



BIGGEST STRIKE

The biggest strike in Canada was the Quebec General Strike, in April and May of 1972. Almost three hundred thousand workers took part. Thirteen hospital union officers and three important Quebec labour leaders — Yvon Charbonneau, Louis Laberge, and Marcel Pépin — received jail terms and fines.

WOMEN ON STRIKE

To celebrate International Women's Year in 1975, all the women of Iceland staged a twenty-four-hour strike. The country screeched to a halt. Ten years later, on October 24, 1985, they did it again: seventy thousand women — a third of the population — stopped working for a day. And this time the president of Iceland joined them. Her name is Vigdis Finnbogottir.

A GRAVE SITUATION

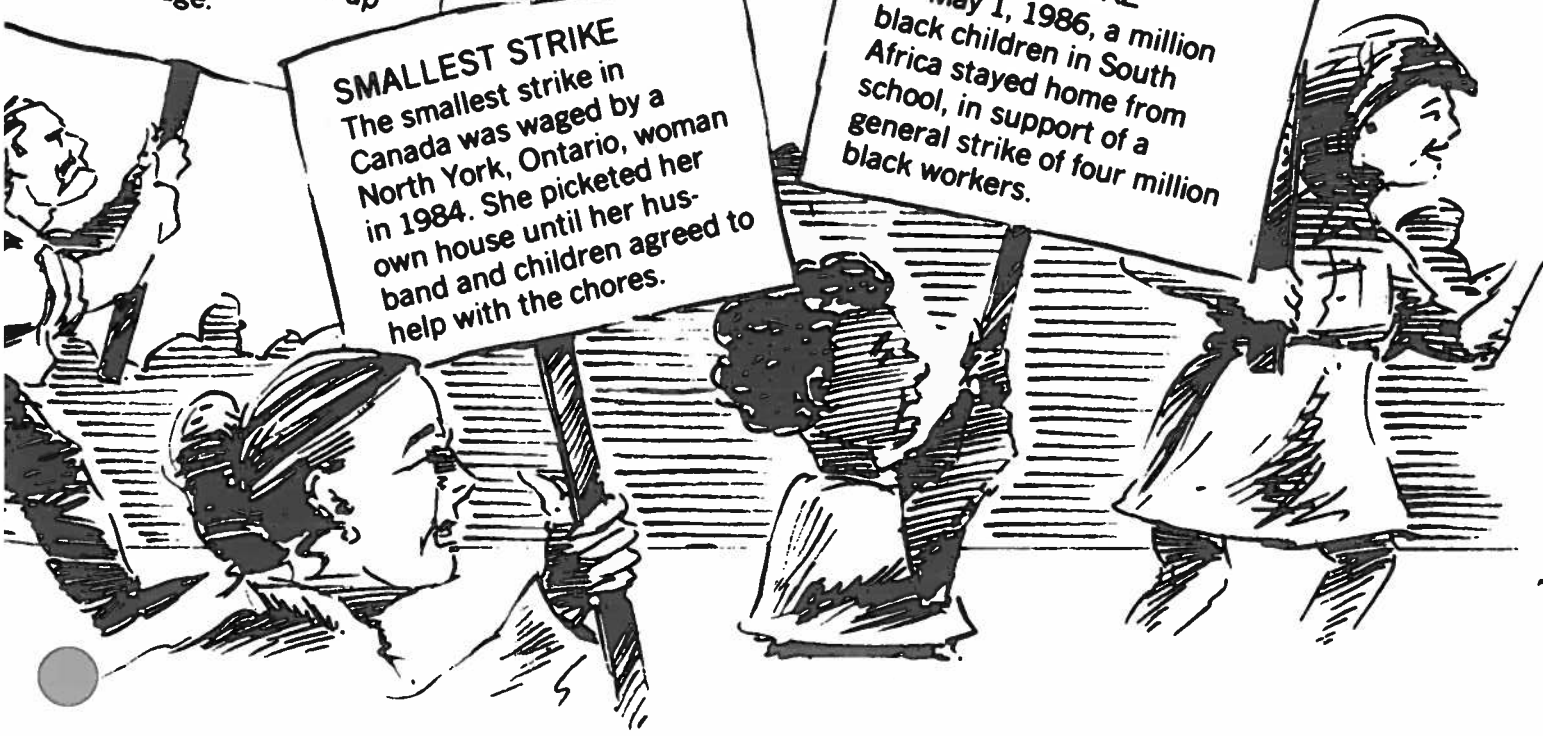
Montreal cemetery workers dug in for a long strike in the spring of 1986. They refused to bury the hatchet or anything else, including six hundred coffins stacked up in cold storage.

SMALLEST STRIKE

The smallest strike in Canada was waged by a North York, Ontario, woman in 1984. She picketed her own house until her husband and children agreed to help with the chores.

KIDS ON STRIKE

On May 1, 1986, a million black children in South Africa stayed home from school, in support of a general strike of four million black workers.



LONGEST STRIKE

According to The Guinness Book of World Records, the longest strike — of barbers' assistants in Copenhagen — lasted for thirty-three years, from 1928 to 1961. But Canada may have broken that record. A printers' strike begun on March 1, 1934, by Local 133 of the International Typographical Union (ITU) against two London newspapers hasn't legally ended. The ITU rules say that a local must declare a strike over, and Local 133 never did.

After wage cuts in 1932 and 1933, the printers asked for a signed contract from the Advertiser and the Free Press guaran-

teeing that wages wouldn't be cut in 1934. The newspapers refused; sixty printers struck, and a long stand-off began. Strike-breakers were brought in from other cities, and the papers kept publishing. Strike pay stopped in 1935 and many members of Local 133 found other jobs. Finally, in 1976, forty-two years after the strike started and with only ten members left, Local 133 gave up its charter and disbanded. But for the few survivors, the long strike against the London newspapers isn't over yet.

STRIKE WITHIN A STRIKE

In 1936, during the London newspaper strike, the Free Press delivery boys had a strike of their own. The bosses told the boys they'd have to pay eleven cents per paper per week, rather than ten cents. The boys didn't have a union, but they fought back: they scattered newspapers all over the streets and set them on fire; they overturned trucks and took them apart; and they didn't deliver any papers. After two days the Free Press gave in.

STRIKE-BREAKERS ON STRIKE

In 1957, workers at Grisco Publications, a newspaper company in New York, went on strike. The company hired strike-breakers from out of town, and got them rooms at a hotel. Two weeks later, the company said it wouldn't pay for their rooms or meals any more, so the strike-breakers struck.

NO PIZZA, NO PIZZICATO

The earliest recorded strike took place in Rome in 309 B.C., when an orchestra leader, unhappy with the length of meal breaks, walked off the job.

