Women office employees at Hopper, Inc., a large manufacturing company in Bakersfield, Calif., realizing they were grossly underpaid and enjoyed only minimal fringe benefits, decided their only remedy was to form a bargaining unit under the OPEIU banner.

Many of the 60 women were so underpaid that they were eligible for welfare and food stamps, although they worked a 40-hour week. Some had even paid up to $300 in fines to an employment agency to get their jobs after they asked Los Angeles Local 30 for help.

However, because of the time and distance between Los Angeles and Bakersfield the Union agreed to give all the help it could but frankly told them that they would have to do most of the work themselves. They accepted the challenge.

Local 30 members June Bolinger and Beth Riley, both experienced in union work, set up a small but energetic organizing committee. Headed by Nevela Robertson it promptly went to work signing up Hopper office employees so successfully that last June the result was an overwhelming NLRA election victory.

Negotiations for an initial contract started right after the election. Dumbfounded that a group of office women could bring them to the bargaining table, it soon became evident that company officials didn't want a union contract.

Instead of negotiating directly, it hired an outside labor consultant who for seven months went through the motions of bargaining with Local 30 Business Representative Bill Roberts and a unit negotiating committee comprising Nevela Robertson, to the credit of Roberts and Carole Porter. This tactic only made the women angrier.

"There was absolutely no employer respect for these women or the work they performed," Roberts said. "After exploiting all alternatives through informal mediation, picketing both the plant and Hopper's home, handbilling the public and all employees, many office women were ready to do most of the work themselves."

Some 250 office employees in seven new bargaining units were added to OPEIU rolls, according to reports from the field to Director of Organization Art Lewandowski.

"The largest was in Puerto Rico where an election held among 100 office employees at Autoridad De Tierras (Land Authority) in Guam resulted in a two-to-one victory by Local 406 for OPEIU representation, according to International Representative Jimmy Diaz."

International Representative Gary Kirkland scored two election victories, one among a 60-member group of Road and Engineering Department employees in Shamina County, Wash., who voted by a margin of better than three-to-one for representation by Local 11.

He also reported that a 30-member credit union in Patco, Wash., had voted for representation by Local 100 by a vote of three-to-one.

In Muskegon Heights, Mich., a ten-member unit of maintenance employees voted to affiliate with Detroit Local 10, International Representative Art Bivin. Köster said the election was conducted by the Council's First Vice President, representing Local 329.

Local 446 President Dominic Fauone was re-elected to a second two-year term on the board and will also serve as a member of the council's Strike Support Committee.

Six More Staff Members Join the President's Club

Sec.-Treas. William A. Lowe reports that the following new members have joined the President's 100 Club since the previous list was published in White Collar:

John Fitzmaurice, Hamden, Conn., International Representative.
Michael G. Goodwin, New York, Sec.-Treas. Local 153.
Gwen Newton, Los Angeles, Calif., OPEIU Vice President and Local 30 Business Manager.

Three Business Representatives of Local 30 in Los Angeles have joined the 50 Club. They are Charles A. Florey, William A. Reay, and William J. Roberts.

The President's 100 Club was authorized by the Executive Board to raise funds for VOTE (Voice of the Electorate). It is open to OPEIU office workers and representatives at all levels.

With the six new council membership now totals 29.

New Haven Labor Council Reelected 2 OPEIU Members

Two OPEIU members have been re-elected to the Executive Board of the Greater New Haven, Conn., Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

Retired International Representative Justin F. Manning was unopposed for his tenth consecutive two-year term as

HEW asks OPEIU to Help in Nationwide Vaccine Plan

Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Joseph A. Califano, Jr., has appealed to OPEIU members to help in a nationwide campaign to vaccinate 20 million children under 15 who lack proper immunity against polio, measles, rubella, tetanus, diptheria and whooping cough.

In a letter to OPEIU President Howard Coughlin, he says that this neglect in part is due to "public and professional apathy and the difficulty that many families have in obtaining immunization for their children during the working day."

He urges OPEIU members "to seek full immunization for their children and to draw their attention to community-based services where they live."

OPEIU Leads All Women Unit to Victory

Self-Organized Group in California Beats Odds to Win Contract

OPEIU Organizing Adds 250 to Rolls

Largest Unit Won by Local 406 in Puerto Rico

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A Lesson for Anti-Union Banks

The American Bankers Association shrewdly announces that less than 1% of the industry's employees are unionized. As a result, these remain among the lowest-paid groups in the nation and will continue to do so until they unionize en masse.

Given the anti-union mentality which this assumption displays, the recognition that if the employees became unionized the banks would become "non-competitive." This is pure myth, amply disproved by the experience of The National Bank of Washington, D.C., marking the casting of the 300-million vote in an NLRB election, spelled out in "Banks and labor laws to make work equitably as Congress intended 42 years ago." The result is a National Labor Relations Act.

In a word of caution to unionized workers, he said:

"Just when a strike will not make your dreams come true. A union is a mechanism - a good tool. And like all good tools it needs to be cared for. So union needs the personal involvement of its members - not just in time of crisis but on a regular, continuing, sustaining basis."

Declarating that the "institution of collective bargaining and the NLRA, the result of a widespread understanding and the spirit of give-and-take that flow from them. Collective bargaining can be just as helpful to employers as employees to employees," he said that "was what the framers of U.S. law intended when they drafted the law 42 years ago." But "between the intent and the results there is a substantial gap of empty promises, delays and frustrations, and the gap has grown instead of shrinking.

Meanly attributed this to the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin amendments to the Act, with the result that employers are now "in the position of the distribution center.

"For workers who face that kind of opposition . . . they face, on the one hand, the power of the professional union-busters and strikebreakers and, on the other, the power of American labor.

"Across-the-board wage gains totaling more than $4,000 per member over three years, in addition to other fringe benefits, were gained by Local 10 for its office unit at McKesson & Robbins, drug distribution center in Detroit, Business Representative Arnold L. Shams reports.

He says the new agreement calls for a $1.00 increase in the base rate in the first year, $5.015 in the second, and $5.015 in the third. In 14(b) language the agreement provides a starting rate of $5.015 an hour in the lowest grade office of mail clerk, rising to $5.025 maximum. In the second year the starting rate will be $5.065 rising to $5.835 maximum.

Other gains are 1½ additional paid holidays, one day of which may be added to vacation time, and one extra paid sick leave day. Under a new sick leave of absence plan, employees with a doctor's certificate may use it and retain sick leave days which are paid for at the end of each contract year. A new sick-senior clause was also negotiated in the event of merger, consolidation or relocation of the distribution center. The new agreement runs to November 1, 1979.

The unit negotiating team as represented by the Shams comprised Chief Steward Virginia Mills, Stewards Sandra Riddle and Jackie LaMar, and committee member Margaret McKenzie.
**CLUW Group Studies Child Care**

**OPEIU Delegate Among 20 Visiting 3 Nations Overseas**

**DELEGATES ON OVERSEAS STUDY: Group of labor union women who are visiting three nations overseas to study child care facilities and programs in a seminar sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Sheila Baker, third from right in second row, represents the OPEIU on the delegation.**

President Sheila Baker, of New York Local 153, and a member of Fordham University's office staff, was designated to represent the OPEIU in a three-week study tour of child care facilities in Israel, Switzerland and Sweden as part of a seminar sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

"I'm delighted that Sheila will represent us in this very important project," said President Howard Coughlin. "We need to intensify our efforts to secure adequate child care facilities for children of working mothers. I'm confident that the information she brings back will help us to attain this objective."

Sister Baker is one of 20 women labor leaders, all CLUW members, who have been designated by their Unions to participate in the child care seminar. The project is financed by the German Marshall Fund, a U.S. foundation set up by the German people in gratitude for the American help they received following World War II.

In addition to the OPEIU delegate, the women's labor group includes representatives of nineteen other international unions. The 20 women trade unionists recently completed a two-day orientation for their trip at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Md., financed by AFL-CIO union affiliates which use it for seminars and training institutes for their members and staffs.

The group took the crash course to formulate questions they will explore, such as finances for child care facilities, problems resulting from the increased number of single working parents, the roles of labor unions, business and Industry groups in the establishment of day care and other child care facilities, effects of the women's movement on development of child care, and social legislation affecting working women.

On their return, the women will work through their own unions as well as community groups to develop standards, and formulate programs for expansion of child care facilities in the United States, where more than half of the three-to-six-year-olds are cared for outside the home today.

**Stage Set for Convention**

The Fourteenth Triennial Convention of the Office & Professional Employees International Union will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in the City of Los Angeles, June 6-10, 1977.

In order to determine the fall 1977 attendance, we called attention to this Convention, its date and location, at each Educational Conference held in 1976. Thereafter, immediately after the first of the year, we sent letters to all Local Unions again notifying them of the Convention, the city, the dates, and the need to elect delegates and send resolutions at the earliest possible moment.

Our Conventions, like membership meetings of our Local Unions, establish the basic policies of our International Union and define the direction of our organization for the ensuing three years. Over 300 delegates representing more than 300 Local Unions will be in attendance and will be informed that our membership totals are now the highest in the history of our International Union.

The convention will deal with a host of resolutions covering a myriad of subjects. These will include proposed constitutional changes, per capita tax increases, and numerous legislative proposals dealing with the economy, minimum wages, changes in the National Labor Relations Act, and repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act.

In order to have our Convention operate both expeditiously and efficiently, members of all committees will be appointed prior to the Convention and will be asked to meet on Saturday and Sunday just prior to its opening.

The committees will be asked to report favorably or unfavorably on numerous resolutions submitted to each such committee. These committees will include: Rules, Resolutions, Constitution, Organizing, Legislation, Publicity, Official Publication, and Officers' Report.

In order to appraise the new delegates of the workings of our conventions, we are forwarding a four-page leaflet to all delegates wherein we will discuss the importance of the work of the convention. As each committee chairman reports, delegates will have an opportunity to debate the pros and cons of the committee's recommendations.

The Convention thereafter decides to adopt or reject the recommendations of the committee. This is usually done by a voice vote. However, any delegate may request a division of the house in which case a secret ballot is taken. One-tenth of the delegates present may demand and obtain a roll call vote based on the voting strength of each Local Union, as provided in the OPEIU Constitution.

Each Local Union in good standing is entitled to one vote in the Convention for each 100 members or major fraction thereof, on which per capita tax has been paid for the 12-month period ending with March 31st preceding the Convention. While Local Unions will have the right to cast all of their votes for any candidate, a particular resolution, all Local Unions are limited to a total of five delegates each.

While the following is subject to actions taken by the Rules Committee, nominations for the offices of President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Vice Presidents generally take place on the third day of the Convention. Elections conducted by a committee of delegates who are not candidates for any office are held on the fourth day. These elections are held by secret ballot. The Office & Professional Employees International Union proudly boasts that its Convention elections have been held by secret ballot since our Union was chartered by the American Federation of Labor in 1945.

In order to ensure representation from all parts of the United States and Canada, Vice Presidents must be elected from various geographic regions of both countries. Thirteen Vice Presidents include two from Canada (the Executive Board is recommending a third Vice President to be elected by OPEIU members in Canada). The Vice Presidents and the Executive Officers comprise the Executive Board of the International Union which operates between Conventions.

It is essential that all Local Unions take part in the Fourteenth Triennial Convention of the Office of Professional Employees International Union. Only in this way can the thinking of each Local Union, which may represent varying shades of opinion, be brought to the attention of the Convention. A well attended Convention, representing most of the Local Unions of the OPEIU, will tend to result in well discussed, well thought-out resolutions which will reflect the majority opinion of the delegates in attendance. We are certain that the Fourteenth Triennial Convention will be the finest Convention in our history.
Ladish Pact Wins Many Gains

3-Year Contract Boosts Pay, Benefits at Kenosha Plant

Across-the-board wage boosts totaling 13% plus a cost-of-living allowance, and greatly improved fringe benefits, were renegotiated by Local 336 in a new three-year agreement covering its 106-member office unit at Ladish Company's Tri-Clover Division, which manufactures pumps and fittings at Kenosha, Wis.

International Representative Mike Walker says it calls for pay raises of 4½% in each of the first two years, and 4½% in the third. The COLA will be paid semi-annually, based on 1½ hours for each 0.4 point rise in the CPI. The old COLA amounting to $1.66 was frozen into base pay.

A new trial basis feature effective April 1, 1979, is a longevity clause granting 5½ hour extra for each year of service for employees whom management finds to have outstanding records, when they reach the top of their pay scales.

At an additional floating holiday takes effect after April 1, 1979. The vacation schedule was also liberalized to provide four weeks after 20 years, and five after 25.

Pension benefits were raised to $7 per month for each year of service to a 30-year maximum. They will go to $8 in 1978 and to $9 in 1979. The employer also agreed to increase life insurance coverage to $1,500 for retirees (was $1,000), and to pay the cost of Medicare premiums for retirees and spouses, as well as Extended Medicare up to $8.65 a month for each for duration of the contract.

NLRB Issues Rule on Promotions Test

If a company is going to base employee promotions on the results of a written test, the employees' union has a right to examine the test and be told how it's graded.

The new finding of the National Labor Relations Board in an unfair labor practice charge filed against the Equitable Gas Company of Pittsburgh, Pa. in upholding and expanding the decision of an administrative law judge, the NLRB ruled that when a union contract exists and contains language outlining promotion procedures, the company cannot "freeze out the bargaining representative from participation in the significant elements of the promotion process."

Reminder

OPEIU members are reminded by their business agents of products made by the J. P. Stevens Company, such as sheets, pillowcases, carpets, table linen, hosery, towels and blankets.

Also, don't patronize Ringling Bros. Circus which now is using non-union musicians.

Find Older Women Are Office Reliables

An employer who prefers to hire only young people for office work is not a wise businessman, according to a study by a major British employment agency.

After questioning some 1,000 women office employees, the Alfred Marks Agency reported that 25 percent of the women over 40 hadn't missed a single day's work in the last year.

Credit Union Contract Calls for 24% Pay Boost

Across-the-board wage gains totaling 24%, with an unencumbered COLA paid quarterly of 1½ hours for each 0.3 point rise in the CPI, plus other non-monetary improvements were gained in a new three-year agreement renegotiated by Detroit Local 601 and the Marquette Credit Union in Dearborn, Mich.

Business Representative Arnold L. Shamsky says it calls for a 10½% wage increase in the first year, and 7½ in the following two years. Starting rate for the lowest classifications is now $158.9 per week. It will rise to $201.7 maximum in the third year. In the top classification, the rate will run from $167.56 to a $231.30 maximum in the final year.

The unit team assisting in the negotiations comprised Christine DeMello and Jean Ludington. The agreement runs to December 1, 1979.

If you move, send your old and new addresses, including zip code and social security or social insurance number for William A. Lowe, Sec.-Treas., 815 14th Street, N.W., Suite 606, Washington, D.C. 20004.

New Insurance Pact Ups Pay 23%

ULLICO Also Yields More Liberal Fringe Benefits

Wage gains cumulatively totaling 23.6% over three years, plus greatly improved fringe benefits in addition to new ones, were gained in a new agreement renegotiated by New York Local 153 for its office unit at Union Labor Life Insurance Co. (ULLICO) Business Manager John Kelly reports.

It calls for a first year increase of 8.5% across the board; 6% in the second year, and 7½ in the third. According to Business Representative Mike Thompson, who led the union negotiating team, starting pay for a file clerk is now rising to $211.94. For a stenographer, the new weekly rate is $198.40, rising to $225 in the final year.

A thrift plan gained in the previous contract, is further improved to raise the maximum employee investment to $100, with the employer to pay 100% in the second year instead of the current 50%.

Tuition remission was raised to $750 to $600 with more liberal credit arrangements. The Health-Welfare Plan was also greatly improved with payments for doctor office visits raised to $10 from $8; a new psychiatric out-patient plan introduced, diagnostic provisions expanded, with the plan also paying full hospital nursing charges.

Major medical coverage was raised to a new lifetime $50,000 maximum, and provides 100% co-insurance after $1,000 of incurred expenses.

A new clause provides dependent life insurance of $2,500 for spouses and $1,000 for children.

OPEIU Wins Back Job at Clinic

Employer Fails in Discharge Case for Excessive Absences

Discharged for excessive absences because of an asthma condition, Marie Fitzgerald, a console-telephone operator at the Community Health Care Centre, Inc., in New Haven, Conn., was restored to her job with back pay amounting to some $2,000 when Local 466 took her case to arbitration.

President Dominic Furco says his employer charged that she had been absent 38 days in 55 weeks of employment, had two verbal warnings, and then contended that discharge was necessary because the job was "highly critical" in emergencies.

The union acknowledged her frequent absences but contended that the Health Center was partly responsible because Marie was misdiagnosed, after switching from her own private physician to the medical program offered as an option by the employer.

Moreover, the union argued that the employer ignored medical evidence in its own records indicating that through remuneration of her prior treatment the asthmatic condition could be controlled.

Arbitrator John C. Mallon, who heard the arguments, found that the employer had not established a clearly defined standard of what constituted "excessive absences," nor taken into consideration the medical evidence available that her condition could be controlled when she changed physicians.

Consequently, he ruled that the grievant was not discharged "for good cause" and ordered that she be restored to her job with back pay from the day of discharge, and with full seniority from her date of employment to the reinstatement date.

Ann Simon prepared the case and presented the union's arguments, with the advice and counsel of retired International Representative Justin F. Manning.

U.S. Price Index

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