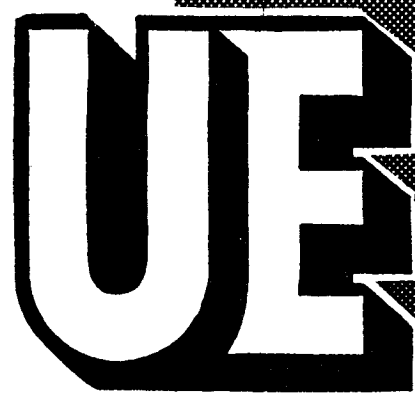


BASIC PRINCIPLES

AGGRESSIVE STRUGGLE

RANK AND FILE CONTROL

UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS OF AMERICA



“WE form an organization which unites all workers in our industry on an industrial basis, and rank and file control, regardless of craft, age, sex, nationality, race, creed or political beliefs, and pursue at all times a policy of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions.”

from Preamble to UE Constitution

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Aggressive Struggle Rank and File Control

As negotiations for the 1979 General Electric contract got under way, the UE publicity department received a phone call from a labor reporter of a major business publication stationed in Washington. He wanted to know the name of the lawyer who would be heading up the union's negotiations.

When told that UE negotiations would be conducted by a committee representing the local unions in the company's chain of plants and headed by the union's officers, he wasn't convinced and insisted. "All right, but who is the lawyer in charge?"

That newspaperman could not be blamed for his question or his skepticism because his experience has been with unions where so-called experts including lawyers play leading roles in negotiations.

While the UE has the help of its dedicated lawyers and research department in technical preparations for contract negotiations, they operate in the context of the fundamental principle of "rank and file control" as set out in the preamble to the union's constitution.

In organizing campaigns, too, the union seeks to persuade workers that only their participation at every stage of organization, contract negotiations and in the life of the local can result in the building of an effective organization.

It was fear of the power that principle represents which led corporate executives, political bosses and some labor leaders to try to destroy the UE during the late forties and for two decades after.

And it was the power of that principle that was the source of the union's ability to survive their onslaught.

The term "rank and file control" would by itself be meaningless unless linked to the policies arising out of the rest of the preamble. Specifically, "aggressive struggle" on an "industrial basis" and spelling out the all-inclusiveness of the working people the union seeks to organize.

Building and maintaining a union on such grounds is a very difficult task because it challenges the whole direction of our society, a direction which leads to ever smaller parts of the society dominating the great majority.

This is apparent in what has been happening with elections, for example, as well as the arms race and threat of war.

Increasingly, the American people stay away from elections because they feel that they are fixed or that there is little choice between the contending major parties. The rank and file are shut out by the wealthy who control the advertising media, and influence elect-

ed officials, with high-powered lobbying and huge campaign contributions.

When the people protest being put through a disastrous and unneeded war, they are told to be quiet because only the "experts" know what is good for them.

Or when three-quarters of a million Americans demonstrate against nuclear war, their concern is laid to ignorance or the charge that they are being manipulated by communists, Russians at that.

In every sphere of life, the essence of democracy — the people's right to determine their lives — is curtailed.

It is in this atmosphere that a labor reporter finds it difficult to accept that rank and file trade unionists could meet and contend with a corporation — even though they are the ones who work at the machines and suffer the consequences of conditions in the plant.

In their continuing efforts to denigrate the need of working people for genuine unions, the employers and the media make use of the defects of the labor movement to promote an attitude of cynicism towards all unions.

They point to high salaries of union officers, examples of corruption and lack of democracy — the very practices that prevail in corporate life and which rank and file trade unionism fights.

The bosses of industry much prefer to reach agreement with a few top union officials and are horrified when the rank and file refuses to go along, again accusing it of ignorance and of all things, greed.

ELEMENTS OF UE DEMOCRACY

The founders of UE addressed themselves to all these issues, as the union's constitution and practices show.

The founders also broke with the practice of having officers serve terms of four years or longer. The present trend in most unions is to return to such a practice.

The UE founders set limits on officers' salaries — no more than the top rate earned by a union member on the job. This helped discourage those who would seek office because it was more advantageous than working in a plant. It has helped keep elected officers from thinking like the bosses and acting like them towards the membership.

They established a shop steward system based on units small enough to enable the steward to be in close contact with the members and their shop problems.

Union conventions were organized to be made up basically of dues-paying, working members of the union rather than of staff members beholden to the officers who have appointed them, as is common elsewhere in the labor movement.

The union consistently and persistently encourages rank and file members to participate in organizing campaigns in their own plants and in others, thereby helping to train them for union leadership.

Those who founded the union in 1936 emphasized the principle of rank and file control because of their own experience and their knowledge of trade union history in the U.S.



COMPANY UNION EXPERIENCE

Some had belonged to company unions or to American Federation of Labor craft unions where the rank and file were expected to pay their dues but not speak up when union policy affecting their lives was being decided.

Among the union's founders were some who worked for GE in Lynn, Mass. There, during World War I, a labor-management committee called the Joint Adjustment Committee had been set up at government direction as the result of a strike. The committee's decisions were referred to the plant manager. His decision was final.

One worker was so taken in by this caricature of labor organization that he wrote in the plant paper, "We passed through two wage reductions without labor difficulty of any kind."

At GE and many other plants, there were Works Councils and Employee Representation Plans masquerading as unions and designed to divert workers from forming genuine unions. In some places, as at the Schenectady, N.Y. GE plant, there had been craft unions which the company succeeded in smashing, not least because they operated separately on behalf of limited groups.

The trade union movement was replete with examples of one craft union in a plant undertaking a struggle against the employer only to find another going along with the boss. What the country witnessed in 1981 when air traffic controllers struck and every other section of the industry worked was once commonplace. Industrial unionism was the answer to that divisiveness in the factory.

DIVISIVE UNIONS

The union's founders had also experienced unions that were such in name only as they



were based on perpetuating division among working people instead of uniting them.

It was that experience that led them to write into the preamble to the constitution that they would seek to organize on an industrial basis, "regardless of craft, age, sex, nationality, race, creed or political beliefs."

The year the UE was founded there existed in the electrical manufacturing industry unions whose constitutions limited membership on the basis of craft, age, sex, race, religion, political belief and even state of a worker's health.

Here are some of the restrictive membership clauses:

"Applicants for membership must be **Christian White Males** — of the full age of 21 . . ."

"Any man is (eligible for membership) . . . except those who are members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). . . Colored: Where there are a sufficient number of colored helpers they may be organized as an auxiliary local and shall be under the jurisdiction of white locals having jurisdiction over that territory. . ."

This reference to colored helpers shows how such a union helped enforce the employer's denial of a right to a decent job to black workers. It was racism with a union label that prevented workingclass unity.

"Any **white person** between the ages of 16 and 65. . . who believes in the existence

of a **Supreme Being**, who is free from hereditary or contracted **disease** (is eligible for membership. . .)."

"Any person or member known to hold membership in the Industrial Workers of the World, the One Big Union or any organization of **Communists** or who by act or deed does or says anything in the furtherance of the objectives or welfare of those organizations. . . shall not be eligible for membership in the association. . . ."

Obviously, such restrictions perpetuated labor's weakness in the face of the employer, especially as American industry built plants employing thousands and even tens of thousands of workers.

Such a labor movement enabled employers to use workers denied jobs or union membership because of all these "reasons" as cheap labor or scabs.

This happened when the steel and packinghouse workers tried to organize shortly after World War I.

Often, craft unions functioned merely as dues collection agencies that employers went to for carefully selected workers who would not make "trouble." They were employment agencies rather than instruments of struggle.

And if a worker did cause "trouble", he

could be expelled from the union as a "communist" and fired by the boss because he wasn't a union member.

The leader of one such national union boasted to UE Sec.-Treas. Julius Emspak at a White House meeting of President Roosevelt's World War II Labor Victory Committee, "All I have to do is draw my breath and my pay." And the pay was huge. No need for him to lead a struggle; everything was under control, especially the rank and file. There was a community of interests between this kind of "labor leader" and the employer.

The consequences of these restrictions against organizing the unorganized were tragic for working people and the country. Between 1920 and 1929, the average hourly wage in the electrical manufacturing industry, for example, rose by less than one cent. GE's profit nearly tripled in that period.

FAILURE TO ORGANIZE

When the industrial union movement was being organized in the 1930's there were only three million members in the AFL plus several hundred thousand in unaffiliated unions such as the railway brotherhoods.

The huge electrical manufacturing industry that had been developed in the first third

"My father always used to think that capitalists and labor don't mix," Myrtle McGuire, a founding member of the UE at the Camden, N.J. RCA plant told the UE NEWS in an 1949 interview.

Her father was Peter J. McGuire, founder of the Carpenters Union who is credited with having proposed the establishment of a Labor Day.

According to his diary, which Miss McGuire recalled, her father walked from Lynn, Mass. to Salem, Mass. for four and a half months, there and back, to organize the textile workers.

"We didn't have any money to buy coal, the day father died," a second daughter present at the interview recalled. "He died freezing."

As the interview was taking place in the daughters' home, the UE was fighting a red-baiting attack at RCA. Referring to that attack, Myrtle McGuire said, "All those charges of 'communism' against our leaders only helps the company."

Peter J. McGuire, revered by many who engage in such divisive activities, was a founder of the English-speaking branch of the Socialist Labor Party, according to Labor's Untold Story.

of the 20th century was virtually union-free except for some ineffectual craft unions.

Within three years, by 1939, UE had grown into a powerful force of several hundred thousand members. This was done by the workers themselves without any financial help from any other union, unlike some other unions in the new movement.

It was led largely by young, rank and file organizers.

UE'S RAPID GROWTH

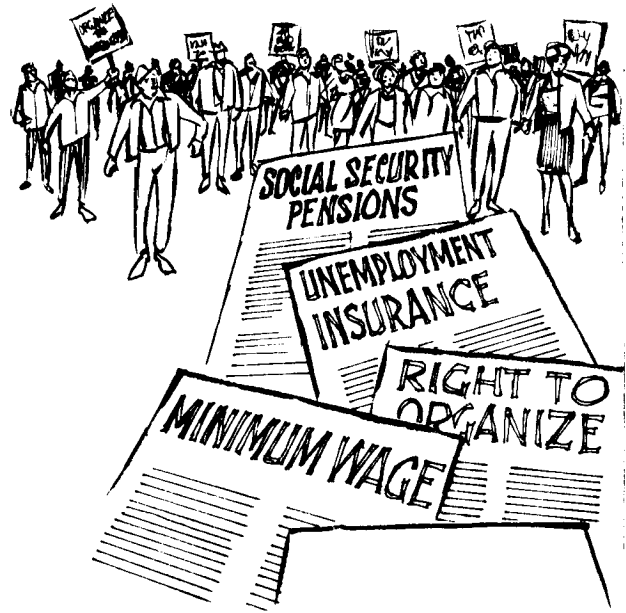
Within three years, by 1939, the UE had signed a national agreement with the General Electric Co. Two years later, Westinghouse was under national agreement although the company fought hard at the plants and in the courts to stop this.

Hundreds of other companies came under contract. Whole cities became "UE Towns". This in turn was reflected in the growing political influence of the union's locals and districts.

Not that there weren't bitter struggles, as at Maytag in Iowa where the governor called out the troops to try to break a strike and UE leaders were charged with criminal syndicalism. Or at RCA in Camden, N.J. where the UE took on a powerful corporation in a strike the same year the union was organized. Police attacks and mass arrests could not stop the drive for a union there.

The economic power of the employers had always been translated into dominant political power as well. But now, for the first time, the labor movement was building an economic force that made it an influential political force as well.

It was during that period from the beginning of the unemployment movement of the early 1930's through the industrial union movement that lasted from 1935 to the beginning of World War II six years later that



there was the greatest development of social legislation ever enacted in the U.S.

Social Security pensions, unemployment insurance, the wage-hour act, the Wagner Labor Relations Act and much more grew out of the unleashing of the rank and file.

The high point of American labor struggles was reached in the winter of 1946, a few months after the war ended.

HISTORIC STRIKE MOVEMENT

Responding to a proposal by the UE, the Steelworkers and the Auto Workers and the UE decided to strike the major corporations they had under contract so that working people could recover some of the losses they had suffered during the war because of employer profiteering.

For the only time, so far, in U.S. history, all of major industry was shut down almost simultaneously. Many other unions were inspired to join the battle. American labor was showing that it had grown up to the point where it could take on the powerful monopolies and win.

It was obvious that a union which could inspire such a movement would be hated and feared by the corporations and their political representatives in government. UE's very existence under the principles it lived by was an inspiration to workers in other unions and a threat to those who wanted a compliant labor movement.

The 1946 strike came as the country was launched on a "cold war" with the Soviet Union, the nation which had suffered the greatest human and material losses of any ally during World War II.

American industry had grown very powerful during the war through profiteering on huge government orders. The losses suffered by America's allies and the destruction of the economies of the enemy nations encouraged these corporations to think they could dominate the world. They began their drive to turn the world into their oyster and they sought the support of American labor. It was at that time, that the basis was laid for moving the jobs of American workers out of the country.

CORPORATIONS HIT BACK

The 1946 strikes had barely been settled when the corporations conspired to change the Wagner Act which working people had won in the 1930's establishing for the first time in U.S. history that workers had a nationally-recognized right to organize.

The employers wanted to make it more difficult for unions to organize, to engage in political action, to maintain rank and file-controlled trade unions.

They didn't want to deal with unions that would challenge domestic or foreign policies disguised as being "in the interests of the country" but actually designed for advancing the interests of a new breed of corporation — the multinationals. UE was such a union.

Nor did they want unions in other countries that would resist such policies by their own governments. It was Charles E. Wilson, the president of the General Electric Co., who in 1946, as he became an aide to the Truman Administration, declared that, "The problems of the United States can be captiously summed up in two words: Russia abroad and labor at home."

CIA funds were poured out to the AFL to disrupt the trade union movements in Italy and France by setting up rival organizations and financing thugs to break strikes.

At home, the Taft-Hartley Act was the employer weapon aimed at weakening the labor movement by encouraging divisions within its ranks, reducing its ability to organize, to strike, and to engage in political action.

UNIONS SEEN AS 'RED PLOT'

From its beginning, the industrial union movement was subjected to a ceaseless barrage of charges that it was merely a communist plot to overthrow the U.S. government. The charges were made by the employers and the leaders of the American Federation of Labor, both of whom feared this rapidly growing labor giant.

Typical of the employer's view was a pamphlet issued by the National Association for Manufacturers entitled, "Join the CIO and Build a Soviet America".



Backing up the corporate effort to stop an effective labor movement from being built was the appearance of "Kentucky Col." John P. Frey, head of the AFL's Metal Trades Dept. before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee in 1938. He told that body of corporation-minded legislators that the Congress of Industrial Organizations was a giant communist conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government and entered the names of almost 300 CIO leaders and organizers as "communists". Employers used that "testimony" to discourage workers from organizing.

Responding to that anti-labor propaganda, a young organizer for the United Auto Workers by the name of Walter Reuther warned workers that when bosses denounce a militant union leader as a "red" it is "because he is a loyal, dependable union man, a fighter who helps his brother and sisters and is not afraid of the boss."

If Walter Reuther had retained this understanding when he became head of the UAW some years later and then of the CIO, the history of the labor movement might have been different.

The basic provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act were written by the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Lobbyists for GE, Allis-Chalmers, Inland Steel and J.I. Case and a lawyer for Chrysler were among those who helped write this bill to amend the Wagner Act. Westinghouse was among the corporations that testified in favor of it.

UNION DEMOCRACY AT STAKE

The labor movement, especially the CIO and the United Mine Workers led by John L. Lewis, expressed strong opposition to this union-busting measure.

UE's three national officers appeared before the Senate Labor Committee to denounce



it. Pres. Albert J. Fitzgerald called it an attempt to destroy the democracy built into the labor movement and particularly the UE. For there was no question that the UE was a prime target of the anti-labor forces.

"The issue," the union leaders told the Senate spokesmen for big business, "is the unity and democracy of UE and its continuation as an effective, fighting organization controlled by the membership."

They cited the preamble to the UE constitution as the guarantee of equal rights for all members "to hold any office or position in the union for which he may be chosen by his fellow members, but also the right of all members, collectively, to elect any member they may choose to any office or post in the UE."

Despite strong opposition from the industrial union movement, and even its veto by President Truman under union pressure, the employers were determined to get their law, and they did. The General Electric Co. was among those who hailed its passage.

The CIO leaders had pledged to stand firm against the law's provisions and insisted they would not sign affidavits swearing that they were not communists and thereby bury the law by non-compliance. But it soon became

evident that many would not stand by their pledges.

Before the bill became law all had agreed that the freedom of the labor movement from government control was the issue, not communism.

Using the non-communist affidavits as the opening wedge, the law was designed to cripple the labor movement.

At the CIO convention immediately following the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, UE Director of Organization James J. Matles blistered those who were turning tail.

Matles reminded them that every member of the CIO executive board had pledged not to sign the affidavits, which were required when a union sought a Labor Board election. Matles added that it reminded him of a "back to work" movement.

He informed the convention that nobody outside the ranks of a union "should or can dictate to another what the policy of that International union shall be."

In other words, he reaffirmed the rank and file control of the UE.

The AFL was meeting the same week and the Taft-Hartley law came under discussion there also. UMW Pres. John L. Lewis, who had taken his organization back into the AFL, denounced the readiness of that body's affiliates to join the Taft-Hartley bandwagon.

"I represent an organization," he declared, "whose members believe they pay their officers to fight for them, not to deliver them into slavery."

"How much heart do you think you will give the members of our organizations out in the industrial centers of this country when they see their great leaders, with all the pomp and ceremonials of a great convention, kneeling in obeisance before this detestable and tyrannical statute? Do you think you will encourage them?" Lewis asked.



The decline of the labor movement that soon set in was the answer.

Employers who had hailed the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act began firing shop leaders who wouldn't bow to it. Militant trade unionism was made synonymous with subversion. Congressional committees converged on cities where there were strong UE locals to harass the union members.

The CIO leaders who had joined this "back to work" movement by signing up under the Taft-Hartley law provisions sprang like jackals at the membership of the UE and of 10 other unions that insisted on standing by the principles which had inspired them.

Those labor leaders who did bow to the law were drawn into government posts, and invited to display their respectability before gatherings of employers.

While the AFL was participating in the cold war drive against unions in Europe, the CIO played the same role at home.

Addressing the 1949 UE convention, Sec.-Treas. Emspak denounced those who sought respectability by crawling "on your belly to the

boss, on your belly to any lousy politician who offers you a trip to Washington. . .”

As a former GE employee at the Schenectady, N.Y. plant, he recalled that the company had in earlier years broken unions there, in Erie, in Lynn, in Pittsfield and in Fort Wayne.

“They broke them by the red-baiting that was current then,” Emspak recalled. “They broke them by buying off the leadership, just as they are trying to do now and are doing.”

Emspak expressed confidence that “we are going to have a union based on rank and file democratic principles. . . that is not dedicated to serve a political machine. . . that is going to serve the economic and legislative interests of our members. . .”

The UE left the CIO in 1949 because the CIO, with UAW Pres. Reuther in the lead, was conducting raids on UE locals and splitting the labor movement. The UE warned that there was no need for two AFL’s, adding that since the CIO had departed from its founding principles it had ended its usefulness to American workers.

When that prophetic statement was verified in the merger of the two organizations in 1955, the UE noted that “the labor movement has not played a leading role in unifying the people against the attacks of big business.

“This is so because the official leadership of both the AFL and CIO have supported Wall Street’s policies, both foreign and domestic. They have infected the ranks of the working people with red-baiting and cold war propaganda. This resulted in a divided and weakened labor movement, confusion and division in the rank and file and the creation of wide gap between the policies of these labor leaders and the needs of the working people.

“Unity of the working people, “the statement predicted, “in terms of protecting and advancing their interests will not automatically be achieved when the proposed merger reaches fruition.”

That assessment was proven correct.

When the merger that was hailed by its matchmakers as opening the way to a burst of organizational energy was consummated, the new organization claimed about 16,900,000 workers out of a labor force of about 51 million. The comparable 1981 figures were 15 million members out of a work force of about 90 million. Even discounting the expulsion of about 1,600,000 in the Teamster and smaller unions, it is obvious that the merger had failed in its basic goal.

What was lacking was the spark of rank and file trade unionism dedicated to vigorous struggle that had motivated the CIO at its founding – but not at its demise.

The takeaways, the concessions, the political ineffectiveness that characterizes the present labor movement is, unfortunately, the consequence of the splitting of the industrial union movement around cold war issues.

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HISTORIC DIFFERENCES

From the earliest days of the American labor movement, two basic approaches to the relationship between employer and worker have been in contention.

One has been a belief that there is a community of interests between both poles of our industrial society, worker and employer.

The other is that labor and management have opposing interests that cannot be brought into harmony, and that only through struggle against those who control the economy and consequently the political life of the country can workers protect and advance their well-being.

William Sylvis, founder of the Molders Union and moving spirit behind the formation of the country’s first national trade union federation – the National Labor Union – was among the great labor leaders who was convinced that

HOW "QUALITY CIRCLES" WORKED IN 1925

AMERICAN WORKERS had to contend with "quality circles" decades before their employers "discovered" them in Japan in the 1970's. How these worked and their real purpose was described in the magazine "Factory" in 1925.

An official of Bethlehem Steel wrote of such a shop council that, "Grievances, in importance, are rapidly being replaced by such constructive operation problems, covering such subjects as increased production, better quality and service."

A vice president of Swift & Co., reported in the same industry journal, "The attitude of our assembly has been broadened so as to include practically all matters of interest to employees' welfare without due prominence to wages, hours or grievances."

The president of Knox Hat Co. was even franker: "Grievances of the personal type", he reported, "such as those having to do with wages, hours of work, working conditions, and so on, have practically ceased. Those that the council now discussed are more likely to do with tools and machinery of production. That, of course, suits us perfectly, for it means greater production and lower costs."

But it didn't mean better living standards for workers. Four years after those reports were printed, the country fell into the deepest depression in U.S. history — a consequence of the unconscionable drive for profits of which the anti-union quality circles were part.

unless the workers were prepared to struggle, capital would grind them down.

"Capital," Sylvis declared in 1868, "blights and withers all it touches. It is a new aristocracy — proud, imperious, dishonest, seeking only profit and the exploitation of workers."

It is because he recognized the need of all workers standing together in the face of this enemy that he fought for the admission of black workers and women to the ranks of organized labor in the face of strong, prejudicial opposition by fellow union leaders.

"OPPRESSORS AND OPPRESSED"

The conservative role of the American Federation of Labor for most of this century makes it difficult to realize that its founders also recognized the fundamental struggle behind those two forces.

The preamble to the AFL's constitution declared: "A struggle is going on in the nations

of the world between the oppressors and the oppressed of all countries, a struggle between capital and labor which must grow in intensity from year to year and work disastrous results to the toiling millions of all nations if not combined for mutual protection and benefit."

That language reflected the fact that among those who helped found the labor movement



of the last century were many who held that only the building of an economic system controlled by the working people would end exploitation by employers.

Between the earliest years of the labor movement, and its rejuvenation through the industrial union movement of the 1930's, those who held that labor and management could lie down together, without labor being devoured, were dominant in the trade unions although there were courageous rank and file struggles against them.

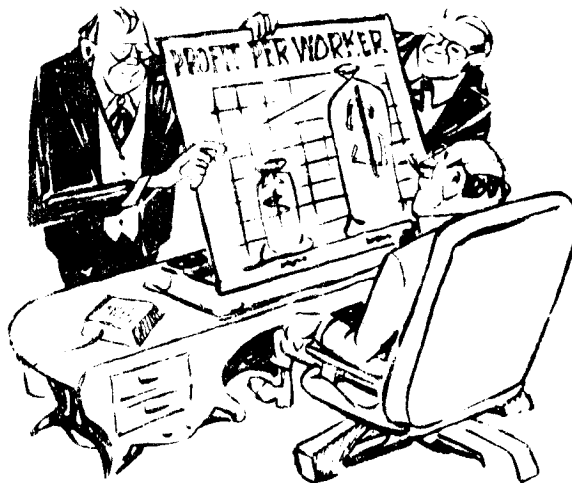
They went along with, or even promoted, such schemes as profit-sharing which set worker against worker for the greater profit of the employer; stock ownership plans in the illusion that this would make the corporation more democratic; labor-management productivity schemes which resulted in increased speed-up and reduction of jobs.

They negotiated no-strike agreements, depriving workers of the only weapon left when employers rejected all reasonable resolution of differences.

The effects of the splitting of the labor movement in the late 1940's became especially evident as the economy sank into deep depression in the 1970's and early 1980's. The employers demanded givebacks of gains won over many years. Hundreds of thousands of workers were led to accepting these demands, instead of fighting back.

"QUALITY CIRCLES"

One employer scheme that was widely promoted in the news media, in labor-management conferences and in shop meetings was "quality circles." Corporate officials discovered these in Japanese industry and sought to sell them to American workers as the way to beat competition from abroad.



So anxious was the Westinghouse Electric Corp. to drag its workers into such circles that it even offered to pay the cost of sending union leaders to Japan to see how they work. Some unions took up the offer. But knowledge of labor's experience with such schemes in the past and recognition that they were just one more example of a speed-up scheme designed to bypass the union in the plant led the UE to turn down the invitation to enlist.

Addressing the 1981 UE convention, Sec.-Treas. Boris Block told of a meeting with Westinghouse officials where the union committee was told by the company, "We can't understand you people. We think you are out of step with the rest of the labor movement on the question of quality circles."

The UE officer replied that the UE is not out of step. "We're in a different parade, marching to the beat of a different drummer.

Brother Block reminded the delegates that employers "understand the class nature of our society and will do everything they can to protect their end."

UE's policies have always been based on the understanding, as he put it then, that "there is no common interest between the boss whose goal is more and more profits and the workers who produce the wealth of this nation."

Recognizing the reality of this struggle, the delegates adopted a resolution which described quality circles as devices "to break down workers' natural mistrust of bosses, and then get workers to begin telling the company how jobs can be speeded up and made more productive, in other words, how to get the work out with fewer people. . .

"In sum," the resolution concluded, "quality circles are an attempt to create a shop floor structure controlled by management and pushing management's point of view, aimed at undermining the union steward system and bypassing the union. The ultimate goal is to get rid of the union altogether, or transform it into a company union."

In examining political issues, whether they be domestic or policies adopted by the government in foreign affairs, the UE recognizes that these, too, reflect the conflicting interests of the employers and the workers.

FOREIGN RUNAWAYS

Especially in foreign affairs, workers have to contend with efforts to equate support of government policies with patriotism.

UE's examination of government policies from the standpoint of whether they serve the people or the powerful employers led the union to be among those who opposed U.S. intervention in Vietnam from its earliest days.

There is little doubt that if that intervention had succeeded there would now be U.S. electronics, radio, television, textile and other factories operating there, as in South Korea.

The American people paid heavily in lives and money for the Korean War. The Korean people have been saddled with a cruel dictatorship that denies them elemental rights to organize. And American workers have seen many of their jobs shipped there.

It is ironic that some of those who condemned the UE in the post-World War II years for opposing the building up of the industrial might of the country's enemies in that war, are now strong advocates of imposing severe trade restrictions on those countries on the ground that they take jobs away from Americans.

The American people are up against permanent unemployment figures in the high millions, growing poverty, and declining living standards.

As employer and government policies have led the country into this greatest depression since the 1930's working people are called on to sacrifice social security, wages, and working conditions that it has taken decades of struggle to achieve.

Strengthening the opposition to the arms race which threatens the world with war, and transferring funds from the military into services and programs to meet the needs of our people can stop the deterioration of American society.

At the first convention of the CIO in 1938, Pres. John L. Lewis singled out the UE as an example of new advances made "in the period of depression" with the signing of a national agreement with the General Electric Co.

In 1980-1982, the UE was being singled out in the press as the union which almost alone in the labor movement had fought concessions to the employers in the latest depression.

Consistent adherence to the principle of aggressive rank and file trade unionism has been the basis of this record of almost half a century of struggle.

The tremendous problems that face America's working people call for the fight of a unified labor movement based on those same principles.

The UE is dedicated to helping achieve that kind of a labor movement.