

Her World Changed: Anna Louise Strong and The 1916 Everett Massacre

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Introduction

Anna Louise Strong remained a controversial figure among her contemporaries and a point of debate among historians. From her upbringing in an abolitionist and suffragist household to her early work in children's advocacy, she sought the next big thing that would give her life meaning and a sense of purpose. Her political radicalism built upon itself within early twentieth-century progressivism as she transitioned from moderate reformism to becoming a globally known communist and radical. Strong often bound the success of her political struggles with her feelings of self-worth and wrote multiple times of feeling hopeless and isolated when causes she championed did not advance.¹ She had numerous formative periods that shaped her political perspective. Her childhood in Nebraska, education at Oberlin, Bryn Mawr, and the University of Chicago, and involvement in charity in Kansas influenced her interpretation of radicalism. In 1915, Strong came to the premier labor town of the United States, Seattle. She was involved in women's clubs and the Seattle School Board and wrote as a columnist in multiple newspapers. Later she became a fierce advocate for the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) and its members known as "Wobblies." By the time she was thirty, she had earned her Ph.D., traveled the country promoting children's welfare, become a published author, and made a name for herself in the political world of Seattle.

In the 1910s in the Puget Sound region, lumber and shipping dominated the local economy, especially after the United States entered World War I. Seattle and the surrounding areas were teeming with pro-labor organizing and unionization efforts. After months of suppression of I.W.W. organizing in Everett, the hostility between the Wobblies and the pro-business police came to a head at the docks in a tragedy known as the Everett Massacre or

¹ Anna Louise Strong. *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), 57.

Everett Bloody Sunday. Strong's documentation of the events of the Everett Massacre of 1916 and the trials of I.W.W. members catalyzed her push out of middle-class bureaucratic social circles. It cemented her political persona as a radical. While critics thought of her as frivolous or inconsistent in her political alignment, Anna Louise Strong's anarcho-socialist radicalization following the Everett Massacre was a foreseeable shift in the grander transformation of progressive movements in the 1910s. Although historians accuse her of harboring conflicting politics or misunderstanding theory, those accusations reveal more about the scholars' gendered biases than Strong's commitment to the causes she championed. Anna Louise Strong's reporting of the Everett Massacre and the trials of Wobblies demonstrated her alignment with more pro-labor and anti-war radicals, which ultimately made her an enemy of middle-class reformists and triggered her recall from the Seattle School Board.

This paper seeks to investigate the specifics of the conservative and liberal critics of Strong and determine how she came to be known as a radical. To contextualize how Strong went from a cautious supporter of the working class to the poster woman of Seattle radicals, I will trace how her childhood, her move to Seattle, and her documentation of the Everett Massacre demonstrate her growing distance from reformism. Most of the primary sources are of Strong's writings, including her 1935 autobiography *I Change Worlds: The Remaking of an American*. This paper begins with a historiography of current available secondary sources about Strong and briefly examines her life before Seattle. It addresses her relationship to the Everett Massacre in three stages: prelude, the tragedy, and post-massacre. Lastly, it investigates Strong's recall from the school board because of her anti-war and pro-labor alliances.

The role race relations played in the history of labor organizing in the Puget Sound region is out of the scope of this paper, which strictly deals with the life of a white woman who, in her

early life, moved in the elite circles of white American society. The Pacific Northwest as we know it is an ongoing white-settler colonial project. It is enforced through repeated violent expulsions and celebrated as a white enclave throughout its settlement. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color definitively played a role in shaping the Pacific Northwest and Washington State. Still, those histories did not overlap significantly with the subjects of this paper.

Nevertheless, the issues raised by Anna Louise Strong during the Everett Massacre around free speech, police violence, and unlawful detention all have undeniable links to modern societal abuses in the United States. Additionally, it is crucial to place the legacy of the Red Scare as a political and racial panic from its inception. Anti-communism merged with the fears of “Yellow Peril,” the belief that a foreign other is actively seeking to dismantle white society, expressing a paranoia still present today. In 2021, I wrote “A White Pacific: the Bellingham Riot of 1907 and the Creation of Transnational Borders” for Andrew Gomez’s *History of Immigration in the U.S.*, which covered the 1907 anti-Sikh riots in the Bellingham lumber industry for those looking for more information on BIPOC labor history in the Pacific Northwest.

Historiography

The scholarship on Strong’s life falls into three categories: the old guard, the feminist renaissance, and twenty-first-century perspectives. In general, historians pre-1970 doubted the authenticity of Strong’s political radicalism and criticized the inconsistency in her participation. Initially published in 1964, Robert L. Friedheim’s book *Seattle General Strike* has functioned as the go-to standard for history concerning the country’s first general strike in 1919 and the events leading up to it, including the Everett Massacre. When he discusses Strong’s involvement, Friedheim’s argument is in line with the majority of scholarship: “Anna Louise Strong moved leftward permanently... Her attachment to socialism, primarily a product of her humanitarian

instincts, became increasingly ardent, although woefully weak in terms of knowledge of formal doctrine.”² Friedheim uses Strong’s summarization of Lenin’s *Soviets at Work* for an American audience as an indication she thought union members were unable to engage with complicated theory.³ He later describes her as someone with a “mercurial temperament” who was prone in her early days of activism to discard causes that no longer sparked her interest.⁴

Friedheim was not alone in depicting Strong as a rash and emotional individual. David C. Dukes’ article “Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause,” published in 1974, reflects the skepticism presented by conservative historians of Strong’s motives for participation in the labor movement and critiqued her more aspirational politics. Duke argues that Strong’s “enthusiasm for the ‘Communist idea’ was always more personally rather than ideologically motivated.”⁵ Duke suggests that Strong was interested in progressive movements primarily as a pastime rather than a genuine devotion to a singular political cause.⁶ He refers to Strong’s charity work, teaching life skills to impoverished people while she was in high school, as her “weekly trips into the slums.”⁷ He calls Strong’s liberal theologian father “crusading” and her vision of challenging capitalist order as inspired by “disillusionment.”⁸ Duke is not explicit with his disapproval of Strong’s political activities. Still, his language reveals more than enough about his general attitude towards “leftist” theory and those who subscribe to it. The conservative criticism of Strong would soon fall out of favor in light of more praising portrayals of her history.

The 1970s saw a resurgence in the scholarship on Anna Louise Strong’s life, especially in feminist circles. The second-wave feminist historical method centered on the idea that historians

² Robert L. Friedheim and James N. Gregory. *The Seattle General Strike*, (Centennial ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 56.

³ Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, 32.

⁴ Ibid, 56.

⁵ Duke, "Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause," 123.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

must “find the women” in the spaces between the great men of history.⁹ Judith Neis’ book *Seven Women: Portraits from an American Radical Tradition* came out in 1977 at the peak of the feminist wave of academic investigation of Strong’s life. It contains a biography of Strong and positions her as an equal with Mother Jones and Harriet Tubman in radical women’s history, definitively aligning with the academics that consider Strong to be radical. Neis’ scholarship represents the largely uncritical second-wave feminist interest in Strong’s life following her death in 1970. Neis tells her audience that “the difference between radicals and other people is that radicals see differently, and once having seen a new reality... they cannot rest until they act.”¹⁰ Neis positions Strong as moving out of a relatively enclosed and “virtuous” American Puritan Tradition into a distinctly anarcho-social political alignment.¹¹ For centuries American Christians had invested in “predestination,” or the belief that one’s entrance into heaven was determined before they were born, extrapolated to mean anyone of wealth or privilege must have God’s favor. Thus, the poor and marginalized people of society are deserving of their role because the highest power ordains it. Her Christian faith initially inspired Strong’s charitable missions, but following her more profound connection with Wobblies, religion was less central in her life and personal philosophy. Neis portrays Strong’s charity work as coming out of a sincere and unbreaking desire to help those in need and counteract the prevailing theory that poor people are ignorant and deserving of inequality.¹²

More than the previously mentioned authors, Neis extensively examines the Everett Massacre, including calling Strong’s articles for the New York Evening Post the “best coverage” of the massacre and related trials.¹³ Instead of acting out of boredom, as David C. Duke suggests,

⁹ An idea introduced by Professor Katherine Smith. See also: “Add women and stir.”

¹⁰ Judith Neis. *Seven Women : Portraits from the American Radical Tradition*. (1st ed. New York: Viking Press, 1977,) XVI.

¹¹ Neis, *Seven Women*, 149.

¹² *Ibid*, 152.

¹³ *Ibid*.

Neis generally supports the striking workers in Everett that led to the police-ordered massacre and is critical of the vigilante justice that went on there, securing her scholarship on the side left-of-center.¹⁴ Following the works by Duke and Neis that were “limited in scope,” Stephanie Ogle’s master thesis “Anna Louise Strong: the Seattle years” (1973) and particularly her Ph.D. dissertation “Anna Louise Strong: Progressive and Propagandist” (1981) represented the most rigorous study of the “public and private life of this complex and controversial woman.”¹⁵ Ogle would become an expert on the life of Anna Louise Strong, often cited by succeeding researchers on Strong, and was featured as a critical historian in the documentary *Witness to Revolution* about Strong’s life.

Since 2000, a more nuanced interpretation of Strong’s life incorporated elements of the old guard and feminist discussions. Academics more sympathetic to Strong’s goals to restructure society similarly point out Strong’s tendency to flip between, or entirely forgo, political alignments, particularly before the 1916 Everett Massacre. Yet several still find a way to explain these inconsistencies. It is generally agreed upon by historians that Strong became more firmly entrenched in the anti-war, pro-labor position of the International Workers of the World (I.W.W.) after the massacre.¹⁶ ¹⁷ In her article from 2019, “Creating a City to Resist the State: The Seattle General Strike of 1919,” Kathy Ferguson counteracts previous scholarship that downplayed Strong’s more radical alliances and propositions with “a particularly anarchist interpretation” carried out “[b]y taking Strong and her I.W.W. connections seriously, rather than setting them aside as youthful indiscretions or immature thinking.”¹⁸ Ferguson calls Anna Louise a “two-card

¹⁴ Ibid, 150.

¹⁵ Stephanie Francine Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, (University of Washington, 1981,) III, IV.

¹⁶ Duke, "Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause," 125.

¹⁷ Kathy Ferguson. "Creating a City to Resist the State: The Seattle General Strike of 1919." *Theory & Event* 22, no. 4 (2019). 922.

¹⁸ Ferguson, “Creating a City to Resist the State,” 913.

man,” including Strong within the broad practice among union members in the early twentieth century to hold memberships in both open shop and closed shop labor unions for maximum benefit.¹⁹ In light of Duke’s disapproving survey of Strong’s life and the poor testaments to her character she received in the documentary film *Witness to Revolution*, Ferguson urges readers “to be suspicious when the ideas of a radical woman are repeatedly dismissed with highly gendered accusations of naivete, passions, and lack of theory.”²⁰ Ferguson’s article generally reflects the more left-leaning, sympathetic criticism of the recent scholarship on Anna Louise Strong.

Also sympathetic to Strong’s cause, John Putman dives farther into the nuances of her varying political ties in the article “A “Test of Chiffon Politics”: Gender Politics in Seattle, 1897-1917,” published in 2000. He argues that labor leaders in the 1910s reached out to middle-class women to make cross-class ties; and that the alliance between middle and working-class women represented a “nexus of class and gender politics [that] momentarily but profoundly redefined Seattle’s political landscape early in the twentieth century.”²¹ Rather than a weakness, Putman posits that “ideological inconsistency was one of the strengths of the [suffrage] movement,” which made the movement attractive to a broader range of the general populace with diverse political beliefs.²² Putman calls the Espionage Act trials and the trials of the I.W.W. members present at the anti-communist Everett Massacre “repressive” and notes Strong’s continued support of the two men on trial as the beginning of the end of her bourgeois political career on Seattle’s School Board.²³ Putman further argues Strong’s shunning out of Seattle’s women’s clubs and eventual recall from the school board for her pro-labor and anti-war

¹⁹ Ibid, 914. Ferguson’s article indicates that often union members would “hold cards” for both the conservative American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) and the radical I.W.W.

²⁰ Ibid, 928.

²¹ John Putman. "A "Test of Chiffon Politics": Gender Politics in Seattle, 1897-1917." *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (2000): 596.

²² Ibid, 598.

²³ Ibid, 613.

activism was a perfect microcosm of “class and gender tensions that plagued Seattle during the transformative years of industrial capitalism.”²⁴ Lastly, Putman gathers the sensational I.W.W. trial and Strong’s recall from the school board as moments that signaled the beginning of the first Red Scare in the United States.²⁵

Childhood and Early Life

Anna Louise Strong was born on November 5, 1885, as the eldest child of Sydney and Ruth Tracy Strong, who both claimed lineage of the “early [white] settlers of nineteenth-century Ohio.”²⁶ Ruth Tracy Strong was one of the first women to receive a college education at Oberlin, where she met Sydney.²⁷ Writing about her family history, Strong insists the “direct line of [her] ancestry was always ‘progressive’ which meant that they kept on going,” but concedes her forebears acted even when the goal “was not always clear.”²⁸ While Sydney’s family was securely middle-class, Anna’s mother’s side was quite wealthy and influential, including Strong’s aunt Lizzie Lord who married future United States president Benjamin Harris.²⁹ Anna Louise Strong’s introduction to activism began in her childhood as the daughter of a liberal preacher and early adopters of abolition theology. She began writing early in life and was encouraged by her parents to think constantly of the audience she was writing to.³⁰ Anna Louise graduated Oak Park High School at fourteen and lived in Europe for a year to improve her German and Latin.³¹ While overseas, Strong felt separated from the more secular European societies and longed for home.³²

²⁴ Ibid, 614.

²⁵ Ibid, 615.

²⁶ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 9.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 5.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, 13.

³¹ Ibid, 16.

³² Ibid, 16.

As a high school student, Anna Louise visited Chicago's West Side and its "grinding poverty" to teach sewing and other life skills to recent immigrants settling in the area.³³ During this time, David C. Duke suggests her reading of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* influenced Strong's belief that "it was not only desirable but also possible to create a planned efficiently run society in which social and economic injustices could be eliminated."³⁴ Anna Louise spent time at Bryn Mawr while waiting to be old enough for college. After receiving her undergraduate degree from Oberlin, Anna Louise Strong presented her Ph.D. dissertation on "the psychology of prayer" in front of the theological and philological department heads, becoming the youngest woman ever to earn a doctorate from the University of Chicago at twenty-three.³⁵ Strong was introduced to pacifism at Oberlin. There is a long history of anti-war protest at the college, including the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society founded in 1840.³⁶ Later in life, Anna Louise Strong's ambition for the causes she championed and her optimism for fundamental social change put her at odds with those around her. According to Duke, Anna Louise was already immersed in Robert H. Wiebe's conception of the "new bureaucratic thought" when she finished her college career.³⁷ Wiebe's theory was about modernization, the belief in a linear progress model tied to a Puritanical tradition of predestination. Anna Louise's faith in American progress was shaken as she grew older.

Despite her relatively happy upbringing, Strong often spoke of feelings of ennui and sadness that would be considered symptoms of depression by modern medical standards. She was a "serious child" whose introspection could frequently cloud her mood.³⁸ She was

³³ Duke, "Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause," 123.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Judith Neis, *Seven Women: Portraits from the American Radical Tradition*, (1st ed. New York: Viking Press, 1977,) 152.

³⁶ Katherine Hamilton. "Peace and Conflict Studies Rooted in Oberlin History." *The Oberlin Review*, (2011).

³⁷ Duke, "Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause," 124.

³⁸ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 12.

considered “gifted” among her peers and was often two or three years younger than other students in her class, contributing to her feelings of isolation or social ill-adjustment.³⁹ As a child, Strong realized “that other friends were taken aback by her religiosity.”⁴⁰ In her diaries from her early life, Strong would complain of “intense headaches, insomnia, endless crying, and fears for her sanity,” which was much more intense than the typical blues of teenagehood.⁴¹

Stephanie Ogle describes Strong’s life as one “obsessed by work and guided by a dream of revolution,” yet often, Strong would retreat from the world when reality did not meet her expectations and aspirations.⁴² In her autobiography, Strong reflected on the tumultuousness of her early political life, writing, “Nor can I forget the wasted strength of my own years of bewildered, conflicting emotions, due to the fact that I never clearly understood my way,” a comment which is exemplary of her emotional state.⁴³ In the same passage, Strong describes her young self as a “lonely youth.”⁴⁴ Ogle interpreted Strong as having “self-consciously... despised herself for desiring fame,” yet felt pulled to fill her loneliness despite that shame.⁴⁵ Anna Louise’s mother, Ruth Tracy, died on October 11, 1903, “a martyr's death” while returning from a speaking tour of the Congregational Church while Strong was still a student at Bryn Mawr.⁴⁶ The family was devastated, but Anna Louise would barely mention her mother’s death in her memoir, and only then to mention during the American entry into the war, “nothing... not even my mother’s death, so shook the foundations of my soul.”⁴⁷ Sydney Strong grew closer to his eldest daughter, Anna Louise, following his wife's passing. She would follow him to Seattle, and he

³⁹ Ibid, 19.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 20.

⁴¹ Ibid, 18.

⁴² Ibid, 2.

⁴³ Strong, *Change*, 2.

⁴⁴ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 18.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 19.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 25.

⁴⁷ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 57.

would remain a huge influence in her political world until he died in 1938.⁴⁸ Sydney Strong did not loudly declare himself radical but held very progressive views and endlessly supported Anna Louise throughout the accusations of radicalism against her.

Work In Children's Advocacy

Strong's early political career began without controversy in the child-welfare movement of the early twentieth century. In the United States, the landscape of child welfare was far different from twenty-first-century adoption and foster programs. Before federally-regulated social work programs, these exhibits and the committees that ran them were the institutions concerned with impoverished, orphaned, and abused children and pushed for changes in legislation to improve the conditions of institutions serving children in need.⁴⁹ Many of the people involved in children's welfare were middle-class and well-educated white women. Strong rose quickly in the ranks while working the exhibit circuit. Growing up in a progressive household instilled the value of charitable giving from a young age in her, and her socio-economic background established her as a respectable woman. She worked in international and domestic child-welfare exhibitions from 1910 to 1915, where Strong found "international recognition and personal satisfaction."⁵⁰ These exhibits were propaganda for the funding and support of programs for orphaned or neglected children. Her work mainly featured managing fundraising endeavors and was centered in Kansas City, Missouri, briefly. In 1911, she was a supervisor at a child-welfare exhibit when tasked with laying off a laborer. Strong felt a great deal of remorse for the firing. In response, the worker introduced her to the Socialist Party and "the fact that some men believed by deliberate action the inequalities of society could be

⁴⁸ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 28.

⁴⁹ Anna Louise Strong. "After the Child Welfare Exhibit, What?" c. 1913-1915. New York City: National Child Welfare Exhibition Committee. Anna Louise Strong Papers. Special Collections at University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

⁵⁰ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, abstract, 113.

eliminated.”⁵¹ Strong took steps to join the party following this revelation but soon lost interest due to what Friedheim described as her “mercurial temperament.”⁵² In her autobiography, she recalled that “It was not I who found the class struggle at last, but the class struggle which found me - as it found steadily during the first fifteen years of our century more and more Americans.”⁵³ Shortly thereafter, she would make the great journey to the country’s most radical city and a hotbed of militant labor organizing, Seattle.

Move to Seattle and the School Board

Strong’s time in the midwest came to a close in 1915, writing: “Love of the western mountains added to a belated sense of duty to my father made me decide to settle in Seattle.”⁵⁴ Anna Louise quickly made connections in her new home in Seattle. Coming from a well-educated, liberal background, she fit in easily with members of the local women’s clubs. In early 1916, she ran for the Seattle School Board and won, becoming the organization’s second-ever elected woman, and only woman member during her term.⁵⁵ Reflecting on her time in office, Strong acknowledged the “progressive forces” encouraged her candidacy and called the school board a “self-perpetuating committee of bankers and businessmen.”⁵⁶ Members of the board were responsible for overseeing the state’s largest school district, forming budgets, and dictating district-wide policy. Women were still without the vote in federal elections, and it was a prime time for grassroots action in Seattle for middle-class women’s organizing around issues of suffrage and labor rights. After failing to secure a working class-based political movement, labor leaders sought out middle-class women for organizational support.⁵⁷ These middle-class labor

⁵¹ Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, 56.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 47.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 49.

⁵⁵ Lucy Olander, *Witness*, 2015.

⁵⁶ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 51.

⁵⁷ John Putman. "A "Test of Chiffon Politics": Gender Politics in Seattle, 1897-1917." *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (2000): 596.

sympathizers were not entirely able to “bond” to their working-class allies, and thus “working-class women quickly emerged as this bond.”⁵⁸ Women’s clubs were also heavily involved in organizing labor.⁵⁹ The fluidity of the labor movement’s rhetoric was also crucial to pulling in a more diverse supporter pool.⁶⁰ In her autobiography, Strong recollected when upon joining the school board, she was “already marked as a radical” by fellow members.⁶¹ Even so, Strong went on to insist, “We progressives resented the term ‘radical,’” refusing the label for at least her time on the school board.⁶² This uncertainty of labeling was felt among her compatriots as well. When Jack Miller, lifelong I.W.W. member and survivor of the Everett Massacre, remembered Strong, he recalled, “she could disembark anytime... it was not her life as it was the rest of us.”⁶³ That may have been true in the early days of Strong’s association with the Wobblies and anarchists but would not remain so. Strong was becoming as disillusioned with the perspectives of her fellows in the school board and women’s clubs as they were with her. In search of “some real proletarians,” Strong became more involved with anti-war work.⁶⁴

Anti-War Work

In 1914, the American anti-war movement was primarily influenced by “upper-class intellectuals, prominent businessmen and Progressive establishment politicians.”⁶⁵ Roland Marchand argues the pre-war peace movement was built around practicality and populated by the elite and wealthy of American society from 1914 to 1918.⁶⁶ In 1916, the United States was on the

⁵⁸ Putman, “A Test of Chiffon Politics,” 596.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 608.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 598.

⁶¹ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 55.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Lucy Olander, Don Sellers, and Kanopy. *Witness to Revolution*. San Francisco, California, USA: Kanopy Streaming, 2015.

⁶⁴ Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, 56.

⁶⁵ Rutger Ceballos, “Reds, Labor, and the Great War: Antiwar Activism in the Pacific Northwest,” Antiwar and Radical History Project - Pacific Northwest, Civil Rights and Labor History Consortium at the University of Washington, 2014.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

brink of entering the Great War in the European theater that had already been dragging out for two long years. Organization in opposition to the United States' entry into the war was widespread at the beginning, with a "vocal minority" of socialists and anarchists involved in the movement.⁶⁷ Strong's previous musings in socialist thought rekindled as war looked more like an inevitability.⁶⁸ On May 10th, 1916, she spoke at a Seattle Central Labor Council meeting to argue her case against growing militarism. She was supported by all union members present at the meeting, including SCLC President Hulet Wells and Secretary James Duncan.⁶⁹ Local working-class opposition to the war was based on the legitimate fear of conscription rather than a commitment to pacifism, and that radical faction of the anti-war movement grew as Seattle elites moved away from un-patriotic protests of American militarism.⁷⁰ Strong was one individual among a more significant trend of pacifists into socialism and communism.

As a board member, Strong felt her only real victory was in preventing the recruitment of underage volunteers for war in high schools, but felt that "otherwise, the machine rolled over me weekly."⁷¹ Regardless of her pessimism, she joined organizations like the Anti-Preparedness League, the Union Against Militarism, and the Emergency Peace Federation to stay off what many saw as an unavoidable fact.⁷² In her reflection of those pre-war months, Strong concluded that hers was an "America whose populace protested war and whose profiteers desired it, left us and marched into the war with all of Europe."⁷³ On April 4, 1917, the U.S. Congress voted to enter the war, and it suddenly became very unpopular to oppose American involvement and the draft.⁷⁴ Businessmen and labor bosses at the lumber factories and in the shipping yards

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, 56.

⁶⁹ Ceballos, "Reds," 2014..

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 52.

⁷² Ibid, 55.

⁷³ Ibid, 56.

⁷⁴ Putman, "A Test of Chiffon Politics," 613.

celebrated “America’s first debut as a global military power” for its potential to generate profit, while pacifists like Anna Louise Strong wept.⁷⁵ Strong was left without allies in the women’s clubs, whose middle-class members fell in line with the popular patriotism of war-time.⁷⁶ She retreated to a cabin for several months, writing in her memoir, “I left in truth because my courage and my heart were broken. Nothing in my whole life, not even my mother's death, shook my soul's foundation. The fight was lost, and forever! "Our America" was dead!”⁷⁷ Strong’s conception of “Our America,” an America with connotations of freedom and liberty enjoyed by a select few since its onset, was a vision of the country that quickly faded from Strong’s imagination. By 1935 when Strong published her memoir, this belief in a righteous American had long since faded.

Prelude to Massacre

In 1916, labor conflicts were getting hot in Everett, thirty miles north of Seattle. A town of about thirty-five thousand, Everett represented a piece of the massive lumber industry in the Pacific Northwest.⁷⁸ Following the explosion of railroads and the rising population after Washington was declared a state in 1889, lumber became central in the region’s economy.⁷⁹ Economic depression in the spring of 1915 led to a decrease in wages of shingle weavers, a blanket description for “sawyer, filers, and packers” working in mills producing shingles.⁸⁰ A “gentleman’s agreement” between the lumber bosses and the shingles weavers was made after they lost a strike, but striking began again as inflation rose in the spring of 1916, as wages did

⁷⁵ Ceballos, “Reds,” 2014..

⁷⁶ Putman, “A Test of Chiffon Politics,” 613.

⁷⁷ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 57.

⁷⁸ Heather Mayer, “Everett, 1916: The Everett Massacre and the Tracy Trial,” In *Beyond the Rebel Girl*. (Chicago: Oregon State University Press, 2018), 90.

⁷⁹ Cal Wislow, "The Origins of the Seattle General Strike of 1919: The Timber Beast," *Monthly Review (New York)* 1949) 71, no. 10 (2020), 48.

⁸⁰ Mayer, “Everett, 1916,” 91.

not return to pre-depression levels.⁸¹ Organized labor repeatedly failed to take hold in Everett beginning in 1912 and continued as the labor bosses prevented I.W.W.'s from renting halls or speaking in public.⁸² The I.W.W. persisted in the face of censorship, demanding “the right to organize, minimum wages, and an eight-hour day.”⁸³ In Anna Louise Strong’s article “Boat Raked by Bullets,” she recounts the July 1916 arrest of a Wobbly for distributing literature without a license, and a later mass arrest of organizers for a “street meeting” on August 22nd of the same year.⁸⁴ The twenty or so organizers were arrested in Everett and held overnight in jail without a trial in Seattle, causing another crowd to gather against the violation of free speech.⁸⁵ The police responded to attempts by the Wobblies to assemble in Everett and “broke it up with clubs and shotguns.”⁸⁶ Throughout August and September of 1916, the Wobblies saw a persistent disruption of their attempts to speak publicly, jail and deportation without trial, and increased detention time “with or without beatings.”⁸⁷

The owners of industry, city officials, and private citizens of Everett “systematically denied” the free speech and assembly rights of the organizers and laborers.⁸⁸ Founded in 1912, the Commercial Club of Everett was an assembly of “mill owners, merchants, professional men, ministers, and labor leaders” that advocated “open shop” policies and sought to “preserve Everett’s economic and moral future.”⁸⁹ The Commercial Club of Everett acted as a meeting

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid, 91-92.

⁸³ Neis, *Seven Women*, 149.

⁸⁴ Anna Louise Strong, “Boat Raked by Bullets,” c. 1917, (Anna Louise Strong Papers. Special Collections at University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA), 2-3.

⁸⁵ Strong, “Boat,” 2.

⁸⁶ Neis, *Seven Women*, 150.

⁸⁷ Anna Louise Strong, “Second Week of I.W.W. Trial, 1917,” 1917, Unpublished draft. Anna Louise Strong Papers. Special Collections at University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

⁸⁸ Neis, *Seven Women*, 150.

⁸⁹ John G. Richardson, “Mill Owners and Wobblies: The Event Structure of the Everett Massacre of 1916,” *Social Science History* 33, no. 2 (2009), 190. An “open shop” system is one in which employees may, but do not have to join a labor union. It is generally thought of as a more conservative option compared to “closed shop” unions where membership is obligatory.

place, and later armory, for the police and deputized citizens involved in the massacre.⁹⁰ Most of the men involved in the pre-massacre Beverly Park beating on October 31, 1916, were members of the Commercial Club.⁹¹ Strong reported that in the later trials surrounding the massacre and events, the state's witnesses attested to what would become a signature style of the anti-Wobbly violence in Everett and on that night in Beverly Park. Arrested organizers, with their hands tied behind their backs to prevent them from shielding their heads, were sent down between two rows of police deputies who "took a swat at them" with the butts of rifles and batons.⁹² Multiple witnesses agreed that in all the violent eruptions before and after the massacre, no Wobblies ever resisted arrest.⁹³ That November, the tensions boiled over at the docks of Everett.

The Everett Massacre, or Everett Bloody Sunday

Historian Heather Mayer called the November 5, 1916, Everett Massacre "one of the most infamous events in the history of the I.W.W."⁹⁴ Having existed in a somewhat gray area between liberalism and more radical alliances, Anna Louise Strong's reporting on the massacre "left little if any doubt where her sympathies lay" according to Duke.⁹⁵ On Sunday, November 5th, 1916, the passenger ship *Verona* carried an estimated two hundred and fifty Wobblies, boat crew, and a handful of unsuspecting passengers from Seattle to Everett to join a shingle weaver's strike.⁹⁶ As the boat neared the dock at Everett, two hundred recently deputized citizens, police officers, and the Everett sheriff Don McRae waited.⁹⁷ As the plank lowered, Sheriff McRae called out, "Who's your leader?" "We're all leaders," responded several men from the boat, to which McRae replied, "You can't land here!" "The hell we can't!" retorted the Wobblies,

⁹⁰ Strong, "Boat," 6.

⁹¹ Mayer, "Everett, 1916," 95.

⁹² Strong, "Boat," 4.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Mayer, "Everett, 1916," 89.

⁹⁵ Duke, "Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause," 125.

⁹⁶ Ferguson, "Creating a City to Resist the State," 922.

⁹⁷ Mayer, "Everett, 1916," 89.

followed by a gunshot from a still unknown party, then a volley of bullets and mayhem.⁹⁸

Overwhelmed and with multiple casualties, the *Verona* “limped off to the open bay” as gunfire from the dock continued.⁹⁹

“For God’s sake, go up and make the men on the dock stop shooting!” cried one Wobbly sheltering in the engine room to the ship’s engineers aboard the *Verona* as the vessel retreated.¹⁰⁰ On the docks, Deputies Charles O. Curtis and Jefferson Beard lay dead, likely from friendly fire.¹⁰¹ The known dead Wobblies included Abraham Rabinowitz, Hugo Gerlot, Gus Johnson, Felix Baran, and John Looney.¹⁰² An estimated six to twelve men were lost overboard, though neither group paid much attention to their deaths.¹⁰³ Another twenty Wobblies and passengers were wounded.¹⁰⁴ When news broke, a rally of citizens of Seattle, including the mayor of Seattle and Sydney Strong, protested the injustice in the Dreamland Ballroom on November 19th.¹⁰⁵

Strong Reporting on the Massacre and Trials

Upon arriving back in Seattle, the remaining Wobblies were arrested. Out of that group, seventy-six men on the *Verona* that night were set for trial, beginning with the prosecution of Thomas Tracy for the murder of Jefferson Beard.¹⁰⁶ The death of the other deputy, Charles O. Curtis, was supposed to be included in the charge, but it was already clear he was killed by friendly fire.¹⁰⁷ In the course of the trial of Tracy, the evidence presented in witness testimonies made it clear that shots were fired “from the open dock, through the dock-warehouse, along the edge of the dock from the direction of the city, and across the dock from a tug-boat with a

⁹⁸ Strong, “Boat,” 2.

⁹⁹ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 119.

¹⁰⁰ Strong, “Boat,” 1.

¹⁰¹ “What Happened That Day in Everett,” *Everett Massacre of 1916 Collection*, University of Washington.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 119.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰⁶ Mayer, “Everett, 1916,” 89.

¹⁰⁷ “What Happened,” *Everett Massacre of 1916 Collection*, University of Washington.

high-powered rifle.”¹⁰⁸ The massacre brought national attention to the ongoing labor struggles in the Puget Sound region. Even the Mayor of Seattle, Hirman Gill, shared his anger publicly, arguing that “when the sheriff put his hand on the butt of his gun and told them they could not land, he fired the first shot, in the eyes of the law, and the I.W.W. can claim that they shot in self-defense.”¹⁰⁹ None of the deputies or police officers involved were tried for the five known Wobbly deaths.

Strong’s work for Seattle newspapers propelled her into reporting on the massacre. In her words, “I was not consciously taking sides in any struggle; I merely sent the news. The news... was that at every stage, the Everett police and private lumber guards took the initiative in beating and shooting workers for speaking in their streets.”¹¹⁰ While Anna Louise Strong’s reporting for the *New York Post* strayed on the side of nonpartisanship, her later articles for the *Seattle Union Record* were unwavering in their critique of the Everett Commercial Club, and the guilt of the Mayor of Everett, Dennis D. Merrill, and his police force.¹¹¹ She was clearly in favor of the defense attorney George Vanderveer and blamed Sheriff McRae for the carnage.¹¹²

Even so, Strong’s faithful support of the Wobblies and more radical causes did not manifest all at once. While she was sympathetic to the victims of the massacre, in a letter to the editor of the *Survey* from March 1917, Strong wrote: “I do not, however, wish to go too far. The I.W.W. is admittedly a revolutionary organization. It aims to overthrow the present system of society, by “direct action.”¹¹³ It is assumed this comment shows Strong’s genuine feelings, as it was made in a private letter rather than a published article. She does, however, stress the

¹⁰⁸ Strong, “Boat,” 6.

¹⁰⁹ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 120.

¹¹⁰ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 54.

¹¹¹ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 121.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 122.

¹¹³ Anna Louise Strong, “Letter to editor of the *Survey*,” March 13, 1917, Anna Louise Strong Papers, Special Collections at University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

Wobblies' was not a "murderous doctrine" as the prosecution was painting it to be.¹¹⁴ Strong remains fairly neutral in this personal letter, maintaining that "Whether they were armed or not, and who fired the first shots, I do not presume to state as yet."¹¹⁵ In language that seems strikingly nonpartisan in comparison to Strong's later unapologetic defense of the Wobblies, she relays to the *Survey* editor, "the evidence is only partly in and is conflicting."¹¹⁶

The trial lasted for about two months. Jefferson Beard's two sons testified at one point to build sympathy for the deputized vigilantes.¹¹⁷ But as more of the state's witnesses gave their testimonies, the events leading to the tragedy came into sharp relief. Mayor Dennis D. Merrill admitted he signed an ordinance banning the distribution of leaflets and public organizing in Everett without a council vote to entrap Wobblies coming from Seattle and deport them as soon as they arrived.¹¹⁸ It came to light during the trial that the Commercial Club had not only served as a place of storage for the weapons used in the beatings and shootings of Wobblies but acted in alliance with the elected officials of Everett to commit those brutalities.¹¹⁹ Members of the Club admitted that "they became deputy sheriffs without seeing the sheriff" and were acting solely in the interest of the business elite.¹²⁰ Thomas Tracy was found not guilty of murder in May of 1917. In the same motion, all other Wobblies being held for trial were also released. No members of the police or citizen deputies were tried in connection to the five known Wobbly deaths.

Recall and Removal from Middle-Class Politics

While Strong remembers how she felt singled out as the "radical" of the school board even before her recall, four other labor-endorsed politicians sat on the Seattle City Council

¹¹⁴ Strong, "Letter to editor," 1917.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Strong, "Second Week of I.W.W. Trial, 1917," 1917.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Strong, "Boat," 5-6.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

during her term.¹²¹ Before her support of the massacre victims made her a target of the country's first Red Scare panic, she was comfortably situated within "progressive" middle-class circles.¹²² The Everett Massacre took place on November 5, 1916, and the effort to recall Strong from her elected position began almost immediately following her reporting on the incident.¹²³ In addition to her sympathies with the Wobblies, Strong's anti-war activism was also raised as evidence of her incompatibility with the business-minded middle-class school board. Before the United States entered World War I, opposition to joining was relatively common, but by the time Congress declared war in April of 1917, "hyperpatriotism" was the only socially acceptable sentiment.¹²⁴ Strong was alone amongst her women's club friends who "could not countenance [her] anti-war activities" in her continued defiance against the war and militarism.¹²⁵ In their view, Strong's anti-war radicalism and alignment with Wobblies was too risky for the great women's suffrage movement.¹²⁶ In 1917, Anna Louise encouraged her labor allies to join rallies against the war.¹²⁷ She joined the *Daily Call*, with its "raw, red" words, as a writer on the "class war" in the fall of that year.¹²⁸ In her first months at the paper, Strong was told by fellow writers that she "didn't know a thing about Marxism," a claim she agrees with within her memoir.¹²⁹ Strong admits that she and other members of the paper's staff "knew no theory" but did know "that on the other side of the earth, Russian workers had used the war to seize power and throw out kings and capitalists and that this was the right idea for all workers of the world."¹³⁰

¹²¹ Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929*. (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press), 1994, 110.

¹²² Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 55.

¹²³ Frank, *Purchasing Power*, 110.

¹²⁴ John Putman. "A "Test of Chiffon Politics": Gender Politics in Seattle, 1897-1917." *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 4 (2000): 612.

¹²⁵ Putman, "A Test of Chiffon Politics," 613.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 123.

¹²⁸ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 59.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

While Strong's campaign in Seattle high schools to end mandatory military drills raised eyebrows among her middle-class friends and within the women's clubs, her support of two Wobblies tried under the Espionage Act cemented her position as a class enemy of Seattle's business elite.¹³¹ After Strong's testimony at Wobbly Hulet Wells' trial in the fall of 1917, the recall movement against her gathered new momentum.¹³² If she was unsure about allying with more radical factions in the spring of 1917, by the fall, her connections were secured, and the topic of discussion for pro-business forces formed a movement against her. On October 23, 1917, a petition for the recall of Anna Louise Strong was submitted to the school board by veterans of the Spanish American War, J.K. Witherspoon, T.M. Wilmot, and Edward C. Foote, who opposed her outspoken position on the war.¹³³ In the same month, the Bolshevik Party led by Vladimir Lenin had brought forth the October Revolution in Russia, irrevocably changing the world and the course of progressive movements in the United States. The wartime repression of the I.W.W. in 1917-1918 was unrivaled in any other time in the history of the United States.¹³⁴ Historian of the Red Scare, Regin Schmidt, orients the growing anti-radical sentiment in the United States as moving from "anti-German passions of the war" into a concentrated attack on "Bolsheviks," or more simply put, 'reds.'¹³⁵

The petition was slow to amass signatures until, by her admittance, Strong gave her opponents yet more evidence as to her alliances with political radicals.¹³⁶ In November of 1917, Strong sat next to Louise Olivereau during Olivereau's sedition trial under the Espionage Act; the latter was accused of circulating anti-draft leaflets.¹³⁷ Olivereau had refused an attorney and

¹³¹ Putman. "A "Test of Chiffon Politics,"" 613.

¹³² Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, 56.

¹³³ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 128.

¹³⁴ Ceballos, "Reds," 2014.

¹³⁵ Schmidt 25

¹³⁶ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 63.

¹³⁷ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 135.

identified herself as an anarchist.¹³⁸ She was found guilty and sentenced to ten years, for which she served twenty-eight months. Strong was undeniably now on the side of the anarchists and labor radicals. Strong had the advantage of respectability garnered by her class and education statuses when she held favor in the elite circles of Seattle. Still, the association of her name with anti-American activity tainted her once-popular reputation. She recounts that after her show of support during those trials, after “eight columns of Seattle’s front pages flamed the news when the woman member of the School Board took the stand in the “treason case” about the anti-war leaflet,” she became the “best-known woman in Seattle,” but lost her previous honor.¹³⁹ By December of 1917, the petitioners broke the needed five thousand signature count to be considered for a vote.¹⁴⁰

Before the recall vote, Strong penned “An Open Letter to My Friends” in 1917. It was addressed to the Engineers’ Union, the first labor organization to support her campaign. Strong is firm and plain in her words, beginning her address with the promise that “We are going in, not only to win, but to win so overwhelmingly that it will put a stop, here in Seattle, to the persecution and suppression now meted out, under cover of so-called patriotism, to persons who dare to hope for real democracy.”¹⁴¹ She points out that in the recall effort against her “no attack has been made on [her] work as a board member,” and refutes the accusations that she violated the Select Service law, which expanded the U.S. military through registration of men ages 21-45 and instituted conscription.¹⁴² Her status as a “two-card man,” in Ferguson’s words, was utilized in this defense of her actions. To a jury, she protested against being labeled “radical,” in private she moved farther and farther left. In response to the objections against her character, she lays

¹³⁸ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 64.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

¹⁴⁰ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 135.

¹⁴¹ Anna Louise Strong. “An Open Letter to My Friends.” c. 1917. Anna Louise Strong Papers. Special Collections at University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

¹⁴² Strong, “An Open Letter,” c. 1917.

out the anti-war and anti-conscription activities she was involved with before the passing of the Select Service law and claims that the rumor she was involved with a particular anti-conscription circular and activities following the United States declaration of war was “entirely false.”¹⁴³ The pamphlet Strong was accused of collaborating on was an advertisement for a “Mobilization Against War, April 21-22” rally at Oberlin. The authors questioned America’s conception of civil liberties and raised the validity of an “Oxford Pledge,” a non-compliance oath begun at Oxford University on American soil.¹⁴⁴ Despite her denials and abjections, her association with radicals and anarchists was too deep to ignore. She lost the vote and was recalled on March 5, 1918.¹⁴⁵ According to historian David C. Duke, Strong lost the recall by only 2,000 ballots cast out of 85,000 total.¹⁴⁶ Strong was devastated, especially once she learned that former supporters voted for the recall. Even with her insistence she was not radical during the recall movement, enough Seattlites felt she was no longer fit to serve on the board because of her politics. Once again, she was pushed into a long melancholy following the recall. In *I Change Worlds*, Strong reflects on that period as a “new political alignment in Seattle” emerged, reshaped around “a bitter battle... between ‘good citizens’ and ‘reds.’”¹⁴⁷ Her allegiance with “reds” was then as much about her seeking-out radicals as it was a label put upon her by the business interests on the School Board.

Strong Post-Massacre and Recall

“Is the world turning upside down? Or who are the maintainers of law and order?” asked

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Organizations Council of Associated Students, “Mobilization Against War, April 21-22” c. 1917-1918, (Oberlin: Oberlin College), Anna Louise Strong Papers. Special Collections at University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, WA.

¹⁴⁵ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 141.

¹⁴⁶ Duke, “Anna Louise Strong and the Search for a Good Cause,” 125-126.

¹⁴⁷ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 65.

Strong in 1917.¹⁴⁸ Almost twenty years later, in her 1935 memoir, Strong recounts her time in Seattle as an activist in a country that “stood aloof” to the suffering ongoing in Europe.¹⁴⁹ After the war with Europe was declared, Strong’s alliances with anarchists and Wobblies strengthened because she felt they were still anti-war.¹⁵⁰ The Everett Massacre and World War I demonstrated to Strong that her conception of America as morally righteous, influenced by her religious upbringing, was a fabrication.¹⁵¹ As was usual for Strong when she lost a political battle, she retreated to a cabin on Mount Tahoma (previously known as Mount Rainier) for several months to recuperate. Melvin Dubovsky, a historian of the Wobblies and Everett Massacre, wrote that after these events, Strong understood “the fruit of war is war and yet more war” and could thus not turn back to her previous non-radical life.¹⁵² Although she was allied with the Wobblies, her memoir details how she was still unsure about the “armed revolution” that some of her more radical friends anticipated.¹⁵³

Suppression of free speech grew after the entry into the war was declared, and the presses of the *Daily Call* were smashed by “hooligans,” according to Strong.¹⁵⁴ In the introduction of *I Change Worlds*, Strong recounts her method as an activist, professing, “we act; and afterward, if we survive and still have time to reason, we know why we have acted.”¹⁵⁵ Her work at the *Call* and its successor, the *Seattle Union Record*, was a “balm on the wounds of [her] soul.”¹⁵⁶ Despite accusations of a nomadic lifestyle by friends, Strong insists “not once in those years did it occur to me to leave Seattle,” as she persevered through the hardship of her recall and outsing from

¹⁴⁸ Strong, “Second Week of I.W.W. Trial, 1917,” 1917.

¹⁴⁹ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 48.

¹⁵⁰ Ogle, *Anna Louise Strong, Progressive and Propagandist*, 123.

¹⁵¹ Neis, *Seven Women*, 149.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 150.

¹⁵³ Strong, *I Change Worlds*, 71.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 60.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 59.

mainstream Seattle.¹⁵⁷ Strong felt that to bring about a global end of societal ills; she had to begin in her current city.

Conclusion

Understanding Strong as a person ruled by her emotions does not have to be a damning accusation. It does not have to be explained away or affixed to her womanhood. The personal *is* political, and for as much as Strong was unfamiliar with concrete Marxist theory in the early days of her radicalism, she was immersed in the socialist project until the end of her life. For the “old guard” historians, Strong was inconsistent, disingenuous, and overconfident in her aspirations. For a handful of her anarchist contemporaries, she was never radical enough. As Ferguson suggests, modern audiences must be mindful of these impossible standards of women of history and ask why they exist. In Strong’s account, her radicalism was decided by her shunning from Seattle moderate circles and growing alignment with the anti-war beliefs of anarchists, socialists, and Wobblies. Her reluctance to name herself as a radical was temporary, as she was loudly demonstrating her sympathies with communists until her death in 1970.

Anna Louise Strong’s reporting on the Everett Massacre and the Wobbly trials was the beginning of her deep association with anarchist and communist leaders. Her haste in political matters would make her yet more infamous among the Seattle business elite. In February of 1919, a ship worker’s strike in the ports of Seattle and Tacoma gained sympathy from other labor unions and became the country’s first-ever general strike. Strong, now a known pro-union reporter became infamous for her article “No One Knows Where.” Moderates accused her of inciting anarchy and a Bolshevik uprising. It was reprinted in newspapers across the world, and although it was published anonymously, the author’s identity was soon known.¹⁵⁸ As soon as it

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 79.

had begun, the Seattle General Strike was called off, and the potential for revolution was lost. Tired of waiting for a revolution, Strong emigrated to the Soviet Union in 1921 and established Moscow's first English newspaper.¹⁵⁹ She was ultimately an optimist, regardless of her periods of melancholy. And a radical, not just because of her political values, but because other people understood her as a radical. She would never again find a home amongst the moderates and reformists of Seattle. After living in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, she was hardly welcomed in the United States at all. Nevertheless, Seattle is the fertile land on which she grew into a radical, and her world was forever changed.

¹⁵⁹ Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, 158.

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