

**THE WESTERN UNION AND
THE WAR
LABOR BOARD, THE
COMPANY'S POSITION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649277797

The Western Union and the War Labor Board, the Company's Position by Various

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VARIOUS

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COMPANY'S POSITION**

The Western Union ⁶⁴
and the
War Labor Board
—
The Company's Position

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THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY
NEW YORK
1918

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MAR 20 1923

THE WAR LABOR BOARD

I

**The Prime Facts and
the Steps Taken**

This pamphlet is issued in order that those interested may have available the essential data as to the labor policy of the Western Union Telegraph Company.

**The Prime
Facts**

The prime facts in this situation to be noted are the following:

1. There has been and is at present no dispute between the company and its employees.
2. The continuity or the quality of its service has at no time been threatened by any action of the employees of the company.
3. In protection of the public the policy of the company has been to refuse to have dealings with any labor organization which

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employs the strike for its own ends or in sympathy with others, the company's policy in this being precisely the same as that of the Post Office Department, to whose service that of this company is in many ways so closely analagous.

4. It has for over ten years made it a condition that it would not employ persons who were members of such organizations or retain in its employ those who became members. Its policy in this regard was so well known that it was understood that those who accepted employment were considered to have agreed thereto.

5. The labor union involved in this matter has no membership whatever among this company's employees, but is an organization carrying on a propaganda to induce our employees to become members.

6. The labor union which invoked the interference of the National War Labor Board sought to secure an interpretation of the Board's principles that would in effect become a mandate of the Board in support of its propaganda to secure members from the staff of the company by inducing them to violate the conditions of their employment.

7. The procedure of the National War Labor Board as embodied in its statement

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of principles and put into force by the President's proclamation, requires that in cases where it is unable to bring about a settlement between parties, or in cases wherein the members of the Board "shall be unable to unanimously agree upon decision," an umpire shall be appointed to decide the controversy.

8. In this case there was no unanimous decision by the National War Labor Board and no umpire was appointed. By a majority vote it decided to make no finding.

9. The belief of the company is that the telegraph being nation-wide and essential for public use must be uninterrupted, hence the essential employees, especially those working the wires, cannot be subject to a strike order either for their own benefit or sympathetically for the benefit of others, nor can there be organization, harmony or facility in the handling of Government and public business if groups of the essential force owe allegiance to different and divergent interests.

10. Notwithstanding its firm belief that its long standing policy was in the interest of the public, in view of the circumstances of the times and to uphold the authority of the National War Labor Board in every possible respect, the company offered to submit the

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matter of the alleged wishes of its employees to a secret referendum to be held under the direction and control of the War Labor Board. No consideration whatever was given to this fair and reasonable proposal.

11. The company maintains that the conditions surrounding its service are of a character to justify the public support of its position, especially in view of its entire willingness to leave to the self determination of the majority of its employees the question whether it should waive a condition of employment of long standing and adopted wholly as a measure of protection to the public service the company is expected to render.

12. The Western Union has no quarrel with the principle of unionism. There are associated with the company many employees who are members of various unions. To surrender control of the direction of its business and of the essential employees to an outside organization animated in its policies by considerations having nothing to do with promoting the service of the company as a great public utility, would be subversive of the very principles upon which the company regards its public obligations to rest.

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The Steps Taken

I. Under date of March 29, 1918, the War Labor Conference Board, representing employers and employees, recommended the appointment of a War Labor Board "to bring about a settlement of mediation and conciliation of every controversy arising between employers and workers in the field of production necessary for the effective conduct of the war."

II. While there was not on that date, and there is not now, any controversy between the Western Union Telegraph Company and its employees, there was an organization of which none of this company's employees were members, which had for many years been seeking to induce our employees to ally themselves with it. Though there are some 70,000 Morse operators in the United States and Canada, only 2,500 of them are members of this organization, and they are chiefly Canadians.

III. Immediately the project of forming a War Labor Board was under way, this organization undertook an unusually active propaganda especially directed to our employees. Meetings were held on April 28th under the direction of the organization in various cities