

1919 Pittsburgh - Role Sheet

Name: *Bill Gardiner*

Allegiance: *Indeterminate*

Role Context

You are a white 50-year-old unskilled worker who had worked at the Homestead mills until the 1892 strike. After the strike, you moved to McKeesport where you took up your current job. Here, you still worked 12 hours a week but you did not have to work on Sundays. Even so, you think that twelve hours was not too much for a man with a strong physique.

Motivations

There have been rumors that Samuel Gompers, although favoring postponement, refused to force the hand of the steel union leaders because he feared radicals might promote the strike anyway. You think that there is certainly an element of truth in this contention, for the steel organizers' radicalism was well known and a favorite topic of the day. For some time newspapers had been parading the bolshevism of the steel labor leaders by quoting Fitzpatrick as saying, "We are going to socialize the basic industries of the United States," and also by publicizing excerpts from Foster's earlier syndicalist writings. Newspapers (such as the New York Times) continually cautioned against this "Red element" within the AFL and early declared that the proposed steel strike was not a strike for wages and hours but a "strike for power, for the control of the industry. Part of you fears that the strike is a revolutionary attempt to change the character of the government, or rather, another way of 'Bolshevizing' the American industry.

Play Guidelines

Round #1

- Introduce yourself to the other members of the meeting, find and listen to both sides
- Explain your situation to the other indeterminates and caution them against ulterior motives behind the strike

Round #2

- You have to stringently question the pro-strike faction to defend their stance, especially the IWW members to remove any doubts of political motives behind the strike

Round #3

- Whether or not the strike vote is passed in round 2, continue to discuss the labor strike and, at the end of the round, vote either in favor or against the strike.
- Your vote may change between Round #2 and Round #3.

Victory Objectives

Complete Victory

You'll achieve complete victory if the final vote results in some improvement for your workers.

Complete Defeat

You will achieve complete defeat if no agreement is reached at all by Round #3.

Important Sources

- Source 3.10 - "Newspaper Articles from the New York Times and the Baltimore Sun"
- Source 3.12 - "A Steel Worker Writes to Fellow Workers"