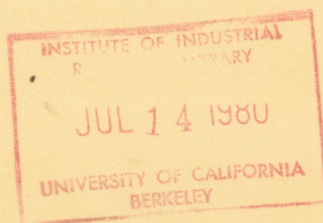


Office Employees Int'l Union.

Report on union
local 29, Office
& Professional
Employees Int'l
Union

by

Susan Stock
&
Alma Campbell



REPORT ON UNION LOCAL 29,

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

[by]

Susan Stock and
Alma Campbell.

[Berkeley] June 5, 1980.

BA 191B

The Office and Professional Employees International Union was chartered in 1945, breaking a long tradition of non-union, non-organized workers in offices and other white collar workplaces. Today, with a membership larger than 65% of other AFL-CIO unions, the OPEIU is on its way to becoming a significant force in unionizing this new body of workers.

Organization has been difficult for the OPEIU, perhaps more so than organizing other worker populations, because of the nature of the workforce in question. White collar workers tend to be less cohesive than, say, factory workers because of their traditional isolation from each other, because of the appeal to professionalism and the fear of proletarianization embedded in clerical workers by their employers, and other factors such as extremely high turnover, job conditions and job insecurity.

Part of the appeal of white collar work has traditionally been higher wages than factory work (true until the time of the Korean War), a cleaner and more pleasant work environment than the factory environment, and clearly superior status than that provided by blue collar employment. These factors still operate to keep white collar workers out of unions, despite the quite significant differential in wages which characterizes office jobs. Although blue collar jobs such as factory work, automotive repair, construction, etc. offer much higher wages, most office workers still cling to their non-union clerical jobs which seem more consistent with the middle class ideals

espoused by their families and neighborhood and peer groups.

As office work becomes more mechanized and automated, it becomes perhaps even more imperative for white collar workers trying to maintain their middle class status to defend their jobs against what they perceive as encroachment on their status, or "blue-collarization". The job of the OPEIU has been, and increasingly continues to be to convince white collar workers that their aspirations and middle class interests can be furthered by the unionization of their offices. Although it seems increasingly clear to me that office work approximates factory work in many ways, and that that more realistic approach and orientation could more effectively advance the material conditions of clerical workers, organizing experience has taught the OPEIU the importance of respecting the middle-class, white-collar concerns of the clerical population.

Where that approach has been used in organizing, it has often reaped success in attracting workers to the union. Indeed, the changing nature of the clerical workforce seems to offer great potential for being organized. At this point in history, the impact of the feminist movement, and the greater occupation of office jobs by members of minority groups are helping open up offices to the idea of unionization as it has not been before. This changing workforce, in addition to the strong intentions and organizing tactics of local 39 have combined to achieve a membership for that local of approximately 5,500 members in its jurisdiction.

*difficultly
in organizing*

-3-

Although clerical workers have traditionally been ignored by the labor movement as being "too difficult to organize" it is perhaps worth a second look in light of generally declining union membership. It is quite possible that "difficult" to organize office workers are not as "difficult" as they have been, or have been perceived to have been, in the past. The impact of contact with other union members in blue collar occupations, increasing dissatisfaction with the frustrations and limitations of the work itself and the pressure of economic downturn are all factors which may contribute to increase the chances of an organizer whose goal is white collar organizing. Edith Withington, president of local 29 of the OPEIU, finds that they have enough opportunities and leads to follow for new organizing to keep a fairly continuous flow of new members into the union. Norm Amundson, of the Institute of Industrial Relations, attributes some of the prevalent negative attitude towards white collar organizing to the low status of clerical workers. He blames unions for a lack of the "will to organize" for the fact that so few offices are union offices. This low status derives partly from the make-up of the workers. Because the field is predominated by women, organizers and other union members tend to characterize office workers in the same derogatory way our sexist society characterizes women: unstable, undependable, frivolous, untalented, superficial. In fact, it is interesting to actually study the history of local 29 and find that women office workers have made quite significant gains

for themselves in the Bay Area. They managed to sit out a very long and precarious strike at Blue Cross/Blue Shield and win much of their proposed contract. On the other hand, the Teamsters strike against Safeway by supposedly tough, strongly backed union members was a dismal failure. We must consider the possibility that some of the disparaging remarks and attitudes about clerical workers comes not from their actual performance as union members but from general cultural stereotypes about women.

In trying to understand some of the unusual difficulties posed by white collar organizing we can distill some of the approaches which might facilitate the union effort. Thus, the increasing number of minority women in office work means that more office workers have been exposed to a union. Black women, especially, who have husbands or fathers or brothers who belong to another union, have had a first hand experience of the benefits that accrue to union members. Clerical workers for factories or shops that have a union for the blue collar workers also have the experience of seeing a union at work and may start to realize that they could claim similar benefits for themselves. Indeed, experience has taught organizers that they are far more likely to succeed in their effort in workplaces that have had access to union activity. This is reflected in the wide range of offices organized by the OPEIU: dog-food factories, law offices, credit unions, hospitals, auto agencies, bakeries, canneries, jewelers, laundries, printers, electric

companies, drayages, dairies and auto supply stores.

So, we have seen that one factor which contributes to success in white collar organizing efforts is the co-existence of, or exposure to workers belonging to blue collar unions. Amundson attributes the organizing success of local 29 to this factor, the "will" of local 29 organizers and also, importantly, to the specific training programs available to members of local 29. These programs are part of the process of democratizing union activities. They make democracy concrete rather than just an abstract concept which is paid lip service but given little structure. The purpose of local 29's leaders is to involve their members as much as possible. Steward training is part of this process. The steward's council is another part of the democratizing process. Rather than having procedures and authorization come from the "top" down, the stewards meet monthly to share their experience and offer each other advise and tactics. This experience helps them develop competence and self-confidence which simple instruction from the top would not provide. (see notes of steward's council meeting).

Democracy in this union is obvious in other aspects as well. The union newspaper, the "29er", is written and produced by rank and file members and, although somewhat amateurish, provides a medium for members to air concerns and communicate with each other on a regular, reliable basis. In addition, with the recent resignation of Richard Delaney, all the

union officials come from rank and file background.

Democracy comes from structures such as these, and also from a somewhat less tangible and quantifiable component: attitude. The commitment of local 29's leadership to being responsive to the needs and problems of the membership grows largely from their commitment to union democracy on all levels. The research of the Health and Safety committee to understand the occupational health hazards involved in white collar work is an example of local 29's continuing search for ways to service their members. The Health and Safety questionnaire project^{is} directed toward this end. They are doing groundbreaking research into the special problems of the white collar worker and the hazards of the office environment; an area that has largely been ignored, or treated as superficial or irrelevant. (The Health and Safety questionnaire is included in the Appendix material with this report).

Difficulties between the international union leadership and local union leadership have also detracted from organizing success. The kind of infighting experienced between local 29 and the international, exemplified by the sequential trusteeships (detailed later in this report), are unfortunate and restrain both the local and the international in their supposedly solidary organizing and administrative efforts. Part of this difference is a difference in intent between the two bodies, and differences of opinion over organizing and outreach tactics. ~~The international tends to be quite a bit more conservative and~~ local 29 is renowned for supporting radical causes and issues.

Changes in the local leadership reflect these differences. Before the present leadership, the local officials tended to sacrifice actual service to present members (in pursuing grievances, for example) to expanding membership. Of course, in the long run, it is not effective to shortchange current members for potential members. The current local leadership conceives of itself as a service organization to meet the needs of members and this is reflected in the democratic attitude and action of the local union. Mr. Norm Amundson agrees that this is the most constructive and politically effective way to operate the union. It is perhaps a slower way to build a union, but it is the way to build a solid base for outreach efforts and will, I think, in the long run, prove to be the most successful approach to white collar organizing.

The willingness of local 29 to take risks for its members is perhaps most graphically illustrated by the resolutions being taken to the international convention which is occurring in New York City this month. Among the resolutions to be introduced are: request for a full time organizer, a call for the formation of a Labor Party, demand for a two year advance notice of plant closings (except in the case of bankruptcy), withdrawal of union pension funds and bank accounts from businesses supporting South Africa and its policy of apartheid, and a call for a ban on nuclear power. These resolutions and others yet to be drafted were submitted from the membership rank and file and

seem to be a hopeful sign that union organizing can have an impact on social policy as well as serving the immediate financial interest of a specific group of workers. As workers feel empowered in their employment situation, that feeling of power may extend itself to other areas of the worker's life and have a beneficial effect for society as a whole. This is, of course, a radical interpretation of the purpose of labor unions, and one which is supported by radical local unions such as local 29 of the OPEIU. The practice of democracy on the local union level, the ideology of the union as an agent for social change, and the enriching of skills and consciousness of workers through their local union and work experience promise to make our society a more democratic and just one.

We turn now to a more specific consideration of the workings of local 29.

Miscellaneous Facts About
Local 29

Chartered in 1937 by OPEIU; affiliated with AFL-CIO and various Labor Councils

Membership: Currently, about 5,500 members; mostly women (exact figure not available)

Jurisdiction: Extends north to Redding, east to Reno, south to Fresno

Offices: Over 160 trade offices are organized. These include a variety of industries such as attorneys, bakeries, credit unions, supermarkets, etc.

Dues: Membership dues are \$10.00 a month for full-time employees, \$5.00 for part-time employees, \$5.00 for unemployed members. (New) employees are required to join the union after 30 days. Initiation fee is \$50.00. Members do not pay dues until the contract is signed. There is a special fee of \$2.50 a month for new members.

Officers: President -- Edith Withington

This position is full-time as of a by-laws amendment 3 years ago. Edy, as she is usually called, usually works 50-60 hours a week.

Secretary-Treasurer -- (Marcella Farinha)

Part-time position

Senior Union Representative -- Alice Bartley

Recently appointed to replace Richard Delaney
The Senior Union Representative appoints the Union Representatives, of which there are 5.

Compensation: The union representatives' wages are determined by averaging the highest clerical pay of 5 contracts (Kaiser, Carnation, for example). The hourly wages are based on 50 straight-time hours a week and are raised every year. The union reps are entitled to 12 compensation days a month, but cannot accumulate more than 10 a year(?); this compensates the reps who must spend a great deal of their leisure time traveling on union business.

The Officers receive 10% above the union reps' pay.

The union reps handle contract negotiations, make proposals, elect stewards, elect negotiating committees, and act ex officio on all committees. There is a great deal of emphasis on steward education and training, which is understandable in view of the geographical jurisdiction that must be covered by a mere 6 individuals.

The members of the union, the rank and file publish a monthly newspaper, "The 29er". Articles cover a wide range of topics of interest to members, from results of Grievances, discussion of EEO, status of contracts, to goings on of the officers.

Grievance Procedure: see separate attachment

STEWARDS' COUNCIL MEETING
May 14, 1980

The Stewards' Council was established in 1952 when Jean Maddox, former Local 29 President, joined OPEIU Local 29. She was not impressed with the union. None of the rank and file members seemed to know what the Executive Board was doing, grievances weren't being handled and union meetings were rarely held for want of a quorum of 25 members. She became a steward and joined the struggle to build a strong, active rank and file union. In her words:

"We started with the idea that we needed a stewards' council and that a good steward system would be the best backbone of the union. We pressured until we got a stewards' class set up. And that stimulated the stewards to build a council, over the objections of the president. We would meet for dinner before union meetings and discuss problems. Our key issue was democracy within the local and membership input into decision-making."

It took over two years just to get the Executive Board to formally recognize the council.

The Stewards' Council meets the second Wednesday of every month and the meeting is open to all union members. The meeting held on May 14 was an interesting and informative one. The attendance and level of participation were surprisingly high. The conference room at the Holiday Inn was packed and extra chairs had to be brought in as people trickled in during the course of the evening. There were roughly 50-60 people present.

There were several guest speakers who started the meeting. Mike Jacobs was speaking about Proposition 10 as we arrived, so we're unsure as to what organization he is affiliated with. OPEU Local 29 takes a stand on many issues and in this case it is against Proposition 10. After he was finished speaking, Mr. Jacobs passed a "hat" around so that anyone who wanted to donate something in support of the No on Prop 10 Campaign could do so. Donations totaled about \$35-40, which the group applauded as being unusually high.

The next speaker was a woman named Lee Shore from the Institute of Labor and Mental Health in Oakland. She was basically there to spark an interest in the group to attend an Institute-sponsored conference on Occupational Stress on May 19 (see attachment), and she consequently discussed stress and how it affects stewards. According to Shore, stewards have the most demanding job in the union. As a (former?) steward herself, she understood the conflicts and demands that are forced upon stewards.

In addition to those "stressors" to which all workers are subjected, such as poor working conditions (too hot or too cold, not enough light, noise, bad air) speedups, and threat of layoffs, stewards are subjected to additional stress that is a concomitant of stewardship. Role conflict is prevalent as a source of stress.

Role conflict can be defined as a "situation in which a person playing a role is obligated to behave (i.e., act, think, feel) in incompatible ways simultaneously, all of which ways are defined as proper to the role or roles he is playing" (Wilensky and Lebeaux, Industrial Societies and Social Welfare). Role conflict puts internal

psychological stress on the individual and thus is something to be avoided or resolved. Take for example, the case of grievance-handling: a steward is expected to be objective, respond to the needs of the members and file grievances; yet, as an individual who is also a co-worker, the steward may know that racism was the basis of the complaint, i.e., there is no valid grievance, and feel resentment against the union member for causing trouble and may not want to pursue the case. This type of situation is very stressful.

Ways of dealing with occupational stress were not really discussed since the remarks were a "teaser" to get people interested in attending the (free) conference and workshops. However, what is basically needed is the understanding that there are various forces acting upon people, and on stewards, and one must be able to deal with realities. The discussion drifted into stress as a health hazard and there were many people who wanted to share their experiences or just get their "two cents in". The fact that stress can be brought up as a bargaining issue was discussed and Lee Shore mentioned the fact that, while stress as a health hazard has not been recognized, there were 25 (out of how many?) successful workers' compensation cases that were based on stress on the job. It was unanimously stated by the group that the burden of proof in these situations should be on the employer.

It was immediately apparent to us as observers that the stewards had a strong anti-employer, anti-management attitude; nary a kind word was spoken about "them". A majority of stewards present seemed to feel that the only reason employers are now interested in relieving stress from employees is so that employees can work harder. The stewards were genuinely concerned with the effects of stress on the membership; they felt that the only weapon unions have today is a strong membership, which they unfortunately lack. Attendees expressed optimism when they suggested that through the union and through the Institute members can be "relieved" of their stress and perhaps develop an interest in the union. Unfortunately, many members (according to the stewards) can now be described as apathetic, hostile or uninterested.

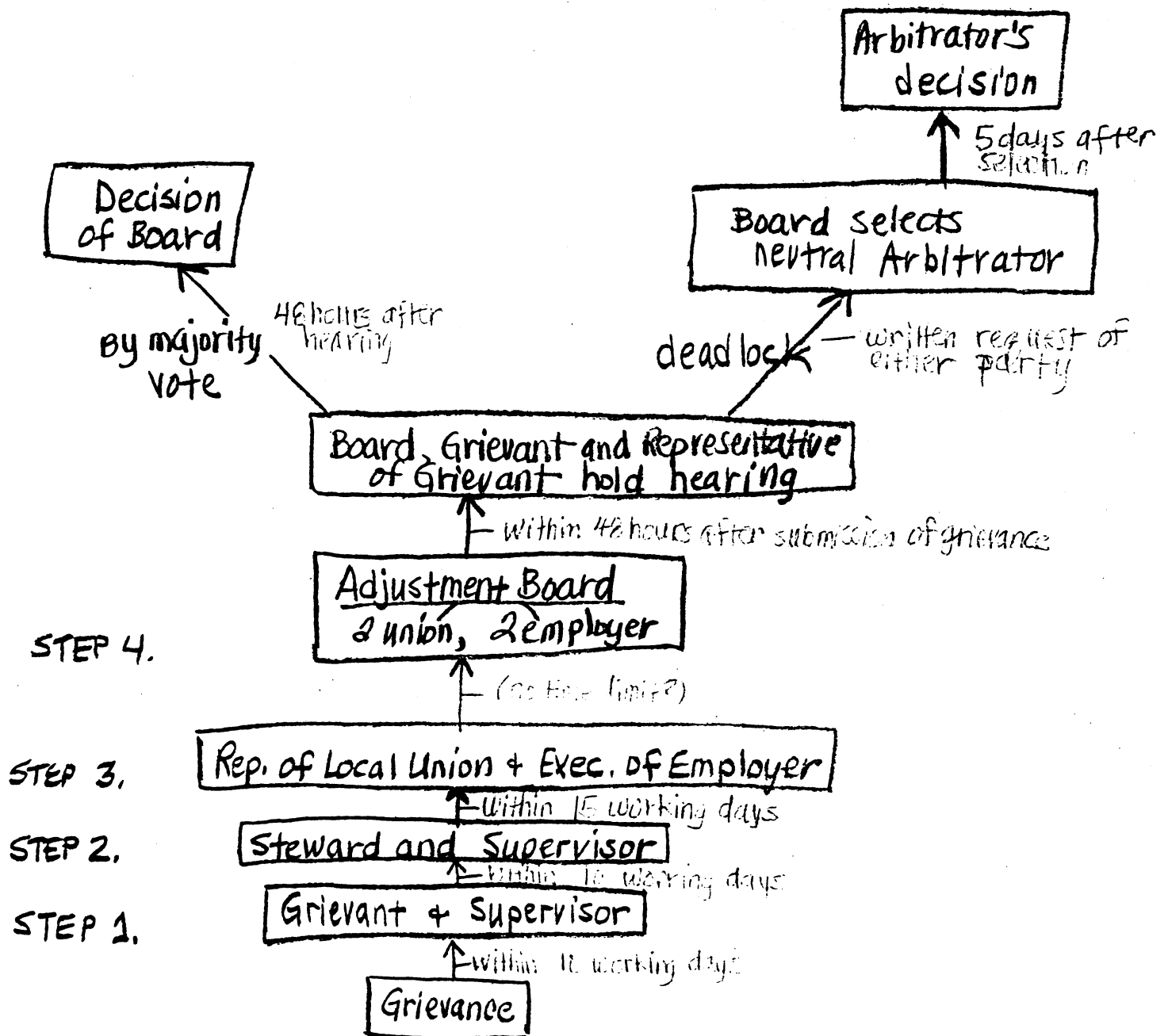
The "open agenda" portion of the meeting was stimulating and enlightening. Several individuals were very concerned with their duties as shop stewards and they wanted to know "how much weight does the shop steward have?" Examples of employer harassment were cited that we frankly found shocking. Stewards were frustrated and confused as to how much power they had, for example, when there is no signed contract. Stewards read in whole "warning letters" they had received from employers which often referred to the performance of "union business" on company time as a violation of the contract. There were thinly veiled threats of termination for such activities incorporated in the letters. Employers resort to such tactics as physically isolating and burdening stewards with work (discriminatorily) so that they cannot leave their desks and contact fellow workers regarding union business. Stewards who engaged in conversation with other workers, no matter how brief or casual the exchange might be, were accused of "witchhunting" (seeking complaints or grievances, trying to cause trouble).

Another question which came up in relation to this was, how much time can the steward spend dealing with grievances or other union business? One steward remarked that while he had five floors to cover, he was allocated only 80 minutes a week to deal with union business (specified in the contract). "Old-timers", or in this case a newly appointed union representative, informed attendees that if a time limit is not specified in the contract, it is usually a "reasonable" amount of time. As long as the steward covers his own work there should be no reason to worry.

One final comment: even in the situation where the officers (in this case the stewards) are responsive to the members' needs, the "system" or the employer blocks the union's attempts to satisfy these needs. One particularly disturbing instance was described at the meeting by a woman who faced many obstacles at work. She is a steward who works in a small office where her fellow workers as well as her employer were very hostile toward her and the union. The workers joined the union in order to reap the benefits but were "pro-management" and did what they were told by employers to win special "priveleges". This woman had received numerous warning letters, was harassed at work and felt she had nowhere to turn. She described the fact that she had filed over 18 separate grievances in response to the treatment she received at work, had won all 18 but was in the same situation she was before she "won" them. She typifies the frustrated steward, or other union official, who gets no justice. This particular woman resorted to putting monetary values on grievances (\$1,000 for one, for example) but although she was awarded them, the employer has never paid. When she went to the NLRB, she spent over five hours there with no fruitful results.

Thus, although stewards genuinely want to do their job they are frustrated in many instances. Hopefully, this particular example is an exception to the rule. The meeting was impressive because it revealed the comradery and mutual support, and exchange of valuable information among the stewards.

USUAL OPEU
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

May 21, 1980

The local meeting was not as impressive in content and discussion as was the Stewards' Council Meeting the previous week. Attendance was low compared to previous meetings, according to those there, with roughly 25-30 people present.

The meeting was conducted formally and followed a well-established pattern. The meeting lasted for two hours, but relatively little was accomplished from an observer's point of view.

The floor was open to a woman named Jodie Murphy, who spoke against Proposition 10, and then the roll call was conducted. A new trustee was sworn in, followed by the reading of the minutes of the Executive Board Minutes of 4/7/80 and the General Membership Meeting of 4/16/80.

The Secretary-Treasurer gave her Financial Report.

Wellman Pierce, Union Representative, requested permission to sign a contract with Mater Credit Union. This was a formality, since we knew about the contract before the meeting.

All correspondence was read which mostly consisted of letters requesting that Local 29 members not patronize various organizations and their products.

Committee Reports were read. Of interest was a suggested amendment to Article XXII, regarding Vacancies in Office (Executive Board), which consisted of the desire to give the right of election back to the membership instead of the Executive Board with regard to the selection of new officers.

The results of the Occupational Stress conference were discussed. It seems that those who attended were impressed and felt that they learned a lot from the various workshops.

According to the president of Local 29, attendance at general meetings is usually low, roughly 1% of the membership (50-55). Many reasons could be cited for this including the usual lack of interest, "I have better things to do", location, time, etc. In addition, it is important to recognize that the membership is mainly female and working women have dual careers--home and the office. This low attendance can also be partly explained by the fact that members are dispersed over a wide geographical area and attending a meeting in Oakland may be infeasible.

After attending the general meeting, one can understand why so few members regularly participate. As is the case in many unions, most business is not conducted during the meetings, but is settled someplace else. The agenda consists of merely passing information up- or downwards and members have the opportunity to speak their minds if they wish.

Borrowing some ideas from Strauss and Sayles, one must keep in mind that it is difficult for officers to decide what should be submitted to the members at

meetings since the meetings are really not suited to decision-making on difficult, technical questions. In addition, the leadership faces a difficult problem if it follows the views of the small meeting-attending minority. The views of the active group are not always the same as those of the rank and file. In following the wishes of the "activists", the leadership may antagonize the bulk of its silent followers. On the other hand, the officers have no sure way of knowing what the rank and file want except through the medium of active members, for this group is the leadership's primary channel of communication with the rank and file. (Many of the attendees of the meeting were shop stewards.) The "actives" influence the rank and file...and at the same time bring the rank-and-file problems to the attention of the officers.

"Inefficient and boring as it may be, the meeting does serve its purpose. If a member is sufficiently interested he can have his say, and he may directly influence union policy. It should be emphasized that decisions are rarely made on the initiative of the rank and file. In fact, union meetings might well be compared with those of the British House of Commons, where the administration answers questions and defends itself, and the opposition attacks.

"...if by democracy one means the responsiveness of the officers to the pressures of the rank and file, an opportunity for individuals to express themselves, and a chance to decide basic issues by a majority vote, then the union meeting, for all its faults, is a democratic assemblage." (Strauss and Sayles, The Local Meeting: Its Functions and Problems)

LOCAL 29 TRUSTEESHIP
The Great Rank and File Robbery

(The following discussion is taken from a union publication entitled, "Jean Maddox, The Fight for Rank and File Democracy")

Local 29 of the Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, based in Emeryville, California, has been in trusteeship three times since June 1973.

Trusteeship means that the membership of a local is no longer entitled to participate in decision making, and democratic rights of rank and file members are suspended. The members still must pay dues, but the trustee--appointed by the International President--decides how dues are spent and whether members are served. He controls employee benefits such as health, welfare and pension funds.

Why has this local had to endure a takeover by its International three times in two years?

Historically, the leadership of the International is ferociously anti-Communist. In 1947 it purged Local 29 of suspected Communists. The president, vice-president and union representative were accused of association with or active participation in the Communist Party. The local was placed in trusteeship, the International Executive Board held a trial and returned a guilty verdict. The defendants were ousted from office and expelled for life.

John Kinnick, who presented the evidence in the 1947 trial, later became president and senior union representative of Local 29. He frequently gave the FBI the names of persons suspected of Communist leanings. In 1949 he was rewarded with a Regional Vice Presidency in the International, which he still retains.

In the late sixties a militant rank and file caucus, led by Jean Maddox, defeated Kinnick on a local level. With Maddox as president of 29, it soon became known as the "wayward loca." Over the years, opponents of the caucus attacked it as "Communist," to the amusement of those caucus members who voted the straight Republican or Democratic ticket. It was a broad based, multiracial caucus of women and men, organized on the issue of rank and file democracy. Control of the local by the membership was what really threatened the International, but when Local 29 voted to grant bail to Angela Davis, the right wing immediately raised the old cry of "Communism" and International President Howard Coughlin wrote that we were leading the union on the road to destruction.

In February 1973 Leah Newberry, Secretary-Treasurer for fifteen years, was voted out. The newly elected slate of candidates assured the membership that they would get service, and be independent from the meddling of the International.

Newberry protested the election results and charged irregularities. After a hurried investigation by an International representative, Coughlin ordered a new election within 30 days.

Over 500 people crowded into the March membership meeting. During a turbulent debate Dick Groulx, head of the Alameda Central Labor Council, was shouted down by angry members when he defended the International. In defiance of Coughlin,

Local 29 voted to install its newly elected officers. Immediately after this meeting someone phoned Coughlin in New York. Early the next morning he placed the local in trusteeship.

At a hearing presided over by a representative of the International, the defeated incumbents could only produce hearsay evidence to substantiate their charges. The winning candidates were not allowed to present evidence and could only speak in answer to a question. The elections of 1973 had obviously been held in the same manner as elections in previous years, when the incumbents won, but in spite of the facts the hearing officer recommended that the local go into trusteeship until another election was held--part of the cost to be borne by the already impoverished local. A simple recount of the ballots was never considered.

John Kinnick was appointed trustee, and the American Arbitration Association was asked to conduct a second election. Coughlin is a member of the Board of Directors of the AAA.

In the new elections, the vote was completely reversed. Newberry was re-elected, along with all members of her slate. Her first official action was to fire the union representatives who had supported the opposing slate. At the next meeting the membership came out in force, and Newberry backed off. The rank and file overturned the firings.

Almost immediately, the newly elected officers began to resign. They could not take the heat from an openly hostile membership. The caucus was able to fill each vacancy with its own members.

As the situation reversed itself through resignations--by January almost half the Executive Board, the three Trustees and the President were caucus-backed people--the International realized that Local 29's rank and file could not be held down by force.

It didn't help when delegates to the June 1974 International Convention were also people backed by the caucus. Formerly, Newberry and Kinnick were routinely chosen. In 1974, neither of them made it. Kinnick, a Regional Vice President, could not vote at the convention because his local had not elected him.

The new Local 29 delegates refused to acknowledge the keynote speaker, Nelson Rockefeller. Instead of voting to reelect Coughlin, they backed an opposition candidate. Coughlin asked to see the new Local 29 President, Audrey Knowles, and they met behind closed doors. From that time, Knowles began taking her orders from Coughlin.

In September 1974, after nine months of frustrating negotiations, the union representatives (who had formed their own union), struck Local 29. On September 25th the Executive Board voted to fire the representatives, but at the regular membership meeting in October, 400 members turned out and voted two to one to overturn the Executive Board decision. The rank and file took matters in their own hands, forced a negotiated settlement and put the reps back to work. On a directive from the International, President Knowles refused to sign the agreement. All locks were changed on the union office doors and the reps were handed letters of resignation.

The International could not face another membership meeting which they knew would mean another reinstatement of the reps. At an emergency Executive Board meeting, representatives from the International tried to coerce the board members into requesting a voluntary trusteeship because of the chaos created by the firings.

Some well-intentioned members went for it and sent a telegram to Coughlin, who immediately slapped a second trusteeship on the local.

The International Constitution states that there shall be a hearing and any aggrieved party shall have the right to file objections in writing within two weeks after the hearing report. There was no report and the caucus raised enough money to request a temporary restraining order against the International, lifting the trusteeship. But the union office was already occupied by the trustee and later Judge Conti ruled that the International had not violated its Constitution and Bylaws "excessively."

So for the third time, Regional Vice President Kinnick took over. Executive Board members were relieved of office. Rank and file members responded by calling rump meetings by word of mouth and through their newsletter, THE FREE COLLAR.

The fired reps went into arbitration and the arbitrator's ruling was unfavorable. The question brought before him was whether the reps had been fired legally and in accordance with the local's Constitution and Bylaws. The arbitrator chose to ignore this issue and ruled that they had been fired for just cause.

The International has some 70,000 members and Local 29, one of the largest locals, approximately 4,000. If the rank and file of Local 29 is allowed to go its independent renegade path, the International fears it will influence other dissatisfied members and endanger the jobs of the International President and his cronies.

The principles of unionism are based upon the right of the individual to participate in a democratic structure and to determine what's best within the structure. When internationals step in, they become worse than Standard Oil because they take such a hypocritical stance. Union members must fight to get trusteeship language out of their constitutions and stop this rule from the top down. Then internationals will serve only in an advisory capacity.

Jean Maddox died while Local 29 was still in trusteeship, but the caucus she was instrumental in developing, and to which she gave so much of her waning strength and energy, lived on. It would be a disservice to Jean's memory not to include a brief story of the caucus' eventual victory.

When the last trusteeship was imposed on Local 29, the caucus reformed. Some old faces were gone. New ones came in.

At one time or another, different members of the caucus would become disheartened. Sometimes only six people attended a meeting and often not the same six. Aside from faith and dedication, there was one important element that kept the caucus going and that was the emergence of the "Free Collar", the caucus newspaper. Even if people didn't always attend meetings, they would write articles, help with the physical task of putting out the paper, and most importantly, see that it got wide distribution. The paper was instrumental in keeping a good portion of the membership of Local 29 informed of the issues.

Toward the end of 1975 the caucus realized that the 18-month period of trusteeship allowed by federal law would expire in the early part of 1976. There was a good possibility that the trusteeship would be lifted and an election for officers held in the near future.

At this point, the caucus took on new life. There was a specific issue... a goal in sight. Two important jobs had to be done -- formulating a program and selecting a slate of candidates.

Attendance at caucus meetings grew and became more stable. Various platform planks were discussed, torn apart and put together until a tentative platform emerged. At the same time names of possible candidates were discussed -- their acceptance of the platform, their representation factor and their electability. By the end of 1975 the caucus was in a "ready" position...and none too soon.

In January, 1976, the trustee called a meeting of the so-called Executive (Advisory) Committee, at which time an International Representative informed the body that an election would be held, and upon the election and seating of the newly elected officers, the trusteeship would be lifted...with strings attached.

The two major strings were: (1) imposition of new Bylaws (with no vote of the membership) and (2) former union representatives who were illegally fired were to receive no money in back pay.

Although the Local had been in trusteeship for 18 months, and all the appointments of representative had been made by the Trustee, the announcement of forthcoming nominations and elections found the incumbents strangely unprepared. They were not organized for an election. Ostensibly running as independent candidates, they distributed joint literature, but their campaign generated little enthusiasm.

The caucus, on the other hand, swung into action. The platform was finalized, the candidates selected, and the show was on the road. We had done our homework. The caucus had people in almost every major workplace. The "Free Collar" was published more often. Large offices were leafleted. Most importantly, the two candidates for top office took leaves of absence from their jobs and hit the campaign trail, visiting over 2,000 people, introducing themselves, the platform and the slate, which by this time had taken the name "Unity and Action Slate."

On May 18, 1976 at the office of the American Arbitration Association in San Francisco, votes of the referendum election were counted. When the tally was complete, the counted showed that "Unity and Action Slate" had won every position except Inner Guard (Sergeant-At-Arms) and four Executive Board seats (two of which were uncontested). On June 22, 1976, the duly elected officers of Local 29 were installed.