

Never Forgotten | Educational Resources

## Section Three | **Organized Workers**



## A. Organized Workers | Discussion Questions:

### Part 1 | Organize!

1. What sparked the creation of the Relief Camps Workers' Union? What were the goals of this organization?
2. What was the role of the Workers' Unity League in the creation of the Relief Workers' Union?
3. Define the difference between the working class and the bourgeoisie? Who in the documentary can be defined as proletariat and who can be defined as bourgeois?
4. What did people understand by Socialism at that time?
5. How were members of the Relief Camps Workers' Union seen and treated by the camps authorities?
6. What were some of the challenges faced by the Relief Camps Workers' Union in organizing support from relief camps across Canada? How did the union work to overcome these challenges?

### Part 2 | Arthur Evans

1. In 1935, Prime Minister Bennett gave a radio speech that was heard across the country—the first time that a Prime Minister spoke simultaneously for the entire nation. What is the significance of this Canada-wide broadcast? What was the message of Bennett's speech? How do you think this speech was received by workers in relief camps?
2. Who was Arthur Evans? Why was he arrested in 1933? What made Evans a “relatable figure” for those in need?

### Part 3 | The Six Demands

1. What were the six demands made by the strikers? Link to the [The Economic Demands of the Relief Camp Workers](#). Discuss these demands, which of the demands do you think is most important? What do the demands reveal about the workers' aspirations—the benefits that they wanted to obtain for them and for Canadian citizens in general?
2. How are these demands still relevant today?
3. Examine the political cartoon shown below. Who is represented in the cartoon? How does the cartoon capture the demands of the strikers? Who is the cartoon sympathetic to? Why?

## **B. Organized Workers | Activities:**

### **A New Form of Government**

Step One: Discuss what you know about the structure of the Canadian government and its operations both during the Great Depression and currently. Questions to consider during this discussion may include:

Which groups' interests is the government looking after?

What policies or efforts are used to protect these groups?

Step Two: Reflect on the ideas of a "workers' government." Use your knowledge from the videos shown in this section, what do you think a workers' government may look like? Do you think that the government the workers proposed would be successful if implemented in real life?

Step Three: In small groups, have students brainstorm a new structure of government that reflects the ideas and requirements put forth by the workers union. The students should include a brief outline of how the workers government would operate as well as detail the benefits and consequences of the new form of government.

Step Four: Once the groups have finished structuring their new governments, each group will then present their ideas to the class.

Step Five: This activity can be concluded with a discussion on the different forms of government and how they operate.

### **Poster Design**

Step One: Imagine you are a member of the Relief Camp Workers' Union. To raise money for the upcoming strike you have been asked to create a promotional poster. The purpose of the poster can either be to encourage relief camp workers to participate in the strike or to gain support from the public.

Step Two: You may wish to brainstorm ideas concerning your chosen topic. Somethings to consider:

- Who is your intended audience?
- Does your poster focus on a certain camp or city?
- Are there any phrases or pictures that may catch your audience's attention?

Step Three: Create a rough draft of your poster. Make sure the poster highlights either the shortcomings of the camps or the demands brought forth by the strikers. The poster should be both informative and eye catching.

Step Four: Reflect on the criteria detailed above to ensure the final draft of your poster meets the expectations.

## International Workers' Solidarity

The Workers' Unity League mission was “to carry on the spirit of ‘international proletarian solidarity’ against capitalist exploitation and to support trade unions in the final struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a worker’s government.”

Discuss the statement “international proletarian solidarity.” How did the members of the Workers' Unity League see themselves at a national level? How did they see themselves at an international level? How might an allegiance or loyalty have based on class conflict with nationalism?

Does this concept of international worker solidarity still exist? What would an international movement of workers look like? What would be required for an international movement to succeed? Are there any current examples of international movements (Black Lives Matter, #MeToo)? How do these movements garner support for their cause?

Students will brainstorm ways in which an international workers movement could develop. How might you garner awareness for the workers movement?