

1983/1989 AT&T Telephone Workers Strike.

Name.

Institution.

Labour resistance at some point called worker strike has been spreading widely both gaining people support and winning some gain in one way or the other. Numerous attacks have been evident since the time many states passed an act concerning the right for peaceful demonstrations. Several organizations have gone to streets protesting for different issues such as workload, job security, work time, or others demanding benefits. The effects of a strike are intense as compared to the sector affected by the workers strike. Some industries are more highly vital than others. Strikes have not just emerged currently but is a thing of centuries. One well-known union that have exhibited several hits over the years is the Communication Workers Association of America.

Tracing over history, this union might have gone for almost twelve attacks in total. CWA is one of the most robust communications and media labor union found in the United States of America. (Mosco & McKercher, 2009). This union represents members in private and public sectors about 600,000 in approximation. The same union has 27 locals in Canada representing almost 8,000. There are several subsidiary labor unions which are affiliated with the CWA resulting in a total of nearly over 700,000 members. ("Communications Workers of America," 2017). This union has had a total of three strikes between 1983 and 1989 alone. The first one was in 1983 which lasted for 22days affecting 600,000 members under the company called Bell system. The second one occurred in 1986 lasting for 25days and affected 175,000 members of the union conducted by AT&T. The last was on 1989 contacted by AT&T and affected approximately 175, 000 members. All these time the union members had different issues to address, and the results were also different ("Communications Workers of America," 2017).

Bell telephone strike is among the CWA union's strike that occurred in 1983. This strike was nationwide and took 22 days involving over 700,000 telephone workers. The issues addressed were diverse. AT&T was seeking medical insurance payments to be

restructured. They needed 25% of basic costs to be transferred to workers and at the same time be surrendered in the face of union integration. Pacific telephone workers in California also had an issue. They were complaining of the imposition of split shifts in every department. They also wanted to maintain their seven and half hours in a day rather than the eight hours per day suggested by the company. The soon-to-be-divested regional basic operating companies at that time were able to overcome the union's demand. The union had demanded a guaranteed job security while the primary operating companies wanted a minuscule \$31 million which they were referring to the training fund. Retraining funds were the money given to workers whose work becomes absolute. Apart from this retraining fund, the workers wanted an incentive-bonus program for early retirement. However, overall these issues that were raised, somewhere implemented while others were not. For instance, the Pacific workers were able to successfully resist the imposition of a split shift in all their departments, and they were also able to maintain their seven and half hours per day rather than the suggested eight hours in a day by the union.

On the other hand, the union did not guarantee any specific job protection. The companies were left thereby with the right to transfer workers or lay off per market conditions ("Phone Strike 1983", 2017). This strike was recorded to be the largest strike in the US which had never been witnessed since 1946. It marked the last national strike to be ever called by the CWA. Its termination was after their weeks were CWA called it over in far of Regan administration confrontations. The union accepted a sell-out agreement which affected the workers greatly because they were lest venerable too mass job cut-off (Jones, 2017). This strike also marked the last contract between the union and the Bell System since after this strike it breaks up; this is because the bell system sought elimination of previously won benefits. ("Communications Workers of America," 2017)

In 1986 there was another strike this strike involved lesser members since it affected 155,000 than the previous which had affected 700,000 in 1983. This strike lasted for 25 days and was against AT&T because AT&T contract was almost similar to Bell System that had been resisted. The International Brotherhood of Electronic Workers (IBEW) ordered its members to join the CWA to maintain the company and keep it open. It ended by the CWA accepting a contract that they had initially rejected. This contract involved a two-tier structure. The CWA sent their workers back to work before even the results of ballots conducted by mail were officially validated. This action was considered to be a betrayal. (Jones, 2017)

After the 1986 AT&T strike was the 1989 strike that followed. AT&T was removed from the contract in the same year. And NYNEX took over. This strike is believed to have been caused by major care health cuts the NYNEX. The strike was called by CWA and IBEW against NYNEX both in New York and New England. In response, the company recruited 57,000 managers temporary for the operations to go on even after the strike. The strike had been joined by groups of workers from AT&T, Bell Atlantic, Pacific Telesis and also other companies. To make the situation worse, Gerry Horgan who was among the NYNEX striker was hit and killed. The driver of the car being the daughter of NYNEX manager, she was not prosecuted. This event worsens the situation, and CWA nor IBEW were willing to mobilize their people to stop the strike. The strike ended by IBEW and CWA accepting a contract settlement which was excluding 170 striking members of CWA and also IBEW of the strikers victimized by the management. The amendments done included a \$125 million in conjunction compared to those of Bell contracts. There was also a small wage increment higher than that offered at the beginning of the strike. (Jones, 2017). Many other strikes followed after this including 1998 which lasted for 15 days, and only 34,000 members were affected who were demanding for overtime payment. In the year 2000, 2011, 2012 and

also 2016, there were reported CWA strikes also. ("Communications Workers of America," 2017)

The impacts experience form 1983-1989 were highly significant. Some of these impacts include lack of artistry which resulted in the companies involved finding solutions to resolve the strike. The company such as NYTEX could hire managers temporally to occupy the positions left out by striking workers. However, the impact was not only felt by companies but also to the workers. Some were laid off and lost their job, while others were forced to go back to the job even without settlement of their concern. However, some impacts were positive.

Through the strikes in some cases, most of the issues that the workers complain about were implemented and followed. This scenario illustrates the importance of unions in and their influence on the labour market. The union has great power to the labour market since by uniting workers; they can stand in our sound and advocate for their right which is better than when a single person stands. On the same case, the union may have some disadvantage since, many companies may tend to settle their disputes with the unions to force their workers back to work without settling or implementing there concern just as it was done in 1986 by CWA. The power of worker being in unions has been evident and currently all civil servants have unions where they belong. At any point of a concern members need not to raise the issue but simply report to the union and it is solved.

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