

# 'Women Rates' Arguments Exploded

Why companies fight to keep rate differentials between men and women workers is easily explained. It means greater profits for the companies.

And the pay off isn't a matter of peanuts—it adds up to billions. According to the 1950 census, the average wage of women was \$1,285 a year less than men.

Multiply this figure by the 4,208,000 women in factories and it produces the staggering total of \$5.4 billion—that's \$5.4 billion in extra profits that U. S. corporations, like GE, made out of paying women lower rates than men.

A GE company representative admitted to an investigator from the Labor Department's Women's Bureau in 1951 the real reason for lower rates for women: "because women's job opportunities had been relatively limited in industry in the past, it had been possible to get them to work for less than men, and employers took advantage of this fact to underpay women."

### A Frank Statement

This frank statement by GE's representative isn't typical of the arguments that UE negotiators get when they meet in bargaining sessions with the company—arguments the Union has a ready answer to, as was admitted by the GE representative when he said:

"I'd hate to have to be the one to have to sit across the bargaining table trying to justify differentials."

Here are some of the arguments the companies develop to justify the lower rates for women—and the Union's answers:

### Company Argument

Companies: "Women are young temporary workers. They quit after a few years to get married. The greater turnover of women, the special services they require make it necessary to pay them lower rates."

The Facts Are: The U. S. Census Bureau reveals that one out of every two women workers in American industry is at least 35 years old, and most of these older workers have held onto their present jobs for at least five years.

The World War II War Labor Board rejected these company arguments, laying down the principle that "intangible alleged cost factors incident to the employ-

ment of women could not legitimately be used to reduce the rates to which the women would otherwise be entitled on the basis of job content." The WLB said "no evidence of such costs was introduced."

### Work for Pin Money?

Companies: "Women don't have families to support. They work for pin money. General sociological factors justify lower pay for women."

The Facts Are: According to government figures, one out of every four workers have children

"If men were to be substituted for women on the so-called women's jobs there would probably be a very real loss in efficiency and productivity, since it is recognized that men are not as well adapted as women for light, repetitive work requiring finger dexterity."

"The productive worth of women on the jobs to which they are customarily assigned, if fairly weighed, might well offset any added production costs resulting from such factors as absenteeism, transient character of service, etc."

"The constant arm and finger movements involved in many women's jobs were, in the course of a day, probably more wearing in many cases than the occasional lifting of a 30 or 40 pound box." The jobs done by women "often involve close attention to work and concentration that is fatiguing."

Companies: "Our rates for women are in line with established community practice. Industry has always paid women less. We're justified because every company does it."

### Government Opinion

The Facts Are: This argument was rejected by the government board in the GE and Westinghouse case in 1945, as follows:

"If this contention were sound, it would follow that no exploitation of any group could be ended (save by voluntary action) if it constituted the common practice of the employers in the locality. The real question is whether any exploitation exists. If it does exist, as we believe that it does from the evidence in this case, it should be ended, and the fact that others practice it ought not to stand as a bar."

### Correct the Injustice

"The claim of community and industry practice cannot be advanced as a sound reason for doing nothing to correct an injustice which patently exists," the War Labor Board stressed "Moreover, these companies as the whole or dominant employer in the community in many instances, may have themselves initiated or supported the practice."

### What's To Be Done?

Through UE's effort in GE, women's straight time earnings, which were only 70.3 of men's in April, 1945, were raised to 78 percent of men's earnings in 1952. But the differential is still substantial throughout the chain.

Is it any wonder there are such things as the big women's demonstration at the Subway Gate in Schenectady on May 7?

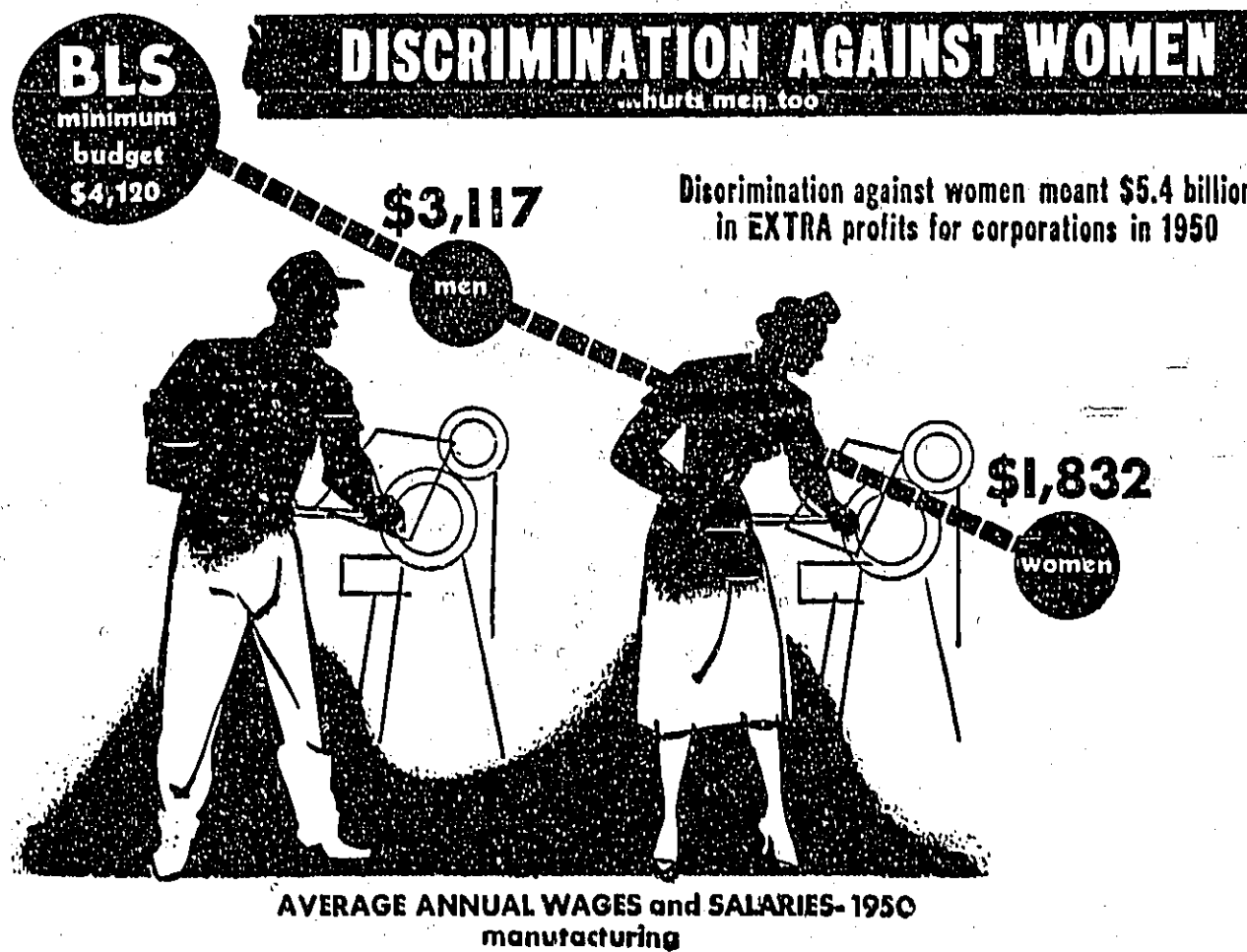
UE backs up and fights to the full the fight of its women to realize their demands for no rate below common laborer, jobs on the basis of content not sex, and a single rate structure in GE to achieve their demand for Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Even the National Association of Manufacturers stated, in May, 1942: "There is little difference between men and women as regards their satisfactory performance in industry."

Companies: "Women aren't as strong as men. They need extra help for heavy lifting, etc."

### The 'Physical Effort' Trick

The Facts Are: The over emphasis on physical effort is a trick often used by companies to justify sex differentials. Actually, physical effort alone has little to do with the value of a job on the company's own scales, which place common labor digging ditches at the lower end and tool and die maker at the top. But, insofar as physical effort is one factor in a job's value, the Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor, in a survey in 1951 of the electrical industry, pointed out:



under 18 whom they must support. One out of every five is either widowed, divorced or separated from her husband. Many have to work because they are war widows, wives of disabled veterans, or of men now in the army.

But most women work because their husband's pay is inadequate to support the family needs. 93 percent of all women work because they have to support themselves or their families.

### Women Worth Less?

Companies: "Women are simply worth less for purposes of factory employment than men."

The Facts Are: This attitude on the part of GE management—that women are somehow inferior workers "worth less" to the company—was revealed by the government to be the greatest hoax of all to justify wage differentials. Stated the National War Labor Board:

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## Upstate Skilled Craftsmen Unite To Raise Wages

Tool and die makers and skilled building trades craftsmen from many upstate New York cities and plants—and from several unions—AFL, CIO and independent—met together in Syracuse on Sunday, May 25, to map a common fight to get the Wage Stabilization Board to raise the ceilings for their wages.



UP STATE NEW YORK  
TOOL-DIE-CRAFTSMEN'S  
CONFERENCE  
Sunday MAY 25<sup>th</sup> Syracuse, N.Y.

UNITY IN SYRACUSE. Indicative of the unity of skilled craftsmen who met in Syracuse last Sunday was the elected chairman, William Templeton, electrician of UE Local 301 and elected secretary, Fred Cacchione, IAM-AFL toolmaker of Remington-Rand, Elmira.

## UE '301' Daily Program On WPTR At 5:05 p.m.

UE Local 301 took to the airwaves this last week to tell the story of its women's demands to the people of the Capitol District. Every day from 5:05 to 5:15 on radio station WPTR,

### Map Joint Fight

Mapping a strategy to mobilize the maximum strength of tens of thousands of UE members behind their wage demands, a joint coordinating meeting of delegates from General Electric, Westinghouse, International Harvester, Sylvania and General Cable held their first meeting in New York City on Monday, May 26.

The programs will continue for the next two weeks, Monday through Friday, at the 5:05 p.m. time on WPTR.

'301' members have been urged to let their neighbors and friends know that UE is on the air and to get the regular habit of listening to the GE story as seen by its workers.

The broadcasts are part of the UE campaign locally and nationally to bring the facts of the wage fight to communities.

Setting aside all questions of union jurisdiction, these skilled workers united on the common purpose of getting something done about their common problem.

Angered over the WSB's rejection of its own panel's report last October, which recommended skilled rate ceilings 30 to 77 cents higher in various areas of the country, the skilled craftsmen from 14 cities adopted a program that calls for:

- A continuations committee to do everything possible to acquaint other tool-die-skilled craftsmen with their program and to work with them for higher skilled rates.

- To call another meeting in 30 days to which skilled craftsmen from other areas of the country will be invited to work out a national program and reconvene the conference in August.

- To set up committees to meet with WSB officials, congressmen and senators, county and local officials, to win favorable action on the WSB Tool and Die report.

- Urged nationwide demonstrations of tool and die makers and skilled building trades craftsmen on an agreed upon day and to join in calling upon their respective managements to join with them in insisting that the WSB put the recommendations of its panel into immediate effect.

### GE Wage Negotiations Still Deadlocked

UE negotiations with GE resumed on May 21, with GE continuing to say its one percent wage offer is all that is warranted, Leo Jandreau, '301' business agent, reports.

The UE negotiating committee attacked GE's act of facing two ways at once, said Jandreau. GE's public propaganda claims high pay and job security—in contrast to the reality of its one percent offer and its current layoff of thousands of workers and short-weeks in its consumer goods division.

Arrangements have been made for another meeting with GE, at a date to be set later.

# Boulware Tips His Hand, He's Against All Unions

The only way for a union to avoid being red-baited is for it to stop acting like a union. This was the substance of a declaration by GE Vice President L. R. Boulware as he smeared the IUE-CIO, the CIO United Auto Workers and the AFL Machinists and Electrical Workers Unions.

Boulware, writing in the company's Employee Relations News Letter, asserted that anti-Communist unions which fight for the union shop and other conditions are "just as much help to Joe (Stalin) as if these union officials were, in fact, Communist agents."

And just to complete the cycle, IUE-CIO President James Carey took time out from his union-splitting work to red-bait GE.

Almost simultaneously with the Boulware assault on the union shop, the National Labor Relations Board in Washington released a report which showed that the big companies, despite their current propaganda campaign, had just about accepted this condition by the middle of last year. The report revealed that 99.5 percent of the 6,810 NLRB cases involving this issue were settled without any formal action by the government agency. It was also revealed that Big Steel, which is now shouting loudly that the union shop "violates its principles," actually has such agreements with a number of unions including the United Mine Workers.

*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.*

**Bldg. 40:** Genevieve Belonick, presently working on hand taping, was hired for second shift and is breaking in on first. Because of domestic problems she requests she be kept on first shift.

**Bldg. 48:** Mary Bonquisto, cafeteria, a cleaner at \$1.28, devotes 2½ to 6 hours daily as baker's helper and demands reclassification to baker's helper, with a proper rate adjustment and back pay for previous amount of hours spent as baker's helper.

**Bldg. 49:** James E. Moore, transferred to boring mill vertical cl. with a starting rate of \$1.76 had the rate reduced two weeks later to \$1.60¼. He insists \$1.76 is proper rate and demands a retroactive rate adjustment.

**Leo Searles,** transferred from Bldg. 273 to 49 to the same type of machine with a lower job rate, demands a retroactive adjustment to job rate according to contract article X, 3, 4.

**M. Santora,** and Leonard Gardner, giving normal performance for their jobs, claim they're not getting combination welder job rate and demand upgrading.

**Ernest Daviero,** grinder, demands job rate based on his performance and ability. His last increase was secured on Feb. 12, 1952.

**Bldg. 57:** A group in the iron foundry proposes as a sound and practical training program for coremakers that there be a minimum breaking in period with a class A coremaker for two years and then immediately be given a



... the company's next objective is to train the centipede ...

## UE Schedules Two Day Washington Lobby

Three '301' members will join UE members from throughout the country for a two day delegation to Washington, D.C. on June 5, 6 to visit congressmen and senators to urge an end of the Defense Production Act, which undermines collective bargaining and freezes wages, defeat of the anti-labor Smith bill, to secure fair employment legislation and to urge a peace rather than a war economy that will advance the people's welfare.

The delegation will also urge an end to anti-labor and thought control proposals of Senators Humphrey and McCarran.

## Globe Forge Strike Wins 17c Boost

The strength of the united action of 150 foundry workers at Globe Forge in Syracuse paid off last week with a contract settlement that netted a 17 cent wage increase package.

These UE Local 323 members achieved complete victory following a walkout on May 16 when the company refused to budge on a number of the workers' demands. Only 24 hours later Globe Forge called UE and asked for a meeting the next day—on Sunday.

Within 48 hours after their show of strength these UE members won:

- Five cents an hour more on top of the five cents already won on Jan. 1, 1952.
- A company financed hospital and medical program costing an estimated 4½ cents an hour.
- A guaranteed 36 hour week at all times. Prior to this, Globe Forge would only guarantee 32 hours.
- Improved bonuses.
- Three weeks vacation after 15 years, with an extra day starting after seven years, with a staggered day addition up to 15 years.
- A union shop contract.

charges foreman discrimination because he was tardy for legitimate reasons and foreman assigned him to "Prepare to Paint," while another worker was assigned to his job.

**Bldg. 81:** A group under Foreman L. Cholewa demands the same method in computing one price as another, based on past practice in conversions of jobs with two operations, in which highest rate has been used when job is done with one operator.

**Women** in the division demand gloves with leather fingers for harnessing cables. They charge gloves now furnished are entirely unsatisfactory.

A group protests the large cables included in their work in harnessing cables because of the resulting pain and disfigurement of their hands.

A group in assembly and wire question the advisability of hiring so many new workers for their group. This has been raised previously and the group demands assurances there will not be a repetition.

A group demands that foreman be instructed to explain the data used in making up prices or tables, according to the contract. Foreman has refused to do this on tables for making harness, looping, etc., saying that they've been in use five years and there is no reason for discussion.

**Bldg. 89.** William W. Boneyzyk charges violation of contract VI, 5 (d) and demands normal time studies be taken on a resistor job only where the method was changed. He charges that a new departure which used a detailed motion time study to establish a new set of standard prices resulted in a loss of earnings.

## '301' Aids UE's Drive At Two GE Plants

Two GE plants where UE is conducting organizing drives are getting an assist from UE Local 301.

One plant, recently opened in Ludlow, Vermont, is expected to have an NLRB election early in the month of June, with UE the only Union on the ballot.

Anthony Esposito, toolmaker, Ed Marine, foundry, and '301' Chief Shop Steward William Mastriani have paid visits to this plant to explain the benefits of UE. The plant does aeronautics work for the government on precision instruments.

The other campaign is in Pittsfield, Mass. The IUE-CIO is bargaining representative for this GE Works of 7,500 employees.

A full scale rank and file revolt over mishandling of grievances and union affairs resulted in over 1,000 workers there joining UE in a period of two weeks, with the cards continuing to roll in. Leader of the local is John Callahan, chairman of the IUE-CIO GE Conference Board.

Mastriani told a Pittsfield membership meeting on May 18 that in contrast to the IUE-CIO sell out on grievances, in UE '301' between 100 to 150 grievances are processed a week and settlements aren't hidden behind "locked doors," since the Union is having to buy more filing cabinets to keep them on record.

UE has revealed in recent weeks the actual record of IUE-CIO grievance sessions with GE. IUE-CIO claims it's "unfair" to reveal the written record of its sell-outs, which it wanted to keep secret.

Pledging '301's full support, Mastriani recalled that when in UE Pittsfield workers used to get their grievances settled, with Callahan calling '301' Business Agent Leo Jandreau nearly every day for advice and help.

"Grievances rate top importance in UE," declared Mastriani, "because each grievance concerns an individual and his problem."

### Mica at '301' Dance

'301' members are going to have company at their dance to be held on June 7 at Edison Club in Rexford from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

The very welcome company will be workers from the Mica Insulator Co., where UE has been conducting an organizing campaign for some months—and will soon file for an NLRB election.

At the Mica membership meeting last Monday, indications were that about 100 Mica workers will join the fun at the '301' affair.

## Opinion Survey Shows GE Policies Approved in Area

An area poll conducted by the General Electric Co. revealed that most persons like GE, its policies and community services.

Forty-five per cent of the more than 500 persons polled thought GE should hold wages at the current level, about 24 per cent said they should be boosted and 2 per cent urged a pay reduction. The remainder was undecided.

The poll also revealed that 67 per cent wanted GE to conduct a poll.

**GE 'POLL'.** GE conducts a poll and gets the answers it wants. It's a simple technique. Ask only questions that you'll get answers you want—and don't ask too many people. It might fool some people but GE's workers have their own "opinion"—with or without a poll. They know. They work for GE.

## 18 Bldg. 28 Women Win 7c Rate Hike

The total number of women winning a seven cent an hour wage adjustment in Bldg. 28 through Union grievance action mounted to 18 last week, as three additional workers won the increase.

Previously, 15 women had won the increase in a grievance filed by Steward J. J. Mann, which pointed out these women deserved a J classification that would boost their rates from \$1.40 to \$1.47 on the basis of their inspection work and use of precision instruments.

## Humphrey's Senate Buddy Introduces Anti-Labor Bill

The Senate's newest double play combination, Humphrey and McCarran, is really beginning to click. The close collaboration between the "liberal" Senator from Minnesota and the

## GE 'Public Opinion' Poll Gets Stacked Answers

GE recently asked GE what it thinks of GE and came up with the news that GE loves GE! This startling information was gleaned from the report on the company "Public Opinion" survey in the Schenectady Works News. The poll allegedly was conducted among all the residents of Schenectady, regardless of whether or not they worked for GE.

However, according to the Works News, only about 500 persons were approached by the company Gallup pollsters. That's less than one-half of one percent of the population of the city. Judging from the answers, all those who were questioned who were not company supervisors were company stockholders.

For example, GE reports that less than one-fourth of the people questioned thought that the company should raise wages. Local 301 has done a little questioning on this itself, and is willing to bet that 99 percent of GE employees need and want more money. In fact, '301' would be happy to call a meeting of its membership and take a vote on this issue, with the company taking pictures.

The survey report also suggests that the company should better publicize the sums of money it spends to "improve working conditions." It doesn't say however that the company should reveal the amount of cash it lays out to fight its employees getting disability compensation benefits. UE has a backlog of 1,000 such cases, which it retains a lawyer full-time to handle.

## Wage Freeze Stays As Prices Go Up

Shoppers are going to have to dig even deeper to feed their families as a result of the latest actions of the so-called Office of Price Stabilization. The government control agency announced last week a one to two cent boost in the ceiling price of most canned fruits and vegetables.

The OPS also predicted that rises would shortly be forthcoming for a host of other basic food products including instant coffees, dry cereals, cookies and canned meats. The new boosts and the pending ones go into effect under the control laws which guarantee manufacturers' profits, wholesale mark-ups and just about everything else except wages.

However, there was one bright note. Taxes will go down—if you happen to be a member of Congress. The lawmakers are acting to cut their own tax bill through a bill permitting them to deduct virtually all of their Washington living costs as "business expenses."

At the same time the nearly one-million workers whose leaders signed "up and down" wage escalator clauses are taking a one cent an hour wage cut even though the latest BLS cost-of-living index showed a rise. Reason: It wasn't enough to offset "drops" in two previous months.

## Red Cross Blood Plan Recommended

The '301' executive board last Monday recommended for membership approval a proposed Red Cross plan for furnishing blood for residents of the nine counties of Essex, Montgomery, Warren, Saratoga, Hamilton, Washington, Schenectady, Green and Schoharie.

The plan would provide after June 2 that all residents would get free blood donations, paying only the \$7.50 to \$10 hospital fee for each transfusion, at local hospitals.

To function, it would require 5,000 pints for civilians and 2,500 for military, which would mean 125 pints donated each time the Red Cross bloodmobile visits Schenectady. '301' would be responsible for securing donations from GE production and maintenance workers to keep the plan operating.

## 301 ON THE JOB

**Bldg. 10C:** A group of drill press operators protest the arbitrary use of table prices and demand an investigation to see that procedure during this transition are the same as regular practice throughout the Works.

**Bernice Greco,** working on a class B job, although a class C operator, demands reclassification and proper rate adjustment.

**Bldg. 14:** L. Gralecki and A. Smolanski demand a retroactive rate adjustment based on contract article X-2-2 since they were experienced on their job. They've been on job six months and not received the job rate of winders, which is \$1.82.

**Bldg. 16:** A group working on coils demands payment for work they perform on damaged material which is not their responsibility and they are powerless to prevent. The coils they work on drive in OK, but sometimes wedge in tight in slot when raising for jump. Resulting damage to insulation causes burn out and coils must then be removed for replacement.

**Bldg. 17:** A lathe group demands an open aisle from their area to the main aisle and a thorough investigation of the undesirable conditions that create safety hazards.

**Bldg. 18:** Thomas Borovicka charges that contract article VI, 5 (d) is violated because a previous machine operation done in two operations and reduced to one by installing a new slotter makes it impossible to maintain satisfactory earnings. He demands a correction.

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