

What GE Workers Are Demanding

At the last negotiating session, GE said one percent, maybe a fraction more—maybe a fraction less—depending on what the latest government Bureau of Labor Statistics show in April. That's all it would offer—said GE.

But the last word on what's going to be in negotiations will rest not with GE—but with its workers.

Here's what some of them—day-workers, skilled craftsmen, women, piece-workers—were saying about it at the '301' membership meeting on April 7.

It's this sentiment that they'll take to the National UE Wage Conference in Buffalo, April 19 and 20—and GE will feel it more and more in the days and weeks ahead.

RAY ELLIS, toolmaker:

"I've worked in GE 27 years. When I started, toolmakers were considered the top job. Everyone wanted to be toolmakers. Now, with piece work, workers can in a few weeks make as much as the average toolmaker—which is around \$2.03. GE only fools itself by turning its back on its skilled workers. A new apprentice after 12 weeks they put him on production and then he won't come back to toolmaking. He's making more money on big lathes and boring machines. At present time, GE says it can't hire toolmakers at the rate—everyone's grabbing them. And the ones they hire go on production. If ever we're going to get anything for toolmakers, now is the time. The supply and demand situation of toolmakers is good. We toolmakers in turbine in Building 273 are ready to go. We showed that when we turned out in a demonstration in a snowstorm. We've never asked piece workers' cooperation, but we think the time has come to ask them to back up the fight of the men who service them."

HELEN QUIRINI, Bldg. 81: "Narrowing the gap between women and the lowest men's rates isn't even adequate for the women. We must fight this year and keep fighting to force GE not to pay any woman a rate that is lower than the common laborer rate. It's a good thing to see and know that so many men are waking up and realizing that this fight of the women is their fight, too. There are many cases where GE has used low women's rates to hire men for less than the common laborer rate. We must go to the community and expose GE's miserable conditions for women—and show up the slick and false propaganda they put out."

HELEN QUIRINI, Bldg. 81:

WILLIAM MASTRIANNI, Bldg. 73A: "Maybe a lot of people don't understand just what the demand to eliminate geographical differentials really means. Let's pin it down. In Utica, I went there, in that area GE is setting up on old plant on Tenth St. for electronics. Rates they will pay are 30 to 40 cents lower than here. Frank D'Amico, from refrigerator control, went out to the new plant in Morrison, Ill. There's a 40 to 50 cent difference out there from what they pay in Building 43. GE's moving into small plants all over the map—into low wage areas. I went to Ludlow, Vermont. A new plant there they're paying \$1.90 for toolmakers and have broken the work down into a repetitive job. They've got local shoe, grocery clerks doing this work—and the top man gets \$1.90 and here it

WILLIAM MASTRIANNI, Bldg. 73A:

pays \$2.21. They're moving large appliances to Louisville and it's not because they like the climate. It's a low wage area and they'll try again to get work 40 to 50 cents an hour cheaper than they're getting it now. If we don't do something to cut out these geographical differentials, they'll be trying to put us all on the lower rates."

SADIE IOVENELLI, Bldg. 81: "I think the women, particularly those who have been most active, are very much encouraged by the support they're getting from the men this year. The men must be seeing that a fight to raise women's rates is necessary to safeguard and protect their own jobs. The women in the Works are going to call a meeting soon to step up this important fight with GE. We women have been in the forefront and we're going to stay there. The government proved GE discriminates against women in 1945 and UE has made progress on it. We can do a real job of getting more this time if the men will fully unite in support of the women. The women alone shouldn't be expected to carry the fight to protect the rates for all."

SADIE IOVENELLI, Bldg. 81:

FRANK CHÉERIO, day-worker, Bldg. 89: "I've got pants that are eight years old and shirts over three years old, if anyone wants to know what the score is with one day-worker. I think we ought to have a demonstration like the skilled workers had. I think the women should also have such a demonstration. Maybe we men ought to one day have a parade or demonstration and the women the next to let GE know how we feel. Let GE know about the poor day-workers who are making \$1.55 or \$1.60 an hour."

FRANK CHÉERIO, day-worker, Bldg. 89:

CHARLES FERRIS, electrician: "A lot's got to be done for the skilled workers. Not a little. One thing we should be clear about. What we take home if we go back to 40 hours, brother, we're going to be in trouble. We've talked long enough—we've got to fight NOW. And everyone should understand that this Union doesn't depend on a few leaders to 'handle' things. In UE, it's not that way. The Union is us—and it's up to us. We spent three hours in Building 41 on one lousy thing. We asked to be treated the same as a stranger at the gate, when they hire outside workers for \$2.45 to \$2.65, with triple time on Sunday, but they won't give us electricians this work. GE wandered around the bush on everything but the issue. By God, something's got to be done. We sat down a day-and-a-half last week and the rest of the plant was ready to

CHARLES FERRIS, electrician:

join us. The toolmakers are mad, building and grounds craftsmen are mad, the women are mad and it's time we acted. GE thinks it's got us buffaloed, but GE will find out we electricians aren't and we expect the support of everyone."

P. J. "PAT" DONATO, piece worker, Bldg. 52: "In the welded products division, the welders are all piece workers. A short time ago we took a strike vote, in the fall of 1951. The welders voted then 100 percent for a strike. While we know day-workers didn't go that solid on the strike vote, they should know that the welders on piece work are ready, as always, to back the day-workers up on any fight to improve their rates. They can depend on that. And the skilled workers should know the same goes for their fight."

P. J. "PAT" DONATO, piece worker, Bldg. 52:

VINCENT PALAZEK, millwright, Bldg. 60: "We piece workers are pretty well convinced that it's our business, too, to get behind the movement of skilled workers and day-workers to make GE give them added money they should have. We'll back them up in this fight. We piece workers feel that GE should upgrade from groups on the job instead of hiring men from the gate for openings. That come up. The skilled workers can depend on us that we're behind them all the way."

VINCENT PALAZEK, millwright, Bldg. 60:

GEORGE DIEMER, electrician: "It used to be after a couple of years, you'd be a helper, then a year at B class, then in a year A. Now they want us to get another eight or 10 years before GE wants to call a man a good electrician. We've got 30 trouble-shooters. They take care of the Works seven days a week, 24 hours a day and in one year handled over 21,000 jobs. I've spent my own time going to night school, and the GE school, too, to be able to do any kind of electrical job. And for all this GE wants to keep paying the 'enormous' amount of \$2.21 an hour. They tell us our job requires overtime. We don't object because we need it. We couldn't get along without it. But we're plenty burned up at our rate when GE refuses to bargain raise it and when we compare what many GE workers are getting after only a few months. It's a far cry from what we get after years. We start at \$1.48 and we don't get the cream of the crop for electricians, anymore. Why not? When piece workers can jump to a rate in a few months that electricians don't get after years—a worker is going to take the job where he can much quicker be able to buy the things his family needs."

GEORGE DIEMER, electrician:

Philadelphia—After a secret ballot vote to strike, UE Local 155 members working at Tinius Olsen Testing Machine Co. won 10 and 15 cent increases on all minimums, an added day's vacation for two year workers and improved sick, surgical and death benefits.

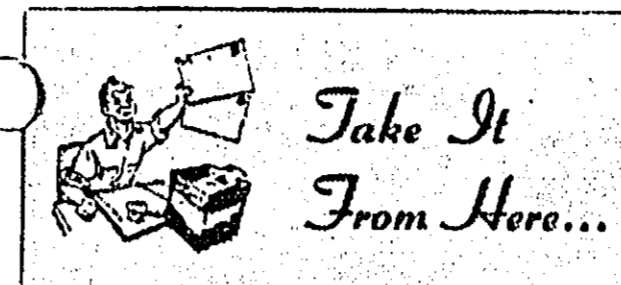
ELECTRICAL UNION NEWS

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Friday, April 25, 1952



Peterboro, Canada — The IUE-CIO took a run-out powder on its raid against UE Local 524 at the Canadian General Electric Works when they couldn't get enough cards signed by GE workers to have an election.

San Diego, Cal. — A one day strike by 1,200 AFL shipyard carpenters, painters, electricians and machinists compelled shipowners to arbitrate their demand that a new health and welfare program be jointly administered.

Evansville, Ind.—UE Local 813 members at Faultless Caster Corp. have won an 11 cent wage package, which includes a six cent general increase as of March 1, a 14 cent raise for tool and diemakers, an additional three cents on July 1 and a wage reopener next Nov. 1.

Denver—A new strike deadline has been set by 22 CIO, AFL and independent oil unions, representing 275,000 workers, to win their joint wage campaign for a 25 cent an hour increase. The new date is April 30.

Pittsburgh—The 700 UE Local 601 members working at the Westinghouse Nuttall Gear Works walked out on April 17 in protest over the company's attempt to cut down the time value of some jobs.

Lansing, Mich.—To dynamite the ice jam of grievances piled up by the General Motors Corp. in its Fisher plant here, UAW-CIO Local 602 members have voted by 93 percent to strike if GM doesn't stop stalling before May. The big vote was attributed to the fact that a year ago when a strike vote passed by a bare majority GM's failure to negotiate on grievances became more pronounced.

Philadelphical—After a secret ballot vote to strike, UE Local 155 members working at Tinius Olsen Testing Machine Co. won 10 and 15 cent increases on all minimums, an added day's vacation for two year workers and improved sick, surgical and death benefits.

UE Wage Conference Sets 1952 Bargaining Goals

Over 400 delegates representing 300,000 UE members held a spirited two day national wage conference in Buffalo, N. Y., April 19, 20, and charted a collective bargaining program for 1952. Those sections of the program that apply to the present wage re-opener in General Electric, include:



'301' AT BUFFALO. The nine delegates UE Local 301 sent to the UE National Wage Conference in Buffalo, April 19, 20, are seen above at one of the sessions. On left of table are seen Charles Ferris, Business Agent Leo Jandreau, Pres. James J. Cognetta, Chief Shop Steward William Mastriani and Vincent Palazek. On right are seen Ray Ellis, Treasurer Helen Quirini, Fred Pacelli and John Smith.

Sen. Ives Hits Humphrey Aims and Wage Freeze

A state-wide committee of UE members met with Republican Sen. Irving M. Ives in Buffalo on April 19 to present their views on the Defense Production Act, which established the wage freeze and undermines collective bargaining, and the anti-labor activities of Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D, Minn.).

'301' Dues Payments Soar To New High

Dues paying membership of UE Local 301 went over the 15,000 mark this month. The exact total was 15,015.

This figure sets a high mark in the time since the IUE-CIO first began, over two years ago, an attempt to split and disrupt the local through two costly raids—ending in a crushing defeat last September in an NLRB election.

The figures, as announced by Marshall White, office manager, revealed that 3,912 have joined '301' since Sept. 15, 1951.

Union leaders paid tribute to shop stewards for the continued high rate of new membership cards each month and urged a stepped up "clean up" campaign to bring into '301' ranks those still not paying dues. Normal GE turnover alone, they said, requires about 350 new members a month to stay even.

Ives stated he was opposed to controls and therefore was against renewal of the DPA, which expires on June 30.

He also said he was opposed to Humphrey's activities, as well as Sen. McCarran (D, Utah), since he was against any interference with the rights of workers to choose their union or officers.

He expressed the opinion that Sen. Humphrey was "misusing" the senate subcommittee which he chairs, and which Ives is a member of, and "would be in UE's corner when it testifies."

Ives scoffed at charges that employers and IUE-CIO level against UE, asserting that he knew that UE Local 301 is a democratically run union.

Fred Pacelli of '301' was a member of the delegation, which represented 55,900 UE members.

• A 15 cent general wage increase "to compensate in part for the increases in productivity and for the loss in purchasing power which our people have sustained since World War II."

• Winning for toolmakers and skilled craftsmen the rates recommended on an area basis by the Toolmakers Panel of the Wage Stabilization Board last fall "which has been ignored by the Board and by industry in fixing the rates paid to skilled workers. By grossly underpaying the most skilled of their workers, the employers have effectively clamped a ceiling over the entire wage structure, to the special disadvantage of the skilled workers and day workers."

• The elimination of discrimination in women's rates, by which employers extract extra profits out of the work of women, which they use to undercut the rate of all workers. UE seeks to eliminate all rates below the lowest rated male job and the upward revision of the rates of all work done by women in accordance with the content of the job.

• Elimination of area and geographical differentials, which enable employers to break down wages in organized areas by running away to low-pay areas.

Participating in the conference were UE Local 301's elected nine delegates, which included:

Leo Jandreau, business agent;

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Map Joint Fight

To achieve maximum strength behind its 1952 wage and collective bargaining goals, the UE-GE National Conference Board, meeting in Buffalo, April 18, voted to coordinate its campaigns with other major chains in which UE has tens of thousands of members, including Westinghouse, Sylvania, General Cable and Sylvania.

Leo Jandreau, '301' business agent, was elected by the Conference Board to the GE committee, along with John Nelson, GE Erie Local 506 president and Florence Romig, GE Cleveland Lamp Local 707 chief shop steward.

Westinghouse Strike Over Speed-up Won, Boycott Off

A two months strike by 700 UE Local 443 members against speed-up in the Westinghouse bulb plant in Trenton paid off with victory on April 16.

McCarran Unit's Attack On UE Fizzles Out

The senatorial committee headed by Sen. McCarran promised some "bombshells" before it conducted hearings in Cleveland on April 17, 18, but it proved to be a dud.

Though it had singled out UE for special attack, the committee also went after the leader of an IUE-CIO local, proving that its purpose is to aid the employers' attack and undermine all unions.

Unable to trap witnesses on questions such as "where were you 10 years ago?" and rejected as anti-labor by all but a few miserable stoopigeons it dredged up, the committee hastily brought its fishing expedition against Cleveland labor to end.

To Speak on School Aid

Answering a request by Harry J. Linton, superintendent of schools, the '301' executive board has invited a speaker to the Union's May membership meeting, May 5, to speak on the May 13 public referendum, in which Schenectady citizens will vote on two proposals designed to finance construction of three new elementary schools.

Faced also with the threat of a national boycott of its bulbs, Westinghouse agreed to rehire Carmella LaPore, who was fired when she protested a 75 percent speed-up. The company in firing her claimed it had the right without the issue going to the grievance machinery.

The time value, over which she was fired, will remain the same as before, while the grievance is negotiated strictly in accordance with the national UE contract.

All workers will receive pay for Washington's Birthday while there was a lockout by the company. Back pay on a wage increase will be paid immediately to Nov. 1, 1951. The Union's demand for full lockout pay will be negotiated in line with the regular grievance procedure.

A corporation lawyer tried to lead a "back to work" movement during the strike, with local and district IUE-CIO leaders lending their aid. IUE-CIO leaders had called upon the workers to surrender to Westinghouse's speed-up and actively disrupted the strike and lent aid and comfort to the company by trying to undermine the workers' confidence that they could win.



GUEST SPEAKER. Ernest Thompson, secretary of UE's National FEPCC committee, was a guest speaker at the UE Local 301 FEPCC meeting on Monday, April 21. Thompson praised Local 301's planned fight on women's demands in GE negotiations and told of the enthusiasm of UE women members at conferences held in various UE districts. He also outlined specific steps to insure fair employment practices on upgrading, apprentice training and hiring.

Appointed for 'Y' Drive

Joseph Ahkao, Bldg. 73, has been appointed by the Local 301 executive board to serve on the UE-GE joint labor-management YMCA committee locally. The committee lends its support to the drive of the YMCA to secure funds for vitally needed improvements in its homes and camps in the area.

Going Up, Up, Up

State taxes in 1951 totaled \$8.9 billion, a 12.6 percent increase over 1950.

Thousands of grievances are handled by UE Local 301 each year at all levels from the steward up to final appeal in New York City. To keep members posted, we shall each week list some of the grievances that have not been settled at the steward-foreman level and have been referred to the executive board-management level.

its capacity.

Bldg. 17: A punch press group of workers on an indefinite rotation schedule because of lack of work demand a reduction in forces to maintain a 40 hour week for workers, as provided in the Union contract.

F. J. Melrose demands that available work be distributed on a fair and equitable basis in his group, charging that the foreman favors one worker on better priced work.

Bldg. 46: Frank Belenez, A&OS, transferred to a job on a multiple spindle drill press with a promised rate of \$1.81, was recently told by foreman it would pay only \$1.70. He demands supervision comply with the promised \$1.81 rate.

Bld. 49: Harold Person demands reclassification to crane-follower class A with retroactive pay for three months on basis he is performing A work.

Bruno J. Mosetti, transferred in November, 1951 from Bldg. 16 to Bldg. 49 boring mill operator, started at \$1.60 on \$1.81 job rate. He demands the job rate and retroactive payment, as contract provides.

Bldg. 60: A group of 115 workers using one time clock, which means 10 minutes before the last card is punched, demands an additional time clock.

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Local 301

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UE Conference Sets '52 Goals

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James J. Cagnetta, president; William Mastriani, chief shop steward; Helen Quirini, treasurer; Ray Ellis, 273; Vincent Palazek, 60; Frank Pacelli, second shift board member-at-large; Charles Ferris, 63; and John Smith, 273 second shift.

The conference declared that "employers are making a concerted drive against all unions" and that electrical workers living standards, "in common with the living standards of all workers, have been forced down since World War II by the insatiable corporation greed for profits and by governmental policies aimed at the impoverishment of the people and the enrichment of the corporations.

"The workers' share of the national income has been driven down, and the corporations' portion enormously augmented by the tremendous increase in labor productivity, by huge increases in prices and by the wage freeze imposed under the Defense Production Act."

"The Wage Stabilization Board," delegates declared, "is not maintaining the balance between prices and wages. Its policies are leading to the worsening of the conditions of the people."

The conference also noted that the "systematic driving down of the living standards of the employees of industry has already resulted in a dangerous growth of unemployment throughout the consumer industries and threatens the entire economy."

Investigation of inefficiencies and inaccuracies caused by emergencies that interfere with regular routine of their job in shipping materials.

Bldg. 81: A group demands proper adjustment for a transformer job that they've protested the classification and price. They cite a similar job in another section that pays higher classification.

Bldg. 107: James Coonrad, entitled to a vacation on Nov. 29, 1951, asked for this pay after he was out for an appendicitis operation and was refused. He demands the one week's pay.

An investigation is demanded of hiring of B carpenters while men with longer service and abilities for upgrading are by-passed.

Bldg. 227: Additional helper for truck drivers is demanded. GE recently removed helpers for loading and unloading, and who assisted drivers to fix flat tires.

Bldg. 269: Day workers on facilitate L.H. tubes demand a reevaluation and proper adjustment in pay, based on fact their type of work and responsibilities warrant a higher rate than \$1.34.

Bldg. 273: A group of machine helpers under Foreman E. Wilmot protest their method of upgrading and demand an investigation.

Urge Steelworkers Get Raise Now

Delegates to the UE National Wage Conference in Buffalo, at the final session on April 20, unanimously went on record in calling upon President Truman to place the Wage Stabilization Board's recommendations for steel workers into effect at once.

Failure to do so, the conference added, would only penalize steelworkers for the arrogance of the employers, who continue to "manage" the industry and draw the same salaries, profits and dividends—while the workers' wages do not have added the "catch-up" raise that CIO Steel leaders accepted.

Delegates also stressed that all of labor should unite to insist that the WSB recommendations be placed in effect—with the same degree of unity that over 100 corporations displayed when they recently met in Washington to voice their support for the big steel companies.

It was also noted that steel companies are spending lavishly on advertisements and publicity to fight the government, while the government is supposedly in control of operations and monies.



SETTING THE COURSE. The approximately 400 delegates to UE's National Wage Conference in Buffalo, April 19, 20, are seen above at the opening session on Saturday morning.

GE's 1% Offer Rejected; Next Steps Charted

The UE-GE Conference Board, meeting in Buffalo on April 18, voted unanimously to reject GE's one percent negotiation offer and to set a date to resume negotiations with GE

on the basis of wage demands set at the UE National Conference.

Leo Jandreau, '301' business agent, reported the series of militant actions, conducted by skilled craftsmen in Schenectady to win their special demands. Similar action was reported by a UE local in a California GE plant.

Conference Board delegates credited '301' with taking a leading position in carrying out wage campaign activities and indicated they would initiate similar activities as quickly as possible.

The fight of '301' around the wage campaign was reported to National Wage Conference delegates by William Mastriani, Helen Quirini and Charles Ferris.

Local 301's delegates, upon their return home, expressed satisfaction over the conference's deliberations and felt confident other locals would push their programs in the manner '301' is. They will urge UE District 3 to plan an upstate skilled workers conference and a district women's conference.

'269' Bomb Hoax Blasted by '301'; Full Aid Offered

When the big bomb scare broke out on Tuesday of this week that resulted in 1,000 Bldg. 269 workers being sent home, UE Local 301 was quick to offer "every assistance possible to help track down the perpetrator of the hoax, if such it was, or of the criminal act of attempted sabotage, if such it was."

The incident, which produced screaming headlines in the afternoon newspaper, resulted from an anonymous call to GE at 9:30 a.m. A man said: "You'd better clear 269. There's a bomb planted there." He then hung up.

In communications to Lewis J. Male, GE Works Manager; Joseph Foley, Schenectady chief of police and the FBI district office in Albany, Leo Jandreau, '301' business agent, declared:

"If this anonymous call was merely a hoax, it is obvious that the members of this labor organization are being victimized either by some demented person or by one who is seeking to hurt every man and woman working at the General Electric Company, for clearly if an interruption in production must follow such a message, it means a serious loss in pay to them—not to speak of a loss to the company and to the National production efforts.

"No one can adequately denounce the psychopathic aims of any individual who could engage in such a hoax.

Jandreau also pointed out to Male that if such an act should be repeated "some device must be arranged, by conference with this Union, whereby interruptions to production, and its consequent loss in pay to the working men and women, be reduced to an absolute minimum with due regard to safety of life and property."

Free of Cost

Nearly \$11 billion worth of new plants and equipment have been made available to private companies free of cost by the government's defense tax plans.

Hit 100% On Fighting Fund

Two more sections have hit the 100 percent mark in paying their \$5 for the '301' Fighting Fund, for use in collective bargaining struggles and defense of the Union from outside attacks.

Chalking up the 100 percent figure are sections in Bldg. 273 headed by Joseph Alois, '301' board member and Steward Patrick Lombardi.

Almost, but not quite, 100 percent is Steward Vincent DiLorenzo's milling machine group of 15 in Bldg. 69. This group has hit the 99 percent mark.

A meeting held in Bldg. 85, addressed by '301' Chief Shop Steward William Mastriani, resulted in 15 signing up the same day.