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Unions Propose New Alternative To Settle Strike

In an effort to bring about an early settlement of the nationwide strike and boycott against General Electric Company, the International Union of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO this week offered the company an alternative proposal of a 16-month rather than a three-year contract.

The new IUE move, unanimously endorsed by the multi-union AFL-CIO Coordinated Bargaining Committee of which it is a part, was made public Sunday after four days of negotiations under a news embargo.

Both Paul Jennings, IUE president, and James Compton, chairman of the CBC Steering Committee stressed the fact
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Inflation Laid To Business Pricing & Profit Policies

AFL-CIO President George Meany recently made public the text of a letter sent to President Nixon on October 27 spelling out the AFL-CIO's view that the major causes of inflation are due to "business pricing policies and profits."

Here is the text of Meany's letter:

"We, of the AFL-CIO, share your concern about the increase
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GE Boycott Merits Backing Of All, Fed Board Says

"The General Electric Boycott deserves the support of all workers interested in protecting the right of free men and women to have a say in what they will or will not work for" because "that's the basic issue at stake in the current unprecedented strike involving 13 unions and nearly 150,000 workers against General Electric,

the world's largest electrical manufacturer."

That's how the 37-member Executive Council of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, stressed the importance of the seven-week old strike and boycott against GE and Hotpoint products in a

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A Closer Look at Nixon's View of Wage-Hour Laws

Employers have long recognized that if you give workers titles you can generally cut or hold down their pay and now it looks like the Nixon Administration is intent on applying this philosophy to the nation's Fair Labor Standards Act.

This was indicated last week when Nixon's Federal Wage-Hour Administrator Robert D. Moran announced a proposed change in the classification of aircraft flight instructors that would exclude them from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime pay rules.

This would mean that some 25,000 flight instructors throughout the nation would not qualify for overtime for work in excess of 40 hours a week because they would be classed as "professionals."

Moran's proposed change would reverse a policy adopted during the Johnson Administration which brought flight instructors under a government contract law requiring time and
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Jennings Hits GE's 'Big Lie' Ad Technique

"General Electric has resorted to the big lie technique in its series of paid advertisements in connection with the current nationwide strike," Paul Jennings, president of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, AFL-CIO, has charged.

"In a disgraceful distortion of fact, this management—with a long, sad history of unlawful failure to bargain in good faith
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State's Jobless Rolls Up 57,000 To 372,000

The ranks of jobless Californians swelled by 57,000 in November and the state's seasonally adjusted jobless rate of 4.6 percent was 31 percent higher than the national average of 3.5 percent.

The increase in jobless Californians brought total unemployment in the state to 372,000 last month, some 22,000 more than were jobless in November 1968, according to a report released by the California Human Relations Agency Wednesday.

The report, issued jointly by the Departments of Industrial Relations and Human Resources Development which are both under the wing of HRA, also disclosed that the state's civilian employment, at 8,056,000 last month, was 49,000 less than the previous month but 236,000 higher than in November 1968.

The state's 4.6 percent jobless
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Murphy Votes Against Unions in Move To Bar Labor's Political Action

A one-sided attempt by reactionary forces to strip labor unions of their tax exempt status if they engaged in any political activity at the local, state or national level while leaving big business, farming and medical tax exempt organizations free to do so was defeated by a better than 2 to 1 margin in the U.S. Senate this week.

The action, in the form of an amendment to the Tax Reform Act of 1969 was introduced by Republican Senator Paul Fannin of Arizona and strongly

promoted by the National Right to Work Committee, an anti-union tax exempt organization funded largely by business interests whose tax exempt

status would have been unimpaired by the amendment.

Defeat of the amendment was essential to preserve the right of trade unionists to engage in voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, political endorsements or even lobbying.

It would have lifted any union's tax exemption status en-

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Unions Offer Alternative To Settle Strike

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that the new union bid was an alternative rather than a substitute for the scaled-down union proposal presented in mid-October.

"Discussions during the last four days made it clear, to our great disappointment, that GE is not prepared to respond in a realistic way to the needs of its workers over a three-year span," Jennings explained.

"In the guise of 'filling in' the second and third years, the company has offered shadow rather than substance.

"It would be a waste of time—and a disservice to everyone concerned—to haggle over the utter inadequacy of GE's position. We are convinced that this course would only prolong the strike. We believe a new approach should be tried.

"Since GE, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, still refuses to make

a meaningful projection into the future, we are proposing this alternative:

"A 16-month contract, expiring May 1, 1971, with an immediate basic wage increase of 35 cents an hour, and a full cost-of-living adjustment after the first year.

"My associates and I are confident that if GE accepts this alternative, the remaining contract issues could be resolved by intensive, good-faith bargaining before the end of this week," Jennings said.

The union leader emphasized that the IUE and the other unions are fully prepared to resume bargaining on the unions' three-year compromise terms if GE prefers.

"And there is still a third alternative available to the company," he pointed out.

"We still stand by our pre-

strike offer to submit all the issues to binding arbitration."

Union spokesmen expressed doubt that GE wanted to negotiate a strike settlement at this time. They pointed to a detailed "back-to-work" program distributed by GE headquarters to management at each strike location. The ultimate aim of the GE program is to attempt to get workers to desert the strike and their unions and return to their jobs as individuals.

"A company that thinks in these terms is obviously not prepared to carry on normal labor-management relations," Jennings said.

"However, we are going to keep trying at what ought to be the bargaining table. Meanwhile GE should know that the boycott will become more effective and the determination of the strikers will grow even stronger with every passing day."

The strike of nearly 150,000 members of 13 unions—10 AFL-CIO and 3 unaffiliated—will enter its eighth week next Monday. GE's production facilities are completely shut down and a nationwide boycott of GE products is rapidly gaining momentum in cities from coast to coast.

The first \$1 million of an initial AFL-CIO Strike Relief contribution of \$13 million was distributed to the striking trade unionists last Monday.

Strike Support Rally Slated in Sacramento

A rally to generate financial support for striking General Electric workers and press the boycott on all GE products, including Hotpoint, will be held at the Labor Center in Sacramento on Monday, December 22 at 8 p.m.

The rally, being held at the request of AFL-CIO President George Meany, will call on all union members to give \$1 each to back up the strikers who are fighting to protect the basic principle of free collective bargaining.

The Central Labor Councils of Marysville, San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties have been invited to attend and to invite all officers, executive board members, shop stewards and other leadership personnel in their areas to come too.

Jennings Hits GE's 'Big Lie' Ad Technique

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—claims it's the union that is avoiding bargaining. Nothing could be further from the truth," Jennings declared.

"The IUE Coordinated Bargaining Committee, for months before the strike urged GE on a near-daily basis to give its position on issues raised by the union. We did not insist on agreement. We asked for responses so that we could negotiate agreements.

"When GE finally presented its one and only take-it-or-leave-it offer on October 7, the union responded by reducing or withdrawing more than a score of our original proposals.

"As the ultimate indication of the union's flexibility, the IUE-CBC (Coordinated Bargaining Committee) negotiating team offered to submit all contract issues to impartial arbitration as a means to avoid the strike. GE refused.

"Now we have this champion of non-bargaining, this company found by both the National Labor Relations Board and the Second Circuit Board of Appeals to have violated the law by its failure to bargain, General Electric, charging the IUE with avoiding bargaining. How cynical can GE get?

"I doubt that anyone takes GE's paid ads and company publications seriously anymore.

"Just for the record, the public should know that in more than seven months of talks GE has made but one offer and has refused to change a thought or a word. IUE is ready to bargain any place, any time and on any issue," Jennings emphasized.

State's Jobless Rolls Climb To 372,000

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less rate was the same as a month earlier but slightly higher than the 4.5 percent tallied in November 1968.

The civilian labor force, consisting of the employed and the unemployed available for and seeking work, totaled 8,428,000 last month compared to 8,170,000 in November 1968.

Food and Gifts Sought For Farm Workers

Food and gifts to support California farm workers in their historic battle for union recognition and collective bargaining rights are needed now.

The next food caravan to Delano will assemble Saturday, December 13 at 568 47th Street in Oakland and at 660 Howard Street in San Francisco and is scheduled to depart at 7 a.m.

On December 20, a truck will take anything that missed the December 13 caravan to Delano. Further information may be obtained by calling the following numbers: Oakland 655-3256 (7-9 a.m. or after 7 p.m.); San Francisco 333-7356; San Leandro 635-3265 or, in Fremont, 656-8656.

Supporters of the farm workers' strike and grape boycott are invited to join the caravan, bring sleeping bags and spend the weekend visiting with the farm workers who are now facing their fifth Christmas on strike for the basic rights already assured to most U.S. workers.

Five Bldg. Trades Councils To Help Minority Youths

Five AFL-CIO Building Trades Union Councils in the Sacramento Valley area will prepare 70 minority youths to pass apprenticeship tests under the AFL-CIO-U.S. Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Outreach program.

Morris E. Skinner, Regional Director of the Labor Department's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, said that joint recruitment and teaching efforts will be conducted by the Fresno, Marysville-Yuba City, Modesto, Sacramento and Stockton Building Trades Councils.

The one-year, \$102,703 contract will be operated by the Valley Area Construction Opportunity Program to recruit and tutor minority youth to enable them to pass tests for admission to apprenticeship.

The Apprenticeship Outreach Program calls for up to 10 weeks of training, using the "tutor and cram" technique, to help youths enter the building and construction trades.

Approximately 350 youths who indicate interest and aptitude will be "drafted" to study for apprenticeship tests as openings occur.

A Closer Look at Nixon's View of Wage-Hour Laws

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a half overtime pay by classifying flight instructors as "laborers or mechanics."

But in an address to the National Aviation Trades Association Inc. in Anaheim on December 1, Moran pointed out that one section of the FLSA exempts persons employed in a bona fide "executive, administrative or professional" capacity from minimum wage and overtime pay requirements.

"I firmly believe that the word professional, under our regulations, must be adapted to the rigid changes in technology and employment practices that have been taking place in this country in recent years," he declared.

Subsequently, in an interview with Harry Bernstein, labor writer for the Los Angeles Times, Moran said that the elimination of overtime for flight instructors was just a first step in the Nixon Administration's plans to open up many more exemptions.

The exemptions, particularly from eligibility for overtime, would apply to persons earning as little as \$6500 a year who could be classified as "professionals," "executives" or "administrators," he indicated.

Moran said the exemptions would include thousands of workers in such fields as computer programming and other technologically advanced jobs, Bernstein reported.

The heart of the Nixon

Administration's "new philosophy," Moran maintained, "is to concentrate on helping workers on the lowest rungs of our economic ladder get the \$1.60 minimum wage rather than concentrating on those \$5 an hour people who aren't getting time and a half for overtime."

To the general (non-union) public such a proposed shift in emphasis might seem eminently reasonable. This is because it is couched in "either-or" terms.

But the truth of the matter is that both the worker who is denied the federal minimum wage and the worker who is cheated out of overtime, regardless of his hourly wage rate, have equally valid claims and a national policy that would short shrift one to concentrate on the other can't be anything but unfair.

At first glance, statistics obtained from the Labor Department tend to confirm the Nixon Administration's contention that more emphasis in the past has been placed on overtime rather than minimum wage cases. In 1967, the Wage Hour and Public Contracts Division conducted 58,159 investigations that resulted in findings that workers had been shortchanged by employers of a total of \$76,092,726, including \$18,839,742 involving minimum wage cases and \$53,737,920 in overtime cases.

In 1968 when the Division

conducted 72,520 investigations, the dollar findings totaled \$89,072,524, including \$27,511,235 in minimum wage cases and \$54,996,417 in overtime cases.

The difference between the total figure and the sum of the minimum wage and overtime cases in each year is accounted for by equal pay cases, the Labor Department explained.

The nearly 50 percent increase in minimum wage cases between 1967 and 1968 is accounted for in large measure by the fact that the hike in the U.S. pay floor from \$1.40 to \$1.60 became effective on February 1, 1968 for more than 29 million FLA-covered workers and resulted, as usual, in an upsurge in resistance to the new minimum by employers.

But contrary to repeated claims made by employer spokesmen that increases in the minimum wage result in wiping out thousands of jobs, Moran acknowledged that the AFL-CIO's position that this simply was not so was correct.

"Our studies show that despite all the warnings from employers opposing minimum wage hikes, such hikes have had virtually no negative impact on job levels," Moran said.

"Employers somehow manage to adjust and even increase the number of their workers," he added.

While the Labor Department figures seem to suggest, at first

glance, that more attention is directed to overtime than to minimum wage cases, such a superficial conclusion ignores the fact that workers who feel they're cheated out of overtime are far more likely to make a case of it than workers who feel they're cheated out of minimum wages both because the money sums involved are generally greater and in part, because the worker involved in overtime cases is probably somewhat more aware of his rights and willing to fight for them.

Organized labor has repeatedly urged substantial strengthening of the enforcement of the nation's Fair Labor Standard Act, its minimum wage and overtime pay laws—all of them.

The need is underscored by Labor Dept. figures showing that barely one-third of the \$89 million in wages that workers were deprived of last year was paid to them.

But the Nixon Administration's so-called "new philosophy" clearly suggests an intent to give less attention to overtime claims in order to concentrate on minimum wage claims.

Such a policy, if carried out, might be pleasing to the big business types that dominate the Nixon Administration since employers would stand a better chance of cheating their workers out of overtime but essentially it boils down to a policy of unequal enforcement of the law and whose really for that?

Murphy Votes Against Unions in Move To Bar Labor's Political Action

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tirement if any dues or assessments paid to the organization were used "to support or oppose any candidate for public office or for other political purposes."

Voting for this attempt to make second class citizens out of trade unionists was U.S. Senator George Murphy. U.S. Senator Alan Cranston voted against it. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 59 to 27.

Last month, Thos. L. Pitts, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, wrote all affiliates to urge them to write Senators Cranston and Murphy to demand strengthening of the tax reform bill, including defeat of the Fannin

amendment.

The AFL-CIO National Department of Legislation had warned earlier that the Fannin amendment represented an attempt "to deny working Americans their rights in all political areas from the courthouse to the nation's capitol."

Under existing law it is already illegal for unions, corporations or any tax exempt organization to make direct contributions in federal elections but loss of tax exempt status is not among the penalties presently imposed.

In leading opposition to the amendment Senator Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.) said the amendment was "unfair, one-sided and anti-labor."

And Thomas Eagleton (D-Mo.) said that the amendment was "not an attempt to remove an equity from the law but an attempt to write one in."

In addition to being "unfair and anti-labor," Mondale said that the Fannin amendment would have nullified a Senate vote taken just last week that removed from the tax reform bill a section that would have barred private foundations and such groups as the League of Women Voters from conducting voter registration drives.

The gross inequity the amendment would have imposed is pointed up by the fact that nothing in it would have put any limits on the political

activities of such groups as the National Association of Manufacturers' Business-Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC), the American Medical Association's American Medical Political Action Committee (AMPAC), or the countless Chambers of Commerce and trade associations that are openly and actively involved in political activities. It was aimed only at labor.

Yet Senator Murphy, who likes to bill himself as a former union man, voted for this vicious anti-union amendment.

That's something trade unionists throughout the state would do well to remember at election time next year.

GE Boycott Merits Backing Of All, Fed Board Says

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statement adopted at the Council's meeting in Palm Springs Wednesday.

The Council's statement, released by Thos. L. Pitts, the Federation's Executive officer, pledged the State AFL-CIO's "full and immediate support" to the striking GE workers and called on each of California's 1.3 million AFL-CIO trade unionists to involve themselves in the GE boycott and strike "morally financially and through personal support."

The Council urged all trade unionists to make a point to contribute \$1 each to the GE Strike Relief Fund and to volunteer their services to local central labor bodies to help push the GE boycott.

TEXT OF STATEMENT

Here's the complete text of the Council's statement:

"The General Electric boycott deserves the support of all workers interested in protecting the right of free men and women to have a say in what they will or will not work for.

"That's the basic issue at stake in the current unprecedented strike involving 13 unions and nearly 150,000 workers against General Electric, the world's largest electrical manufacturer.

"General Electric brought this strike and boycott on itself.

"Between May and October of this year, it refused to engage in any meaningful negotiation with the unions involved.

"On October 7, 1969 the press received GE's one and only pre-strike 'take-it-or-leave-it' offer before it was received by the unions' negotiating committee.

"Shortly before the strike began on October 27, 1969, GE rejected a union offer to submit the issues in dispute to binding arbitration. The union repeated this offer just two weeks ago and GE again rejected it.

"If this multi-billion dollar firm, with 280 plants in 33 states of the union and other facilities scattered throughout

more than 100 countries abroad succeeds in flouting the nation's collective bargaining laws, other corporations will be encouraged to do likewise to maximize profits at the expense of their workers whether their workers are union or non-union.

"GE's flagrant contempt for the nation's established policy of encouraging free collective bargaining has been evidenced by the tactics it has pursued throughout this decade toward unions representing its workers.

"This has been confirmed by a U.S. Appeals Court decision handed down the day the current strike began that held that bargaining tactics used by GE in an earlier dispute were unlawful and directed the company to engage in genuine collective bargaining.

"Specifically, the court held that GE violated the National Labor Relations act by refusing to furnish information requested by the union; by attempting to deal separately with various union locals; and by failing to bargain in good faith.

GE TACTIC RAPPED

"Moreover, the court expressly denounced the company's practice of making its one and only proposal on a 'take-it-or-leave-it' basis shortly before a strike deadline and then attempting to sell its proposal to the employees and the general public as a 'product' using the company's highly sophisticated consumer product merchandising techniques.

"But GE, convicted in 1963 as the number one firm involved in a price rigging scandal that robbed millions of U.S. taxpayers of more than \$100 million, is scarcely affected by the court's ruling. It clearly regards itself to be above the law since it is using almost identical tactics in the current strike.

"The record shows that GE workers have been short-changed. The average GE worker's purchasing power today is less than it was in 1960.

"The record shows that GE's earnings during the past nine years have been phenomenal.

In 1960, GE made 14.3 percent profit as against 9.2 percent for all manufacturing. In 1968 GE made 14.8 percent, against 12.1 percent for all manufacturing. In dollar terms, GE profits after taxes rose more than 78 percent during this nine year period. And its recently announced third-quarter profits were 11 percent higher than a year ago.

"In short, GE clearly believes that it can hoodwink the public through its slick ads in the communications media. In fact, GE is so convinced of the effectiveness of its propaganda machinery that it has had the arrogance to boost prices on a long list of its appliances from three to six percent just a few weeks ago in spite of its high profits and to charge, at the same time, that its workers' wage demands were 'inflationary.'

GE'S DOUBLETALK HIT

"In its own self-interest, the consuming public cannot afford to be bamboozled by GE's self-serving doubletalk.

"The Executive Council of the California Labor Federation pledges its full and immediate support to the valiant trade unionists forced to carry the battle of all workers against this huge corporation and urges each and every one of the 1.3 million AFL-CIO trade unionists in California to do likewise by involving themselves in the GE boycott and strike morally, financially and through personal support.

"Specifically the council urges each and every AFL-CIO union member in the state to be sure to contribute \$1 each to the GE Strike Relief Fund and to volunteer to their central labor bodies to help push the boycott against all GE and Hotpoint products. Contributions should be sent to GE Strike Relief Fund, in care of Lane Kirkland, AFL-CIO, Secretary-Treasurer, 815 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

"The complete involvement of all trade unionists will be absolutely essential to win this crucial struggle."

Inflation Laid To Business Pricing & Profit Policies

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ing price level. Rising living costs are washing out all or most of the buying power of workers' collective bargaining gains of the past several years.

"Despite the advances negotiated in 1969—and there have been some large ones—Secretary of Labor George Schultz reported to the AFL-CIO convention on October 2 that the median wage increase after accounting for the rise of consumer prices, has been only a little under two percent in the first year of the agreements.

BUYING POWER DIPS

"Some workers, who are locked into long-term agreements negotiated two or three years ago, have experienced a decline in the buying power of their earnings.

"In addition, the buying power of the average non-supervisory worker's weekly take-home pay after federal tax deductions in 1969 has been hardly any greater than last year or in 1965, four years ago. For the vast majority of workers—and for low-wage workers in particular—these developments represent a burden on them and their families.

"Under these conditions, demands for wage increases are obviously based, in large part, on prior increases in the cost-of-living.

PRICES RISE FIRST

"In collective bargaining negotiations, workers and their trade union leaders seek to offset the previous rise in living costs and to gain some advance in the standard of living. If workers fail to achieve such objectives, their real earnings decline and a continuing rise in the cost-of-living puts their real earnings further behind. Therefore, a major factor in trade union wage demands is the prior rise in living costs.

"Our analysis of the rising price level leads us to the conclusion that its major causes are to be found in business pricing policies and profits. It seems to us that changes in pricing and profit policies are needed to slow down the rise of living costs."