

Electrical Union News

THE VOICE OF THE UNITED ELECTRICAL RADIO & MACHINE WORKERS OF AMERICA—LOCAL 301 CIO

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Veterans Say — "Nuts" To Lifetime Of Low Wages

The newspapers are attempting to make labor's battle for a living wage look like a purely local affair. The Union-Star has taken the lead in Schenectady. It speaks of being "pro-community." It fears that Schenectady will slip into an "economic valley," and calls for a "reasonable compromise by both sides."

This struggle for a decent life reaches around the world. General Electric, for instance, is an international concern, with heavy interests in many countries, including Germany and Japan. As Veterans of this war we have come to understand what that means.

The soldiers who are still sweating it out in Europe and Asia understand it, too. There are G.I. mass meetings and picket lines all over the world in Manila, Honolulu, Japan and in a dozen other places. As one colonel put it, they are "forgetting that they are not working for General Motors." It is easy to forget. As a matter of fact, they ARE working for General Motors, and for General Electric, too.

Danger From Greed

We fought in the war because we realized that the right to a decent life was in danger. It is still in danger from the greed of corporations which value their profits above the people, and above the community.

We know a strike is no fun. Our war for survival was no picnic, either. Do you remember the stories of the men who were torpedoed and shot down at sea? Remember what they ate and drank? Do you remember the boys surrounded at Bastogne? It was a hard and bitter struggle. The enemy dropped leaflets which told our men they would be better off if they gave up. Do you remember their answer? It was one word "NUTS!"

That's our answer to those who advise us to accept a lifetime of low wages and privation for our families. "Nuts" to all who say we should surrender indefinitely, our prospects for a decent standard of living, in order to avoid a few days of eating beans.

The Union-Star says labor fears that "some of their followers might be awakened." Our only fear is that the working people, to whom we belong, may awaken too late to the danger of losing the victory which was so dearly bought with sweat and blood.

We united on December 7, 1941, to defeat a foreign enemy who threatened us with political and economic slavery. Let us unite now, on January 15, 1946, to repel the threat of slavery at home and to insure our rights to LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.

Signed: Sanford Archer, Arthur Barlette, Frank Bergamini, Estan Campbell, Joseph Donnell, Albert DuPont, H. D. Faltousen, William Hackert, Eugene LeMoine, William Roth.

Veterans Committee
Local 301 - UER&MWA

We Fight Back Tomorrow GE Continues It's Excuses

In an all-out bid for public and employee sympathy, the company has resorted to deliberate misrepresentation of facts. The concern which it now expresses for the welfare of its employees and the public is so thin-veiled it has fallen flat and sharpened more than ever, the determination of the workers to settle their differences with Generous Electric once and for all.

For the purpose of showing how far astray the GE publicists have gone, their own statements as given in their costly ads of January 10 are repeated here.

Under the heading "Who wants a strike at General Electric", the company says "We don't want it."

The record is that the company has not once in 6 months of negotiation, bargained in good faith on the wage issue. It has cancelled the union contract. It has already tried to cut prices as they have notified the union they intend to do. It has laid food and other stores in departments so their stooges might hold out in the plant for a long siege. It has had deputized, many foremen for what purpose? Because the Company WANTS AND EXPECTS a strike . . . its actions prove nothing differently.

Concern For Public

"The Public Doesn't Want It!" the company then says adding that the "public is waiting for the things they make". If GE had concern for the public of Schenectady, why have they laid off 16,000 workers when it has such a terrific consumer demand for its products? Why has the company moved three of their large sections of the Schenectady plant to other cities. Why have they BOARDED their products for months hoping to increase their prices and escape payment of taxes? That's the record of GE's concern for the public.

So They Don't—Eh?

"Many of our employees don't want it" says the company adding that few can be happy at a loss in wages during the strike. Granting that there are always a small insignificant handful of people who will sell their friends and themselves down the river very cheaply, there isn't one thinking employee who will stand for wage cutting and gradual (Continued on Page Four)

Office Workers Join Fight For Better Pay

A large group of salaried workers of the GE served notice on the Company that it has no intention of falling prey to the Company's plans of turning them into strike breakers or carrying on bedroom work shops during the strike at a meeting held last week at their request.

The group, after hearing Leo Jandrea explain all details of the union case, voted unanimously to endorse the union's wage fight. As means of making their support effective, a temporary president and secretary were elected to lead the organizing committee and a committee was selected to publish a monthly salaried workers bulletin which will be sent to all salaried workers who have signed an application to join the union.

A report was given by the union organizer to the effect that many thousand salaried workers now working in the Schenectady plant were already members of the UE and reports had been received during the

Powerhouse & Guards Must Go In To Protect Union

In accordance with general union policy throughout the country and especially the program of our own international union, the General Strike Committee of Local 301 has instructed certain workers to stay on the job throughout the strike. The big reason

for this is that property may be protected. An that is not so much that the union is interested in GE property but that it is interested in seeing that its members are able to go back to work promptly when the strike is won.

A minimum amount of heat must be kept up throughout the plant in order to keep pipes from freezing and causing damage that might take months to repair. The fire department must be on duty to protect the plant. The patrol is also a protective unit. Government employees on the payroll of the United States will be allowed to enter the plant. These, with a few others, in the opinion of the international union and the local general strike committee are important to the future of union workers and their jobs. Even these must have passes issued by the union in order to get through the picket lines.

Are On Strike

A spokesman for the powerhouse group said, "We want it distinctly understood that we are loyal members of Local 301 and are on strike. We are obeying orders in keeping these departments running for the protection of the future jobs of our fellow union members. You may be sure that we will see to it that this protection is not abused by General Electric."

Bus Drivers, Others Pledge Full Backing

"Buses that do run, will terminate at lower State street", Local 301 has been assured by Lewis Benedict, president of Local 169, Transport Workers Union. Full text of the offer of cooperation to striking GE workers which was received follows: "Local 169, Transport Workers Union went on record at a special meeting tonight, January 9, 1946, to support the G.E. workers to the fullest extent, in event of strike and assure them that THERE WILL BE NO BUSES RUNNING TO THE G.E. plants for any workers. Buses that do run will terminate at lower State street. Signed Lewis Benedict, president Local 169."

AFL Pledges Support

Meanwhile, Richard Carmichael, president of the Schenectady Trades Assembly, AFL, made public the position of his organization by stating that no member of his organization would attempt to pass any picket line.

Local 70, UOPWA, which is the bargaining unit for office employees including those employed by Local 301, voted fullest support of that organization behind the GE workers.

Beware of Rumors

This is to caution our members that there will be many wild rumors spread throughout the community on offers that the General Electric Company is supposed to have made to your union. There no doubt will be stories in the local press condemning the union on the way that they are conducting the strike, and there will be people who will be telling you that your leadership is making a serious mistake and that you should take whatever offer the company makes regardless of the strings that are attached.

The officers and executive board of Local 301 for these reasons have arranged to keep you fully and truthfully informed on the progress of the strike by the use of Strike Bulletins, The Electrical Union News and the Radio.

Hall Always Open

Furthermore Union Headquarters will be open at all times and there will always be people available who can answer any questions that you may have.

You are requested before passing on information concerning the strike that you be sure that it is true and has cleared through the General Strike Committee.

ORIGINAL TORN

ELECTRICAL UNION NEWS

United Electrical Radio & Machine Workers of America, CIO
Schenectady G E Local 301

Prepared and Published by the
PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Editorial Office: Electrical Union News
301 LIBERTY ST. SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

Co. Provokes Battle By Daily Injustices

Anyone, to know what they are speaking about when they talk about strikes, must know first hand, the actual conditions inside industry. To some people and much of the press, strikes are something decided upon by union leaders, and followed out by the general run of the membership. Nothing is further from the truth. Strikes are the result of decisions in the minds of the majority of workers which are unified into the channel of common action by the union leadership.

What influences those decisions? They are the everyday occurrences in the shop, the little things that happen daily which would never in themselves make a newspaper headline or even slightest mention. Such things for instance as a man seeing his amount of pension being drastically cut by being downgraded by the company after many years of service; or not having enough money left over at the end of the week to replenish that coal supply that is running low; the refusal of immediate supervision or perhaps management to correct inequalities on the job; in other words the failure of ordinary methods of obtaining the things of life of which a worker is deserving in return for his toil.

Cooling Off Over

When the stored up dissatisfaction of the majority reach the point where mind and body can no longer stand the strain, we have strikes. Did someone say cooling-off period? The members of this union, hitherto, have gone through months of cooling off—and in return got a cold shoulder from management. They didn't comply because they were already plotting to come out with a 10 percent offer to avoid paying what was ordered by the government. The 10-cent raise might be figured like this: 6 cents for exploitation and 4 cents to cover increases in the cost of living. Now, how far went 4 cents toward buying food at present prices? What this really amounts to is a 4-cent offer.

The great General Electric Company gives 4 cents. Can you imagine it? You don't have to. It's a fact.

Heroes Now Devils?

Just who are these workers who are demanding a just wage settlement. Did the Union-Star or others who share their opinion ever hear of them? Perhaps not by the names they are now calling the workers under their breath but a few months ago they were the patriotic Americans about whom even the General Electric Company joined in praise for their magnificent war production record, along with the leaders of military, national and local civic life. Many of them were GI Joes who stormed the beaches in the Pacific or sweat it out in a foxhole in Europe whom everyone promised "we will never forget your deeds and sacrifice." They are John Jones who lives the second house down the street, Bill and his wife who live up stairs, they are Dad, Mom, your cousin. But now they're something else . . . or are they?

The people themselves know what they are striking for . . . its merely the right to a decent life and security. They are well aware of the implications involved in a strike and are aware of the far worse implications, if they should lose, not only for themselves but their future, their community, and their nation. They

are fighting for a chance to buy the things they need, which in turn and not indirectly means to insure our city that taxes can be met, that merchants will have a good market and demand for their goods, so the Union Star can sell advertising space to the merchants.

It is the workers who bring the wrath into Schenectady through their toil and still certain elements of the press would advocate KILLING THE GOOSE THAT LAYS THE GREENBACKS ON THE LINE.

Women Exploited By General Electric

The War Labor Board ordered the General Electric Company to bring the rates for women into line with the rates for men doing similar work. The chairman of the WLB made a personal investigation of conditions in the Schenectady plant and stated flatly that women were being "exploited" by the Company. The WLB said the Company should increase women's wages by 6 cents an hour. GE refused to comply. Why?

They didn't comply because they were already plotting to come out with a 10 percent offer to avoid paying what was ordered by the government. The 10-cent raise might be figured like this: 6 cents for exploitation and 4 cents to cover increases in the cost of living. Now, how far went 4 cents toward buying food at present prices? What this really amounts to is a 4-cent offer.

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G. E. POLICY:

Divide' Em and Rule' Em

In an effort to divide the ranks of the workers, and pit the lower paid people against those making more money, GE made a 10 percent offer. They thought such an offer would satisfy the workers in the higher brackets and leave the majority of the employees on low-rated jobs holding the bag. When the people saw through that one, the management came along with a modified offer of 10 percent to not less than 10 cents.

When the plumbers, steamfitters

PICKET INSTRUCTIONS

Picket Captains
Every shop Committeeman is a picket captain. Each Captain has a picket schedule of Union members in his department, indicating the days and hours when the member will be on the picket line.

Pickets
Every Union member is assigned to picket duty, and will receive his schedule of days and hours from his Picket Captain.

Reporting for Duty
Pickets will report to the Picket Captain at the post to which they are assigned. Captains at the post to which they

State Street Gossip

The following are common remarks heard along State street in public meeting places, and even in the shop among certain management-ized employees. That this type of rumor-gossip is un-accidental goes without saying . . . it's one of the company's choicest weapons in its battle for public sympathy.

Those who want to strike are radicals.

Answer: Yes, and rightfully so. Who are they? They are your neighbors, friends and relatives who are ambitious enough to desire and expect to enjoy a decent living, in return for their toil.

A Wage-increase will make prices go up.

Answer: They will not. Labor will not enter into a conspiracy with industry against the general public by agreeing to a wage increase which was dependant upon increased consumer prices and eventually lead to a spiral of inflation. The government agrees with labor that there can and should be a substantial wage increase without any need of an increase in prices.

The union should have agreed to the 10% offer of the company.

Answer: By accepting it, the union would be guilty of a gross injustice to its membership. The offer itself falls far short from the actual needs it's pointed out in the union's case as presented before the company to balance earnings against the increased living costs and of equal importance is the fact that the lower-wage-bracket groups, those on jobs from 71c to a dollar who comprise the bulk of the GE employees, would receive much less of an increase than the skilled worker who also needs an increase. The union insists that all employees be treated alike and that can only be done through a flat cents-per-hour increase.

The union should not strike now.

The fight between the union and management goes much deeper than only the wage increase. The Company, by numerous actions such as GE's cancellation of the union contract, are waging an undeclared war on organized labor in an effort to break the unions or at least make them ineffective. The union's position if it did avoid the showdown, would be best illustrated by the man who waited until his house was burned to the ground before he tried to pour water on the fire and put it out.

NOTE

From Picket Captains

Every member must be at his assigned post Tuesday, 6 A. M. for MASS PICKETING—Would-be Scabs MUST NOT PASS our lines.

Food Committee Already Active

The Food Committee, under the chairmanship of Board Member Irene Patterson, has already begun the solicitation of food for picket lines and hard-pressed families. Letters have been sent to all food merchants in the city, both retail and wholesale soliciting their support. Teams from the committee and from the organization of wives of members have started active solicitation and are getting excellent results.

Coffee, doughnuts and sandwiches will be served by the wives of members at the strike headquarters opposite the main gate on Edison Avenue, at the strike headquarters near the Subway Gate, strike headquarters at Campbell Avenue and at Union headquarters. Mobile units will supply the same service to picket lines on Rice Road and the Cinder Path.

Other members of the committee are C. Billie Rogers, William Kelly, John Boyle, Sadie Iovinella, Jack Mele, James Meaney, and Francis Etzel.

Speakers' Bureau Tells Union Story

A Speakers' Bureau under the leadership of Sidney Friedlander, has been organized by the Publicity and Public Relations Committee. Its purpose is to offer any and all groups and persons of this vicinity full and accurate information about the wage and strike questions.

Every business man in Schenectady as well as other civic groups have been sent personal letters offering the services of the trained staff who will meet with them individually or before groups.

Signifying a real interest, a sizable number have already responded and asked for a union speaker to call on them.

Any civic, professional or neighborhood group who would like to have the issues explained and any questions they may have answered, are invited to call Fay Marvin or Milo Lathrop and place their request.

Open Letter Protests Giving Foremen Club

To The Schenectady County Board of Supervisors
County Court House
Schenectady, N. Y.

Attention: Mr. Kenneth C. McKee

Gentlemen:

Our organization is protesting a recent action of the Schenectady County Sheriff in deputizing 20 foremen of the General Electric Company. This was done at the request of the corporation. Such an action, in our opinion, is unwarranted and provocative. The action certainly indicates that the Company expects to fight the workers with every means at its disposal. As a further indication of this attitude of the Company, it should be noted that this action was taken prior to the announcement of any strike date.

The 20 new deputy sheriffs are in addition to the regular patrol department and many other employees who have been deputized for many years. We believe that the previous number should have been sufficient.

The exercise of arbitrary powers without consulting other interested parties is not an action to be condoned. We think that the sheriff should have arranged an opportunity for a full discussion of this problem so that both sides could have been heard. It would certainly seem that the sheriff is showing partiality in view of the existing circumstances.

We are requesting your assistance and support in this matter in order to eliminate any obstacle that might impede a speedy settlement to this wage dispute.

Very truly yours,
Leo Jandreau, Business Agent
Local 301.

No One Is Exempted From Active Duty

There is a job waiting for every member of Local 301 on the strike front. This is not a strike of the officers and executive board of the union but it is a rank and file decision. The membership by an overwhelming vote has authorized a strike to enforce their demands for a decent living wage.

Varied Skills Needed

The Executive Board, which is the General Strike Committee, has set up eight committees for strike action. There are: Food, picket, veterans, welfare, publicity and public relations, recreation and social activities, distribution, and finance. The most of these committees need additional help. If any member of the local feels that he or she has talents that would be useful to any of these committees they should call union headquarters and volunteer their help.

Everybody Must Picket

The picket line is, of course, everybody's job. Every man and woman in the union is expected to put at least one day on the picket line. But there are many other jobs, too. If you can write, news copy or have an art for digging out news the Pub-

licity Committee can use you. If you can sing or tell stories or entertain volunteer for service with the Recreation Committee. If you are good at soliciting or neighborhood activities, the food or distribution committee can use you. Veterans should contact the veterans committee and be assigned to a job.

Productivity

Charges by General Electric Company spokesmen that the productivity of the workers is as much as 25 to 30% under par has been made publicly and also to union negotiators in wage meetings.

This back-handed slap at the workers who the company itself a few months ago praised for their "unprecedented cooperation which made its outstanding war production record possible", is not only a maneuver to counter the union's wage arguments. It is a wedge designed to be used by piece-rate and planners to tear apart piece rates and job rates; to wring every last ounce of energy from a human machine for which they are willing to pay as little as possible and get away with it.

Gov't Contradicts GE

To weed out the roots of falsehood from the GE fable, one only has to refer to two volumes prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the Senate Subcommittee on War Mobilization. It is a source of information as reliable as any to be had.

Says this government agency: "We have come out of the war knowing a great deal more about how to produce efficiently, speedily and cheaply, than we knew when we went in" . . . The extent of the wartime increase in productivity has been estimated by the War Production Board for finished manufacturing goods at an average rate of 6% per year for the years 1939 to 1944, or a total for that period of 28 percent. For the period January 1941 to July, the increase at this rate amounts to 22.9 percent.

Need Economic Balance

This means that in July, 1945, the average manufacturing worker was turning out each hour 22.9 percent more product, (measured in physical units) than he was able to turn out in January, 1941. Now it is elementary economics that if output per man hour rises while workers get paid no more than they did at the outset, industry will go into a tail-spin. People can only buy industry's products if their incomes rise in proportion to industry's capacity to produce.

Merchants Cooperate

These friendly merchants are among those cooperating with the Strike Food Committee, Chairman, Miss Irene Patterson, reports.

Friedlander's Bakers has promised that it will duplicate free, any amount of bread or doughnuts bought from them by the union.

Friedlander's Market offered a plentiful supply of stew beef, beef bones for soup and cold cuts.

Other markets such as Wasserman and Wiles Pleasant Valley Market were also very cooperative.

Waldorf Bakers refused to cooperate in any way when called upon by the Committee, Miss Patterson reports.

Fort Edward Plans Effective Strike

The Fort Edward plant of the General Electric Company is well organized for a strike under the leadership of Harold Boynton, Executive Board Member. Strike headquarters have been set up across the street from the plant in a garage owned by George Capugos. Coffee and doughnuts will be served there to the picket line and committee. There will be cards and other table games available.

A pep meeting of the Fort Edward membership was held Friday evening at which refreshments were served and entertainment furnished.

Pay Checks Prove G. E. Claims Phoney

The General Electric Company's publicity department is doing a mighty poor job of trying to convince GE workers that they are getting enough money to live on without the necessity of a wage increase.

Using a gag line, which by the way, is a quote from Charlie Wilson's statement of December 21, the company's advertisements say "GE average rates 30% above 1941". Further along in the big ads, and GE is spending lots of money on them which would be put to much better use in pay-envelopes, the company says, "Within the past month the government is the authority for the statement that the cost-of-living increase is now 33%, which introduces a new factor for appraising compensation for company employees.

G E Math

To break these statements down let's analyze what actually are the

facts as the workers in the GE know them only too well. First of all . . . "your rate is up 30%". The union has won during the time the company specifies (1941 to 1945) two increases 10c and 5 1/2c a hour respectively. There were no more increases . . . in fact there was a very famous law known as the "Little Steel Formula" that prevented any more. For a man on a \$1 an hour job, our mathematics say his increase was 15 1/2%; on a 75c per hour job the increase would amount to 20%; a man on a \$1.50 an hour job, the increase would amount to about 8 1/2%. Still the company figures the average increase and reports it to the public and to YOU as 30%.

To strikes us that they are trying to pull the stunt performed by fishermen who catch a fish too small to be lawful so they break its back and stretch things a bit.

Now to get this 30% increase on a personal basis, George K. in the transmitter department received 84 cents an hour in 1941. Then during the war rush, he stepped on it every minute of the day and was lucky to build his take home up to about \$1.20. But on V-J Day those jobs were gone so he did odds and ends for 92c an hour but they didn't last long so he was transferred to another department. What's he getting now? George is getting 88c an hour on work of equal calibre as he had before.

So let's see how the GE's 30% stands up for George. He got 84c in 1941 and is getting 88c now. The difference is an increase of 4c or figured on a percentage basis, approximately 4 1/2%. Again we say "GE's stretching things a bit".

No Surprise

As for acknowledging that only "last month" increase in cost of living went up to a total of 33% over pre-war levels . . . Every person who eats, wears clothes or lives in a dwelling knows the answer to that even if the prevailing figures as dropped up by the Company's publicists don't.

SAYS JANDREAU:

"We do not intend to let anyone through that line to take our jobs."

Picket Stations

1. Main Gate, near Staff's gas station.
2. Subway, Bill's Lunch.
3. Campbell Avenue, Piccolo's Coffee Shack.

To All Members

It is highly important for you to keep fully informed of all new developments as rapidly as they occur.

The following are the three main channels through which the leadership of the union will get their messages to you. Follow them closely.

WSNY

EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY
7:15 P.M. at 1240 ON YOUR DIAL

ELECTRICAL UNION NEWS

BI-WEEKLY AND OFTENER IF NECESSARY
Distributed at plant gates and other vantage points to be announced.

BULLETINS

Flash news of importance as fast as the presses will run and distributed in the same manner as the Electrical Union News.

LOCAL 301 PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

ORIGINAL TORN