In 1919, 35,000 workers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation, staged a six-week general strike between 15 May and 26 June.

The Winnipeg General Strike lasted for six weeks. On 21 June — “Bloody Saturday” — state officials, working with employers and elites organized into the Citizens’ Committee of One Thousand, authorized violence. Special constables and the Royal North-West Mounted Police attacked strikers and their supporters during a peaceful demonstration. The strike was called off a few days later, ending officially on June 26.

The Winnipeg General Strike remains one of the most important strikes in Canadian history.

Strikes had been a common occurrence in Winnipeg since the 1890s as working people pushed back against poor working conditions and growing inequality in the city. When building and metal trades workers went on strike on 1 May 1919, other unions in the city decided to join them in a general sympathetic strike.

The strike began with 11,000 unionized workers, but the number of strikers soon swelled to 35,000 as thousands of non-unionized workers also walked off the job. Many of them were women and recent immigrants living in the city’s North End.