



# 100 Years WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE 1919-2019

## 2019 Events Presented by Manitoba's Unions

### 1919 SOCIAL SOLD OUT!

Presented by Myers LLP

May 11 // 8:00 pm - 1:00 am // Ukrainian Labour Temple (we regret this venue is not accessible)

### WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE CENTENNIAL GALA DINNER

Presented by Manitoba Building Trades

May 15 // Cocktails at 5:30 pm, Program starts at 6:30 pm // RBC Convention Centre

### SOLIDARITY FOREVER PARADE & COMMUNITY CONCERT (FREE)

Presented by UFCW Local 832 and CUPE Manitoba

May 25 // Parade will run from the Exchange District to Memorial Park // 11:00 am - Noon  
Concert in Memorial Park // 12:30 - 6:00 pm

### RISE UP 100: SONGS FOR THE NEXT CENTURY CONCERT (FREE)

Presented by MGEU

June 8 // Old Market Square // 2:00 pm - 11:00 pm

**\*For tickets to the 1919 Social and the Centennial Gala Dinner, call 204-947-1400**

Find all of your Winnipeg General Strike centennial information at:  
**MFL.CA/1919**

## President's Report

SPRING 2019  
MANITOBA FEDERATION OF LABOUR



The Winnipeg General Strike Committee (Photo credit: Manitoba Archives)

### Celebrating a Century of Solidarity

Sisters, brothers and friends, 2019 is a big year for our movement. It marks the Centennial Anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike. 100 years since workers effectively shut down the City of Winnipeg for six weeks, demonstrating the power working people have when they act as one.

To celebrate the importance of the Strike, and all of the gains that the labour movement has won since, Manitoba's Unions are hosting a number of events this spring. The events are listed on the last page of this report, and I'm so proud that Manitoba's unions are presenting something for everyone - a social, a gala dinner, a free parade, and two free public concerts. Unions and union members are part of our communities, and we know the importance of giving back.



KEVIN REBECK

And while this is a year where we are rightly celebrating the important history of the Strike, it also reminds us of just how important our movement is for working people in this country. 100 years ago, workers didn't have workplace pensions, strong healthy and safety laws, maternity and paternity leave, or a minimum wage - to name just a few of our many victories.

Unions have and will be a force for good in our society, and that is why they are consistently under attack by the elites and the bosses: unions threaten the power of those who want to stay in charge. And workers in Winnipeg in 1919, both organized and unorganized, shook the very foundations of what the elites saw as the natural order of things - their wealth and benefits at the expense of working people.

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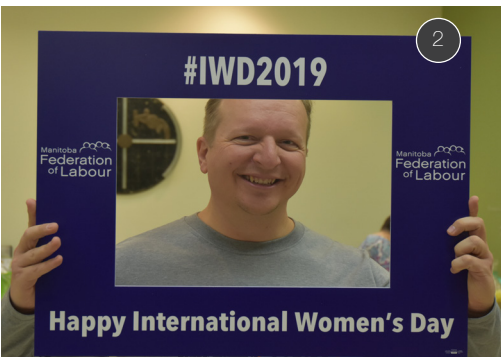
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**[1]** American Income Life staff Jaqueline Lowe and Leo Vandebussche present President Rebeck with a sponsorship cheque towards General Strike Centennial celebrations. **[2]** President Rebeck at the International Women's Day Breakfast. **[3]** President Rebeck speaks to the Myers LLP Labour Law Conference about the Winnipeg General Strike Centennial celebrations. **[4]** Ironworkers Local 728 Business Manager Robert Duarte presents President Rebeck with General Strike sponsorship cheque. **[5]** President Rebeck with retired Indigenous Workers' Caucus Chair Cathy Woods.

## Century of solidarity, cont'd

So while we celebrate this year, and we should have a great time celebrating the achievements of our labour movement over the past century, we should also remember that ours is a constant struggle for workers' rights and dignity.

Our movement is made up of so many incredible people, and I want to take this opportunity to thank Cathy Woods for all of her hard work as the Indigenous Workers representative on the MFL's Executive Council. Sister Cathy has retired, and we wish her all the best.

In early March, the Pallister government released its latest budget, and they continue to cut deeply into the public services that working families count on. Health care and education are being cut. The budget also includes cuts to child care centres, which will mean that families looking for child care to help get back to work or school will be left further behind.

In my comments to media on budget day, I also focused on the cuts this government continues to make to roads, bridges, and other infrastructure in our province. We know that strategic investments in building and repairing infrastructure is good for jobs and good for our economy. But this Pallister government is turning its backs on working families, leaving us with more potholes and fewer people working to fill them. We face a bumpy road ahead with this government, as it only cares about the bottom line, not the people and services impacted by their cuts.

A strong NDP is the only way we can get rid of the Pallister Conservative government, and I want to make special mention that this year is the 50th anniversary of the election of the first NDP government in Manitoba's history, when Ed Schreyer became our premier in 1969. The Schreyer government went on to build a better province for all Manitobans, including creating public car insurance, establishing our universal public home care system and provincial pharmacare program. There is a celebration of this anniversary on June 25 at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg.

In solidarity,

*Kevin Rebeck*  
**Kevin Rebeck**

President, Manitoba Federation of Labour

## Alarm bells ring as the Pallister government sets sights on our education system

After cutting health care and throwing the system into chaos with emergency room closures, the Pallister government is now looking at the damage it can do to our province's K - 12 education system.

In January, Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen announced that a review of the education system would be conducted to see what changes to make in the system. Tellingly, the Minister refused to rule out school division amalgamations.

The review is being co-chaired by former Saskatchewan minister Janice MacKinnon and Clayton Manness, who many will remember as the Filmon government's minister responsible for devastating cuts to education in the 1990s.

CUPE Manitoba was quick to criticize that forced amalgamations won't be good for students, communities, or the front-line workers who dedicate themselves to ensuring safe and supportive learning environments. Local control over education is the backbone of the K-12 system in Manitoba.

Not wasting any time to cause more damage, the Pallister government announced that they will again be underfunding the K - 12 education system for a third year in a row the day after announcing the education review that will guide where and what to cut in Manitoba's education system.

By refusing to fund education anywhere near the rate of inflation, or economic growth - as the NDP did when they were in government - the Pallister government continues to starve school divisions of the resources they need to hire teachers and provide the best possible education for Manitoba students. It is also forcing school divisions to

make lose-lose decisions between cutting programs and sharply increasing taxes.

We know what happened the last time that people like Clayton Manness and Brian Pallister had control over the education system - hundreds of teachers were fired, school infrastructure crumbled, and our young people were shortchanged on their educational opportunities.

With the continued cuts to the public education system and this new review, we can't help but feel history is about to repeat itself. We know that schools need investments in teachers and classrooms so that students get the education they deserve.

By continuing to underinvest in schools and teachers, the Pallister government is hurting students and families, meaning that our young people are not getting the support they need and deserve.



The 1919 General Strike united citizens, shut down a city and revolutionized workers' rights across a nation. Hear artists, writers and filmmakers present tributes to the event that changed Canadian history forever - Pecha Kucha style!

**When & Where | May 2, 2019 | Millennium Centre, 389 Main Street | Doors 6:30pm & Show @ 7pm**

Admission is pay-what-you-can; suggested donation is \$10.



# NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Observed on Friday April 26<sup>TH</sup>  
11:00 - 11:45 AM

Union Centre  
Second Floor Auditorium  
275 Broadway  
Winnipeg

Light refreshments will be served beginning at 10:30 AM

## Mourn the Dead, Fight for the Living.

Please join the Manitoba Federation of Labour in marking the National Day of Mourning with a special Candle Light Memorial Service to remember and honour workers killed or injured on the job.

To be followed by the Safe Workers of Tomorrow Leaders Walk, starting at the Union Centre at 11:45 AM.



## International Women's Day

The MFL's Women's Committee always does a wonderful job in celebrating International Women's Day, and this year was no different.

Celebrations were spread over two days, with a breakfast held at the Union Centre on International Women's Day, and then a free screening of The Notorious Mrs. Armstrong about labour activist and feminist pioneer Helen Armstrong on March 9.

The breakfast featured selfie signs with special messages for International Women's Day, which as you can see were put to good use.



## Pallister charts dangerous course to privatize air ambulance services

It is well known that the Pallister government is looking to privatize public services to help their private sector friends make a profit, regardless of the harmful impacts these decisions have on Manitobans and the services they count on.

For months, the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union has been raising concerns about the Pallister government's plan to privatize air ambulance services, known as Lifelight. These critical emergency services help Manitobans when they need it most.

According to a report commissioned by the MGEU last year, this rush to privatize emergency air ambulance service is short-sighted and unsafe. The study echoed what the pilots, nurses and doctors who staff Lifelight have been saying for some time: privatizing this essential service will increase costs and put Manitobans at risk.

Doctors who work on Lifelight planes have even said they could resign over issues of patient and personal safety if Lifelight is privatized.

The current Lifelight model has many advantages and a strong track record, including:

- A highly-experienced staff with top caliber training who have contributed both nationally and internationally to technological innovations and training;
- A stellar safety record with no serious injuries or fatalities; and
- A dedicated fleet of modern, superior jets committed to protecting Manitobans.

The Pallister government came to government saying they would make decisions based on facts and evidence. But all we have seen from them since then is a willingness to make decisions based on their ideology, no matter the cost to working families.

The labour movement is proud to continue to fight back against the privatization of public services that we all count on.

## Manitoba's unions stand in solidarity with postal workers

Canada's postal workers work hard in tough conditions, especially in the winter. Their hard work ensures that the mail keeps moving, and we all benefit from it.

But too many postal workers are getting injured on the job, and pay inequity continues to be a major problem, especially for rural postal workers. Due to Canada Post's unwillingness to deal with these longstanding issues at the bargaining table, Canadian postal workers went on a series of rotating strikes across the country this past fall and winter.

Key demands for postal workers were job security, an end to forced overtime and overburdening, better health and safety measures, service expansion, and equality for rural letter carriers.

The working conditions of postal workers have deteriorated over the last decade in part because Canada Post has failed to properly address the huge increase in parcel volumes and the burden it has placed on members.

Canada Post also needs to address workplace injuries, which over the last two years, have increased by 43 per cent. The disabling injury rate for a letter carrier is eight times the average of the rest of the federal sector, which includes the longshoring, mining, road transport, and railways sectors.

In November, the Trudeau Liberal government took the extreme measure of legislating postal workers back to work, taking away their right to strike. This shameful practice was employed many times by the Harper government, and the Liberals were only too

happy to use the same playbook and back the employer against the rights of postal workers.

In response, the Manitoba Federation of Labour organized a picket at the Canada Post depot on McDermot Ave. in Winnipeg this December to show support for postal workers. There was a strong showing from Manitoba's labour movement, and together we blocked Canada Post trucks from entering and exiting the depot for a couple of hours. The picket raised awareness of the fact that the Trudeau Liberals trampled on workers' rights and sent a message of solidarity.

It is disappointing that the Trudeau government chose to support management instead of allowing for a free and fair collective bargaining process. But it also reaffirmed for workers that, at the end of the day, Liberals are no different than Conservatives when it comes to siding with the employer over workers. Just look at the ongoing saga of the SNC-Lavalin Affair for proof of just how close the Liberals are with corporate Canada.

The right to collective bargaining is a Charter right, but this right is under attack by the federal government's actions. Prime Minister Trudeau and his Liberals are no better than Stephen Harper when it comes to standing up for workers' rights.

Seeing so many out in support of postal workers was heartening, and we are lucky to have so many dedicated labour activists here in Manitoba.



Manitoba's labour movement pickets Canada Post Depot to raise awareness of the Trudeau government's trampling on workers' rights

## Pallister puts more health & safety protections on the chopping block

The Pallister government has made yet another move to weaken the protections that keep workers safe on the job. This time they've gutted protections related to hearing testing, exposing workers to a greater risk of occupational hearing loss.

As President Rebeck explained on CJOB radio the day that these cuts were announced: "workers are heading home from work today with less hearing protection than they did when they punched in for their shifts – all thanks to a stroke of Pallister's pen."

Until recently, employers were required to perform baseline hearing tests for workers in noisy workplaces within 70 days of their starting a job, and then further tests at least once a year from that point on. This requirement matched the latest Canadian Standard Association (CSA) guidelines for hearing testing, providing a continuous record of workers' hearing levels, and allowing for early detection of any hearing loss.

Now the Pallister government has amended the "Hearing Conservation and Noise Control Regulation" to allow employers to delay baseline testing for up to six months, and to perform regular tests every two years, rather than annually.

This is extremely concerning given that there have been

between 500 and 700 WCB claims accepted for noise-induced hearing loss every year in Manitoba since 2008. We clearly need stronger protections, not weaker ones.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety explains the need for regular hearing testing as follows:

Because occupational hearing loss happens gradually over time, workers often fail to notice changes in their hearing ability until a relatively large change occurs. By comparing audiometric tests from past years, early changes can be detected and appropriate protective measures can be implemented to prevent further damage.

Weakening requirements for hearing testing will compromise prevention efforts and early detection of injuries, potentially exposing workers to more serious hearing loss.

The Pallister government has failed to provide any explanation as to why they would ignore the latest CSA guidelines related to hearing testing. Instead, they have justified their move as "harmonizing" with other jurisdictions with weaker standards. This is clear proof that when Pallister says "harmonize", he means "race to the bottom", not "raise the bar for all".



## Raising awareness about right to paid leave for victims of domestic violence

The numbers are staggering: one in three Canadian workers experience domestic violence. The majority of these victims are women.

Domestic violence affects too many Manitobans, but too many workers do not know that they have the right to take paid leave from work to get the help they need.

To do our part, the MFL launched a very successful awareness campaign about the right all workers in Manitoba have to take paid leave from work when experiencing domestic violence. The awareness campaign received positive feedback, with many people noting that they hadn't known about this right until they heard about it from the MFL.

Manitoba led the continent in establishing this right under the NDP government, and many provinces and states have followed

our lead. Thanks especially to the MFL Women's Committee for their advocacy on this issue and for pushing to make an awareness campaign happen.

