**The Office Worker**

Official Organ of the International Council of Office Employees Unions of the A. F. of L.

Vol. 1, No. 11  
WASHINGTON, D. C., JANUARY, 1944

---

**Late Bulletin**

Miami, Fla.—A new international union may soon be added to the growing list affiliated with the American Federation of Labor—a union composed of office workers which potentially could be the largest in the Federation.

The AFL Executive Council instructed President Green and Secretary-Treasurer George Meaney to con-vene, which the officials of the office workers' organization, now made up of federal labor unions associated together in an international council, and to issue an international charter to them as soon as technical questions of jurisdiction are straightened out.

(Ed. note—See earlier story on page 2.)

---

**NLRB Election Ordered at the Texas Company**

Port Arthur Anticipates Substantial Victory

Washington, D. C., Jan. 24.—The National Labor Relations Board today granted the request of the Office Employees Union Local 2977 and directed that an election be held within 30 days among the clerical and office employees of the Texas Co.'s refinery and terminal at Port Arthur, Texas.

The election is for all clerks, stenographers, colorimeter operators and employees of the cashier's department. These workers will vote as to whether or not they desire to be represented by Office Employees Union 2977, A.F.L., an affiliate of our International Council.

In ordering an election among these workers the board, by its notice of the fact that Local 2977 represents a substantial number of the workers involved, and that the workers are thereby entitled to an opportunity to vote by secret ballot for their choice of a collective bargaining representative.

It is anticipated that Local 2977 will receive an overwhelming majority of the votes cast because it is certified by the Labor Board as the exclusive bargaining agency for the employees involved.

Agreement Negotiations to Follow

Immediately upon winning the election and obtaining legal certification as the bargaining agency for office workers, Local 2977 will enter into a bargaining negotiations with the company to the effect that it will be able to obtain substantial improvements in the present working conditions of these office and clerical workers. The full assistance and cooperation of our International Headquaters has been extended to Local 2977 and its members employed by the Texas Co. to the end that a satisfactory working agreement may be promptly consummated after the election.

It is pointed out that the achievements by which the Texas Co. workers can gain through

---

**Wage InCREASES Won at Film Exchanges**

Hollywood, Calif.—A 10 percent wage increase, preferential hiring, time and one-half after an 8-hour day, and no time off in lieu of over-time were the important points recently won for office workers of Film Row by the National Board of Film Employees, A. F. of L., according to reports contained in the current issue of their monthly publication "Punching In."

Covered by the negotiations were R.K.O., Warner Bros., Paramount, in addition to other film exchange companies. These increases have been jointly submitted to the War Labor Board for its approval.

---

**American Enka Workers Organize**

Enka, N. C., Jan. 26.—Taking a page from the experience of their fellow workers engaged in production, members of our trade employed in the offices of the American Enka Co. are forming into our International Council.

Close observation of the gains made by our employees of this company engaged in production of rayon textiles has convinced the office workers of the company that only through their union can they likewise obtain increases in wages, reduction of hours of employment and improved working conditions.

Speareading the drive in response to the demands of the workers, two members of our trade employed by the company is Roy Whitmire, president, Local No. 2598 of the United Textile Workers of the AFL.

---

**American Ship Co. Negotiations Begin**

Law, O., Jan. 17.—Negotiations on an agreement applying to all main office and certain outside offices of office workers of American Shipbuilding Co. are scheduled to begin in the near future, according to Pearl A. Imms, business representative of Local No. 1966, which union holds bargaining rights for these workers.

Negotiations are presently in effect in other shipyards throughout the nation where agreements are held by our affiliated unions will be utilized in the drafting and negotiation of this agreement. International Council officers have been requested to assist officers of Local No. 1966 during meetings with employer representatives.

In one instance the rights for the workers of our trade employed by this company were won two months ago through an NLRB election in which 80 percent of all eligible voting workers marked their ballots in favor of union representation by our affiliated local. Local union of these workers anticipates that the successful conclusion of this agreement will lead to demands for unionization from other office and clerical workers in heavy industries in Cleveland and surrounding communities.

---

**Pay Increases at Herbst Shoe Mfg. Co.**

Milwaukee, Wis., Jan. 17.—Under the terms of a union agreement signed December 29, the office employees of the Herbst Shoe Manufacturing Co. received wage increases of $2 to $3 per week retroactive to September 9, 1943, it was announced today by Alice Holz, Vice President of our International Council and Secretary of Local 16456 of this city.

These wage increases have been the approval of the War Labor Board.

The present agreement is the third which Local 16456 has negotiated with the company and it provides for a 40-hour week, Monday through Friday, with double time for all work performed on 5 national holidays and on Sundays.

Time and one-half is paid for all work in excess of 40 hours per week. The above agreement will apply to all members of our trade employed in retail establishments in this city and will bring to these workers a substantial advance in wages and improvements in working conditions.

---

**Wall Street Workers Win Pay Increases**

Washington, D.C., Jan. 9.—The National War Labor Board ordered J. S. Bache & Co., New York City stockbrokerage house, to increase its minimum salary rate from $17 to $20 per week and ordered, as a retroactive payment, that a sum of $1.50 a week be paid to all employees for each week worked between October 20, 1942, and the date of the board's order, it was announced today.

The board also ordered the company to restore employees' salaries back up to where they were on June 1, 1941, the time they were cut by the company.

In addition, the company was directed to grant a 15 percent increase above the weekly minimum and above the increases necessary to bring salaries up to their January 1, 1940, level.

In connection with granting this 15 percent adjustment the board stipulated, however, that the increase shall not result in any salary rates in excess of the minimum rates established for such occupations by the Second Regional War Labor Board.

The 350 employees involved are members of Local 20840 of New York City. The local organized this office some time after the company fought the organization every step of the way in an effort to preserve its substandard employment conditions, and to keep organization out of Wall Street.

The War Labor Board case was filed in October of 1942. The company was ordered by the board to sign an agreement with the local and incorporate therein the terms of the board's order.
International Charter Requested

Miami, Fla., Jan. 20.—A formal petition requesting full International Union status for our International Council was today presented to the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor by President J. Howard Hicks, Secretary-Treasurer Paul R. Hutchings, and Vice President L. G. Nygren, on behalf of our International Council.

In addition to appearing before today's session of the Executive Council and orally supporting our plea for full International Union status, our Council officers prepared and submitted to each member of the Executive Council a formal petition outlining in considerable detail the past history and growth of our International Council and our endeavors, over the years, to maintain our financial status and our ability to function on a self-sustaining International Union basis.

The petition as presented was in accordance with the unanimous action taken by the 1945 convention of the American Federation of Labor, which recommended the granting of an international charter for our trade.

The petition is presently receiving the consideration of President Green, Secretary-Treasurer Meaney, and the other members of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.

MOORE DRY DOCK ORGANIZES

Oakland, Calif., Jan. 10.—Office workers employed at the Moore Dry Dock are rapidly signing application cards for membership in Local 20444, according to Organizer Al Price, of the local, who is in charge of the Moore drive.

SEES VALUE OF UNION MEMBERSHIP

Tacoma, Wash., Jan. 21.—Our Local No. 20360 of this city, tells the following story in the current issue of the Tacoma Labor Advocate, which graphically portrays the fact that union membership and union recognition are worth fighting for:

"One of our very active and ardent supporters in the shipyard campaign is a little girl who knows patriotism inside and out. Her husband was wounded and probably permanently disabled in the North African campaign and is now confined to his home. She will forever be responsible for earning the family's living because he will not be able to work the rest of his life.

"She is organizing her office at the shipyard so that it will be solidly union, because she wants to do the work where decent, fair conditions are prevalent. She knows that the 20 or 30 years of working to support her husband and family will be made less impossible if there is unionism.

"If we were allowed to divulge her name, we would refer to her all of those who have questioned our patriotic motives. Doubtless she knows a long hard lesson in real patriotism that she could use for study."

NEW CONTRACT SIGNED AT KNITTING MILL

Washington, D. C., Jan. 10.—According to reports recently received from A. F. of L. Organizer Walter Mitchell, a signed agreement has been negotiated between the Cardigan-Waring Co., of Florence, Ala., and Office Employees Union No. 25501.

The company operates a knitting mill in Florence, Ala., and the local covers office employees working in that plant.

REYNOLDS ALLOYS CASE CERTIFIED TO NWLB

Sheffield, Ala., Jan. 26—The War Labor Board has taken jurisdiction in the current drive against Local 22501 and the Reynolds Alloys Co. involving the terms of the agreement to cover the office workers employed at the company's plant near Sheffield, Ala. Local 22501 established its exclusive bargaining rights for office workers last fall through NLRB proceedings. The subsequent deadlock in negotiations, the dispute going to the War Labor Board, which has recently certified the case to its Atlanta regional office for hearings and handling.

Organizer Walter J. Mitchell of the American Federation of Labor is assisting Local 22501 in this matter.

APPEAL MADE ON SHIPYARD AGREEMENT

Washington, D. C., Jan. 20—Assisted by our International Council officials, Irving Enna, secretary-treasurer of Local 16521 of Portland, Ore., and William, business representative of Local 25977 of Vancouver, Wash., today presented a strong appeal to the Shipbuilding Commission of NWLB to reconsider its decision in connection with negotiations between these two unions and shipyards of the Kaiser Co., Inc., in both cities.

While the unions and the employer were in complete and unanimous accord on all aspects of the agreement as negotiated by the factor, NWLB did not deter the Shipbuilding Commission from its previous ruling. However, the factor has been expressed in informed circles that the commission was not fully cognizant of all the factors involved in the consummation of the agreement as originally submitted. Company representatives joined with union representatives in formulating the appeal.

While the outcome of the appeal awaits the decision of the commission, it is felt that at least some progress can be made in gain- ing the most equitable decision than that handed down several weeks ago.

NEW LOCAL CHARTERED

Napa, Calif., Jan. 9.—A charter was installed today in this city, according to information received from Council Vice President Carl F. Nelson, who assisted at the installation.

This newly chartered local union, with George B. Nelson, President; Robert Nelson, Organizer; John J. Sweeney, Brother Bob Solomon, Vice President; William Cowles, Secretary of the Napa Central Labor Union, and Business Agent Carl Mentzer of the local Boilermakers, is engaged in organizing the office force employed in the Basalt shipyards in this city.

A substantial number of the office workers in this yard are char- ter members of this local, and it is anticipated that organization will proceed rapidly judging by the interest already evidenced by the rank and file of office workers, a substantial majority of whom have already signed bargaining cards indicating their desire to be represented through their Local O. F. of L. office employees union.
RELAXATION OF WAGE STABILIZATION PROGRAM AS MEANS OF ASSISTING OFFICE WORKERS URGED BY INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Unionization Declared Most Suitable Remedy

Washington, D.C., Jan. 28.—Seizing upon the opportunity to place before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor the problem of office workers during present war-time conditions, International Council officers today appeared before Senator Claude Pepper's subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor.

Speaking not only for our International Council and members of the A.F. of L. office workers' unions, but for the millions of other workers of our trade laboring without the benefit of union representation, Council officers proposed several steps for the consideration of the committee which, if pursued, would lead to the elimination of many present day and postwar injustices imposed upon workers of our trade in the United States.

Effective wage stabilization and ineffective price stabilization has resulted in a breakdown of the economic condition of such workers, which has recently received wide publicity through our International Council and daily papers throughout the country. No legislation is presently pending before Congress on this matter as it affects our trade.

International Council President J. Howard Hicks, in his presentation before the committee, dwelt to a considerable extent upon the economic and employment problems confronting members of our trade under the present stabilization program of the Government. He said:

"The present dilemma of the millions of unorganized office and clerical workers in the United States is indeed worthy of consideration. Unorganized office workers today find themselves attempting to stretch their inadequate pre-war income to fit the wartime economy with its stepped-up living costs, job freezes and other problems which must be met for their continued liveliness.

Wartime Problems Discussed

In telling the committee of the increased employment problems brought about by the war effort and which are of concern to the members of our trade, Hicks said:

"Current war-time conditions have placed an undue strain and burden on office and clerical workers who have not had collective representation on conditions of their employment.

"The hours of employment for office and clerical workers in private industry have been increased considerably, and there has been a definite and noticeable doubling up of the work load due to the increased production and the loss of experienced and competent workers who are difficult to replace.

Stabilization Program Blasted

Taking issue with the government's current stabilization program and emphasizing the duties imposed upon the committee the injustices rendered office workers, Hicks said:

"A stabilization program is a general rule, if have received at least some increases to partially meet the increases in the cost of living prior to the enactment of the stabilization policy. As a result of the low wage rates for office workers existing prior to the war, and our country's wage policy has been materially reduced due to increased living costs so that today, even if they have received the full 15 percent allowed under the "Little Steel formula," their purchasing ability still ranges farther behind that of other workers than it did prior to the war.

Almost without exception the determinations of the Regional Wage Labor Boards, with respect to provable wage rates for office classifications, are based on insufficient evidence and are not sufficient income to enable them to meet present day living costs.

In many communities the War Manpower Commission's regulations prohibiting the hiring of employees who cannot obtain a release from their past employer have prevented office workforces employed in government agencies from shifting to production work in order to better meet present day costs. In addition to these regulations proving ineffective price stabilization, we have found that some employers, in order to maintain an adequate office staff, have been required to freeze wages for those workers within the plant, that is, to refuse to allow these workers to secure available production work jobs in order to obtain the higher rates of pay on such work.

"The growth of such practices graphically portrays the plight of the office worker, who by virtue of his trade and his essentiality, is frequently not permitted to shift to production work but must remain working at the far lower wage levels prevalent in the office side of the plant.

Thus, office workers who are today members of our trade have experienced the inadequacy of their individual bargaining with employers and have, as a result, banded together into our unions for purposes of collective bargaining on all matters directly affecting their employment."

Benefits of Union Membership

Strong emphasis was placed by Hicks on the benefits derived from union membership and collective bargaining on the part of members of our unions, and the committee was advised:

"Those of our trade who have exercised their collective bargaining rights realize that in a position to further advance and procure a more equitable share of representation, which is to be paid in the form of wages."

"Countless thousands of presently unorganized office workers are workers in the same area whoseIdentical problems lies through the channel of collective bargaining. They are today organizing our International Council and its affiliated local unions."

"As our movement grows and increases, additional workers will awaken to the necessity of collective bargaining and they will find through this medium the only opening available for a complete solution of their employment problems. We have realized within the limits of the present stabilization program.

"Many workers of our trade in the United States can testify to the effectiveness of collective bargaining with their employers through their unions. Virtually all of our members have received wage or salary adjustments to positions which have not been obtained by similar but unorganized workers in the same area."

"In addition to outright wage or salary increases, many of our members employed in heavy industries have gained a substantial increase. These gains have been received by workers not previously enjoying union membership, and have been gained through collective bargaining with their employers and have been affected to the mutual benefit of both workers and employers."
Portland Gains Many Workers

Portland, Ore., Dec. 28—Secretary-Treasurer Irving Enna of Local No. 16821 of the Retail Clerks Union recently reported that negotiations with the wholesale grocery operators' association are progressing and it is expected that this agreement will be concluded in the near future.

Although the union has won major increases in this city since the inauguration of the stabilization program it is hoped that additional wage increases and other improvements will be forthcoming as a result of current negotiations.

Officers of the union have reported that agreement has been reached with the local Office Workers Union for an increased bonus payment by Weisfield-Goldberg Co., retail jewelers and general merchandisers. Payment of bonuses by this company, if an agreement with the union is based on annual store sales but are not considered as a part of employees' wages.

Additional Workers Organized

Officers of the local have also announced that the union has completed organizing the remainder of the office and clerical employees of Commercial Iron Works, Inc. When the agreement with the union is based on the outside production clerical workers have been under contract by virtue of their union membership for the past several months. The remaining 600 workers demanded union representation several months ago after witnessing the increased wages and other advantages won by their fellow workers in the non-administrative crafts.

Initial negotiations with company management indicate that Local No. 16821 will have no difficulty in concluding an agreement for wage increases and improvements in working conditions. With the Commercial Iron Works, Inc., a peace-time as well as a war-time situation it is anticipated that the organization of the employees of this company and the subsequent negotiation of an agreement covering all its employees of our trade will result in a substantial boom for all office workers in the Portland area.

An agreement has also recently been negotiated with the Buckner Chapman Co., a building contractor engaged in war as well as non-war fabrication and construction.

The Oregon Physicians Service has recently signed an agreement with the local for its office and clerical workers. The agreement of this agreement by the War Labor Board will result in greatly improved wages and other benefits for the workers of this trade.

The agreement between the union and the Iron Fireman Manufacturing Co., was recently opened by mutual consent and wage increases were negotiated for members of our trade employed by this company. Final approval of the alterations of this agreement will result in retroactive pay to last December 15 for the workers covered.

CHARGES AGAINST FORD MOTOR PULLED; HEARING SCHEDULED

Jacksonville, Fla., Jan. 24—Unfair labor practice charges filed against the Ford Motor Co. and involving its local plant are scheduled for hearing Jan. 29, before an NLRB trial examiner at Jackson- ville.

President Lorraine Rhodes of Local 23133, who filed the charges against the company, advises that the NLRB has issued its formal complaint in the case and has scheduled public hearing to be held on January 29.

The complaint also points out that the company “has kept its employees under surveillance and has interrogated them concerning their concerted activities and concerning the activities of other employees” and that the company has threatened to close its Jacksonville branch if the employees do not refrain from the picketing.”

The complaint also states that the Ford Motor Co. has “threatened, obstructed and broken union meetings and collective bargaining among its employees.”

All of these acts are unfair labor practices in violation of the National Labor Relations Act, which guarantees to office workers as well as to other workers the right to join labor organizations and to engage in collective bargaining activities for their mutual aid or protection.

were depressed at the time the policies were adopted. We knew that through investigation, would find that the maximum allowable rates established by the War Labor Board and its various divisions for office and clerical classifications are in effect some 20 per cent above the average wage level.

The Ford Motor Co. has “threatened, obstructed and broken union meetings and collective bargaining among its employees.”

“Those who are union members need not fear substantial reductions in wages or salaries, nor do they need to fear the manipulation and practices similar to those involved during the prewar period. We believe that the average American worker will always get a wage only means by which he can properly assure himself of an appropriate and sufficient income coupled with reasonable working conditions, is through collective bargaining in the wages and working conditions of office workers will be substantially improved.

We believe that this committee should advise all organized office workers who are seeking wage adjustments and improved working conditions that organization provides the only means by which they can solve their economic problems and that it is the declared policy of the Congress to improve and protect collective bargaining through bona fide unions.”

In stressing the inadequacy of the wage stabilization policy as it stands today when applied to members of our trade, the committee was told to investigate and learn for itself how futile it is for office workers to try to gain equitable relief unless the policy is altered or amended.

The International Council spokes- man, in introducing this investigation by the committee, stated: “We believe that this committee should thoroughly investigate the application of the present wage stabilization policies to office workers whose wage rates were depressed at the time the policies were adopted. We knew that through investigation, would find that the maximum allowable rates established by the War Labor Board and its various divisions for office and clerical classifications are in effect some 20 per cent above the average wage level.

The Ford Motor Co. has “threatened, obstructed and broken union meetings and collective bargaining among its employees.”

“Those who are union members need not fear substantial reductions in wages or salaries, nor do they need to fear the manipulation and practices similar to those involved during the prewar period. We believe that the average American worker will always get a wage only means by which he can properly assure himself of an appropriate and sufficient income coupled with reasonable working conditions, is through collective bargaining in the wages and working conditions of office workers will be substantially improved.

We believe that this committee should advise all organized office workers who are seeking wage adjustments and improved working conditions that organization provides the only means by which they can solve their economic problems and that it is the declared policy of the Congress to improve and protect collective bargaining through bona fide unions.”

In stressing the inadequacy of the wage stabilization policy as it stands today when applied to members of our trade, the committee was told to investigate and learn for itself how futile it is for office workers to try to gain equitable relief unless the policy is altered or amended.

The International Council spokes- man, in introducing this investigation by the committee, stated: “We believe that this committee should thoroughly investigate the application of the present wage stabilization policies to office workers whose wage rates

**SIMON HARDWARE AGREEMENT SIGNED**

Oakland, Calif., Jan. 19—Local 2077 has recently entered into an agreement with the B. Simon Hardware Co., of this city, it was announced by Carl F. Nelson, Council representative and business representa- tive of that local.

The agreement provides for a union shop and for the hiring of unemployed members of the union. It also provides, among other things, for 8 holidays and for 2 weeks vacations within 2 years of service.

The rate ranges established for the 70 office classifications involved are low of $25.50 a week for a beginner's clerk, to $55 per week for a senior accountant. The agreement also provides for automatic step increases each 6 months until the employee reached the maximum of his rate range.

Wage rates established will become effective upon the approval of the War Labor Board.

**FOOD INDUSTRY INCREASES WAGES**

Washington, D.C., Jan. 18—It has been approved by the Regional War Labor Board for members of Local No. 16821 employed in the food industry, according to Nelson.

The increases are retroactive to January 2, 1943, and, as a result, will amount to a considerable sum when payment is made by the employees.

Additional information is expected to be released on the results of the War Labor Board’s recent investigation of price fixing in the food industry.

**ACTIVE MEMBER PASSES**

Detroit, Mich.—Brother Frank Fitzgerald, treasurer of Local 16812 for the past 17 years, passed away on December 23. Brother Fitzgerald had served faithfully in many capacities and his passing represents a distinct loss to his local union.

Local 16812 was selected vice president of the local and served as president the following year. In 1927 he was elected to the office of treasurer and he served in that capacity continuously until his death on December 23.

Local 16812 has lost a most valued and respected member, and the membership of our local extends its most sincere sympathy to Brother Fitzgerald’s family and his many friends.

**ORGANIZING DRIVE UNDER WAY IN S. F.**

San Francisco, Calif., Jan. 19—An organizing drive of members of our trade employed in heavy industries in San Francisco and Northern California will be launched by Local 21320, with the assistance of the American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations of Labor and the Bay Cities Metal Trades Council, it was announced by Eleazer D. Murphy, secretary of the local.

Western Representative Daniel Logan, Local No. 23, will play a prominent part in the conduct and progress of the undertaking. A. F. of L. organizers under Flanagan’s direction will also assist in the drive.

**STABILIZATION PROGRAM**

(Continued from page 3)

(Continued from page 3)

**STABILIZATION PROGRAM**

(Continued from page 3)

**STABILIZATION PROGRAM**

(Continued from page 3)

**STABILIZATION PROGRAM**

(Continued from page 3)

**STABILIZATION PROGRAM**

(Continued from page 3)

(Continued from page 3)