



California AFL-CIO News

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THOS. L. PITTS 151
Executive Secretary-Treasurer

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8 Big Oil Firms Fined \$550,000 For Price-Fixing

Did you know that eight of the nation's major oil companies have just been fined more than half a million dollars for conspiring to fix prices and sales to private brand distributors?

Chances are you didn't because stories dealing with corporate crimes that bilk the nation's consumers out of millions of dollars year after year are often buried in the finance sections of many of the nation's preponderantly conservative daily papers if they are carried at all.

In fact, critics of American newspaper publishers—excluding Vice President Spiro T. Agnew—have often charged that some publishers deliberately downplay or “bury” stories adversely affecting some of their biggest advertisers. But who pays any attention to critics like that?

At any rate the Associated
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Bay Bldg. Trades Seek 200 More Minority Youths

Five Northern California Building and Construction Trades Councils are participating in a program to prepare 200 more minority youths from the Oakland area for apprenticeship entrance exams in the building trades through the U.S. Labor Department's Apprenticeship Outreach Program.

During the first contract the Building Trades Councils participating in the Bay Area Construction Opportunity Program exceeded the goal of 200 placements by better than 50 percent.

They placed a total of 302 youths, including 154 carpen-

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Are You Eligible?

90,000 Calif. Workers Rate Flood Disaster Aid

An estimated 90,000 workers, including farm workers, who lost their jobs as a result of floods early last year may be eligible for a share of some \$28 million in federal disaster unemployment assistance funds that are about to be made available under the Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1969.

Thos. L. Pitts, Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, urged all local unions and central bodies “to give the broadest possible publicity to the availability of this additional aid for workers hard hit economically by last year's floods.”

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GE Strikers Winning Worldwide Support

The multi-billion dollar General Electric Company continued to play games with the public through publicity releases this week instead of engaging in any meaningful collective bargaining with the unions representing their 150,000 striking workers despite the fact that more GE workers are on strike now than when the strike first began and support for the strikers is mounting throughout the world.

On the West Coast, apparently as part of GE's carefully orchestrated propaganda barrage, H. M. Lawson, GE's Western Regional Vice President, repeated GE's outrageously false claim that “union leadership is reluctant to sit down and really talk about the issues.”

The truth of the matter is
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Dance to Help Her-Ex Strikers In L.A. Jan. 16

A fund-raising dance to commemorate the valiant and continuing struggle of striking and locked out employees of the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner to win fair wages and working conditions will be held Friday,

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Pitts Hits Nixon Mid-East Plan as 'Appeasement'

“The Nixon Administration is on the road to the appeasement of dictatorship in the Middle East,” Thos. L. Pitts, Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, warned Tuesday.

Specifically, Pitts attacked the administration's proposal that Israel leave territories she occupied in June 1967 in return for a promise of peace from Egypt.

He said that such a policy would allow the Soviet Union and Egypt to achieve through political pressure what they could not win on the battlefield.

“It would place a rearmed
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Congress Faces Big Work-Load in '70

Any objective analysis of the year 1969 can only emphasize the immense load of unfinished business that faces the United States for the year 1970.

The President has failed to move successfully in numerous areas of national life where

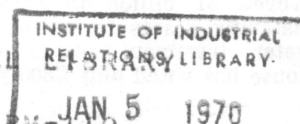
legislation is urgently needed. An examination of the still unanswered legislative needs of the country must hold the key to what kind of Congress the American people will need both next year and in the years ahead.

Tax Reform: The President this week signed a watered-down tax reform bill that still leaves perhaps \$10 billion in tax loopholes. The tax burden has largely been removed from the very poor—which is all to the good—but the middle income worker is still the tax goat on April 15.

Lobbyists for the nation's rich interests swarmed into the Capital to protect their own

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Congress Faces Big Work-Load in '70

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special groups. The general public, perhaps in the illusion that "real" reform was likely, fell back to its old apathy. Nixon's proposals aimed at reducing tax relief included in the bill for lower and middle income persons were compromised in part by reducing the increase in exemptions when the bill went to joint Senate-House conferees.

Inflation: The Nixon Administration has made no bones about its determination to beat back inflation come what may. Already the country is suffering from "tight money" policies that have crippled the building industry and have hurt millions who buy on credit. Spokesmen for the administration have more and more conceded that unemployment is one of the prices that will yet be paid.

The President first started out promising that this would not happen. The fact is that it has already. Unemployment last January was at a rate of 3.3 percent. Today, it is 3.9 percent after reaching 4 percent in September.

Industrial Health and Safety: One of the crucial pieces of unfinished business of the current Congress is an industrial safety bill satisfactory to organized labor. Numerous representatives of labor have appeared before committees hearing testimony on the need for strict federal regulations and standards to protect the nation's workers.

The Nixon Administration, conceding the urgent need to correct such shocking statistics as an annual toll of more than 14,000 deaths, and more than two million injuries, has proposed legislation that leaves the burden of protective law on the states and safety standards on private industry. A much stronger bill providing for federal standards and federal enforcement is still before Congress with strong labor support.

Social Security: The need for bringing Social Security benefits up to date—notably the benefit level as compared with living costs and retirement needs—has long been recognized. Organized labor and the National Council of Senior Citizens have called for a 50 percent increase in benefits over

the next two years, more liberal treatment of retirement rights, an increase in the minimum benefits, use of public funds in the retirement system and improved Medicare benefits.

The Nixon Administration has asked for only a 10 percent increase in benefits and a small increase in minimum benefits. At stake is a retirement in dignity and economic security. Congress included a 15 percent increase in Social Security benefits in the tax reform bill despite the the Nixon Administration's opposition.

The War on Poverty: The Nixon Administration has clearly swung the problem of job training and the production of jobs to private industry. While the Labor Department has pressed training programs, it has shifted the emphasis from government programs to private programs with federal economic help. The Job Corps has been pretty well dismantled, and the labor union apprenticeship system largely sidetracked.

The role of state employment agencies has been greatly enlarged with emphasis on state responsibility for jobs and job training. The concept of the government as the "employer of last resort" has been rejected. In its fight on inflation, the administration has decreed economic cutbacks that can only increase the pressure on jobs, with non-white workers likely to be the greatest sufferers.

Pollution: Congress and the Administration have talked about air, water and soil pollution through pesticides, but still have a long way to go in making a determined, well-financed campaign to protect the country from pollutants.

The need is great. Over and over again, scientists have warned us that we cannot go on polluting air and water without eventually destroying ourselves. Some have gone so far as to say that life on earth itself may be threatened as the ecology of the planet is shattered.

While the Senate has approved \$1 billion to provide matching grants for states for water treatment plants, the House has voted only \$600 mil-

lion and the Nixon Administration asked for only \$214 million. How much will actually be used is still doubtful.

Fair Labor Standards: There is a wide range of labor legislation that still lies dormant. Organized labor has long called for a \$2 an hour minimum wage. The Nixon Administration is opposed to this. Labor has called for revision of the National Labor Relations Act by which farm workers would be given the same rights and protection that industrial workers have. The Nixon Administration has proposed a plan that would still leave farm labor weak, with its right to strike gravely impaired.

The rights of the construction trades in situs picketing are still unresolved, with Congress marking time. The urgent necessity of reforming the workmen's compensation system and bringing it up to date still hangs fire.

Medical Legislation: President Nixon in a message to Congress made a cogent analysis of the medical problems affecting the country, including the tremendous increase in medical costs, but did not come up with a program that is likely to solve these problems.

What is highly significant, however, is that talk of a National Health Insurance program has been revived. The fundamental success of Medicare and Medicaid—despite the abuses that have surrounded their costs through scandalously high doctors' fees—has brought home the advisability of including all Americans, regardless of age and economic status, into a national program.

While a National Health Program is still far from reaching an active legislative stage, it appears certain that in the next few years it will become a serious legislative proposal.

There are other great areas of unfinished business: aid for education, further consumer protection, increased pay for postal workers . . . the list is endless.

The first year of the Nixon Administration is virtually gone. The amount of "hard" legislation that has been voted and signed is slim . . . too slim in the face of the need.

Pitts Hits Nixon Mid-East Plan as 'Appeasement'

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Egypt on the very borders Israel had to defend in 1967," he pointed out.

Pitts, executive officer of the State AFL-CIO said the administration should use its influence to bring Israel and the Arab countries into direct peace negotiations.

The American trade union movement has enjoyed a long association with the trade union movement of Israel, he said, but "so long as the Nasser influence denies Arab workers their freedom, the Arab countries will never know either peace or democracy."

AFL-CIO Backs Curb on Unasked Credit Cards

Credit cards should not be sent to people who haven't requested them, the AFL-CIO maintains.

In voicing labor's support for a credit card regulation bill sponsored by U.S. Senator William Proxmire (D-Wis.), AFL-CIO Legislative Director Andrew J. Biemiller wrote to a Senate Banking subcommittee saying:

"The only question we have is whether the mailing of unsolicited credit cards should not be banned outright rather than indirectly discouraged as presently provided in the bill. We hope the subcommittee will give favorable consideration to an outright ban."

The AFL-CIO also strongly supports a provision of the Proxmire bill which would limit a credit cardholder's liability for unauthorized use of his card to \$50 and provide other safeguards.

'Let The Sunshine In'

"Much has been done to let pure air and sunshine into working places, to exclude conditions breeding organisms injurious to life, but ever-increasing knowledge and the widening of our conception forbid us to stop or stay in the crusade for human welfare." — Samuel Gompers.

Worldwide Support Pours in for GE Strikers

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union negotiators have attempted to get a responsive collective bargaining dialogue going with GE management almost continually between May and October of 1969 but GE consistently refused.

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

GE SPURNS ARBITRATION

The 13 unions involved offered to submit the issues in dispute to binding arbitration both before and since the strike began but GE has consistently refused to do so.

Lawson also attempted to leave the general public with the impression that GE has made a real attempt to settle the strike.

"Not only did the union officials refuse to discuss the economic aspects of a new contract until the month the contract expired, but they rejected both our first and second offers before they even discussed them at the bargaining table," Lawson claimed.

WORSE THAN FIRST

The truth is that John Baldwin, GE's chief negotiator, admitted at a bargaining session in New York on December 23 that the company's second contract offer of December 6 was worse than the first.

Members of the union negotiating committee, who knew that already, were stunned to hear it from the company's own spokesman.

When they pointed out to Baldwin that the company's advertising is trumpeting the claim that its December 6 offer "directly meets the employee's concerns" and "demonstrates the flexibility in our bargaining," Baldwin promptly denied he had made any such admission.

The facts about the December 6 offer are as follows:

- It makes no change at all in first-year wages. For 1969-70 the proposal is 20 cents an hour for more than 98 percent of the workers. For others it sets a skilled worker allowance that for a tiny handful of employees might go as high as its 25 cents ceiling.

- The proposed second and third year increases of three percent would be the lowest in any major union contract in the country and they would widen, rather than lessen, current area wage differentials.

- The cost of living proposal in GE's so-called second offer is exactly the same as the inadequate one in the last contract. GE, in its typical way, says it is two percent instead of the old one and three-quarter percent.

NO CHANGE AT ALL

But in the old contract the one and three-quarter percent was calculated after the annual wage increase was applied. The two percent would be calculated before the wage increment is added. The result is that this figures out to no change at all.

Moreover the GE cost of living proposal would provide a maximum of only two percent each year. This means that if the cost of living continues to rise at its present rate, GE workers would lose 15 cents an

hour in the next 12 months.

Beyond that GE's so-called new offer still ignores arbitration, the union shop and area wage differentials and still demands the right to cut wages during the life of the contract.

In a sincere attempt to get GE to sit down and bargain fairly, the IUE-Coordinated Bargaining Committee proposed:

UNIONS' PROPOSAL

- A mutual agreement on a 16-month contract.

- A 35 cents an hour increase in the first year.

- A full cost of living clause to take effect in the last four months of the agreement.

- All the non-economic and fringe benefit proposals which the union has made.

In addition, the union repeated its offer to submit all unresolved issues to binding arbitration, an offer that GE's management has repeatedly refused.

Meanwhile the global nature

of GE's operations came more fully before the public eye when support for the strikers began coming in from such far flung quarters as Japan, Israel, and Australia.

Histadrut, the Israeli trade union organization has contributed \$5,000 to the GE Strike Fund and promised its full support in every other way.

JAPANESE SUPPORT

The Japan Council of the International Metal Workers' Federation (IMF) has set up a special publicity committee to inform the public of the strike issues and to raise funds and has cabled its support to the IUE-CBC.

And Denkin Roren, the giant Japanese electrical union, has expressed its full support for the GE strikers as have the 53,000 workers at the huge Toshiba electrical complex. GE owns a major share of the Toshiba works.

AUSTRALIA VOWS AID

The Electrical Trades Union of Australia, representing more than 62,000 workers, has also pledged all out support to the GE strikers.

Similar pledges have come from the Metal Workers Federation in Brazil and Chile and other pledges of support have come from union workers in Ireland, Argentina, Italy and Mexico.

In California and throughout the nation, the AFL-CIO sponsored boycott of GE products was accelerating.

GE BOYCOTT SPREADS

In Southern California, for example, the Machinists at Lockheed are concentrating on covering the Burbank area; and the Steelworkers and Rubber Workers are concentrating on the heavy industrial areas around Maywood and Southgate.

Although negotiations resumed between the IUE-CBC and GE on Monday, no progress was reported as of press time.

But James Compton, Chairman of the CBC Steering Committee reported that "the strike is solid and it will stay solid."

The strike is solid, he added, "because the needs of the workers have not been met. It will stay solid until they are, and GE's trickery, which worked in past years will have no effect this time."

Senate Votes 4% Pay Hike For Federal Employees

The Senate passed a "bare-bones" pay raise for federal employees, scaled down by its Post Office and Civil Service Committee in the hope of averting a presidential veto.

It would give most salaried federal and postal employees—those earning less than \$10,000 a year—a 4 percent pay raise, effective January 1, 1970.

Smaller raises would be given to those in higher grades—3 percent for the \$10,000 to \$15,000 bracket, 2% in the \$15,000-\$20,000 bracket, and 1 percent for the top regular pay grade. No immediate increase would be provided for the highest-ranking executives.

All employees would be guaranteed an additional raise of at least 3 percent on July 1, based on comparability adjustments with private industry.

The House earlier voted a 5.4 percent raise for postal workers, retroactive to October 1, along with a pay-setting procedure to keep all government pay scales more up-to-date with private industry patterns. President

Nixon would "seriously undercut" the government's efforts to curb inflation.

Senator Gale W. McGee (D-Wyo.), chairman of the committee which drew up the bill, said the amount of the increase was cut to "bare bones" so that it would not be vetoed. He said present salaries are based on comparability data for the summer of 1968. Since then, he said, living costs have gone up 7.4 percent.

The House has requested a conference to seek to resolve differences between the two bills, thus putting off final action until the second session.

Relativity of Wages

A \$100 a week average net income may sound like a good income to many people, but to some it only means that they are living at or under the Federally established poverty level. A man and wife with six children living in the city or a farm couple with ten children would be considered "poor" by these standards were they making only \$100 week net income.

Bay Bldg. Trades Seek 200 More Minority Youths

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ters, 11 cement masons, 17 electricians, 5 ironworkers, 5 operating engineers, 22 painters, 12 in the pipe trades, 10 plasterers, 2 roofers, 14 sheetmetal workers, 4 tile setters, 42 in miscellaneous trades and 1 each as a bricklayer, glazer, lather and machinist.

The second contract has been funded for \$250,888 under the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) for one year, Morris Skinner, Regional Director of the Labor Department's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, said.

AFL-CIO Building Trades Councils participating in the program include those in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Santa Clara and San Mateo.

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

Disadvantaged youths are recruited through local State Employment Service Offices, Apprenticeship Information Centers, local unions and central bodies and various other social service agencies.

The program is designed to "reach out" to minority youth, motivate their interest in becoming skilled craftsmen and help them pass apprenticeship tests in 18 building and construction trades.

Experienced union craftsmen and other program sponsors also counsel and assist those apprentices selected to help them remain in their chosen apprenticeships until they succeed in completing it.

Disabled at Work

Many handicapped workers are benefiting by technological advances in the modern working world, when skill means more than muscle. For example, a polio-paralyzed engineer runs a computer for an aircraft company, although he works from a wheelchair and sleeps in an artificial respirator.

Are You Eligible?

90,000 Calif. Workers Rate Flood Disaster Aid

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The act, Public Law 7139, became effective October 1 and applies to "any individual unemployed as the result of a major disaster."

Eligibility for assistance is not limited only to those covered by unemployment insurance but is available to any worker living and working in a disaster area who no longer had a job or was unable to get to his job after the floods struck, according to Brad Bailey, assistant to Sig Hansen, Deputy Director of the State Department of Human Resources Development which will administer the relief program in California for the U. S. Department of Labor.

FACT SHEET READIED

A fact sheet spelling out general details for eligibility for the disaster unemployment assistance is currently being developed and will be available at unemployment insurance offices of the California Department of Human Resources Development by January 12, the first day on which applications for such assistance will be accepted, Bailey said.

Hansen estimated that the

average person affected would be eligible for six weeks of benefits at an average of about \$51 per week or a total of \$306. But he emphasized that that was an estimated "average." Some workers might qualify for less and some for more—up to a maximum of 26 weeks of disaster assistance, it was explained.

DISASTER AREAS

Earlier this year, 37 California counties were declared disaster areas after heavy rains and a record snow pack in the Sierra caused major flood damage.

These counties are:

Amador, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Humboldt, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Riverside, Sacramento, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Sierra, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, Ventura and Yuba.

Hansen explained that applications may be made any day between January 12 and Feb-

ruary 23 and that the funds would be paid out over a period of two or three months.

He estimated that 140,000 persons could be expected to apply and that about 90,000 would be eligible.

In some instances, workers who drew unemployment compensation may still be eligible for additional relief under the disaster unemployment assistance program, Bailey said.

For example, if a worker's UI benefit was less than the sum he would be entitled to under the disaster unemployment assistance program, he may be entitled to the difference.

Dance to Help Her-Ex Strikers

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January 16, at the Hollywood Palladium.

The dance will feature entertainment and all attending will have a chance to win a color TV set as a door prize.

Tickets for this worthy event may be purchased at \$2.50 per person at the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner Strike headquarters at Olive and 11th Streets in Los Angeles and may be reserved by calling Area Code 213-748-3053.

Proceeds of the dance will be used to carry on this essential battle to preserve free collective bargaining.

The strike-lockout began December 15, 1967. Since then the paper has been operating with professional strikebreakers but its advertising revenues have been drastically reduced and its circulation slashed to less than half of its former 725,000 due to the on-going consumer boycott of the paper and other publications in the multi-million dollar Hearst chain.

"All Federation affiliates and individual trade unionists are urged to buy tickets for the dance and, if possible, attend it," Thos. L. Pitts, Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, said.

8 Major Oil Firms Plead 'No Defense' To Price-Fixing Charges, Fined \$550,000

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Press reported on Christmas Eve that U. S. District Court Judge Reynier J. Wortendyke imposed fines totaling \$550,000 on the eight oil firms after the firms entered pleas of no defense to charges that they had conspired to monopolize interstate trade of gasoline products since 1955.

The indictment was brought against the firms in 1965 and charged that the firms had forced non-named brand distributors to sell the oil at a certain price.

The firms involved and their fines were:

Atlantic Refining Company, \$100,000; Gulf Oil Corporation, \$100,000; Cities Service Oil

Company, \$100,000; Cities Service Company, \$50,000; American Oil Company, \$50,000; Humble Oil and Refining Company, \$50,000; Sinclair Refining Company, \$50,000; and Mobil Oil Corporation, \$50,000.

The fact that these major oil companies entered pleas of no defense and simply accepted the fine tends to corroborate charges made repeatedly over the years that the maximum penalties impossible under the nation's anti-trust laws are so inadequate as to invite huge corporations to flout them.

And this suggests that the adage "Crime does not pay" needs to be amended to read "Crime does not pay except for huge corporations."