

Swollen Wartime Profits— But Not Enough for Wages

NEW YORK (EP)—Can industry afford to pay wage increases to millions of American workers now being forced to pinch pennies and tighten their belts because the end of the war has cut huge chunks out of their take-home pay?

Don't look for the answer in the editorial columns of the commercial press where workers are handed stern lectures daily about how they are holding up free enterprise's re-conversion program by asking for a living wage. The place to look is in the documented government reports which set out irrefutable proof that American industry has emerged from this war with a staggering load of profits—great in its history.

11 BILLIONAIRE FIRMS

The truth about how industry fared during the war, told in the Oct. 1 issue of In Fact, weekly newsletter, can be gleaned from these government figures. For example, despite the much-touted excess profits tax, 11 new billionaire firms were created during the war, making a total of 43. A WPB report, issued July 20, 1945, says: "Net profits after taxes increased from \$5 billion (1939) to \$6.4 billion."

According to the same report: "Industry's profits before taxes shot up from \$2.7 billion in 1939 to nearly \$17.2 billion in 1944. . . . The rise in profits before taxes was even sharper than the increase in sales; hence the margin of profit rose from 6.3% in 1939 to a high of 11.6% in 1941, then slowly declined to 10.3% in 1944."

Another report, issued by OPA in March 1945, concludes: "American industry made far more profit during the war than in peace. . . . The vast majority of the corporations at least doubled their pre-war earnings and many realized five, 10 and even 50 times as large a profit in 1942 as in the base years. Durable goods producers achieved the sharpest of the gains but no segment of the industrial economy failed to share substantially in the rapid profits expansion engendered by the war."

NO REINVESTMENT

Not only the profits but the general financial position of all corporations has been vastly improved during the war. In Fact reveals, "Very little of the profits made during the war have been reinvested. Corporate financial policy during the war," the WPB report says, "has been extremely conservative. This is evidenced by the increasing percentage of profits retained in the business. As a result about \$15 billion has been added to the net worth of industrial corporations, thus increasing its prepar level about one-third." The leaders of free enterprise, who have been denouncing the full employment bill as unwarranted government intervention in their affairs, were able to scale these new heights of wealth only with a substantial boost from the government.

Public Affairs

(Continued from page 1)
welcome to all Local 301 people to come into the meetings which are being held every Wednesday evening at 7:30 and to participate in the proceedings.



Local Fights Denial Of Jobless Insurance

Ex-war workers who are now unemployed due to the lack of industrial and governmental planning to meet re-conversion, are lazy and don't want to work. So say news releases in the press and on the radio.

Proof? Oh sure, they have it in X city, so they say, there are 200 on unemployment insurance roles and 225 jobs available. In Y city, more job openings than unemployed. In Z city it's the same condition. The people are just lazy bums, don't want to take jobs and so are responsible for any economic flop that may occur. That's the line being fed the people by the Committee for Economic Development and others. EVIL PROPAGANDA

This publicity is purely evil propaganda. It's evil because it deals with the matter of employment which is the only means of earning the right to keep body and soul together and because it is based on half-truths—using the half which suits the purpose of its propagators.

The other half of the story is kept under the wraps least the general public learn to know the real truth and put the overwhelming power of public opinion behind labor's objective of higher wages and a satisfactory minimum wage law.

Impartial surveys have proven that of the quoted 200,000 available jobs in New York State, approximately 60% are at sub-standard wages. Also that in certain cities where there are a large number of jobs available they are not being taken because the people on the unemployment insurance rolls can not qualify because of physical or experience and training requirements.

Joseph O'Connor, regional director of the United States Employment Service stated very recently, "The fact that a job is open means nothing until you know what the job is, where it is, what the wages and working conditions are, and what qualifications a worker needs to fill it."

"Although many former war workers are accepting the offered jobs," O'Connor said, "many more are understandably reluctant to accept a reduction in income that would drastically reduce their standard of living and, in the case of many men with family responsibilities reduce their income 'below a reasonable subsistence' level in the face of the high cost of living."

Where are those jobs the ex-war workers are expected to take? In the low pay retail trade where many jobs pay no lower than they do because of the existing 40c minimum wage law and in open shops, low wage industries.

A typical example of the latter is found in a case being handled at the present time by the Local 301 Unemployment Committee office. A Local 301 member, employed during the war in the General Electric plant as a cutter grinder was laid off because of lack of work according to seniority procedure. The job rate was 95c an hour and with the 10% second shift premium, this wage earner had a take home pay of \$1.05 an hour.

A resident of Albany, this person applied for unemployment insurance benefits at the Albany office and was referred to a "job" at a tool company in that city. The work was identical with the work performed at GE but the rate offered was 52 cents an hour! It was the legitimate reasoning that the job was turned down, but

nevertheless, the person's unemployment insurance benefits were denied. An appeal was made to the Local 301 office which has assisted the person in making an appeal through the proper channels which will call for a hearing on the case at the Albany insurance office.

If this job had been taken at the rate offered, this is what would have happened. Working six days a week during the war gave this wage earner \$54.00 a week. With the loss of overtime this wage earner's pay dropped to \$42.00, a sizeable reduction.

Now at the offered job, this wage earner's pay would be only \$20.80. A cut of \$33.50 or approximately 61%. This is not only one example, it is typical of thousands of cases throughout this state and there are plenty in Schenectady and surrounding cities. This is the half of the story that is not being told by the CED and others about the unemployment conditions.

Present high prices and the greatly increased cost of living were based on overtime pay in shops which were union-organized. The base rate in GE of common labor is 80 cents an hour. During the war period it is true that unorganized shops, retail trade and even trained office help which are untrained in the GE were not considered worth as much, by the employers, as common labor because they were paid in most cases, considerably less than the common labor's rate.

What is actually happening now is that employer interests expect workers to accept pre-war peacetime wages even though the cost of living remains at high war-time prices.

To carry out this squeeze play against the war workers, these groups are using many local USES offices the national and state governments such as some local USES offices which are in effect, black-mailing many people into unsatisfactory employment by threatening withholding unemployment insurance benefits.

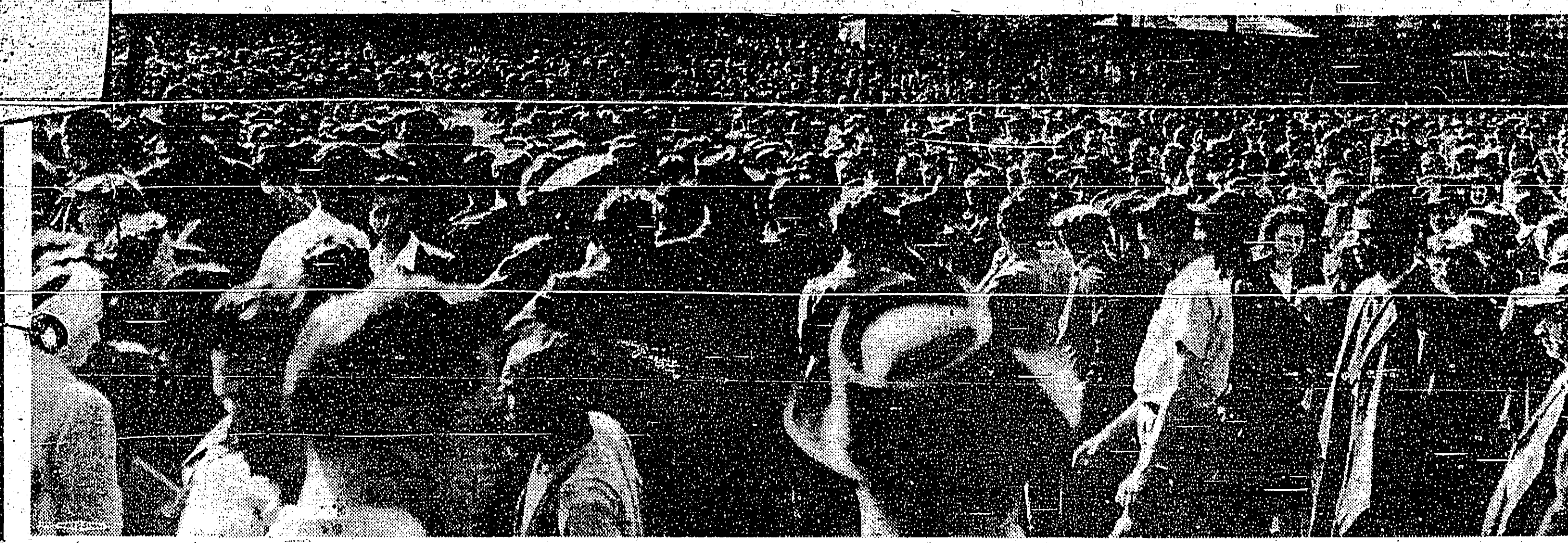
The only answer to this problem is the intensified support of every worker, employed or unemployed, behind the liberal legislation now pending in congress and for Local 301 members, to consult the Local 301 Unemployment Committee on any problem regarding jobs and wages.

Printed in U.S.A.

LETTERS ARE LIKE

A VISIT HOME TO A SOLDIER. WRITE HIM TODAY!

L J MATEO
GEN ELECTRIC CO
BLDG 41
SCHENECTADY N Y 12301



GE WORKERS as they turned out in front of the plant to add emphasis to their demands for the \$2 increase.

Electrical Union News

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

Vol. II—No. 36 NOVEMBER 3, 1945 300 3c per copy

Committeemen To Meet Nov. 7

The November Committeemen's meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 7th at 7:30 p.m. instead of Tuesday, November 6th. This is in accordance with the practice followed in the past years, Tuesday, November 6th being Election Day.

The meeting will be a joint meeting of first, second, and third shifts, to enable all committeemen to participate in the nomination of candidates for officers of 1946. The Election Committee will also be elected at this meeting.

For the membership's information Article XVIII of the Constitution is quoted below:

ARTICLE XVIII
Nomination and Election of Officers
SECTION A — Nominations of candidates for general officers shall be made at a General Meeting of Shop Representatives, subject to the approval of a membership meeting called for that purpose. (Notifications of the election shall be posted in the plant at least seven days prior to the general election.)
The meeting for nominations will take place during the month of November; elections will take place during the month of December and officers will be installed during January as stated in Article IV of the Constitution.
SECTION B — Tellers and an election committee shall be appointed by the General Meeting of Shop Representatives, who will, in conjunction with the Business Agent, make arrangements for election.

What the Govt. Can Do About Jobs

By SEN. JAMES MURRAY Democrat, Mont.

The Full Employment Bill reflects the faith of its sponsors in the producers of the nation, and their conviction that through concerted expansion, our vast resources can be mobilized in peace for a steadily rising standard of living that will provide jobs for all who are willing and able to work. At the same time it recognizes that only the government is in a position to underwrite such concerted expansion, because only government has a broad enough guarantee, and only the government can assume the risks involved.

The central feature of the bill is its declaration of the right to work. It constitutes a promise that the number of would-be workers in this country will be accepted as a goal, and that total purchasing power will be kept large enough to employ this number.

Fears and misapprehensions are rampant as to how the measure would work.

Not by Deceit
Some anticipate that it would operate by deceit. To these it should be made clear that this is not a plan for directing the economy from a Washington blueprint. As members of Congress we would hardly impose upon ourselves such a heavy and impossible responsibility. There need be no guarantee of specific jobs or of individual

Company 'Sympathetic' But Unwilling to Move As Wage Negotiations Get Underway

Dodging and unwillingness to meet the real issues of the union's \$2 a day wage increase demand was evidenced by the General Electric Company in the first formal session of the union and company as this paper went to press.

The union representatives presented the case to the company and included in it, not only the justification and need of an increase at the present time but also undeniable proof that the company was able to meet the demands.

The union spokesmen told the union committee that it was "sympathetic" but due to the fact that the wage question was an issue of national scope affecting all branches of industry throughout the country, it could not move before a national wage policy was arrived at.

The company's position on the wage question was scheduled to be considered by the UE national executive board which was called in session to hear the negotiating committee's report and to decide on the future course of action.

DOESN'T JIBE WITH FACTS
The argument of the company spokesmen that GE could not "wait" until a tangible national wage policy is set is not consistent with the facts, according to Business Agent Leo Jandreau, who as International Vice-President of the UE, is a member of the negotiating committee.

Actually, the General Electric Company is by far the largest manufacturer and employer in the electrical industry. It is also one of the largest and most powerful corporations in the country. The company's position raises the question that if the leaders of industry such as GE can not set industry's policy, who else should do it, a small employer?

Reference by the company to the fact that the wage question is pending in all industry throughout the country and therefore it can do nothing now is also another thin veil to camouflage the real issue.

It is granted that workers in other industries throughout the country are after increases also, but that does not change in any way the basic facts of the union's case before GE which are:

1—The cost of living has risen far beyond what it was before the war production program with long hours of overtime got underway.

2—The wages paid were consistent to their present point, not because of any increase in basic wage rates but because of overtime earnings.

3—Overtime is now a thing of the past and workers take-home pay has dropped to or below pre-war levels, while prices remain at the same high.

CAN AFFORD RAISE
4—The company's financial position is such that it can easily afford to grant the \$2 a day wage increase without necessity of raising prices, and it could still operate at a fair profit.

It was reported, as this paper went to press, that some company spokesmen, faced with the unions proof that the company could well afford to pay the increase, passed the information off as irrelevant to the case.

This also raises a point which can be correctly questioned. It would not be the policy of this or any other fair opinionated labor organization to force an employer to do the impossible if price competition was such that increases in production cost would cause the employer to lose his market or operate at a loss. The ability to pay does have a very definite bearing on the wage question.

New Committeemen
The following new committeemen were sworn in at the October 15 general membership meeting: Mary A. Gee, 23; C. B. Rogers, 53 and R. E. O'Brien, 57.

ORIGINAL TORN



Workers Demonstrate Solidarity Behind Union on Hot Wage Issue

When you touch a man's pocketbook, one of the most essential components of existence outside of life itself, you're calling for action—and it's action G.E. got from the thousands of Local 301 members recently. Originally a spontaneous demonstration in support of the electricians and steamfitters, it developed into a powerful warning to the General Electric Company that the GE Schenectady workers expect and demand that the company grant the general \$2 a day wage increase. Like the demonstration just prior to the war that won the 10-cent an hour wage increase needed at the time, this one stirred the company into coming to terms of settlement for the electricians and steamfitters. It won for them an increase of 5c an hour retroactive to January 1, 1945 and an additional 5c an hour beginning January 1, 1946. Thunderous applause and enthusiasm displayed by the thousands at the demonstration at the main gate of the plant when rank and file speakers raised the UE demands for the general increase of \$2 a day, proved beyond all doubt that the entire membership is solidly behind the union negotiators who met with the company October 25 to present the formal demands and attempt negotiation of the issue.

Do You Want Action?

Prepared by Education Dept., Local 301
Do you want more effective action on the grievances arising in your department? Do you want your grievances handled correctly, so that by the proper approach, and by skillful carrying-through, your problems are more rapidly and more satisfactorily adjusted? Of course you do, and there is something you, the union member on the job, can do about it. All Union Committees are requested by the membership to attend the new leadership classes to be given by the Education Department this fall. These classes are planned to give each Shop Representative the knowledge of the Union Contract, of our Grievance Procedure, and the actual handling of all kinds of cases regarding correct performance of his job. Surely, a man elected by his fellow-workers to represent them, should feel enough responsibility to his group to learn the fundamentals of his job. And the best place to learn that job is at the Union Training Classes. Your job is to see that your Committeeman attends these classes. Check up on his or her attendance, and turn on the heat if he or she fails to attend regularly. Better yet, get your group to attend with your Representative. In any event, insist on your Committeeman learning his job. Then, with the scientific approach to job problems, he learns in class, together with the clearer understanding of his function in the Grievance Procedure, your Committeeman can really go to work on your Group's grievances. Don't forget to consult your

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Cases Pending Before Management

The following is a list of cases pending before management at the present time as a service to the membership. The Electrical Union News in co-operation with the Business Agent's Office will publish in each issue the list of cases pending. When a case no longer appears in this list, it may be assumed that settlement has been made.

5494	73	J. Leguire & Co.	Fuchs	8-1-45
5513	72	Joe Thurling	Fuchs	9-27-45
5517	68	Cleaning Group	Busse	9-10-45
5522	76	Group Complaint	Baciewicz	10-8-45
5515	62	Mrs. Mary Kramer	Mastrazzo	8-11-45
5558	69	Group Complaint	Garratt	9-11-45
5528	69	Joséphine Komoc	Esposito	10-17-45
5593	63	Group Complaint	Ryan	10-15-45
5570	273	D. A. Burger	Kelly	9-21-45
5416	59	Baking Group	Bender	7-4-45
5529	46	J. Sautora	Arcand	8-27-45
5545	46	W. A. Stevens	Bowen	8-29-45
5567	40	A. Pottencott	Lemoursaux	9-19-45
5579	40	Group Complaint	O'Connell	10-1-45
5579	50	Group Complaint	Waterhouse	10-1-45
5586	40	Group Complaint	Waltinsen	10-1-45
5916	109	Lucy Fredericks	Seliger	6-7-45
5529	109	Harry Perue	Wysowski	8-27-45
5541	109	Brie Schlicht	Leisher	8-27-45
4400	81	Group Complaint	Ragueel	8-1-45
		Prepare for Ship-ment		
5547	81	David C. Morey	Ragueel	8-21-45
5591	81	Group Complaint	Whittaker	10-12-45
5591	81	Jack Mable	Mohyle	8-7-45
5591	81	G. Leone		
5575	'CAP	Cecile Greene	Case	8-28-45
5592	'CAP	Heien Quirin and Group	Case	10-12-45
5511	66	A. Jackewicz	Giaquinto	8-10-45
5591	8	Sarah L. Tucker		10-15-45
5596	48	Antonia Stunziou		10-15-45
5692	52	J. Starink	Knowlton	10-16-45
5695	66	Kiddie Piech	Peterson	10-16-45
5580	15	Punch Press		7-23-45
5519	17	Forest Manning	Manning	8-11-45
5596	20	John Miller	Roberts	8-1-45
5599	22	J. Laubler	Roberts	9-19-45
5571	21	Dewitt Cola	Patrosky	9-20-45
5570	21	Flor's Odechowski	Scott	9-28-45
5578	21	J. Laubler	Roberts	9-28-45
5582	21	Group Complaint	Scott	10-19-45
5587	21	Jaculle Kennedy	Scott	10-11-45
		Rose Dolan		
		Pauline Patka		
5588	28	Charles G. Hyde	Hyde	10-11-45
5597	21	Ruth Reid	Scott	10-15-45
5599	27	Barlow Wright	Scott	10-12-45
5600	22	J. Laubler	Roberts	10-16-45
5492	27	Group Complaint	Gartockel	7-25-45
5587	5	Group Complaint	Boyden	8-27-45
5581	5	William Wharton	Franklin	10-3-45
5584	37	Genevieve Carina	Villano	10-10-45
		William Webster		
5588	57	Thomas Severa	Severa	10-12-45
5599	27	Edgar Histed	Villano	10-12-45
5598	12	Anthony Caramello		8-9-45
5592	49	Group Complaint	Lash	9-11-45
5585	60	Joe Windowski	Lash	9-11-45
5594	60	Group Complaint	Malone	10-10-45
5591	15	William Chiopeck	Pannone	10-15-45
5587	6	L. Becker	Rallo	8-1-45
5495	General	Inspectors' Classif. Station & Tailors	Baren	8-1-45
				8-1-45
5598	107	Ralph Rieckard	Pagel	7-29-45
5572	69	Ellen Marx	Rieckard	7-13-45
5591	10	John W. Purhart	Rieckard	7-5-45
5516	66	Group Complaint	Westbury	8-14-45
5596	15	James Mangione	Rimroth	9-17-45
5541	21	Match Beam Group	Sheehy	7-2-45

Cases in Advanced Stages Of Collective Bargaining

5412	81	Group Complaint	Helmus	7-29-45
5499	10	John W. Purhart	Zaninich	8-8-45
5488	28	J. B. Leigh	Wilkinson	8-29-45
5489	22	Frank Shay		8-29-45
5593	18	Alfred J. Johnson		8-29-45
5522	General	States Paid Women no Jobs Rated Over 7c	Anibal	8-29-45
5523	60	Lewis Armstrong	Rudeshelm	9-19-45
5299	39	Group Complaint	White	10-8-45
5150	59	Craftsmen	Petrofsky	10-8-45
5519	109	Mrs. M. Cerero	Wysowski	10-8-45
		Mrs. D. Friestok		
		Anna Perone		
		Larry Molitolo		
5526	35	Group Complaint	Wysowski	10-8-45
5521	60	J. Spohnburg	Wallingford	10-8-45
5522	21	Group Complaint	Dattorro	7-2-45
5557	19	B. H. Buel	Buel	10-18-45
5190	22	Group Complaint	DiDonato	7-29-45
5211	27	W. W. Wilkes	Barling, Trimble	8-29-45
5239	15	Die Sellers	Candlers	7-29-45
5301	109	Group Complaint	Pelciant	8-2-45
5232	68	Group Complaint	Wysowski	9-7-45
5119	265	John L. Casey	Reel	9-7-45
5411	71	Group Complaint	Wassell	9-12-45
		Clydia		
5011	12	Altona Screw Machine	Nelson	10-15-45
5521	52	O. Ghin	Esposito	10-19-45
5525	52	H. E. Leubardt	White	10-19-45
5525	52	A. Esposito	Esposito	10-19-45
5594	17	P. T. Westinger	Todisco	10-19-45

Cases Before War Labor Board

2210 General Electricians
2809 General Steamfitters
Office Workers

Local 301 Requests A 'Fellow Worker' To Stop Double Talk

Mr. Charles E. Wilson, President General Electric Company Lexington Avenue New York, N. Y.

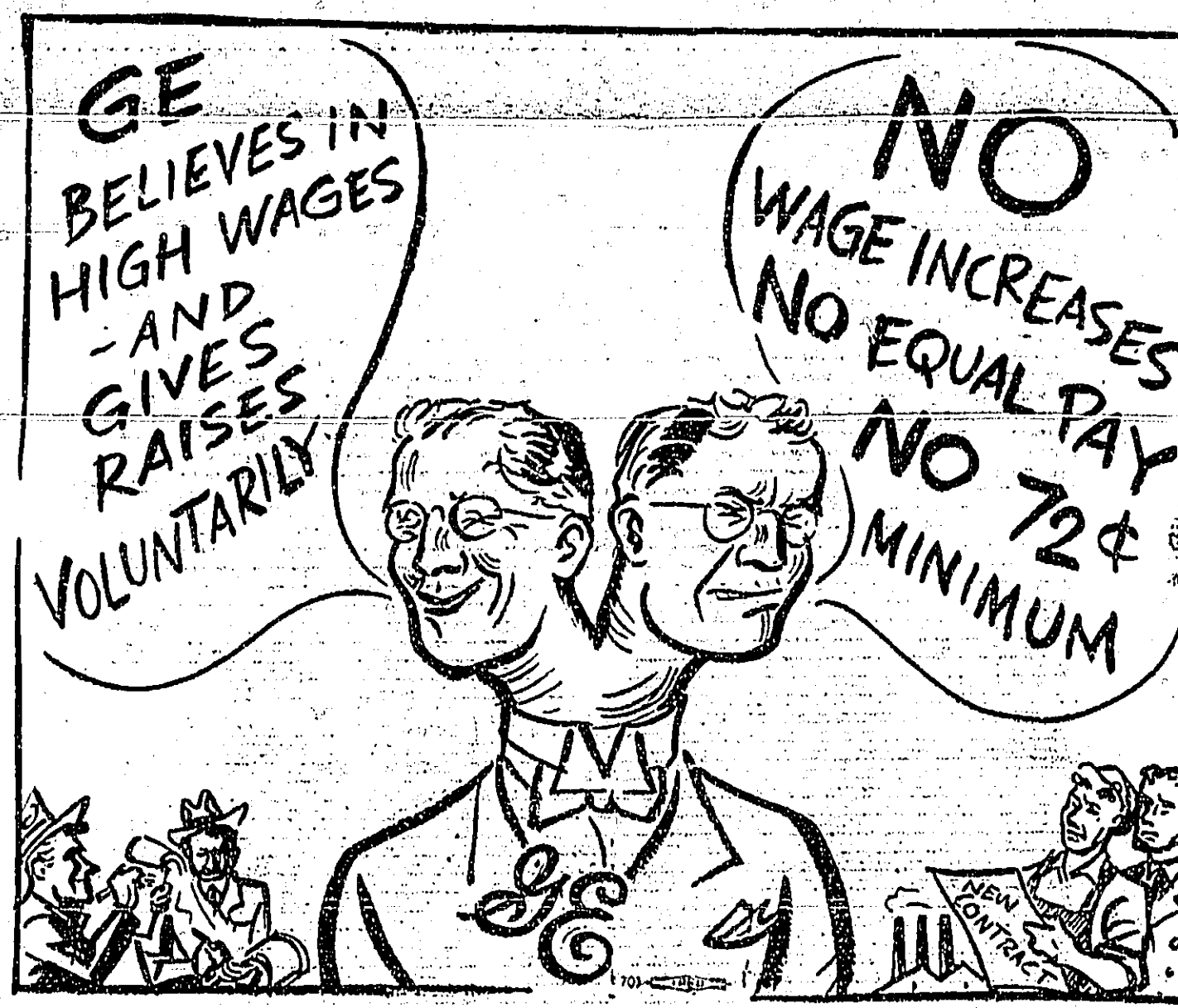
Dear Mr. Wilson:
Last month you sent a "strictly personal" letter to the home of each G. E. employee. At that time you stated that from time to time you would publish your thoughts in the "Works News."

After some consideration, the Executive Board of our Union has decided upon a reply in the name of our members. This is not a personal letter, but must be shared with our members and the public.

During the past several weeks, your views have come to us through statements carried in the newspapers. The most significant of these, we feel, was your statement read at a meeting in Potsdam, N. Y., on October 8, in which you were said to deplore the "fashionable" belief that everyone "has a right to a job." This was the meeting at which Herbert Hoover, who believes that everybody has the right to a job selling apples, was the principle speaker.

Many of our members have also read the Company's views on national planning in the current issue of the General Electric "Commentator." They regard the views expressed there as a sample of what you, as president of the General Electric Company, think about planning for full employment and all the other planning required to realize the "personal objectives" referred to in your letter. For our part, these objectives are: a job at a living wage, adequate unemployment compensation, a decent house to live in, adequate medical care, reasonable prices for necessities—in a democratic country.

It is in the "Commentator" your thinking is represented by a dishonest review of a deceptive book, F. A. Hayek's, "Road to Serfdom," which has been vigorously



promoted by the Hearst newspapers and others of like views. The review is dishonest because it is more reactionary than the book itself. The book is deceptive because it twists the facts of history.

This GE-sponsored review says that planning led to dictatorship in Germany and Italy. That is faking history. The whole world now knows that it was the lack of planning in both these countries, before Hitler and before Mussolini, which led to unemployment and hunger, and the breaking down of the spirits of the people.

In fact, Mr. Wilson, it was opposition to planning—similar to the job done in the "Commentator"—that helped prepare the ground for fascism and war in Europe. We would like to remind you, that it was the German industrialists, with whom G.E. was closely connected, who supplied the money and did the "planning" for the whole Nazi show. Some of them are now on trial. Others have escaped.

Now, only a few months later, wages of G.E. workers have been reduced. A worker who received \$52, before taxes, for a 48-hour week now receives \$40, before taxes, for a 40-hour week. During the summer, G.E. demanded OPA permission for a "plan" to raise the price of home appliances. Now G.E. says that planning is "The Road to Serfdom."

Apparently, if any planning is to be done G.E. wants to do it. The newspapers of October 9th carried the story of a civil suit by the Anti-trust Division of the U. S. Department of Justice against the General Electric Company, Westinghouse Electric Corporation, two of their subsidiaries and an "expert association" jointly controlled by them. The suit will charge the companies of monopolizing the sale of electrical apparatus and equipment for export from this country and participating in a foreign cartel. That's what we would call super-guy planning, but not in the public interest.

Last Spring you said that home pay must not be reduced with the return to the 40-hour week. You said high wages and low prices was the road to the future. You got a terrific build-up in the press of the nation as a far-sighted and progressive employer. Once you fa-

vored planning. And planning would surely be necessary to carry out such a program.

Now, only a few months later, wages of G.E. workers have been reduced. A worker who received \$52, before taxes, for a 48-hour week now receives \$40, before taxes, for a 40-hour week. During the summer, G.E. demanded OPA permission for a "plan" to raise the price of home appliances. Now G.E. says that planning is "The Road to Serfdom."

REAL PLANNING NEEDED
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How about some planning which will be good for the workers, as well as for the Company? Why not put that take-home pay back where it belongs, in the pay envelope, as you once suggested, so

that the workers can afford to buy the appliances G.E. will produce?

WM. T. WILKINSON, President
LEO JANDREAU, Business Agt.
for the Executive Board, Local 301, UER & MWA

Clothing Depot At Union Hall

A used clothing collection center will be set up in a corner of the main hall at union headquarters as a result of the general membership approval of an executive board recommendation at its October meeting.