

# THE OFFICE WORKER

Official Organ of the Office Employees International Union of the A. F. of L.

No. 28

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## WORKERS ORGANIZING AT DRACKETT PLANTS

Norwood, Ohio—The office and clerical workers employed at the Spring Grove plant and the Sharon plant of the Drackett Co. are rapidly organizing under the banner of the OEIU, according to Brother George C. Goelz, financial secretary of Chemical Workers Local 170, which holds bargaining rights for the production group in this plant.

It is anticipated, on the basis of the interest shown that a local union charter can shortly be issued to this office group and that the OEIU will soon be in a position to move forward to obtain exclusive bargaining rights for the workers of our trade employed in this plant.

OEIU Vice President R. M. Daugherty is working with the officers of Chemical Workers Local 170 in connection with this drive.

The Chemical Workers have just successfully concluded a two week strike at this plant resulting from the company's refusal to consider reasonable increases in pay. Hourly increases ranging from 9 cents to 17½ cents were won for the Chemical Workers membership. Strike action by the Chemical Workers was taken only after months of negotiation had failed to bring about a satisfactory wage settlement.

## Improvements in Power Co. Pact

Meridian, Miss.—Wage increases ranging from \$10 to \$21 a month for clerical employees of the Mississippi Power Co. have been negotiated as an amendment to the basic agreement with Local 54. F. F. Fisher, president of the local, headed the negotiating committee.

OEIU Vice President A. R. Carson, who has been working with the group further reported that the increases are also reflected in new minimum rates and provision is made for \$5 per month increases each six months until the top rate is reached.

The agreement, as amended, is extended for an additional year.

## SECURE WAGE BOOST

Oswego, N. Y.—Wage increases ranging up to 12 cents an hour, retroactive to October 16, 1944, were won by Local 125 for close to 50 office workers at the Ames Iron Works division of Pierce Butler Radiator Corp. in a new contract negotiated by Local President Milo F. Decustio, Steward William A. Gregory and a committee.

Other highlights of the contract are an eight-hour day, 40-hour week, time and one-half for Saturday work, double time for Sunday and holiday work, paid sick leave, vacations, union shop and seniority in the filling of vacancies, layoffs and rehiring.

## International Convention of OEIU is Held in Chicago

Chicago—About 100 delegates from local unions throughout the United States and Canada attended the 1947 convention of the Office Employees International Union held in Chicago at the Congress Hotel from March 17 through March 22.

The convention handled approximately 100 resolutions from local unions dealing with a wide variety of subjects. It also elected officers and heard a number of fine addresses by distinguished leaders of the labor movement and government officials during the busy 6-day session.

### Officers Elected

President Paul R. Hutchings and Secretary-Treasurer J. Howard Hicks were returned to office, together with the following vice-presidents: Region 1, Robert M. Daugherty, Toledo, Alize Holz, Milwaukee; Region 2, J. O. Bloodworth, Jr., Tampa, Fla., A. R. Carson, Sheffield, Ala.; Region 3, L. G. Nygren, Minneapolis, Minn., C. A. Stafford, Port Arthur, Texas, and Region 4, Frank F. Randall, Oakland, C. C. Newell, Vancouver, Wash.

Two new vice-presidents were elected. They are Sarah Keenan, business representative of Chicago Local 28, for Region 1, and Lauren P. Amell, president of Los Angeles Local 174, for Region 4.

The convention went on record authorizing the International officers to request all locals to give the fullest possible support to Local 205 of New York City in its dispute with the Wall Street exchanges and brokerage firms. President William Green also pledged the support of the great A. F. of L. as reported elsewhere in this issue.

### President Green Speaks

In his address President Green blasted restrictive legislation and declared it would lead to strife and chaos. "If the union shop is banned, workers will be in rebellion and stay in rebellion until they can elect a new Congress that will repeal such a law" he asserted.

"Freedom to work with, where and for whom one pleases is a sacred right in America" he emphasized. "What power, legal or otherwise, can make a man work unless he wants to? Legislation is not going to make a man work with a non-union worker unless he wants to.

"If the closed shop is barred, the employer will have to choose whether he wants to try to keep his plant open with non-union workers or whether he wants his union men to return to their jobs under closed shop agreements."

Reactionary members of Congress were condemned for trying to do a job to weaken labor, which anti-union employers could not accomplish by themselves.

"Just remove all the mist which surrounds all this propaganda spread against labor" Green continued "and you will find the facts standing out in a single motive—to weaken and destroy organized labor so workers may be more fully exploited. That to me is un-American."

Blasting further at anti-union propaganda, the AFL President said, "We parallel ourselves to the churches of America, wherein we both are striving to improve human values to make better citizens for America.

"Our sole objective is to seek to lift the standard of life and living among the masses of people in our country, and we are deeply interested through education in improving their cultural, spiritual and social life."

### Hear Lundeberg

In the course of his stirring address, Harry Lundeberg, president of the Seafarers International Union, declared "The Union is composed of people and there is nothing strange about a union. The workers banded together for their own mutual benefit to get the high wages and the best working conditions the industry can stand, and when I say they can stand, they can stand more than they are taking right now around the country in various industries. They are making plenty of money and we as organized trade unionists should take it away from them—give them so much for themselves, and we take the rest because we produce it."

He also condemned Communists, declaring that "in our organization we class the Communist Party and its followers as scabs to the working class of the United States." Lundeberg wound up his speech with an offer of "any kind of support we can render you."

The main convention address was given by John M. Houston, a member of the National Labor Relations Board. It is reported elsewhere in this issue.

Social highlights of the convention were the corned beef and cabbage get-together, which was appropriately held on St. Patrick's night and featured the singing of Irish songs, and the banquet in the Gold Room of the Congress Hotel, which was unique in that there were no extensive speeches.

Secretary I. M. Ornburn brought a message from the AFL Union Label Trades Department, stressing the importance of buying union-made goods.

### Act on Communists

The convention unanimously adopted the report of its Appeals Committee in denying the appeals filed by Tom Bolster, former presi-

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## FRISCO TRANSPORT AGREEMENT SIGNED

St. Louis, Mo.—President A. L. Rex of Local 13 recently announced the conclusion of negotiations and the signing of an agreement between the local union and the Frisco Transportation Company. The agreement, which is the first between the local union and the company, provides for hourly wage increases ranging from 16 to 25 cents.

According to Rex, John I. Rollings, secretary, St. Louis Trades and Labor Union, materially assisted Local 13 in the negotiation of this agreement.

Office employees in the company's local operation are reported as equally enthusiastic over the improvements which they have won through collective bargaining as were their fellow workers employed by the same company who several months earlier joined Local 185, Springfield, Missouri, and negotiated the initial agreement with the company.

## Further Gains at Bastian Brothers

Rochester, N. Y.—A graduated raise with assurance of a minimum of at least 10 per cent to each office employe was obtained by Local 34 in a renewal contract with Bastian Brothers Co., manufacturer of badges. The increase is retroactive to January 1.

The contract provides for the union shop, paid vacations and sick leave and seniority in promotions as well as layoffs and rehiring. It continues the eight-hour day, five-day week, with time and one-half for overtime and double time for Sunday and holiday work.

A negotiating committee of five members with Business Representative Claire B. Hall handled the negotiations.

## APPROVE COUNCILS

Chicago—Without a dissent, the Office Employees International Union convention adopted recommendations of the Executive Board and the convention constitution committee to amend the International law so as to provide for the establishment of councils of local unions in an area or industry where mutual interests require cooperative action in effectuating the purposes of the International Union.

The convention, in adopting the proposals made by the International officers, would allow for close cooperation of local unions in a limited area or industry with the International Executive Board having the right to authorize the establishment of councils to function in accordance with specific requirements as adopted for inclusion in the International constitution.

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OFFICE EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION



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J. HOWARD HICKS, *Sec.-Treas.*

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## Praises AFL For Eliminating Reds

Washington, D. C.—J. Edgar Hoover, head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, praised the American Federation of Labor for its successful efforts in preventing Communist infiltration in his testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Affairs.

"I am convinced," Hoover said, "that the great masses of union men and women are patriotic American citizens, interested chiefly in security for themselves and their families. They have no use for Communists.

"In those instances where Communists have taken control of unions, it is because too many union men and women have been out-manuevered and out-waited by Communists.

"The Communists have long viewed with envy the AFL. They admit they play a very small role, with only a handful of Communists active in AFL locals.

"If more union members took an active role in the affairs of their unions, it would become increasingly difficult for Communists to gain control.

"Union members can easily spot 'Red' sympathizers and party members in conventions and meetings, because they invariably drive to establish the 'party line' instead of serving the best interests of the union and the country."

Hoover and other witnesses told the committee the best safeguard against "Reds" and "fronts" is what Woodrow Wilson used to call "pitiless publicity," and that it would be unwise to make "martyrs" of them by outlawing the Communist party.

## Locals Encouraged to File Income Returns

Washington, D. C.—All OEIU local unions throughout the United States, Alaska and Hawaii have been encouraged by J. Howard Hicks, secretary-treasurer of the International Union, to file income tax returns with their district collectors of internal revenue.

## Convention Hears Houston On Anti-Labor Proposals

Chicago—The principal address at the OEIU convention was delivered by John M. Houston, senior member of the National Labor Relations Board and a former member of Congress from Kansas.

In no uncertain terms he condemned the proposed punitive labor laws and warned that "such policies would lead to the most bitter and costly strife."

He said that "white collar workers" as the key workers in industry, commerce and finance "have the responsibility and opportunity to show both the misinformed and uneducated the course which our labor relations thinking must take and the pitfalls to be avoided if our democratic ways are to continue and prosper.

"Something fine in American life is threatened and will be lost if pressing social, economic and governmental problems are to be decided on the basis of which groups are most glib, sensational repetitive and emotional," he declared. "Yet there is a very real danger that the current controversy over what the policy of the United States shall be with respect to labor relations is being decided by the country at large on this basis."

### Fundamentals

Houston went on to underscore several fundamental considerations:

"First, a democratic society and a strikeless economy are incompatible; there can be no absolute guarantee against strikes.

"Second, orderly adjustment of labor relations cannot be based on radical changes which either destroy established patterns or which impose techniques foreign to the parties involved. Orderly conduct of labor relations can be derived only from a maturity in which past experience has demonstrated to the parties the most desirable principles and techniques.

"Third, industrial unrest is generally a symptom of an economic ailment. Labor-management relations are not carried on in a vacuum.

"Fourth, there is questionable wisdom in the 'omnibus' approach to peaceful labor relations. There is no necessary connection between industrial peace and democracy in unions, which some intend to secure by imposing internal regulation.

"Fifth, if we advance labor relations proposals from the standpoint that we must be punitive, then our labor relations program is doomed to failure. Our entire program should be shaped by the philosophy that punishment is not what we are seeking; we are seeking a constructive and positive approach."

Houston then discussed the National Labor Relations Act, the

In a detailed letter addressed to each local union, and which was accompanied by a set of forms required for the filing of such reports. Hicks explained the method of completing and filing the reports. All local unions receiving such forms are required to file the same not later than the fifteenth day of the fifth month following the end of their annual accounting period.

costs of government compulsion and the role of free collective bargaining.

### No Gift to Labor

Advocates of proposals tied in with the Labor Relations Act, or Wagner Act as it is also known, are "completely misguided" as to the character of that law, he declared.

"Many of these proposals are based on the belief that the Wagner Act created and gave a gift of some kind to labor, that labor was given a right which it had not had before 1935. The simple truth is that the Wagner Act did nothing of the sort.

"The National Labor Relations Act, the Norris-LaGuardia Act and the Clayton Act did not create new rights for employees; all of them were passed to set up procedural safeguards for rights which for more than a hundred years have been considered basic and constitutional.

"In short, the Wagner Act is nothing more than the recognition of the age-old principle that a legal right in one person implies a duty on the part of others to refrain from trespassing on that right. The Wagner Act does not convey a gift to anyone; nor does it establish a special status upon any one group in our society; nor does it clothe any group of men with any degree of irresponsibility.

### Success Is Proven

"What it does for the labor relationship in this country is entirely similar to what our laws concerning private property does for property owners.

"Thus, the Wagner Act was not intended to eliminate all evils from the field of industrial relations; its scope and purpose was a limited one. And that it has been a success is dramatically demonstrated by the decline in strikes and lock-outs caused by the denial of the right to self-organization. In 1937, about 60% of the strikers in the United States were involved in organizational strikes; in the latest period for which we have information, the first 6 months of 1946, the figure had declined to 8%. In 1937, man-days idle due to organizational strikes accounted for 76% of all strike idleness; of the 42 largest and most important post-war strikes studied by the Department of Labor, only 1/20 of one per cent of the idleness was caused by organizational issues.

"The purpose of the Wagner Act, as we have noted, was to remove the causes of certain types of industrial unrest," he continued. "This has been accomplished to a great degree. Will some of the current proposals implement or weaken that policy?"

### Costly Strife

"I submit that the answer is obvious: Such policies would lead to the most bitter and costly strife. Free men do not readily surrender basic rights—particularly when they have enjoyed them for only 12 of the last 100 years and when others still continue to enjoy them. Our history teaches us that men will fight for freedom to associate with their fellows, even in the

## Changes Made In Dues Receipts

Washington, D. C.—Secretary-Treasurer J. Howard Hicks of the OEIU has announced that commencing with pre-written monthly dues receipts issued for June space will be provided on such receipts for local union secretary-treasurers to show the amount of dues paid by each member, together with any additional charges which may be made. Hicks pointed out that in local unions where monthly dues are uniform such space could be used at the option of each local union but in those cases of local unions with a sliding schedule of monthly dues, the providing of such space was particularly desirable.

In a letter addressed to secretary-treasurers of all local unions, Hicks stated that further improvements were to be made in the pre-written dues receipt system and encouraged the submission of constructive suggestions prior to such changes being made in the near future.

The OEIU recently inaugurated a pre-written receipt method of dues collection which provides for the issuance of a prepared monthly dues receipt card for each member of each local union with sections attached, one of which is retained by the local union for its record of payments made while the second is returned to OEIU headquarters as indication that the member whose name appears thereon has paid dues for such month. This new method of dues collection, which is based upon a method utilized by almost all public utilities in billing and receipting payments, greatly expedites the issuing of individual receipts for monthly dues and the reporting of those members paying dues to International Union headquarters.

The OEIU is the third major labor organization to adopt the pre-written receipt idea and other major organizations are giving favorable consideration to the idea at the present time.

face of criminal conspiracy laws. Our history further teaches us that this has always been the costliest fight—in terms of both human and capital losses."

"Our current difficulties do not derive from the fact that we have chosen collective bargaining as a national policy," he continued. "Where we do have difficulties they are usually due to the fact that we have not had enough experience with collective bargaining. In some areas, the techniques of collective bargaining are unknown; in others, too much is expected from collective bargaining; in some instances, either party is not contributing his share to the enterprise of collective bargaining; and, also, we still have with us those who wish to return to the 'good old days' when the employer had the unlimited right to fix the conditions of men's labor and to interfere with their rights.

"In brief, we have not as yet learned how to live together; we have not as yet developed that maturity which rests on accommodation rather than on insistence of having one's point of view prevail. And, this is readily understandable. Widespread collective bargaining really did not get under way until about 10 years ago. The

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## OEU Convention Held in Chicago

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dent of Local 29 at Oakland, Calif., and Muriel Kerchen, a former business agent of that local, and sustained the expulsion action taken by the Executive Board against such individuals on the ground that they were Communists or Communist sympathizers. Herbert Kalman, a former vice-president of Local 29, was similarly expelled by action of the Executive Board but took no appeal to the convention.

The convention also unanimously adopted a resolution putting the International Union squarely behind the pronouncement condemning Communism which was adopted at the AFL convention last October, and also affirmed as International Union policy the pronouncement of its Executive Board in its decision of March 5, expelling the three members of the Oakland, Calif., local.

The convention took action to establish, effective as of the next electoral convention in 1949, a fifth regional district for the Dominion of Canada, with a Canadian vice-president to be elected at that time. In the meantime the Executive Board is to designate a Canadian representative.

The convention arrangements and entertainment were worked out through the efforts of Chicago Local 28, which served as host to the convention. The hard-working convention committee, headed by local President Daniel O'Connell, with local Vice-President Sally McCorry serving as co-chairman and with Business Representative Sarah E. Keenan as committee secretary, did a magnificent job in providing for the smooth running of the convention and in arranging a most delightful entertainment program. All of the officers, Executive Board members, as well as the rank and file membership of Local 28, played an important part in assisting to make the convention an outstanding one.

## COUNCIL ENDORSES OEU AFFILIATION

San Rafael, Calif.—The Pacific Coast District Metal Trades Council unanimously adopted a resolution favoring affiliation of the Office Employees International Union with the Metal Trades Department of the A.F.L. and took action to notify President John P. Frey of its decision.

## MOVIE AVAILABLE

Washington, D. C.—“America the Beautiful”—a technicolor sound movie depicting the marvels of the United States, is available for showing by local unions. Applications should be made to Films and Special Services Section, U. S. Savings Bonds Division, Treasury Department, Washington building, Washington 25, D. C., or to the state savings bond directors.

## Wages Lag Behind Prices, Labor Dep't. Report Warns

Washington, D. C.—The basic flaws in the nation's economy were graphically underscored by the latest Department of Labor report on factory earnings.

It showed that for “the third successive month,” weekly earnings of workers in manufacturing industries have remained virtually unchanged—in each instance, just a shade under \$47.

In other words, while prices continue to mount, wages are remaining stationary.

The picture is much blacker when compared with wartime. Back in January, 1945, “take-home” pay of industrial workers hit \$47.50, highest of the war period.

Twenty-five months later, “take-home” earnings of factory employes had still not climbed back to the wartime level, but the cost of living in that period—according to the Labor Department's figures—soared over 20 per cent.

Thus, workers have, in effect, taken a 20 per cent “cut” in their

real wages during the past two years.

There was a slight ray of hope for consumers in another Labor Department report just issued. It showed that the cost of living index declined by 2/10 of 1 per cent from mid-January to mid-February.

However, the Department quickly offset that by pointing out that a temporary drop in the family food bill was responsible for the over-all downturn, but that the rise in wholesale food prices after February 15 would turn the decline into an increase in its next monthly index.

Outside of foods, nearly all other prices rose between mid-January and February, the Department said.

As typical, it cited the fact that “clothing prices advanced for the 44th consecutive month and have risen almost 80 per cent since August, 1939.”

## Houston Speaks

(Continued from page 2)

first half of that decade was devoted chiefly to winning recognition of collective bargaining rights; the second half was devoted to preparation for war and war itself. And after the war, collective bargaining was suffering from a “hang-over.”

### Laws Not Cure-alls

“As to the parties to the collective bargaining process, they must bring sanity, moderation, and tolerance to the bargaining table. They must realize that even an imperfect collective bargain is better than one tendered by some governmental agency. Only in this way will they learn to bear full responsibility for their product.

“To the extent that this philosophy of self-government, leadership, and responsibility develop in labor and industry, to that extent there will be less need for reliance upon laws. After all, you cannot legislate maturity; laws in themselves are not cure-alls for troubled human relations, whether they are labor relations or family relations. No matter how wisely fashioned, laws may tend to substitute rigid controls for the realistic and good-faith proposal and counter-proposal of collective bargaining.

“The purpose of Government should be to strengthen the relationship between management and labor. It should foster cooperation and not rely on official decree. It should operate on the premise that progress can be made only by agreement. And all actions of that Government should be shaped in the direction stimulating such agreement.”

## DELEGATES ENDORSE LILIENTHAL, CLAPP

Chicago, Ill.—Delegates assembled at the second convention of the OEU gave hearty support to a resolution calling for Senate approval of President Truman's nomination of David Lilienthal as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Gordon Clapp as director of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

## WHOLESALE DRUG CO. WORKERS VOTE OEU

Portland, Ore.—Office workers employed in the local operation of the McKesson and Robbins Drug Company voted decisively in favor of representation by Local 11 in a recent National Labor Relations Board election, according to Irving Enna, secretary-treasurer of the local union.

Enna reported that the success achieved in the McKesson and Robbins' election was the result of carefully planned and determined activities on the part of Business Representative Ruth Flood of the local union. Announcement of the success in this election has resulted in a demand for organization among office workers employed in the remainder of the industry and with whom Business Representative Flood is actively working at the present time. Negotiations on the initial agreement between McKesson and Robbins and the local union, and which are to start soon, is expected to result in a rapid and successful conclusion of the organizing program in the remainder of the industry.

### Yellow Cab Parley

Local 11 is presently negotiating an agreement with the Yellow Cab Company following successful unionization of the office employes of the company. AFL unions representing other workers employed by the company are lending assistance in the negotiations.

In an expansion of the educational program which the local union has under way, James R. Canon, business representative, is conducting indoctrination classes for the many new members entering the local union. These classes deal principally with a brief history of the organized labor movement, detailed information concerning the operation of the local union, information concerning the negotiation of agreements and each member's reasons for interest and obligation in obtaining and fulfilling such agreements, together with an outline of the organic structure of the AFL and the relationship of the local union to the OEU and the remainder of the AFL movement. In addition, Canon is conducting monthly dinner meetings for office stewards during which a wide range of interesting information is unfolded and discussions are held regarding new and interesting problems and observations of the office stewards.

## Secure Increase At Yawman Erbe

Rochester, N. Y.—Local 34 has negotiated a supplement to the working agreement with Yawman & Erbe Manufacturing Co., bringing wage increases of 10 to 12 per cent to all office employes, according to Claire B. Hall, business representative. The increase is retroactive to January 13. Another gain was the extension of paid sick leave to factory clerks, in addition to the general office staff.

## GREEN PLEDGES SUPPORT OF AFL

Chicago — A resounding pledge of the support of 7,500,000 AFL members to Local 205 in the dispute with the New York brokerage firm of A. M. Kidder & Co., and the resultant dispute with the New York Stock & Curb Exchange was made at the annual convention of the Office Employees International Union by AFL President William Green.

He devoted a considerable part of his speech before the convention to the Wall Street situation.

“I have watched the developments there and if it becomes necessary, I am going to call upon our Central body in New York, upon our unions in New York City, upon our national organizations throughout the country, to stand up and rally firmly and completely to the support of those workers who may become involved in that strike,” Green declared.

“I am proud of the fact that these workers have the courage to stand up and say to their employers that they want better wages and better working conditions in this money-making establishment, the Stock Exchange.”

He said further that he did not believe that “the people of the United States would support the owners and operators of the Stock Exchange when they refuse arbitration.”

“I consider that refusal of arbitration as justification for the workers to go on strike and fight for their rights if it becomes necessary for them to do so,” he declared.

# Heard By Delegates At International Convention



- 1—William Green, *Pres., American Federation of Labor.*  
 2—Paul R. Hutchings, *President OEIU.*  
 3—J. Howard Hicks, *Secretary-Treasurer OEIU.*  
 4—I. M. Ornburn, *Secretary-Treasurer, Union Label Trades Dept., A. F. of L.*

- 5—William Lewis, *Vice President, Chicago Federation of Labor.*  
 6—Father J. L. Donohue, *Chaplain, Chicago Building Trades Council.*  
 7—John M. Houston, *Member, NLRB.*

- 8—Daniel O'Connell, *President Chicago Local No. 28, OEIU.*  
 9—William L. McFetridge, *Vice President, Illinois Federation of Labor.*  
 10—Harry O'Reilly, *Regional Director, American Federation of Labor.*  
 11—Charles Wills, *Representative of Governor Green of Illinois.*  
 12—Joseph McCarthy, *Representative of Mayor Kelly of Chicago.*  
 13—Joseph Tobin, *Director, Labor Division National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.*  
 14—Harry M. Lundeberg, *President, Seafarers International Union.*

