Organizing successes

Hospital, institute units join OPEIU

Despite strong anti-union resistance by non-profit management at a Pennsylvania hospital and a Brooklyn, N.Y. institution, office and technical employees voted overwhelmingly for OPEIU representation at both facilities.

The more dramatic victory took place at Brownsville General Hospital in Pennsylvania where a 185 member unit of nonprofessional employees voted 137-to-27 for Local 457, of Centerville, a better than 5-to-1 margin.

A petition for the election was filed last December and a hearing was held in February by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. Hospital administrators undertook a series of anti-union legal maneuvers but these were denied at every turn and the election ordered for September 20.

The day before election, the hospital notified the board that it wouldn't allow balloting on the premises. The board reacted by hiring a bus and parking it in front of the hospital where employees cast their ballots.

In a final desperate effort, hospital attorneys, on election day sought a State Supreme Court injunction but again lost. After the votes were counted, the board certified the union but the hospital then filed new objections to delay collective bargaining.

A "hearing was scheduled as this issue went to press.

International Representative John W. Richards, Local 457 President Walter Golombewski and Rec.-Sec. Marilyn McCoy actively assisted the campaign of the Brownsville hospital employees to unionize under the OPEIU banner.

In an NLRB election among 150 clerical and technical employees at the renowned Pratt Institute in Brownsville, Brooklyn, Local 153 won an impressive 3-to-1 victory, thereby winning an energetic office Organizing Committee which overcame many obstacles placed in their path by hospital management hostile to the union.

Management efforts to keep the union out took many forms, according to the account of Secretary-Treasurer John Kelly. It used every legal technicality to force delays. After the election was scheduled, management held captive audience meetings and sought to dissuade employees with letters drafted by the personnel office urging them to vote against the union.

The tactics backfired in a splendid way.

The Organizing Committee, guided by Business Representative Gerry Lisikowitz and Gladys Lee, successfully countered management's maneuvers.

Contract proposals are now being forged for the Pratt Institute employees.

The Pratt victory was a sign of addition to Local 153's growing University Division, following on the heels of successful campaigns on the Brooklyn and Stony Brook campuses of Long Island University and, more recently, the decision of the 200-member independent union at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute to join Local 153. Its first major victory was at Fordham University some years ago.

Although Vancouver Local 15 was certified as bargaining agent for clerical and technical employees in the Department of Physical Plant, University of British Columbia, last May 30, obstructive tactics were adopted by the University which filed objections. The B.C. Labor Relations Board, following a hearing, upheld the certification and contract talks have now been scheduled for the new bargaining unit.

Regional Director John B. Kinnick reports that a raid by an "independent" union, at the freight companies represented by Denver Local 5 while negotiations for a new contract were proceeding ended in a re-election victory for continued OPEIU representation. The raiding group was organized by a Denver labor attorney.

Contract talks have now been resumed.

Shorter work week test succeeds for N.Y. local

The shorter work week, tested on a trial basis during the summer months for some 750 office employees of Group Health Inc., as a result of a collective bargaining proposal by New York Local 153, has proved so successful that the union and management have agreed to make it permanent.

GHI computer operators now work three days per week, while employees in other departments enjoy a four-day schedule. The computer employees have four straight days off, with other office employees getting three day-weekends, according to Local 153 Sec.-Treas. John Kelly, who said GHI is the "first union shop in the city to adopt such a plan."

The agreement followed a joint union-management study of the trial period results. This disclosed that absenteeism had been cut by 20% and work errors had been reduced by 50%.

"A year ago, there seemed to be more discontented people. You don't see that now," commented Dr. George W. Melcher, Jr., president of GHI, in admitting that results had erased the "resistance" he had expressed about the experiment before it was started in July.

Under the plan most employees work four day-shifts, nine hours a day for the first three days and eight hours the fourth, plus 45 minutes daily for lunch. The EDP section works two 12-hour shifts, one 11-hour shift and then four days off. The basic workweek remains at 35 hours.

A union-management memorandum of agreement was drawn up setting forth details on paid time off, vacations and sick leave, overtime, night differential, and coffee-breaks. A 7% differential for night employees, based on straight time worked, already had gone into effect. Various other liberalizing changes are scheduled to start in 1973.

The GHI shorter work week is widely recognized as an historic step in the nationwide campaign initiated by the Office & Professional Employees International Union to reduce the present standard 40-hour, 5-day week. Other unions are expected to follow the OPEIU lead in demanding a shorter week which is likely to become an important collective bargaining weapon in the hands of union negotiators across the nation.

For many years President Howard Coughlin had advocated a 4-day, 24-hour workweek as a national social and economic necessity in talks with industrialists, in press conferences and mass media interviews. GHI's move in this direction is a giant step forward in realizing his goal for white-collar employees on the North American continent.

Enthusiastic support for the plan was displayed at a meeting of bargaining unit members who hailed the shorter workweek as providing unique opportunities to enjoy greater leisure and additional time off for recreation, educational and avocational activities.

The Canadian Labour Congress has expressed strong opposition to any scheme which would shorten the work week at the expense of longer work days, and warned that any such amendment to the Labour Standards Code may have serious repercussions, particularly for Canada's non-union employees.

In a 25-point brief submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into the four-day 40-hour work week, it urged the body to reject it because "the only manner in which the shorter work week can safely come into being is through the maintenance of an eight-hour day or less."

The CLC brief pointed out that organized workers are quite capable of looking after their own interests but that "the thousands of unorganized workers across the country" are prone to manipulation if the labour standards are relaxed."

The Congress accused propogants of the four-day, forty-hour week of merely seeking higher productivity and higher profits at the expense of employees.

It also rejected the propogants' claim that the shorter week with 10-hour day would afford workers more leisure.

"The optimum answer to a cry for more leisure time can only be found in longer vacations, earlier retirements, increased sabbaticals, and a shorter workday and workweek in combination," the brief stated.

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November, 1972

OPEIU PICKETS PROTEST the sale of Farah slacks and sportswear at Lansburgh's Department Store in downtown Washington, D.C. Nearly 175 office employees from AFL-CIO headquarters, who are members of Local 2, participated in the rally after Lansburgh's refused a request to discontinue the Farah sales. The Clothing Workers have been on strike against Farah since May 3.
Banks rush to automate, give jobs to machines

The mushroom growth of bank automation warns all bank employees in the U.S. and Canada to unionize. An article on this page tells how banks across the nation are stampeding to install electronic tellers and cash-dispensing machines.

While one million bank employees in the U.S. and Canada hesitate to unionize for better pay and greater job security, banks are joining in a joyful stampede to automate by installing electronic tellers and cash-dispensing machines.

The American Bankers Association says that about 700 electronic tellers and cash dispensers have been installed in banks so far and that demand is rapidly accelerating. By 1980, the association predicts, banks will have spent more than $1 billion for 34,000 automated tellers and currency dispensers.

Insert a plastic card
To use an automatic teller or cash dispenser, a customer merely inserts a plastic card into a slot and presses a few buttons to identify himself and to instruct a computer. Currently, electronic tellers contain their own minicomputers that don’t have access to a bank’s main computer.

But within a year, bankers and manufacturers say, many machines will be brought “on line” with central computers, making money and larger transactions possible. Moreover, computers may soon link the machines of different banks or scattered cities, allowing customers to bank while far from home.

Bankers contend that such national link-ups are hardly science-fiction. For example, National BancAmerican Inc. of San Francisco recently contracted with TRW Inc. for a nationwide communications network linking all BancAmerican card banks. The system, which should be operating by next April, is expected to reduce to less than a minute the time it takes a merchant to check the credit of a customer from anywhere in the U.S.

Credit Cards Going?
In some places, however, credit cards may soon be unnecessary. Banks are trying to link their computer systems directly with retail stores, providing merchants with a foolproof means to ensure that transactions are good. Eventually, such systems could eliminate written checks because customers could use the machinery to transfer electronically funds from their accounts to those of the merchants.

Swamped with paperwork, banks are also working to eliminate payroll and other kinds of checks. Banks are spending billions of dollars to automate their teller machines. By next February, up from the current one, American Fletcher National Bank of Indianapolis will add two electronic tellers to its current 10 by the end of the year, and an official says, “It’s no longer a question of whether more banks will get into this, but of when.”

In the Columbus area, the rush to electronic banking was touched off by City National Bank & Trust Co., an affiliate of First Banc Group of Ohio, which installed its first cash dispensers early in 1970 and had the area’s first electronic teller in operation last October. Today, a spokesman says, cash dispensers are operating around-the-clock at all 12 branches, which are due to have the more sophisticated tellers this month.

Union leadership means studying

Some of the most vicious attacks against the labour movement come from people who would benefit most from automation but hesitate to do so because they opposed the initiative at so to others, union leaders indeed many of our fellow citizens, indeed many of our members do not understand our policies and objectives,” he told delegates to the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour.

He added: “What is particularly galling is that some of the most vicious attacks come from low-paid exploited unorganized workers who lack the initiative to join unions and use them to improve their lot. They also realize that their own well-being is largely the result of the hundreds of years of struggle by labour to obtain pensions for the aged, health and welfare legislation, legal protection and the right to vote.”

Unions study labor law at AFL-CIO center in Washington, D.C. President Gail Raymond of Local 288, in center rear, successfully completed the intensive course.

Local 288 President Gail W. Raymond, Westfield, Mass., was among the group of labor leaders who recently completed the Labor Law Institute at the AFL-CIO Labor Studies Center in Washington, D.C.

The institute participants took part in an intensive week-long course in which they learned specifics of law as it pertains to labor-management relations.

 Critics of unions include many who need their aid

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The course was taught by authorities in this field—union attorneys, AFL-CIO staff members and professors of law.

The Labor Studies Center is the labor movement’s first national full-time educational institution. It is now in its fourth year of operation at 1500 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. In May it will move to its permanent permanent educational campus in Silver Spring, Maryland, where it will continue to offer its diversified curriculum in expanded facilities.

The center serves all unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Copies of its 1972-73 catalogue and further information are available from the center.

Page Two

WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION affiliated with the AFL-CIO General

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LOWEST, ATTENTION: Change of address Form 3573 should be addressed to Office and Professional Employees International Union, 612 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Published monthly at 81 Rhode Island Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Subscription Price $1 a Year

Bank automation makes unionism imperative

The mushroom growth of bank automation warns all bank employees in the U.S. and Canada to unionize. An article on this page tells how banks across the nation are stampeding to install electronic tellers and cash-dispensing machines.

By 1980, the nation’s banks plan to invest more than $1 billion in electronic equipment. Electronic banking will make credit cards obsolete and eliminate much of today’s paperwork, payroll checks and check writing, and greatly reduce the need for clerical personnel today. The employees are indispensable tomorrow, they will be expendable.

Automation now is breaking down the neck of every clerical employee in commercial banks, mutual savings banks, savings and loan associations and insurance companies. It menaces in one way or another both the pay prospects and job security of every office employee in the financial field, including brokerage houses.

Of the 500,000 clericals employed by banks in 1970 to sort checks and run bookkeeping machines, about nine of every 10 were women. Already underpaid and in most cases dissatisfied, these underpaid women face a double threat: little chance of getting any raises together with the prospect of being replaced by electronic banking machines.

As a result, those employed by banks and particularly women bank employees now need to visualize what the future holds in store for them. This, of course, calls for a revolution in their own traditional thinking and outlook toward unionism. In their growing predilection, unionism is their one hope.

Once again the OPEIU urges all bank employees to unionize now, before it is too late.
Linda Trayanoff

Member of Local 13 is Labor Day queen

QUEEN FOR A DAY: Linda Trayanoff chats with William G. Adrian, named Labor Man-of-the-Year (left); Senator Charles H. Percy, and George Badgley, Chairman of the Labor Day Awards dinner-dance.

Linda Trayanoff, 21-year old member of Local 13 in St. Louis, Mo., was chosen as Union Label Queen for the Labor Day festivities held in Belleville, Ill. The contestant is selected each year on the basis of tickets sold for the event with all local unions of the different crafts participating.

An office employee at the International Bridge Workers, Linda was crowned queen by Mayor Nichols of Belleville at the Labor Day Awards dinner-dance held prior to the annual parade and picnic. She rode in an open convertible in the Labor Day parade and later awarded prizes to winners of the various contests at the picnic which followed. Local 13 participated in the picnic by operating two soda stands. Local 13 member Dora Marsh served as chairwoman for the Belleville Labor Day activities.

Institute marks its 25th year

Rutgers University's Institute of Management and Labor Relations in New Brunswick, N.J., celebrated its 25th anniversary on October 18 with a day of discussion on "Inflation Control, Productivity and Collective Bargaining."

The Institute's program is guided by an advisory council made up of leaders in labor, management and the public.

OPEIU Local 32 Business Manager Nicholas Juliano, Newark, N.J., is a member.

Local 15 members gain $1,000 over two years

Wage increases totaling more than $1,000 per member over two years, shift differential lifted to 25c hourly from 10c, an additional paid holiday, and supplementary vacations based on longevity were won in a new contract negotiated by Vancover Local 15 for its unit at Scott Paper Ltd., in New Westminster, B.C.

The settlement calls for a general wage hike of $30 per month in each year, according to Business Manager Bill Swan- son, setting a $415 starting salary, a $435 starting salary, and a $455 starting salary in the top bracket, the maximum goes to $3720 per month after 24 months.

Those already above maximums in grade will also get the general increases. Employees performing work temporarily in a higher grade are entitled to pay of that grade after three days (was 5). Those promoted will receive a $15 a month minimum salary increase.

Both Good Friday and Easter Monday now become paid holidays, bringing the annual total to 10. Previously, employees had the choice of either day as a holiday.

After five years continuous service, employees will be eligible for supplementary vacations with pay each five years in ad- dition to their regular vacations. The schedule calls for one sup- plementary week after five years; two supplementary weeks after 10, and another two after 15. At 20 and 25 years, em- ployees will get three supplementary weeks in each period, four weeks at 30 and 35 years, and five after 40 years.

Assisting Swanson in the ne- gotiations were Chief Steward Rosalind Rust and committee members Mary-Lou White and Theo Browne. The agreement runs to May 31, 1974.

Canadian minimum increased to $1.90

The Canadian federal minimum wage was increased to $1.90 an hour from $1.75 on November 1 by an Order in Council under the provisions of the Canadian Labour Code (Labour Standards). The minimum applies to employees aged 17 and over in businesses coming under federal jurisdic- tion. The minimum for employees under 17 is increased to $1.75 an hour.

In the U.S. meanwhile, minimum wage legislation died in the last days of the 92nd Congress when a Republican-Dixiecrat coalition refused to send a House-passed bill to conference with a more liberal Senate bill backed by orga- nized labor. The Senate bill would have raised the wage floor to $2.20 an hour in several steps. Thus, the U.S. minimum continues at $1.60 an hour.
First contract brings increases and $50 bonus

An initial contract negotiated by Local 403 for its new unit at the Data Systems Division of Computing & Software, Inc., gained a $5 across-the-board weekly increase plus a $50 bonus for each employee, together with implementation of a new pay grade structure and various fringe benefits. The contract covers laborers who manage and operate the NASA Computer Complex at Stennis Space Center.

The one-year pact runs to July 1, 1973. It sets a $2.60 hourly maximum in the lowest grade; to $5.50 in the top classification, according to Local 403 President R. S. Tardo. Such a one per hour differential was obtained for the night shift and 30¢ for the midnight shift.

The agreement provides 10 paid holidays annually and vacations of one week after six months; two weeks for 1- to 5-year service; three weeks for 6- to 9-year service; and four weeks after 10. Sick leave of 3/6ths day per month is cumulative to 20 days. Employees can use one week's vacation in lieu of unused leave above five days or can elect to carry the balance forward into the next fiscal year.

Pension reform a good bill dies

Pension reform is dead for 1972. It will doubtless come up again when Congress reconvenes in 1973. In the meantime, however, the Senate Finance Committee in one fell swoop last month struck down the Williams-Javits Pension Reform Bill of four of its major provisions—vesting, funding, reinsurance and pension portability. The Senate Finance Committee thereby axed one of the most carefully prepared and researched pieces of legislation ever to have been drafted on the subject of pensions.

More than one million dollars and three years of study and hearings, and countless hours of drafting the measure, went into the Harrison Williams-Jacob Javits measure. Despite this, Senator Russell Long’s Finance Committee, late in September, completely blanked it.

There is no question in the minds of those of us who negotiate pensions that vesting, funding, reinsurance and voluntary portability are absolutely essential if pensions are to accomplish the goal set for them when pensions were set up and approved by the Internal Revenue Service. Obviously, a pension plan which states that a pension benefit will be paid only when and if the worker reaches the age of 65 is unrealistic. If such a worker is laid off, quits or is laid off, at the age of 65, all contributions made on behalf of such individual are lost.

The Williams-Javits Bill’s provision of guaranteed vesting after eight years is sound and realistic. Its proposal to insure funding is a good one. Too many plans today either depend on the size of company profits or the health of the general fund of the company involved for pension contributions or pension payments. Obviously, in such cases, if a company goes through a period of reduced earnings, the pension plan will suffer. On the other hand, if the company loses its identity because of merger or dissolution, the pension plan and its promised benefits to workers go up in smoke.

In many cases, pension plans are set up on the basis of repaying past service liability over a period of 30 or 40 years. This is sound in accordance with actuarial advice. However, if companies adopting this system go out of business for numerous reasons before the past service liability is fully funded, the payments are generally made only to the older employees and the rest receive nothing. For this and numerous other reasons, reinsurance, proposed by Williams-Javits, is imperative. We should not continue to face the specter of workers, thinking they would be secure at retirement age, finding that pension payments made on their behalf did not provide for full payment of past service liability and were not reimbursed by a responsible company or government institution. We insure bank deposits. We therefore can, with certainty, insure pensions.

Portability raises numerous problems. Obviously if a worker is employed for a period of 10 years in a firm where pension payments are made on his behalf and, because of numerous reasons, he quits or is laid off, he should have the right to bring his pension credits with him to the plan of his new employer. Problems here involve the fact that his new employer may not have a pension plan or, if he has, the plan may be completely different issofar as contributions, pension payments, retirement age and other factors are concerned.

Finally, despite the need for the Williams-Javits Pension Reform Bill, we have another area not touched by this proposed measure. While most workers are covered by Social Security or the Railroad Retirement Act, 30 million are not covered by private pension plans. Obviously, the terms of the Williams-Javits Bill will considerably increase the cost of private pension plans. The bill, however, will have no effect on employers who do not provide pension coverage for their workers. It is apparent, therefore, that increasing the cost of private pensions will also increase the competitive disadvantage that such employers are already facing with their competitors who provide no pension plan coverage whatsoever. This is a very serious problem and should be considered by Senators Williams and Javits in preparing their proposals for the 1973 Congressional term.

No pension reform bill will be complete without making provision for the 30 million workers who do not enjoy the retirement protection of a private pension plan. Britain resolved this problem two years ago. We in the United States can too!