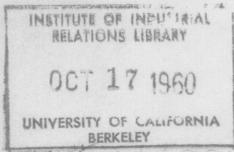


Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO
January 14-17, 1960



SUMMARY REPORT AND CONCLUSION OF IUD SEMINAR,

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROBLEMS OF PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS IN INDUSTRY,

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, JANUARY 14-17, 1960 * = Washington, 1960

This report is based upon a four-day meeting of trade unionists and academic specialists which covered a wide range of subjects affecting the unionization of professional and technical workers. The program of the meeting as well as a roster of participants is attached.

White Collar Workers Increasing

Great technological and social changes are making white collar workers an increasing majority of the total labor force. In 1947, for example, according to the U. S. Census there were 23.5 million blue collar workers in the labor force and 20 million white collar workers. By 1957 the white collar work force had reached the figure of 25.5 million compared to 25 million blue collar workers.

In the manufacturing sector alone, many of these changes in the labor force are even more dramatically apparent. Between 1948 and 1959, for example, production and maintenance workers as a proportion of total employment in the chemical industry declined from approximately 75% to 62%. In petroleum refining the production and maintenance proportion fell from 75% to 64%. In electrical machinery, the decline was from 75% to approximately 67%. The shift away from production and maintenance workers appears to be greatest in companies and industries where technical innovation and general expansion are largest.

These changes are obviously of great significance for the labor movement. Until now trade unionism in the U. S. has been primarily a blue collar phenomenon; it has been estimated that around 85% of the membership of the AFL-CIO and the major independent unions can be classified as blue collar workers.

* 42 unionists from 10 unions and the IUD were in attendance. See roster attached. [Roster not rec'd by IIR. C.L.]

In the face of these labor force changes the labor movement must break out of its "blue collar shell" or face the prospect of becoming a declining numerical force. Indeed, trade union membership in recent years has reached a plateau. With the prospect of a vast expansion of the labor force in the next decade or more, the labor movement must find the means to facilitate organization of millions of new workers especially in the white collar field.

Unless the labor movement accomplishes this objective, it may face the prospect of some loss of social and political position in the country at large. In addition, the labor movement's economic bargaining position in the mass production industries may be somewhat weakened if it represents a declining proportion of the workers therein. The country generally will suffer if the labor movement, the mainspring of progressive reform in the past decade and more, undergoes this sort of relative decline.

Specific Framework of Conference - Professional and Technical Workers

These trends are very broad and general. In dealing with such a broad movement it seems wise to break it into segments. This conference was concerned with the professional and technical workers in industry (for example, the scientist, the architect, the chemist, the draftsman, the laboratory technician, the tester, etc.) as opposed to the general category of white collar workers which also includes clerical, administrative, and other occupations.

While the white collar work force is increasing generally, the increases among professional and technical workers, particularly in manufacturing, are especially notable. Thus between 1952 and 1959, for instance, in manufacturing while the professional and technical work force increased over 60%, the clerical force increase was between 10% and 11%; at the same time the number of semi-skilled manufacturing workers actually declined about 5%, while the number of

unskilled laborers working in manufacturing declined almost 12%. In many ways the professional and technical workers in manufacturing may be the most critical in terms of increasing importance. (See table attached.)

Problems of Unionizing and Bargaining for Professional and Technical Workers -
General Social and Economic Factors

The unionization of professional and technical workers will obviously confront the labor movement with a number of new problems as regards both organizing and bargaining. The nature of the occupation of a professional or technical worker differentiates him to some extent from the typical production and maintenance workers with whom the industrial unions are more familiar.

The education which professional and technical workers must have is typically much longer and more specialized than that required for other occupations. The result of this training and the nature of his work are likely to give the professional worker a special occupational or professional sense of identification. In many cases this identification is emphasized by the possession of special higher degrees. This special sense of profession in some respects leads to a state of mind in which the professional worker resents any but "colleague authority" in the performance of his occupation. Supervision by a fellow engineer is one thing; supervision by the company's works manager or the personnel office is quite another. In his work, too, the professional and technical worker, especially in the past, typically has exercised a greater degree of independent judgment. In general, one might say his work has been more "highly individualized" than that of other workers.

Significant trends in American industry, however, are in many ways undermining and changing the nature of the professional and technical workers' position. When, as is already the case, engineers and technicians are employed to the extent of 4,000, 5,000, or 10,000 in one company, with several thousand

in the same work place, patently many of the traditional characteristics of this work have disappeared. The sense of "high individuality", the sense of full independence of job judgment, any possibility of "colleague control" as opposed to ordinary company and managerial control, all of these elements are highly reduced and in many cases disappear. Moreover, the very sharp increase in the numbers of engineers and technicians employed in industry will make it more difficult for companies to regard them as a fixed cost, as has often been the case in the past.

As these changes occur, the professional and technical worker finds himself confronted with many of the problems which have typically confronted other groups of workers in modern society. His individual ability to control his working destiny has been undermined.

Under these circumstances the possibility, indeed the necessity, for professional and technical workers to develop and find group organization is accentuated.

The philosophical basis of unionism--the necessity for all large groups in a democratic society to develop the means of representation and participation in its processes--suggests that professional unionism to represent these workers can and will increase in the future. While many adaptations and changes may be necessary in the structure of unionism, as it goes forth to meet these new challenges and responsibilities, the basic underlying philosophy of providing effective democratic representation must persist.

Some of the Specific Types of Issues Which Will Confront Unions in Collective

Bargaining on Behalf of Professional and Technical Workers *

Our studies during the seminar suggested that in some of the traditional collective bargaining areas there are no great differences in the needs and attitudes of professional and technical workers compared with production and maintenance workers. In other instances, however, we find significant differences.

* Copies of an analysis of 12 union contracts covering professional and technical workers in industry which was used at the conference are available on request from the IUD.

Pensions - So far as pension formulas and systems are concerned, little difference between the real needs of the different groups of workers could be found on the basis of experience to date. Professional workers seem, however, to have greater interest in the technical details and mathematics of pension and welfare plans. In many situations unions may want to set up special rank-and-file committees of professional workers to study and evaluate the mathematical and related aspects of pension and welfare financing.

Wage Systems - On the other hand, the structure and character of wage systems covering professional (especially) and technical workers differs from that of the traditional production and maintenance unit. The nature of professional work, for instance, makes for the acceptance of systems of merit ratings. In a sense, professional workers expect to be paid as much for their own knowledge and training as for the specific job which they are performing. This will have obvious repercussions on the way in which wage schedules will be bargained for these workers. We find that in many instances professional and technical workers are called upon to travel from one job site to another, especially in connection with government missile, aircraft, and other programs; the problems of travel pay and per diem arrangement take on special significance in contrast to their minimal importance for production and maintenance workers. It seems clear, however, that professional and technical workers, like other groups, are very much interested in higher wages. Indeed, as some of the other forms of job status disappear under the impact of technological change, higher pay to achieve higher social status' becomes even more pressing for many professional workers.

Seniority - Traditional attitudes towards seniority must undergo substantial adaptation in meeting the needs of professional and technical workers. For engineers and scientists the nature of their work suggests that seniority will play a much smaller role than for production and maintenance units as far as

promotion is concerned. On the question of layoffs, again some adaptations of traditional attitudes towards seniority are necessary; but it would seem that on layoffs the attitude of the professional worker towards seniority will be somewhat closer to that of the production worker. In the case of many types of technical workers, their needs and attitudes as regards seniority are very much in line with traditional union attitudes and programs as regards both layoffs and promotions.

Union Security - There is considerable confusion about the issue of union security as it affects professional and technical unionism. One frequently hears that unionized engineers, for example, have no use for the union shop--that engineers would never bargain or strike for the union shop. Experienced organizers realize that a demand for a union shop will often receive low priority even among a newly unionized production and maintenance unit. However, when any group of workers comes to recognize the necessity for their own strong and effective organization, there is good reason to believe they will come to understand the role and importance of union security provisions. So long as engineers do not feel a strong need for union organization, it can be expected that they will similarly "look down" on union security. This is the type of area in the long run, however, that the trade union movement should not compromise. Of course, no organizer should over-emphasize union security in the early stages of organization where there may be little understanding of the concept, but this does not mean that the issue should be undercut or misrepresented.

Organizing Professional and Technical Workers - Experience to Date

Reasonably good figures presented at our conference suggest that there are some 24 independent union bargaining units covering professional and technical workers in the United States today. These include approximately 35,000 professional workers and some 11,500 technicians. Union membership under these units is considerably less than the total bargained for.

There are additional thousands of engineers, scientists, architects, chemists and technicians already covered by units belonging to unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO. There are no adequate figures on these workers but in the case of technicians, particularly, there are considerable numbers so covered. Overall, however, judging the independent and affiliated units, it can be readily admitted that professional and technical workers--especially the former--are relatively unorganized in the United States.

The rather modest number of already organized professional workers, however, is not too useful a guide for what the future may hold. Until the main body of the American labor movement and its constituent units bend to a serious effort to bring organization to these groups of workers, progress must inevitably be slow. Indeed many of the frustrating organizing efforts of the past which were conducted by inexperienced and badly financed groups offer no clear guide to what the future may and can hold.

Organizing Professional and Technical Workers - The Problem of Structure

Broadly speaking, one can identify four or five possibilities of structural forms in which professional and technical workers in American industry can be unionized.

(a) The existing industrial unions can seek to extend their bargaining rights with no serious change in their structures and methods, by winning NLRB elections. (Under existing law and NLRB doctrine it would appear that for the most part future new elections among technicians and professional workers will generally find them in units which are explicitly separated from production and maintenance units unless they expressly vote for inclusion with production and maintenance workers.)

(b) The existing industrial unions with engineers and technicians in their jurisdiction can take on the task of organizing these workers, but in the

process they can make major changes in their structure and programs to meet the special needs of these groups.

(c) Professional and technical workers can be organized into a modified "craft union" within the AFL-CIO with a jurisdiction which embraces all of these workers regardless of where they are employed. A variant of this might be to establish a separate organization for professionals on the one hand and another craft union for the technicians--both to be within the structure of the AFL-CIO.

(d) Professional and technical workers might be organized on a large scale in an independent craft union (or unions) standing outside of the AFL-CIO.

Needless to say, the aforementioned structural types are not mutually exclusive and in fact several of them may move forward at the same time.

For our purposes in this conference, however, we take as our principal point of departure the position that the industrial unions must increasingly occupy themselves with the job of organizing professionals and technicals falling within their jurisdiction. There are a number of reasons for this:

Economic power in the United States to a considerable extent tends to be company and/or industrial in character. To counterbalance this economic power, workers must be organized along roughly parallel lines. For this bargaining to be effective, professional and technical workers would at the very least require an intimate, working relationship with and support from the already organized production and maintenance workers unions.

The history of unionization and bargaining in most mass production industries and companies prior to the mid-30's shows the difficulties if not the futility of plural unionism in these situations. The truth of the matter is that the craftsmen in the mass production industries were not effectively represented until they helped to build the present production and maintenance industrial union units.

Experience related in several cases during the conference tends to substantiate this position. In the case of one important electronic company where a separate union of engineers and technicians had been formed and where the relationships between this unit and the production and maintenance unit were quite cordial, the strains of separate union bargaining were nevertheless considerable. In two years on separate occasions the production and maintenance unit and the professional and technical unit, each having a separate contract termination date, called separate strikes. Good solidarity was maintained by these two units in these four separate strikes, but the strains involved were obviously enormous. It was clear that this relationship could not exist indefinitely and eventually the professional and technical union affiliated with the industrial organization.

Adapting Industrial Union Structure to Meet the Needs of
Professional and Technical Workers

On the other side of this debate stands the contention of some professional and technical unionists that the ordinary industrial unions of production and maintenance workers never can or will give enough attention to the special needs of professional and technical workers. Several cases were related wherein only after professional and technical units split from existing industrial units and formed a separate craft type of unit were they able to bargain satisfactorily.

It is clear that if industrial unions are to succeed in organizing large numbers of professional and technical workers in the future they must make major structural adaptations to meet the special needs of these workers. A few industrial unions have already established special salaried workers divisions within their organizational structure. While these are a relatively new development, they already have had some significant results. In some cases a special vice president on the problems of professional and technical workers may evolve in a given industrial union structure with specialized staff drawn from professional and technical ranks to help organize and negotiate.

Important adaptations will also be necessary at the local level. The experience of the IUE in the New York-New Jersey area is instructive, (this experience is not unique with that union--but the concentration of IUE professional and technical units in a limited geographical area made it of special interest to our conference). Their development suggests that industrial unions may find it most expeditious to set up two or three separate local unions with separate local agreements when organization embraces the work force ranging from scientists and engineers on the one hand to the unskilled laborer on the other at the same plant. Thus in one important company the IUE has a separate local for clerical and other white collar workers, a separate local for professional and technical workers, and a separate local for the production and maintenance workers. In another case in the same area, there is one general salaried workers local which embraces clerical, professional, and technical workers on the one hand, plus a separate local for production and maintenance workers. In these instances separate agreements are negotiated by the local but all carry a common expiration date. The experience under these arrangements has been very good; effective cooperation has developed between the different units, and the interests of no group of workers has been sacrificed--rather have they tended to reinforce one another.

Such formal, separate arrangements at the local level may not be necessary; perhaps the mere establishment of special sections for salaried workers with some measure of autonomy in large industrial local unions can meet this need.

At this stage of development one cannot clearly foresee all of the forms which may evolve--and indeed there will be combinations as has already been suggested. So far as the general problem of trade union structure is concerned it should be remembered that the experience of the 30's, when the organization of mass production workers was first undertaken seriously, demonstrates that old forms undergo adaptation and new forms emerge as trade unionism advances on

a broad scale. The industrial unions which had to be built to represent the mass production workers in the 30's were in many ways different from traditional unions of earlier decades. One may expect comparable, evolutionary developments as unionism comes to professional and technical workers.

Finally, it was agreed that even as the industrial unions make their efforts in this field there may well persist on the part of professional workers a desire for some inter-union professional type of identification and service within the framework of the labor movement. This might be done ultimately through some sort of an inter-union council setup. In turn such a council might also attract many of the independent professional and technical unions.

It was also agreed that in some situations the nature of the work place--for instance, a company engaged purely in research and development work which could not be clearly categorized as belonging to any one industry--might best be served by a purely craft union of professional and technical workers.

A Special Organizing Problem in the Future - Technicians

It would seem that in a number of respects technical workers are rather close to highly skilled craft workers as we have traditionally known them so far as their needs may be concerned. This is especially true of so-called production technicians and even of technicians attached to research and development departments in large, production companies.

On the other hand, the conference took careful note of the fact that under the guise of technological change many employers are seeking to bleed legitimate production and maintenance units and claim separate units for what they call "technicians". In many instances these latter are really performing work which is not substantially different from the regular production and maintenance unit. Union organizers and officials must be on guard to prevent these incursions into the traditional units. (A special IUD memorandum is being

prepared on NLRB policy as it affects clerical, professional, and technical workers.)

Due to the nature of their own unions as well as the industries in which they operate, for some organizations the problem of organizing technicians only, as distinct from professionals, may be more imminent. On the other hand, several cases were cited to show that where a large number of engineers are employed along with technicians in a given unit, the most effective method of organization may be to begin with fairly senior engineers. As in the case of most organizing, no blueprints are available.

Future Plans of IUD

It was agreed that this problem of organization is and must remain one in which the major initiative must come from the international unions,

The IUD can, however, assist the interested international unions in a number of ways. Additional research should be undertaken on the problems and attitudes of professional and technical workers in industry. Specific training programs should be devised to help union representatives who will have the responsibility for organizing and servicing professional and technical workers. Some written case history experience of efforts at unionizing professional and technical workers should also be provided. Exploration might be undertaken on the subject of an interunion council to service professional and technical employees.

If our diagnosis is correct, critical social and economic trends will make the white collar worker in industry, including the professional and technical worker, more important in the years to come. Limited achievements to date in organizing these workers are no barometer of future progress. Indeed, it is well to recall the remarks of George E. Barnett, pioneer university student of unionism in America, who in devoting his presidential address before the American Economics Association in December, 1932, on the future of the labor movement predicted ". . . the lessening importance of trade unionism in American

economic organization." Shortly before this prediction, Barnett had stated ". . . I see no reason to believe that American trade unionism will so revolutionize itself within a short period of time as to become in the next decade a more potent social influence than it has been in the past decade." (Quoted by John T. Dunlop in "U. S. Industrial Relations: The Next Twenty Years", 1958, p. 29)

The conditions influencing the prospects for union organizing today are, obviously, quite different in many ways from those of the thirties. But the manner in which the American labor movement did adapt and transform itself in the thirties and forties to organize millions of workers in the mass production industries is proof that the new task at hand can be accomplished.

Appendix II

Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO
Research
January 1960

PERSONS EMPLOYED IN MANUFACTURING, BY MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS
1952-1959*

	(T H O U S A N D S)									Percent Changes	
	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1952 to 1959	1957 to 1959	1958 to 1959
Total Employed	16,270	17,504	16,735	17,051	17,266	17,369	16,101	16,700	2.6	-3.9	3.7
Professional	858	988	954	939	1,043	1,318	1,383	1,379	60.7	4.6	-3
Clerical & Kindred	1,922	1,793	1,948	1,935	2,024	2,155	2,061	2,127	10.7	-1.3	3.2
Sales Workers	462	368	468	477	543	552	583	533	15.4	-3.4	-8.6
Craftsmen, Foremen	3,226	3,551	3,325	3,200	3,239	3,520	3,220	3,242	.5	-7.9	.7
Operatives	7,304	8,015	7,619	8,063	7,917	7,330	6,514	6,925	-5.2	-5.5	6.3
Laborers	1,304	1,547	1,190	1,283	1,289	1,231	975	1,152	-11.7	-6.4	18.2

* For April of each year.

SOURCE: BUREAU OF THE CENSUS (Percentages Computed from Census Data)

PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL AND KINDRED WORKERS
AS PERCENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYED IN MANUFACTURING, 1952-1959*

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
April	5.3	5.6	5.7	5.6	6.0	7.6	8.6	8.3

* For April of each year. SOURCE: Computed from above data

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PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL AND KINDRED WORKERS BY MAJOR INDUSTRIES
 1952-1959*

	(T H O U S A N D S)								Percent Changes		
	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1952 to 1959	1957 to 1959	
Total Employed	5,188	5,372	5,689	5,646	6,053	6,469	6,997	7,197	38.7	11.3	2.9
Agriculture	36	36	19	29	15	33	42	31	-13.9	-6.1	-26.2
Construction	146	152	153	122	157	190	197	186	27.4	-2.1	-5.6
Manufacturing	858	988	954	939	1,043	1,318	1,383	1,379	60.7	4.6	-3
Durable Goods	506	664	568	610	731	903	985	951	87.9	5.3	-3.5
Nondurable Goods	352	324	386	329	310	414	398	428	21.6	3.4	7.5
Transportation	160	138	172	163	166	209	223	210	31.3	.5	-5.8
Trade	182	220	188	191	200	227	232	211	15.9	-7.0	-9.1
Service Industries	3,350	3,370	3,813	3,777	3,998	4,064	4,493	4,689	40.0	15.4	4.4
All Other Industries	456	468	390	405	476	431	438	493	8.1	14.4	12.6

* For April of each year.

SOURCE: BUREAU OF THE CENSUS (Percentages Computed from Census Data)



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TOTAL EMPLOYMENT vs. PRODUCTION WORKER EMPLOYMENT FOR SELECTED INDUSTRIES

Year	All Manufacturing			Aircraft & Parts			Motor Vehicles & Equipment			Machinery & Non-Electrical		
	Total Employment (1000)	Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers									
1944	17,111	14,607	85.4%	1296.6	1006.9	77.7%				1,528	1,199	78.5%
1948	15,321	12,715	83.0	237.7	173.6	73.0	789.3	654.6	82.9%	1,308	1,000	76.5
1949	14,178	11,597	81.8	264.1	194.7	73.7	759.6	635.3	83.6	1,354	1,043	77.0
1950	14,967	12,317	82.3	281.8	206.4	73.2	825.2	701.6	85.0	1,605	1,248	77.8
1951	16,104	13,155	81.7	463.6	341.9	73.7	844.5	707.9	83.8	1,664	1,280	76.9
1952	16,334	13,144	80.5	660.7	483.5	73.2	790.2	644.4	81.5	1,708	1,303	76.3
1953	17,238	13,833	80.2	779.1	568.7	73.0	928.9	767.1	82.6	1,556	1,152	74.0
1954	15,995	12,589	78.7	764.1	541.4	70.9	755.6	624.4	82.6	1,592	1,179	74.1
1955	15,563	13,061	83.9	740.5	506.6	68.4	903.8	746.4	82.6	1,730	1,279	73.9
1956	16,905	13,196	78.1	814.4	651.8	80.0	809.9	648.5	80.1	1,738	1,256	72.3
1957	16,782	12,911	76.9	861.7	563.6	65.4	786.3	630.1	80.1	1,501	1,039	69.2
1958	15,468	11,658	75.4	757.6	479.3	63.3	630.8	480.0	76.1	1,645	1,167	70.9
June 1959	16,455	12,524	76.1	735.3	451.3	61.4	754.2	598.1	79.3			

Year	Electrical Machinery			Basic Steel			Rubber Products			Petroleum Refinery		
	Total Employment (1000)	Production Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers	Total Employment (1000)	Production Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers	Total Employment (1000)	Production Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers	Total Employment (1000)	Production Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers
1944												
1948	871	657	75.4%	612.0	536.8	87.7%	257	208	80.9%	196.6	147.0	74.8%
1949	767	558	72.8	550.4	476.7	86.6	230	183	79.6	191.6	143.5	74.9
1950	877	670	76.4	611.0	532.9	87.2	246	198	80.5	185.4	136.0	73.4
1951	1,007	769	76.4	643.5	560.2	87.1	264	213	80.7	198.6	143.3	72.2
1952	1,084	817	75.4	570.7	486.5	85.2	267	212	79.4	201.6	140.2	69.5
1953	1,220	925	75.8	653.3	559.6	85.7	278	221	79.5	206.3	142.4	69.0
1954	1,086	793	73.0	580.8	492.5	84.8	249	193	77.5	203.6	137.3	67.4
1955	1,124	822	73.1	635.3	544.6	85.7	272	215	79.0	201.3	132.2	65.7
1956	1,202	870	72.4	630.2	532.6	84.5	269	211.1	78.5	200.8	131.0	65.2
1957	1,223	858	70.2	642.7	537.0	83.6	265	205.9	77.7	199.1	128.1	64.3
1958	1,119	750	67.0	536.7	436.8	81.4	245	186.0	75.9	192.1	121.2	63.1
June 1959	1,233	833	67.6	651.8	543.1	83.3	256	196	76.6	190.2	122.3	64.3

Year	Chemical & Allied Products			Paper and Allied Products			Ship & Boat Building and Repairing		
	Total Employment (1000)	Production Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers	Total Employment (1000)	Production Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers	Total Employment (1000)	Production Worker Employment (1000)	Percent Production Workers
1944									
1948	700	522	74.6%	473	407	86.0%	140.7	123.2	87.6%
1949	663	484	73.0	455	389	85.5	100.3	85.0	84.7
1950	682	494	72.4	485	415	85.6	85.2	72.0	84.5
1951	749	536	71.6	511	434	84.9	116.3	101.2	87.0
1952	770	537	69.7	504	421	83.5	152.6	134.6	88.2
1953	807	553	68.5	530	442	83.4	153.6	135.1	88.0
1954	791	532	67.3	531	440	82.9	129.4	112.5	86.9
1955	811	546	67.3	550	453	82.4	123.0	105.7	85.9
1956	833	553	66.4	568	463	81.5	130.0	111.4	85.7
1957	845	545	64.5	566	459	81.1	148.8	127.2	85.5
1958	821	512	62.4	547	439	80.3	144.5	121.4	84.0
June 1959	843	527	62.5	565	453	80.2	148.0	124.3	84.0