

THE SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1919: LABOR UNIONS UNITING FOR CHANGE

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GUIDING QUESTION:

How did American labor unions work to create a more perfect union for workers?

OVERVIEW

This lesson is intended to help students examine the history of labor unions and their efforts to support and protect workers. The lesson begins with an introduction of the labor movement in the early twentieth century. Using primary and secondary sources from the Seattle General Strike of 1919, students will learn about the causes of the strike and how people joined together to fight for their convictions. Students will also investigate why the strike eventually collapsed and how much change actually occurred. They will then compare and contrast this strike to another labor conflict.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Understand a brief history of the labor movement and the historical situation of 1919;
- > Explain the causes of the Seattle General Strike and its outcomes;
- > Determine the long-term impacts of the strike; and
- > Compare this event with another labor conflict to explore patterns of continuity and change over time.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- > D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- > D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

"A Letter From the Mayor," *The Seattle Star*, February 11, 1919
Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1919-02-11/ed-1/seq-1/>

Letter, Local No. 82 of the United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters letter to Tacoma Central Labor Council expressing their position on the general strike, February 3, 1919
Pacific Northwest Historical Documents Collection, University of Washington
<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/pioneerlife/id/9137/rec/43>

Letter, Local No. 568 of the International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers and Iron Ship Builders letter to Tacoma Central Labor Council expressing their position on the general strike, February 4, 1919
Pacific Northwest Historical Documents Collection, University of Washington
<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/pioneerlife/id/9143/rec/42>

Photograph, *Seattle General Strike deputies receiving weapons*, February 6, 1919
Museum of History and Industry
<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/5493/rec/9>

Photograph, *Shipyard workers at Skinner and Eddy shipyard at Pier 36*, 1919
Civil Rights & Labor History Consortium, University of Washington
http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/zenPhoto/1919_strike/General-Strike-photos/Skinner+and+Eddy+shipyard+workers+1919_UWDigital.jpg

Political Cartoon, "Not in a Thousand Years," *The [Seattle] Post-Intelligencer*, February 6, 1919
Museum of History and Industry
<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/14697/rec/11>

Political Cartoon, "Our Flag Is Still There," *The [Seattle] Post-Intelligencer*, February 11, 1919
Museum of History and Industry
<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/14707/rec/1>

Poster, James Montgomery Flagg, *Together We Win*, c.1910–1920
Library of Congress (90712758)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/90712758/>

"Radicals Lose Vote to Seize All Industry," *The Seattle Star*, February 6, 1919
Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1919-02-06/ed-1/seq-1/>

"Seattle Gets Back to Normal," *The Seattle Daily Times*, February 11, 1919
Seattle General Strike Project, University of Washington
https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/images/news/Times/TIMES_19190211_P1.jpg

"Sixty Thousand to Respond to Call," *Seattle Union Record*, February 3, 1919
Seattle General Strike Project, University of Washington
<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist2/SURfeb/SUR%202-19-3%20full.pdf>

"Under Which Flag?," *The Seattle Star*, February 5, 1919
Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1919-02-05/ed-1/seq-1/>

TEACHER-CREATED MATERIALS

- > Seattle General Strike Historical Context and Timeline
- > Seattle General Strike (Sets One to Seven)
- > Comparing Labor Movements Assessment

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Organize students into groups of three or four students each.
- > Make (or share electronically) one copy of the Seattle General Strike Primary Source Packet and Comparing Labor Movements Assessment for each group of three to four students.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT (15 MINUTES)

- > Ask students about the purpose of a labor union and why employers may oppose the formation of labor unions.
- > Project the Seattle General Strike Historical Context and Timeline and review with students. Review previous conflicts between labor and management they studied up to this point. Responses could include the Haymarket Affair (1886), Great Southwest Railroad Strike (1886), Homestead Strike (1892), New Orleans General Strike (1892), or the Pullman Strike (1894).
- > Project the poster, *Together We Win*. Analyze the poster, asking students to explain the message, purpose, and audience.
- > Explain that students will analyze the February 1919 Seattle General Strike to answer the question, *How did American labor unions work to create a more perfect union for workers?*

ACTIVITY TWO: SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE STATIONS (30 MINUTES)

- > Organize students into groups and distribute a Seattle General Strike Primary Source Packet to each group.
- > Direct students to analyze the sources and discuss the questions posted below each source before moving on to the next set.
- > Lead a discussion to synthesize the sources. Discussion questions:
 - » *How did the Seattle General Strike demonstrate democracy in action?*
 - » *Were the unions seen as a positive or negative force in this situation? Explain your position.*
 - » *After reviewing this case study, what questions do you have about the role of labor unions in U.S. history?*

CONNECTIONS

The history of labor is a key part of the American story. Studying the labor movement involves an examination of issues of race, class, and gender, and stretches across political, social, and economic spheres.

ACTIVITY THREE: COMPARING LABOR MOVEMENTS (45 MINUTES)

- > Distribute the Comparing Labor Movements Assessment to student groups.
- > Allow students to select a different strike in U.S. history to compare and contrast to the Seattle General Strike of 1919. Possible topics from U.S. history include:
 - » Haymarket Affair (1886)
 - » Great Southwest Railroad Strike (1886)
 - » Homestead Strike (1892)
 - » New Orleans General Strike (1892)
 - » Pullman Strike (1894)
 - » Paterson Silk Strike (1913)
 - » Steel Strike (1919)
 - » Railroad Shop Workers Strike (1922)
 - » Textile Workers Strike (1934)
 - » Union of Electrical, Radio, and Machinist Workers' Strike (1946)
 - » Steel Strike (1959)
 - » Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike (1968)
 - » U.S. Postal Strike (1970)

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- > Assign the Comparing Labor Movements Assessment for completion.
- > Allow students to present their strikes and classify the effectiveness of each strike.
- > Develop a list of methods labor unions have employed to enact change. Evaluate the list and identify which two methods you think were the most effective.

- > Drawing from their research into other labor conflicts across U.S. history, engage students in a Socratic seminar to answer the questions:
 - » *How did American labor unions work to improve conditions for workers?*
 - » *Why were labor unions opposed?*
 - » *How did these conflicts help create a more perfect union for workers?*

STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING THE FOLLOWING FOR AN NHD PROJECT

- > Theodore Roosevelt and the Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal Miners Strike (1902)
- > The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (Wagner Act)
- > Steel Strike in Gary, Indiana (1919)
- > Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers (1962)

To access a PDF containing all of the sources and materials to complete this lesson plan, go to:

WWW.NHD.ORG/250

EDSITEment!

RELATED RESOURCES

Lesson Plan: The Industrial Age in America: Sweatshops, Steel Mills, and Factories

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/industrial-age-america-sweatshops-steel-mills-and-factories>

Closer Readings Commentary: National History Day Resources: Conflict and Compromise in History

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/closer-readings/national-history-day-resources-conflict-and-compromise-history>

Humanities Article: "Railroad Melee"

<https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2011/novemberdecember/curio/railroad-melee>

Media Resource: BackStory: Blasts from the Past: A History of Dynamite in the United States

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/media-resources/backstory-blasts-past-history-dynamite-united-states>

Media Resource: BackStory: Women at Work

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/media-resources/backstory-women-work>

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND TIMELINE

The Seattle General Labor Strike of 1919 is largely unknown in the history of the United States due to the overwhelming number of labor movements that took place that year, or the lack of violence, or the lack of measurable changes due to the strike. Labor unions in the United States began in a piecemeal process for local groups of skilled workers in individual trades and then in industrialized factories.

As early as 1794, skilled workers in individualized trades came together to protect workers' wages and safety regulations. In 1869, the Knights of Labor became the first national labor organization in the United States. It united skilled and unskilled laborers to demand shorter workdays, fair wages, and other regulations. By the 1880s, the Knights of Labor had approximately 700,000 members, making it the most powerful labor union in the United States.¹

A number of strikes in the 1880s had violent results. In 1886, hundreds of thousands of workers were unemployed. This led to labor unrest and clashes (sometimes violent) with owners and the police. It culminated in a demonstration in Haymarket Square in Chicago, where a bomb killed a police officer and six others.² The membership of the Knights of Labor declined, as a new group, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), grew. The AFL focused its efforts on achieving economic gain for its members.

On the whole, unions remained fairly weak throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, though the strikes continued. The government repeatedly sided with business owners and, in some cases, approved of the use of military force to stop strikes.

The dawn of the twentieth century seemed promising for labor unions as more laws were passed by the U.S. Congress that sided with their cause, including the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 and the Adamson Act of 1916.³ Progress halted as the United States entered World War I. Union leaders made a deal with President Woodrow Wilson that unions would not strike during the war. In exchange, the War Committee on Labor was created to settle disputes. Due to the demand for machines, weapons, and uniforms, both factories and unions grew exponentially during this time.

The United States attempted to return to normal after the war, but economic conditions at home made it difficult for many people to make a living. After patriotically supporting the war effort by limiting strikes and accepting wage controls, they thought working conditions and wages would improve. Instead, 1919 saw large-scale unemployment. Additionally, the Russian Revolution of 1917 created fears of a communist "Red Revolution" in America, which permeated the labor movement, leading some to see unions as "un-American." Many Americans feared a revolution in the United States.

¹ To learn more about the Knights of Labor, created by Uriah Smith Stephens and led by Terrence Powderly, visit "Knights of Labor," Ohio History Connection, accessed August 8, 2020, https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Knights_of_Labor.

² "Haymarket Riot," HISTORY®, updated December 16, 2009, accessed August 8, 2020, <https://www.history.com/topics/19th-century/haymarket-riot>.

³ To learn more about the Clayton Antitrust Act, visit "The Clayton Antitrust Act," History, Art & Archives, United States House of Representatives, accessed August 8, 2020, <https://history.house.gov/HistoricalHighlight/Detail/15032424979>. To learn more about the Adamson Act, visit "President Woodrow Wilson Addresses a Joint Session to Avert a National Railroad Strike," History, Art & Archives, United States House of Representatives, accessed August 8, 2020, <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/President-Woodrow-Wilson-s-Joint-Session-message-appealing-for-the-avoidance-of-a-national-railroad-strike/>.

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND TIMELINE (CON'T)

In 1919, over four million workers walked the picket lines. For five days in February, over 65,000 workers in Seattle, Washington, joined a general strike to advocate for change. It began with 35,000 shipyard workers walking off the job. During the Great War, shipyards experienced unprecedented prosperity. The workers expected pay raises, but were refused.

The shipyard workers appealed to Seattle's General Labor Council, and after different labor unions from around the city voted, it was agreed that all workers would walk off the job in support of and solidarity with the shipyard workers. The peaceful strike lasted for five days, and resulted in little, if any, real change.⁴ In fact, it set the stage for a year of disappointing labor movements that resulted in an unsupportive American public for the next decade. Though viewed as a failure, the Seattle Strike was the first time American labor united to show the power of a unified group demanding change.

TIMELINE

1794	The first labor union, the Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers, was established in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
1869	The Knights of Labor was established as a national labor union.
1880s	The Knights of Labor's power and membership declined, giving rise to new organizations.
1886	The American Federation of Labor formed in the United States to encourage labor unions to unite and fight for better working conditions, higher wages, and shorter hours.
1914	World War I began in Europe. The United States maintained its neutrality.
1917	The United States entered World War I.
	The Espionage Act was passed, making any "disloyal" statements illegal. This led to the arrest of many union members, socialists, and radicals.
	The Russian Revolution began when the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, captured and killed Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and his family. They established a communist government with the idea that the workers of the world would unite and overthrow other governments.
1918	The federal government established the War Labor Board to help settle labor disputes and keep factories producing the necessary supplies for the war effort. American factories saw increased production and profits.
1919	Seattle shipbuilders went on strike asking for wage increases after the shipbuilding industry quadrupled its production in four years.

⁴ "Seattle General Strike Project," University of Washington, accessed August 8, 2020, <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/>.

Poster, James Montgomery Flagg, *Together We Win*, c.1910–1920
Library of Congress (90712758)
<https://www.loc.gov/item/90712758/>



SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET ONE

Photograph, *Shipyards workers at Skinner and Eddy shipyard at Pier 36, 1919*
Civil Rights & Labor History Consortium, University of Washington
http://depts.washington.edu/labpics/zenPhoto/1919_strike/General-Strike-photos/Skinner+and+Eddy+shipyard+workers+1919_UWDigital.jpg

After agreeing to not strike and accept wage controls during World War I, the shipyard workers in Seattle thought their patriotism would pay off, resulting in increased wages and shorter working hours. When owners refused, 35,000 men walked off the job in late January 1919. This photograph shows workers on strike outside the employment office at one of the shipyards.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- > What can we learn from the photograph? Describe the scene and what you observe.
- > What conditions did the workers in the photograph experience?
- > What did the workers hope to accomplish?

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET TWO

Letter, Local No. 82 of the United Association of Plumbers and Steam Fitters letter to Tacoma Central Labor Council expressing their position on the general strike, February 3, 1919

Pacific Northwest Historical Documents Collection, University of Washington

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/pioneerlife/id/9137/rec/43>

A call was put out to other unions across Seattle to join the shipyard workers and form a general strike.

Other unions around Seattle met to vote on whether or not to join the general strike.

To Central Labor Council
This is to certify that L U no 82 voted
on general strike Feb 3-1919 a total votes
cast 164, 141 yes 23 no 1 Blank
Members who voted against general strike
made motion and seconded and motion
carried to go down the line 100 per ct strong
Total votes cast 165 yes
Best
F.A. Gottering
Rec. Sec.
L. U. 82

United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters
Local Union #82

To Central Labor Council

This is to certify that L U no 82 [Local Union #82] voted on general strike February 3rd 1919 a total votes cast 164, 141 yes 23 no 1 Blank.

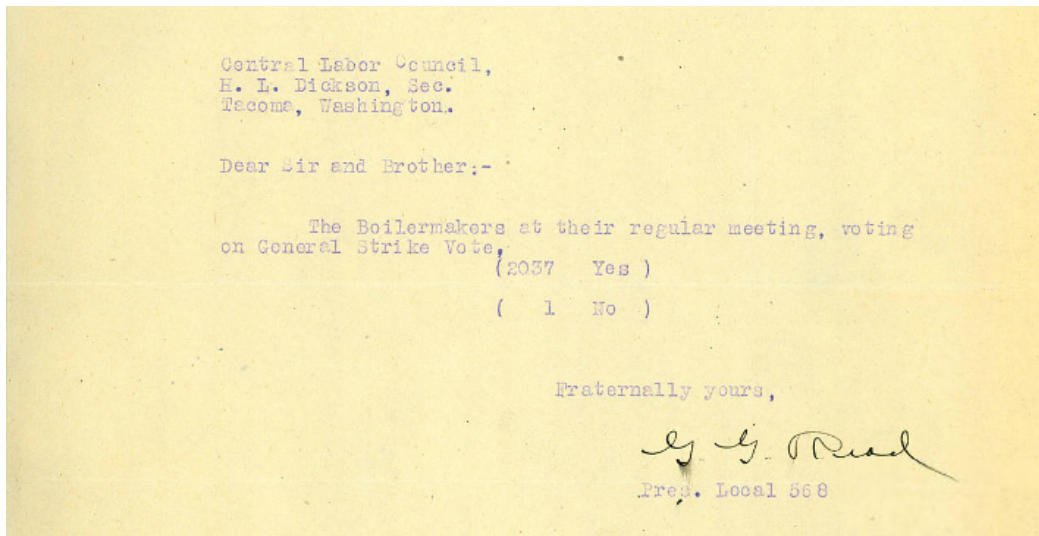
Members who voted against general strike made motion and seconded and motion carried to go down the line 100 per ct [percent] strong.

Total votes cast 165 yes.

Best,
F.A. Gottering
Rec. Sec. [Recording Secretary]
L.U. 82 [Local Union 82]

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET TWO (CON'T)

Letter, Local No. 568 of the International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers and Iron Ship Builders letter to Tacoma Central Labor Council expressing their position on the general strike, February 4, 1919
Pacific Northwest Historical Documents Collection, University of Washington
<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/pioneerlife/id/9143/rec/42>



International Brotherhood of Boilermakers & Iron Shipbuilders
Lodge # 569

Central Labor Council,
H. L. Dickson, Sec. [Secretary]
Tacoma, Washington.

Dear Sir and Brother:-

The Boilermakers at their regular meeting, voting on General Strike Vote.

(2037 Yes)
(1 No)

Fraternally yours,
G.G. Read
Pres. Local 568

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- > What can we learn about the strike from these two letters?
- > What was the motivation of these groups to strike? Did both letters indicate the same motivation?
- > Why are these motivations important?

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET THREE

“Sixty Thousand to Respond to Call,” *Seattle Union Record*, February 3, 1919
Seattle General Strike Project, University of Washington
<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist2/SURfeb/SUR%202-19-3%20full.pdf>

After declaring a strike, the shipbuilders union asked the Central Labor Council to support a general strike. The excerpt is from the *Seattle Union Record*, a labor-owned daily newspaper.



Sixty Thousand to Respond to Call

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

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

Negotiations Fail

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

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

From 8 a.m. till 9 p.m. Sunday, the Labor Temple, delegates from 110 unions discussed the whole situation and laid their plans. All decisions were made with one voice and a remarkable unanimity was demonstrated throughout the meeting. The time for the general strike was set for 10 a.m. Thursday. Arrangements were made to feed the strikers and the public. A committee was appointed to urge upon other Puget Sound towns the advisability of presenting a slid front by calling a general strike for the same day.

Efforts will be made to extend the general strike throughout the state, if that course becomes necessary, it was announced.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- > What are the main ideas expressed in this newspaper article?
- > What goals helped to create unity within the movement?

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET FOUR

Photograph, *Seattle General Strike deputies receiving weapons*, February 6, 1919

Museum of History and Industry

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imismohai/id/5493/rec/9>

To prepare for the strike, Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson asked for and received two U.S. Army battalions from Camp Lewis near Tacoma, Washington, and recruited 2,400 young militiamen. They were deputized and given weapons. The Strike Committee countered with 300 military veterans in its War Veterans Guard. Violence was avoided during the strike, which lasted six days in 1919.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- > What can we learn from this photograph?
- > How might the people in the photograph have impacted the strike?

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET FIVE

“Under Which Flag?,” *The Seattle Star*, February 5, 1919

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1919-02-05/ed-1/seq-1/>

“Radicals Lose Vote to Seize All Industry,” *The Seattle Star*, February 6, 1919

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1919-02-06/ed-1/seq-1/>

The Russian Revolution took place in 1917. Leader Vladimir Lenin pushed workers to unite and overthrow their oppressive government. Communism called for government control of the economy until a true shared system could be established among workers. The American economic system of capitalism was seen as the enemy of communism.

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COMPLETE Service of the Newspaper Enterprise Association.

The Seattle Star

 NIGHT EDITION
TWO CENTS IN SEATTLE
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THE GREATEST DAILY CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST
Based on Second Class Matter 302 & 100, at the Postoffice at Seattle, Wash., under the Act of Congress March 3, 1879.

VOLUME 21, NO. 291 SEATTLE, WASH., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1919. Weather Forecast: Tonight and Thursday, clear with light to moderate to strong winds.

UNDER WHICH FLAG?

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

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

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

Under which flag do you stand?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- > How did the media in 1919 describe the striking workers?
- > How might the ideas presented here create less support for the general strike?
- > Why was the strike seen as un-American in 1919?

RADICALS LOSE VOTE TO SEIZE ALL INDUSTRY

Conservative labor leaders proved victors over the radicals in the Central Labor council meeting Wednesday evening and, following a wild debate, voted down a resolution calling for the taking over of all industries in the city.

This resolution urged that in the event of the employees failing to settle the shipyard strike, the workers seize the machinery of production for their own protection.

Immediately on the introduction of the resolution, a clamor of debate arose thruout the hall, speakers for and against the proposal madly endeavoring to secure the attention of the delegates.

Radicals declared that the sympathetic strike slated for 10 o'clock this morning could be settled only in this way, should the owners hold out for any length of time.

Conservatives appealed for a negative vote, on the argument that passage of the resolution would mean the immediate placing of the city under federal control and martial law.

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET SIX

“Seattle Gets Back to Normal,” *The Seattle Daily Times*, February 11, 1919

Seattle General Strike Project, University of Washington

https://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/images/news/Times/TIMES_19190211_P1.jpg

Political Cartoon, “Our Flag Is Still There,” *The [Seattle] Post-Intelligencer*, February 11, 1919

Seattle Museum of History and Industry

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imismohai/id/14707/rec/1>

The strike lasted for six days and the city shut down. Though it was tense, there was never violence. Industry owners refused to negotiate and pressured workers to return to the job.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

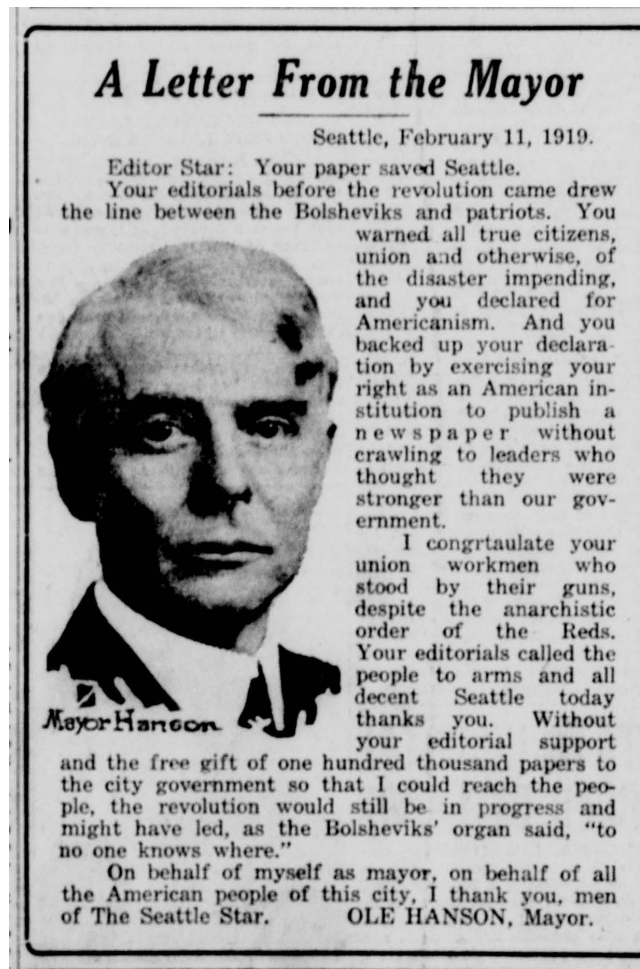
- > The headline uses the term “normal.” How might this reflect one motive for ending the strike?
- > What is the message of the political cartoon?

SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE SET SEVEN

"A Letter From the Mayor," *The Seattle Star*, February 11, 1919

Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1919-02-11/ed-1/seq-1/>

Though the workers in Seattle believed they were fighting for a just cause and working to make their lives better, many felt that the workers were trying to overthrow the American capitalist system. Mayor Ole Hanson was intent on stopping the strike from creating a revolution.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- > What was Mayor Hanson's motive in ending the strike?
- > How was he trying to create a more perfect union?

COMPARING LABOR MOVEMENTS ASSESSMENT

Selected Strike: _____

Location/Date: _____

Good places to start your research:

- > PBS's American Experience on Labor Wars Landing Page: [pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/theminewars-labor-wars-us/](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/theminewars-labor-wars-us/)
- > AFL-CIO's Labor History Timeline: aflcio.org/about-us/history
- > AFL-CIO's Key Events in Labor History: aflcio.org/about/history/labor-history-events
- > Department of Labor's Labor in the Industrial Era chapter: [dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/chapter3](https://www.dol.gov/general/aboutdol/history/chapter3)

What were the workers fighting for? Did group members have goals or changes they wished to secure? Explain.

How did workers come together? Did all workers have the same goals?

Who opposed the changes or demands of the labor unions? Why did they do so?

What did the unions accomplish or fail to accomplish? Explain. Be sure to list any laws that changed due to this event.

COMPARING LABOR MOVEMENTS ASSESSMENT (CON'T)

Synthesis Questions:

What are some similarities between the two events?

What differences do you see between the events? Consider causes, methods, opposition, and outcomes.

What questions does this raise about the role of labor unions in United States history?

To what extent did these events help to create a more perfect union?



BUILDING A MORE PERFECT UNION



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ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

EDSITEment!

THE BEST OF THE HUMANITIES ON THE WEB

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NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY