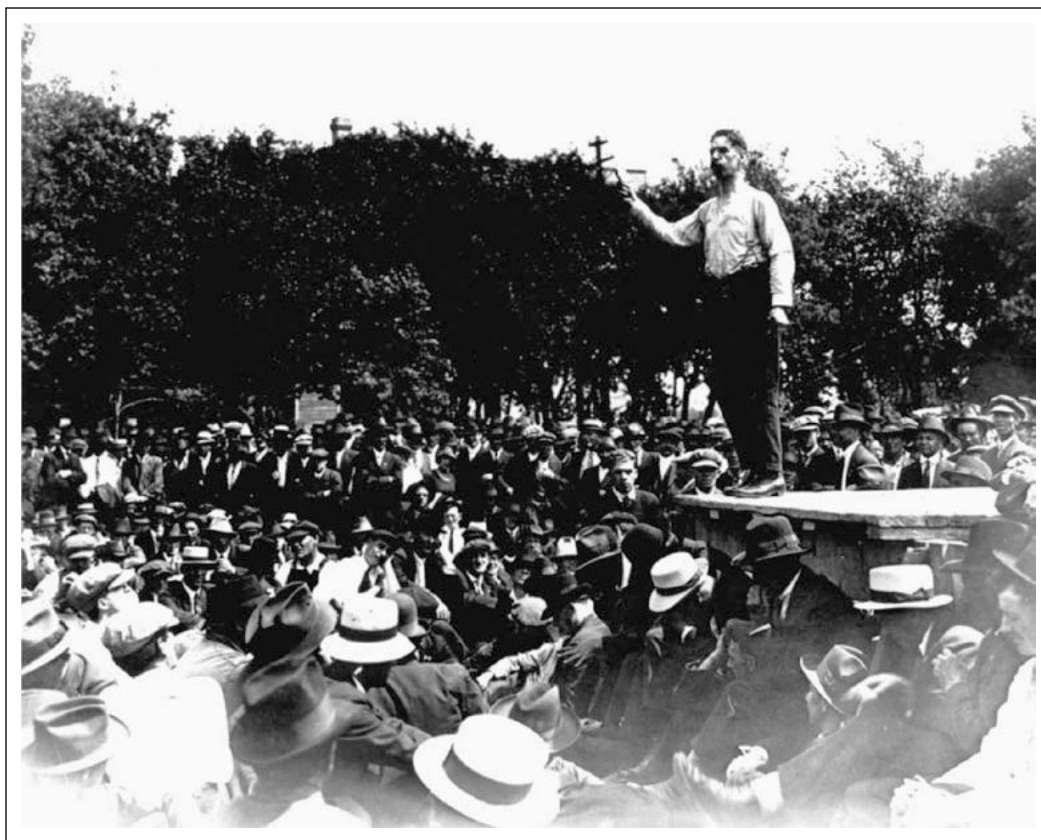
Archives of Manitoba, L.B. Foote Collection.

Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.



7. Demonstration by strike supporters at the
Winnipeg Board of Trade Building, 4 June 1919.

Archives of Manitoba. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.



8. Strike leader Roger Bray addresses the crowd assembled at Victoria Park, 13 June 1919.

Archives of Manitoba, L.B. Foote Collection, N2743. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.



9. Citizens' Committee of One Thousand meeting, circa June 1919.

Library and Archives Canada, C38596. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.



10. Second charge of the Royal North-West Mounted Police along Main Street at William Avenue, 21 June 1919. The police rode into the crowd, holding clubs and reins in one hand and revolvers in the other.

Archives of Manitoba. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.

11. Canadian Army Service Corps trucks with Lewis machine guns patrol Main Street, downtown Winnipeg, 21 June 1919.

Archives of Manitoba. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.





12. Arrested strike leaders awaiting trial, 1919. Back row, left to right, Roger Bray, George Armstrong, John Queen, R. B. Russell, R.J. Johns, William Pritchard. Front row; William Ivens, A.A. Heaps. *National Archives. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.*



13. Winnipeg workers protest the arrest and trials of the strike leaders, Labour Day, September 1919. *Library and Archives Canada, C37329. Courtesy of Sharon Reilly.*

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Graphic History Collective sees the study of history as an important part of activism. Radical history is a resource. We believe that changing the world today requires a solid historical understanding of the tactics and strategies that people in the past used to fight for social change.

As part of our creative process, we consult historical books and articles about the stories we transform into comics. We also draw on primary source materials such as photographs, newspapers, and songs. Below are notes acknowledging the materials we used to create the text and illustrations in this comic book. We have also included a selected bibliography of further reading on the Winnipeg General Strike and Canadian labour and working-class history.

NOTES

Cover Image: The cover design references a photograph of strike leader Roger Bray speaking to a crowd at Victoria Park during the strike, republished in Michael Dupuis, *Winnipeg's General Strike: Reports from the Front Lines* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 80.

David Lester's explanation of the cover art: "For the cover, I wanted to convey the energy and dynamic of class conflict in Winnipeg, with the charging horses representing the might of the state versus the defiance of the strikers throwing rocks, and the importance of the orator conveying to the mass crowd the power of working together. My use of bright warm colours in the background is a metaphor to represent the bold, positive ideals of a better world. In this case the very aesthetics of colour become political."

Page 1: This image references an illustrated map of Winnipeg in Norman Penner, ed., *Winnipeg 1919: The Strikers' Own History of the Winnipeg General Strike*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975), xiii.

Pages 2–3: This image references a photograph of a crowd at Portage and Main, 10 June 1919, republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 130.

Page 5: There were many individuals involved in the Winnipeg General Strike. We have chosen to focus on the people represented on this page; however, the art also implies that these figures by no means acted alone. These people were part of a broader working-class revolt. The portraits are based on historical photographs. See, for example, J.M. Bumsted, *The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919: An Illustrated History* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1994). We note that Mike Sokolowski's name is sometimes spelled Sokolowski.

Page 6: The newspaper headlines on this page are real. The articles have been compiled, edited, and republished in J.E.

Rea, *The Winnipeg General Strike* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1973).

Page 7: During the strike, the *Western Labor News* published a "Special Strike Edition," often referred to as the "Strike Bulletin," which was edited by William Ivens. The text on this page appeared in the 27 May edition of the Strike Bulletin. See Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 68–69.

Pages 8–9: This image of Portage and Main is based on a photograph from the *Winnipeg Free Press* circa 1910s.

Pages 10–11: These pages depict Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, symbolically on horseback as leader of Canada, directing the North-West Mounted Police to confront resisting Métis and other Indigenous communities in 1885. The image references two historical images. The first is the photograph "Métis and First Nations prisoners following the North-West Rebellion, August, 1885," Library and Archives Canada, C-006688b. The second image is "The Capture of Batoche," based on sketches by Sergeant Grundy and others, 1885, Library and Archives Canada, ICON168173. Thanks to Adam Gaudry and Rob Innes for their assistance with the wording of this page.

Pages 12–13: These pages reference images of the North-West Mounted Police, such as "Trooper of the North-West Mounted Police 1876" by R.J. Marrion, Canadian War Museum, and "North-West Mounted Police, at Fort Calgary," Glenbow Museum, NA-354-10. The image of James Henry Ashdown is based on a photograph in Bumsted, *The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919*, 6.

Page 14: The image of Ashdown, among other business leaders like Thomas R. Deacon, is based on cartoons in *Manitobans As We See 'Em, 1908 and 1909* published in 1909 by the Newspaper Cartoonists' Association of Manitoba and reproduced in Bumsted, *The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919*, 7. Along the bottom of the image is a reference to the Winnipeg Aqueduct that was completed in 1919. We thank Adele Perry for assistance with this panel. For more on the politics of the aqueduct, see Adele Perry, *Aqueduct: Colonialism, Resources, and the Histories We Remember* (Winnipeg: ARP, 2016). The map of Winnipeg is based on a map by Tom Morris included in Gerry Berkowski and Nolan Reilly, *1919 Winnipeg General Strike: A Driving and Walking Tour* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, 1985).

Page 15: This image references a photograph of a crowd outside the Winnipeg Board of Trade Building republished in Dupuis, *Winnipeg's General Strike*, 72.

Pages 16–17: These pages reference images of soldiers from World War I, such as a "Send More Men" propaganda poster

as well as photographs like “Canadians gather round a German prisoner, captured during a trench raid by the 78th (Winnipeg Grenadiers) Battalion,” Library and Archives Canada, PA-00262.

Pages 18–19: These pages reference the charcoal style of war art by artists like Harold James Mowat. See Mowat’s “A Night Raid,” “Stretcher Bearers,” and “Trench Fight” in the Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum.

Page 25: This page draws on an account of the Walker Theatre meeting in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 6–16.

Page 26: George Armstrong’s remarks at the Majestic Theatre are published in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 17–18. We have amended his remarks for readability.

Page 27: This page is based on an account of the Calgary Convention in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 21–29.

Page 30: The strike ballot results are published in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 43–44.

Page 31: This page depicts Ernest Robinson, secretary of the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council, reading a press release that is quoted in Bumsted, *The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919*, 28.

Page 34–35: The image of the strike committee is based on a photograph republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 2.

Page 35: The “Permitted By Authority of Strike Committee” sign can be found in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 50.

Page 36: The text in the image of the Strike Bulletin comes from the 26 May 1919 edition quoted in David Jay Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg: Labour, Industrial Relations, and the General Strike* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 119. The image of the Citizens’ Committee of One Thousand is based on one of the only known photographs of the group in Bumsted, *The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919*, 34.

Page 37: The image of *The Winnipeg Citizen* is based on an article republished in Rea, *The Winnipeg General Strike*, 20. The A.J. Andrews dialogue is based on an account published in the Strike Bulletin and republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 65.

Page 38: The “Clean Out the Bolsheviks” article is republished in Rea, *The Winnipeg General Strike*, 36.

Page 39: The quote attributed to Meighen can be found at www.cbc.ca/History.

Page 41: These song lyrics were published in the 13 June 1919 edition of the Strike Bulletin. We thank David Thompson for passing along the reference. We have amended the lyrics, changing the name “Winning” to “Bray” for narrative purposes.

Page 42: The image of Edith Hancox is based on a photograph courtesy of David Thompson.

Page 45: The image of the anti-strike veterans is based on photographs republished in Dupuis, *Winnipeg’s General Strike*, 70.

Page 46: The image of the “special constables” being sworn in is based on a photograph republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 129.

Page 51: The image of a crowd gathering on Main Street is based on a photograph republished in Dupuis, *Winnipeg’s General Strike*, 106.

Pages 54–55: The image of a crowd tipping a streetcar is based on a photograph republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 191.

Pages 56–57: The image of a streetcar on fire is based on a photograph republished in Bumsted, *The Winnipeg General Strike*, 74.

Pages 58–59: The image of charging police is based on a photograph republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 196.

Pages 60–73: The images of Bloody Saturday are based on photographs republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 185–196.

Pages 74–82: The images of clashes between strike supporters and special constables are based on photographs republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 198–202.

Pages 82–83: The images of the army in the streets of Winnipeg are based on photographs republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 201–204.

Page 84: The images of articles from the Strike Bulletin and *The Enlightener* are based on images reproduced in Dupuis, *Winnipeg’s General Strike*, 117 and 123.

Page 86: The top image of Labour Day protests against the arrest and trials of strike leaders is based on a photograph, Library and Archives Canada, C3732. The bottom image is based on a photograph of the arrested strike leaders republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 161.

Page 87: William Pritchard’s testimony is partially republished in Penner, *Winnipeg 1919*, 243–284. The quote from Resina Asals can be found in Gregory S. Kealey’s treatment of the Royal Commission, Gregory S. Kealey, “1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (Spring 1984): 15.

Page 88: The bottom left image references the “Towards the Dawn” Co-operative Commonwealth Federation promotional image. To the right, the top image references a photograph of the Communist Party of Canada in 1932, and the bottom image is based on a photograph of a coal miners’ rally in Blairmore, Alberta, 1931, Glenbow Archives, NC-54-2024.

Page 91: The image in the middle is based on a photograph of Quebec labour leaders marching as part of the 1972 general strike. The bottom image references the Days of Action strikes that occurred in Ontario in the mid-1990s.

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Strike that also took place in 1919. He is the author of *The New Democracy: Challenging the Social Order in Industrial Ontario, 1914–25* that explores the post-World War I labour revolt in that province. His most recent book, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* examines the generation of 1919 as they continued to fight for labour over the course of the next two decades. He lives and works in Treaty 2 territory.

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The Graphic History Collective is a group of activists, artists, writers, and researchers interested in comics, history, and social change. We produce people's histories in an accessible format to help people understand the historical roots of contemporary social issues. Our comics show that you don't need a cape and a pair of tights to change the world. www.graphichistorycollective.com.

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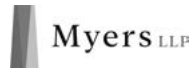
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