

ELECTRICAL UNION NEWS

THE VOICE OF LOCAL 301 U. E. R. & M. W. A. C. I. O.

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March 11, 1949

301 Board Asks Steamfitters to Postpone Strike

The 301 Executive Board this week urged leaders of Local 128, Plumbers and Steamfitters Union, AFL, to ask their membership to postpone its strike "until such time in the next few months as the 125,000 UE members employed by GE decide their course of action in contract reopening negotiations."

"We ask this in the common interest of all GE workers, in your union as in ours," the Board stated in a letter sent Wednesday and signed by every 301 officer and board member.

"If your members knew all the facts, they would realize that your proposed strike is not in their interest. They would know that such a strike by 350 out of 18,000 workers here could serve only to tear down what had been built in 13 years of united action by GE workers."

Meeting With AFL Board

The Board voted to send the letter after holding a meeting Tuesday night with the Steamfitters' Executive Board at the latter's request. The point of view of the AFL union was presented by Henry Ausfeld, president, and Keith Rockwell, business agent.

They said the union took the strike vote because GE refused to grant wage adjustments and other demands. They asked that when the strike starts members of Local 301 do only their usual daily work and not do any work which steam-

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Pay Day Situation

As the EU News correctly reported last week, GE representatives agreed at a conference called by the State Labor Department Mar. 1 in Albany to change the Monday pay day back to Friday.

The only question left unsettled was the actual time the change would be made, because of technical difficulties the company claimed are involved.

There is no justification for the statement issued by Works Manager Lewis J. Male to newspapers denying this understanding.

Some Difference



Facts for GE Workers

It's Big Business Greed for Profits That Boosts Prices, Not Wage Raises

General Electric and other monopoly companies which control production and prices have always charged what the traffic will bear. But they are trying to blame high prices on "inflationary" wage increases.

Since 1940 General Electric has been the subject of 12 government complaints or federal indictments charging price fixing and other violations of the anti-trust laws. GE has been found guilty in five cases and in two cases signed consent decrees agreeing to court orders preventing their actions.

Under these circumstances, the companies would have hiked up their prices whether or not there were wage increases. That is why GE and other companies fought against price controls. To the extent that workers won wage increases they were that much better off and industrial profits were that much less.

The companies have timed their price increases in most cases to fol-

low wage increases as a propaganda measure to have people believe that wage increases caused price increases. But these price increases have always been substantially greater than the cost of wage increases which could have been absorbed out of exorbitant profit margins in the first place.

For example, General Electric's estimated profit on each employee in 1948 is \$1,089. GE wage increases

UE Strikers Win Victory At Tiffin GE

Over 500 UE members, mostly women, employed at the GE plant at Tiffin, Ohio, returned to work Monday after a solid 16-day strike had forced settlement of their piece work and lay-off dispute on the basis of the union demands.

The piece price cut issue will go before the American Arbitration Association as called for in the contract. The GE still opposes arbitration of the actual disputed price, but will let the arbitrator decide whether or not he has the authority. GE will not go to court to block the arbitration, as it has tried in the past.

The union believes that under the contract piece price guarantee of same earnings upon a change of method, the arbitrator clearly has the power to arbitrate the price.

Same Production Quotas

Pending the arbitration decision, the current production quotas on the disputed job will be maintained. The company had planned to raise these quotas by one-third, which would have cut the price.

The company also agreed not to bring up at this time the question of the guaranteed day rate. It had threatened to abolish the guarantee.

The settlement was negotiated in Schenectady last Friday by UE International Representatives Joseph Dermody and Joseph Turkow.

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in 1948 averaged \$239 per employee per year. GE could have absorbed that wage increase and still have been left with a profit of \$850 per worker. Instead GE increased prices up to 11.9 per cent following the 1948 wage increase. At the end of the year in the face of these huge profits, and this time with no wage increases in industry at all, GE raised prices from 5 to 10 percent on large motors and generators.

General Electric opposes wage increases because without such wage increases its present exorbitant profits would have been doubled.

301 Asks Steamfitters To Postpone GE Strike

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fitters would ordinarily perform. In reply to questions, they said a strike date has been set and that 301 will be given this information by letter.

No Maintenance Crew
Business Agent Leo Jandreau asked whether the steamfitters will do what 301 did in 1946 and leave maintenance crews in the plant for emergency repairs which may be needed to protect the equipment. The answer was that they plan to leave "not one member of the Steamfitters' Union in the plant to maintain anything."

Jandreau pointed out that if steam lines should freeze up, the situation might develop after the strike that steamfitters might be working overtime for months to repair lines while other workers were outside—unemployed. Ausfeld replied that removing every steamfitter from the plant was a necessary part of his union's pressure.

Board Members Speak
A number of 301 officers and Board members told the steamfitters that the need is for unity of action by all GE workers, rather than individual action by one group. The AFL board said they would report to their membership the views of 301.

The 301 letter expressed particular concern over the failure to arrange for leaving any steamfitters inside for plant protection. It pointed out that the strike plan calls for "winning benefits for 350 members by forcing the lock-out and possible unemployment after the strike, of thousands of your fellow-workers in GE who have had no say on the proposed strike. We do not believe that this is fair to union principles.

"Whether you win your strike or lose through such a plan, the only long range result can be to advance the General Electric's long range aim to split the workers employed by GE and return to the disunity and unorganized condition

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More Shop Stewards Take Oath of Office

Chief Shop Steward Stephen Watts, extreme left, swearing in new shop stewards Feb. 15, left to right, Charles Corey, Building 76; Lewis Coroch, Bldg. 285; William Poltorak, Bldg. 49, and S. Wendt, Bldg. 49.



which prevailed before 1935.

"Last summer our building trades members invited your union to join with us in fighting for conditions which you now seek. Today our membership is preparing for company-wide negotiations. We see the justice of your demands, but feel that it is wrong for 350 workers to decide what 18,000 shall do. We believe that our members are prepared for a joint fight with you in the months to come and through such action to back your demands. But to achieve such demands, the vast majority of GE workers must make the decision as to specific action they will take."

If it were not for the existence of UE at the plant, the letter pointed out, the steamfitters "could not even be thinking of strike action." The letter recalled gains made for the AFL members as part of the UE collective bargaining unit.

How UE Proceeds
"Your members should also know," the 301 Board stated, "that when UE negotiates it does so as a united group of 125,000 workers, organized in close to 100 plants. In order to win our demands from the huge General Electric Company, we found it necessary not just to rely on this organization, but to organize the whole electrical industry, including Westinghouse and Sylvania. Then we found it necessary to coordinate our program of action with the other major industry unions, such as steel, auto, and rubber."

"Whether you win your strike or lose through such a plan, the only long range result can be to advance the General Electric's long range aim to split the workers employed by GE and return to the disunity and unorganized condition

Pensioners' Meeting

The UE-301 Pension Organization will meet at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Mar. 23, at the union hall.

THE ORGANIZING DRIVE NEEDS YOUR HELP

Board Takes Action On Syracuse Trip

A request of the Syracuse GE local UE Executive Board that President Frank Kriss attend a meeting of that board Monday night was turned down by the 301 Executive Board at a special meeting earlier Monday.

A letter from Syracuse said that UE District 3, to which Local 320 of Syracuse belongs, had asked 320 to meet with Leo Jandreau, who is District 3 president, to discuss the contract reopening. The Syracuse letter asked that Kriss come too.

A motion to concur with the Syracuse request was defeated by a vote of 20 to five on a roll call of the 301 board. The board also voted that the action and the following statement be carried in the EU News.

Board's Statement

"Business Agent Leo Jandreau will meet with the Syracuse GE local executive board in his capacity as president of UE District 3. He will assist that local in con-

Movie Program

"Native Land", with Howard De Silva and Paul Robeson, will be the feature of tomorrow (Saturday) night's movie program at 301 Hall. The films will be shown in the rear hall.

Also on the program will be "World Series-1948" and "Monarchs of the Ring", including scenes from the following fights: Dempsey-Carpentier, Pauline-Wells Firpo - Willard, Dempsey - Firpo, Louis-Galento and Louis-Schmelting.

The free movies are for 301 members and their families. Shows start at 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

sidering the coming contract negotiations, in line with the policies of UE and GE Conference Board. In doing so, he brings to Local 320 his 13 years of experience in leadership of this union and the international in its relations with GE.

"We are in accord with Brother Jandreau to go to Syracuse as District President, and do not authorize Brother Kriss to go to Syracuse for this local.

District Matter

"We feel that the District is well equipped to handle the request for assistance from any local under its jurisdiction. Therefore, we feel that by sending Brother Kriss, Local 301 would supersede and interfere with the jurisdiction of the District Council."

The roll call on the Syracuse request that Kriss attend was as follows:

Yes—Bishop, Flanigan, Green, Fiorillo and Watts.

No—Brashear, Brauneisen, Cognetta, Esposito, Friedlander, Kaminski, Kelly, Kuschel, La Bombard, Mangino, Mastriani, Pacelli, Phillips, Quirini, Scott, Sisto, Spears, Stewart, Templeton and Jandreau.

Vice-President Hodges, Treasurer Downs and Board Members Davis and Villano were absent at the time.

Hundreds at Opening Of Men's Clothing Sale

The sale of low cost men's clothing will continue through Saturday, Mar. 19 at Local 301 Hall for members of the union and their families. More than 500 people bought clothing the opening day Tuesday. Hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The demand for the clothing bargains is so big that the stock has had to be replenished.

GE Strikers Win Victory at Tiffin

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ski with George Pfeif of top management, and was ratified by the Tiffin membership Sunday. It also provided:

Seven workers with over six months' service in a group of 90 laid-off before the stoppage will be rehired. Local negotiations will continue on the cases of several others under six months' service.

There will be no discrimination or retaliation against any worker because of the strike.

The company and the union will make no claims for damages or back pay as a result of the dispute.

The immediate issue in the dispute was a change from taping to cord tying of a field coil of a small motor stator. The company had raised the production quota, and then planned to raise it again as the result of a time study.

The decisive factor in the strike was the unity of GE workers not only in Tiffin, but in other plants.

A back-to-work movement was organized in which two printed leaflets were distributed by airplane. The scab movement was stopped.

The company also had expected opposition to Tiffin workers by other GE groups. When the company announced the lay-offs of thousands in Erie (and hundreds in Schenectady) and tried to blame the Tiffin strikers, the workers answered by blaming the company. Locals in other small motor plants served notice they would not handle Tiffin work.

The strikers also got considerable local support from the Tiffin community, from AFL locals there, and from nearby UE locals.

The company sought to attack the leadership of the Tiffin local. The strikers replied with an advertisement citing the war record of UE and of seven veterans out of 14 executive board and shop committee members. It contrasted this with GE's record of indictments and its conviction of conspiracy with the Nazi Krupp firm to fix prices on cartoloy.

Stewards' Discussions

The second round of discussion meetings for shop stewards started Wednesday, with legislation and workmen's compensation as the subjects. The first round was devoted to the handling of grievances.

Because of lack of space EU News is not continuing to list names of those attending.

Last Chance Tomorrow for Help on Income Tax



Girls in the Local 301 office helping members fill out the non-technical part of their income tax forms, before tax experts start in on the more complicated part. Help in filling out income tax forms will be given again tomorrow (Saturday) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Economist Warns Prices Will Rise

Congress was warned recently by a member of the White House council of economic advisors that price increases are likely to be renewed this spring and unless checked can lead to an "ultimate crash."

John D. Clark, the economist, predicted that powerful inflationary factors will become more active within 60 days. He stressed these factors which he said would probably set living costs spiralling again:

Mounting federal outlays for defense and foreign aid.

Prospects for government deficit spending in April as the treasury comes to the end of its surplus accumulation period in March.

Loosening of bank reserves—which are the source of bank credit.

The statement of this conservative economist bears out the arguments of UE that workers need a wage increase and should not be sidetracked by the front-page stories about a temporary 2 per cent drop in living costs.

People should remember, when prices rise again, that the boost was predicted long in advance for the reasons Clark gave, and has nothing to do with any wage increase that may be won.

More Pressure Needed Against Taft-Hartley

The Senate Labor Committee has just reported out the Thomas Bill which repeals Taft-Hartley and restores the Wagner Act with certain crippling amendments. It may come up for debate and amendment on the Senate floor in two weeks.

Let Senators Irving Ives and Robert Wagner know that you want 100 per cent repeal of Taft-Hartley and restoration of the Wagner Act. Write or wire the same thing to your Congressman.

Welders' Case At Male Level

Local 301 has moved to the Male level the issue of job requirements for the various classifications of welders.

The question has been at the first Building 41 level since December. In January the company committee asked for time out to survey the welders' duties in the whole Works.

In discussing the case last week with a large committee of welders' shop stewards, Frank Schaaff said that after the survey the company still saw no better way of establishing dividing lines for the different rates. He stuck to the position that pipe welders do not necessarily belong in the "special welder" group with a rate of \$1.62. The Turbine division welders contend that this always was recognized before now.

Testimonial Dinner For Leo Jandreau

Business Agent Leo Jandreau was guest of honor last Friday night at a testimonial dinner at Town Tavern given by 260 members of the union and their families. The affair was arranged by Willard Kuschel and Morton Lewis, both of Building 46, and William Mastriani, Bldg. 73A.

The top three UE officers, President Albert Fitzgerald, Secretary-Treasurer Julius Emspak and Director of Organization James Matles, came to Schenectady for the occasion and to speak on Jandreau's service to UE and the labor movement. Former 301 President Andrew Peterson was master of ceremonies. Other speakers included Joseph Turkowski, international UE representative, and Lewis Benedict, president of Local 159, Transport Workers Union. Leo Vosburgh, county welfare commissioner, was among those attending.

BUILD THE UNION

More Headlines For C. E. Wilson

Charles E. Wilson made a speech at the Syracuse Chamber of Commerce forum last week which the GE publicity department must have thought was very good, for the Schenectady Union-Star ran a big spread on it. But again this Wilson speech raises the question of words against actions.

Wilson said: "Let us stop this soul-rotting business of setting one group against another in the hope of deriving some cheap immediate advantage."

What does he think GE does through its price rate department when it speeds up workers and cuts prices for another boost in the record GE profits?

Wilson declared that labor's "bosses" had made no attempt to negotiate "an honest, workable, equitable labor bill."

What GE proposed was a "labor" bill which would be even more viciously anti-union than Taft-Hartley.

Wilson's high point was that "industry had paid its way to bigness" by providing comfort, security and contentment for the American people," according to the Union-Star.

Has Wilson heard of the more than 3,000,000 now unemployed? Has he heard of thousands laid-off by his own company, including increasing hundreds of lay-offs and downward transfers in Schenectady?

Big Business policies brought America to a crash in 1929. They brought years of unemployment for many millions of Americans. Wilson is pushing the very same policies today.

What Do You Expect Of a Riesel Column?

Here's another example of the misstatements of Victor Riesel, so-called "labor" columnist for Big Business newspapers. In a column last week he mentioned the fact that the UE Westinghouse conference had laid out a militant wage program. Then he added:

"Shortly thereafter the General Electric Conference Board of the UE came through with a me-too program."

It happens that the GE Conference Board met before, not after, the Westinghouse group.

Gaeth Broadcast

The Arthur Gaeth broadcast, sponsored by the national UE, is at 10 p.m. every Monday over WKW, Albany (850 on your dial).