

COMMUNICATOR

What is the New York State Public Employees Federation? What can it Do?

PEF is a coalition of labor unions including some of the most recognized and most powerful groups in the country. We have joined together to form a viable alternative that the New York State employee may examine and determine for himself or herself whether we represent a more effective method of representation.

By bringing our principal members together we can supply both the resource and working capitol to find out if you, the state worker, are ready to take a step forward in true union representation. Our coalition is the result of expanded relations with labor organizations in both the public and private sector. Unions are now realizing that working together in a given labor market is the sophisticated and realistic approach to organizational efforts.

Right now all we're doing is finding out if you like us. Judging from the response reported by our field staff and the large number of cards we now have at this early date in the challenge period it is obvious that the concept is a success. A quick computer count of cards returned tells which state bargaining units are responding.

This spells economics in organizing and avoids complicated and wasteful jurisdictional battles later on. It provides immediately, the kind of local leadership training, negotiations work, political action, and research staff necessary to do the job at hand.

PEF's goal for state employees is to

develop this nucleus into the kind of creative and powerful union that is deserving of the massive and highly developed labor force found in this state. There is no doubt that the unified strength of state employees has begun to affect the thinking of political leaders. But, this is just a bare beginning. Local grass roots activism can elect governors and legislators. Careful examination of voting records and analysis of legislation introduced by elected officials tells union members throughout the state who is representing them at the State's Capitol and who is not.

PEF as a labor concept means decentralization. It means giving to members the autonomy that they are seeking. It means unity — but more than that it mandates reaching out to individual members so that they can see the wide spectrum of services their union can offer. When problems arise, it means dealing with building representatives and local leaders that are trained and ready for your problem. It means a field representative, fresh from the latest training course in a fast moving labor field, who can work with and understand your problem.

Behind that field rep and local union stands an impressive staff of skilled professionals who assist the locals with up-to-the-minute research and legal aid. An educational and training section that is constantly out in the field translating the most current trends in the labor movement into pragmatic and realistic work shops where the state employee can learn what management can and cannot do. It is here, in the workshop, where the PEF member

learns what to do in time of crisis and more importantly, how to avoid the crisis.

When you go into bargaining with PEF's aid, your team is armed with a computer analysis of every similar wage and working condition situation in the country. This is possible to do when you are part of a national organization. Then as the negotiation demands come in from all segments of the bargaining unit, they are also computerized. We know what you're asking for, how it compares with what every other public employee organization has, and the statistical justification for the request.

We also know how important every contract demand is to the rank and file member, because we solicit you by mail and personal interview, and ask you to rate in order of priority what we are asking for. We let you sharpen our skills and in turn we sharpen your skills.

The key to PEF's success, if we are to be successful, is education and communication. State employees know more about their jobs than anybody else. The critical part comes when this knowledge must be communicated from the job site to the bargaining table or to the workshop where it can be analyzed and put to its best use.

In cooperation with local advisory committees of PEF members, key issues will be identified. These advisory committees will be elected from a write-in ballot form to insure *grass roots origin*. The key issues will be the issues that *they* determine to be critical to their jobs and their status within a union. The education and training

courses springing from the identification of those critical issues will make us both strong. They also provide a forum for self-criticism and that too will make PEF and its membership healthier and stronger.

We would like to think that our research and educational services are people oriented. A Civil Service Examination Program (CSEP) is just one example of how we feel a research department can be made to work to your best advantage on a year-round basis and not just during the negotiation process. We believe that a board of state employees, appointed from the locals, must be formed to take a look at the Civil Service testing program. This board should critically evaluate and analyze current testing procedures, make recommendations to the State Education Department, and most important of all, establish an in-house training program. The research department prepares the statistical data on the kinds of job related questions that are asked. The Board determines their relative weight, and makes alternative suggestions to the Education Department. Meanwhile, the state employee who must take these examinations knows that they will be generic to his or her situation and has the assurance that the union is doing all it can to make their chances better.

This brief outline of what PEF is and what its goals are, lacks only two ingredients to be a complete statement of philosophy. More hard work from us and more input from you. Together we'll make PEF everything a public employees union should be. ■

PUT YOUR SIGNATURE WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS!!!

COME ON ADMIT IT — YOU'VE BEEN DISSATISFIED WITH CSEA INC. FOR A LONG TIME.

YOU WERE WILLING TO FIGHT INFLATION ON YOUR OWN FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS, WERE EVEN WILLING TO ACCEPT A DUAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM AND A LABYRINTHIAN GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE... BUT THIS LAST MONTH, OH NO, THIS LAST EPISODE HAS TURNED YOUR DISSATISFACTION TO SMOLDERING ANGER!

APRIL OUTDID HER CRUELTY: DARK CLOUDS HELD "STRIKE." YOU WERE DAMNED IF YOU WENT OUT (YOU JUST COULDN'T PICTURE DR. WENZL GOING TO JAIL FOR YOU)... AND BROKE IF YOU DIDN'T.

YOU HEARD THAT THERE WERE STRIKE LEADERS, BUT YOU COULD NEVER FIND ONE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. SO YOU TURNED ONCE AGAIN TO YOUR FRIENDLY NEWSCASTER ON WINS AND REJOICED WHEN HE ANNOUNCED "14%."

BUT RELIEF WAS SHORT-LIVED. RUMORS STARTED AND THE NEWS NOW READ, "PLUM SQUEEZED."

WERE YOU TO LOSE YOUR INCREMENTS? WHAT WOULD HAPPEN DURING THE FIRST TEN DAYS AFTER YOU WERE INJURED ON

THE JOB IF YOU DID NOT HAVE THE ACCUMULATED SICK LEAVE? CSEA INC. CALLED A SPECIAL MEETING. NO ANSWERS. "WE'LL ASK THE STATE FOR CLARIFICATION," BECAME A HAUNTING REFRAIN.

APRIL HAS ENDED BUT RELIEF THROUGH CSEA INC. IS STILL NOT IN SIGHT. THE STATE INSISTS THERE IS NO REASON FOR CLARIFICATION, THAT THE TERMS WERE CLEARLY STATED. CSEA INC. HAS GONE AHEAD AND MAILED OUT THE BALLOTS FOR RATIFICATION WITH THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE AGREEMENT.

AT BEST THERE IS GOING TO BE A LONG FIGHT, THAT IS, IF FIRST CSEA INC. CAN CONVINCE SOMEBODY BESIDES THEMSELVES OF THE NEBULOUS LANGUAGE.

MEANWHILE, THE STATE WILL CONTINUE TO MAIL OUT THE PAYCHECKS... AS THE CONTRACT READS.

THERE IS A WAY OUT. BRING IN AFL-CIO PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATORS UNDER THE PEF BANNER AND REAP THE EXPERIENCE AND POLITICAL CLOUT OF THE AFL-CIO!!

RELIEF IS ONLY A SIGNATURE AWAY!

Autonomy Means Self-Government

Local autonomy is a clearly defined set of "do's and don'ts" which spell out precisely what rights any organization has, as well as the responsibilities of the group. In the AFL-CIO the right to local autonomy is absolute and cherished along with the principles of seniority. It might be easier to explain local autonomy by describing the CSEA hierarchical system which professionals have decried as undemocratic and contemptuous of the rights of the individual. Everything that happens in CSEA happens at its Albany headquarters and is controlled by paid staff who must, of necessity, think of their own welfare and their own jobs rather than the needs of the membership.

All of the monies collected as dues go into the Albany fortress with a miniscule pittance doled back to the area association chapter. (Itself, an amalgamation of State and County Employees). The outrageous decision to strike was manufactured by Pres. Wenzl who then went to the membership to get "off the hook."

Association staff representatives are not responsible to the local chapters but to the CSEA Albany complex. Instead of local chapters deciding who will represent the membership at negotiations or on committees, they are designated by the CSEA hierarchy. In a nutshell, the CSEA is a peculiar pyramid structure with all decisions made at the top and, perhaps, eventually filtering down to the bottom. There is no way in which a chapter can feed into the hierarchy; it can't act and, at best, can only react. This system is not one of local autonomy. Under this system,

there can never be the title bargaining approach to collective bargaining so desperately needed by employees in the Professional Unit. Webster's dictionary defines autonomy as "the quality of being self-governing and the right to self-government." No ands, ifs or buts. In simple language, autonomy means freedom. Should state employees choose the Public Employees Federation, AFI-CIO, as their bargaining agent, each professional organization would have the freedom to select its own negotiators and committeemen and structure itself in accordance with its own needs. The autonomous organizations set their own dues and make the necessary decisions as to how monies will be allocated. That's what local autonomy does mean.

Lastly, on the issue of strikes, only the local union membership votes to strike or, equally important, votes not to participate in a strike. That's autonomy — that's freedom.

CSEA is falling apart partly because it doesn't offer autonomy and freedom to its chapters. In AFL-CIO unions, such autonomy is mandated. The real issue is one of democracy and self-government.

Won't you join the Public Employees Federation in the fight to bring organizational democracy to professional employees in New York State? We know that it can work as it has done in California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and now in Massachusetts.

Your vote for the Public Employees Federation AFL-CIO can make the difference between democracy and overlordship. Use that vote wisely.



Federal Lobby a Must for State Employees

A large portion of Federal monies supplied to states are used through title funding to increase and maintain employment on the state and local level. As most state workers know, a good number of the positions in New York State government are financed through this title concept.

It would then appear that maintenance of job security would at least for some people be related to title funding. Should this be true, one must ask the question "is my union making every possible attempt to insure that this funding does not stop?" If the answer is "no," (with all the state layoffs, the answer is apparently no), then one would wonder why. Could it be that your association never had serious thoughts about a Federal lobby? Could

it be that they never had any serious thoughts of obtaining true job security. It appears that their attitude is "it's easier to sign up a new member than save a job."

The Public Employees Federation holds job security (maintenance of staff) at the highest of priorities. PEF will, for the first time, provide representation for professional employees of New York State by a concentrated lobby in Washington and negotiations of job security through the Public Employees Federation department of the AFL-CIO.

If state workers belonged to the Public Employees department now, such things as the recent funding cutbacks in the Parks and Recreation department would diminish. If we can do it for teachers, we can do it for you.

What Happens When You Change Unions?

Law Guarantees No Loss of Benefits

The Public Employees Federation has received numerous inquiries from State workers as to the status of present benefits (such as sick leave, health insurance, retirement) in the event of election victory by PEF.

We feel that this is an honest concern and would like to tell you what the law says on this matter. The Public Employment Relations Board, (PERB), ruled, "In the Matter of Fraternal Order New York State Troopers, (5 PERB 3060) setting a precedent which establishes

rules for a change in employee organization and guarantees a maintenance of your benefits subsequent to an election victory by a challenging union.

In that decision PERB held that the previously certified employee organization loses its status immediately upon the certification of successor organization and that the successor organization, in all purposes, substituted for its predecessor. The new certified organization assumes the privileges and responsibilities under

the existing contract, quote, "until a new agreement can be negotiated effective upon the start of a new fiscal year of the employer or the expiration of the old agreement, whichever is sooner."

In other words, if a new organization is certified during the last year of the agreement (which should be the situation in nearly all cases and is the case now), the agreement remains in effect until termination and the new organization will seek to negotiate a successor agreement.

Please beware. There are those who would mislead you into believing that if you change bargaining agents, you will lose your benefits. This is not true and union leaders should recognize their obligation to give you the truth. All benefits that you now enjoy will be retained.

PEF will be glad to send a copy of this decision to you. Write Director of NYSPEF, 80 Wolf Road, 6th floor Albany, New York 12205.

It's time to treat public employees fairly

From the poorest Chicano in a Los Angeles barrio, to the mightiest corporate executives in the boardrooms of New York, Americans just don't like to have restrictions placed on them because of who they are or what they do. The same is no less true of individuals who are employed by government.

But a persistent sense of futility is pressuring public employees who are seeking full labor rights. Where this frustration grows, militancy breeds... and that, unfortunately, is the current condition of public employee labor relations.

The idea has taken hold that public employment is a privilege, and special conditions can be attached to it. But when these restrictions become unreasonable, when they are applied in a selective manner, or seem unfair in light of contemporary values, public employees will react with anger and hostility.

Public employees today are faced with the same dilemma: they are

restricted by legal and political prohibitions unknown to other American citizens.

Many government workers view themselves as outsiders in a system which permits all other Americans the rights to organize and bargain collectively, to reside where they want and dress how they wish, to engage fully in political activity and enjoy the benefits of protective federal legislation.

Are today's government workers really that different from the GM strikers of 1936, or the civil rights' activists of the 1960's?

Leaders of public employee unions see the need for a new look at laws and government actions. They intend to seek change through all conventional methods available in the legal and political system.

What we are witnessing is a fearful reaction from public managers, local and national political leaders to the unionization of public workers. They deliberately incite distrust and hostility.

Like other minority groups, public employee unions realize nothing will be given the workers until it is demanded. And when they demand, public workers merely follow the path used so successfully in the past by other organizations seeking change: protest, picket, petition.

Direct action is the one common denominator which has forced advances in all social movement. For activist public employees, who are frustrated by failures through conventional means, direct action can have only one meaning: strike.

Both the AFL-CIO and Public Employee Department support the right to strike for public employees. This right is viewed as necessary in order to bring equality to the bargaining table.

But some public employee unions have given up the right to strike in lieu of alternative machinery to settle disputes or contract impasses. If this right is to be given up, it must be done so freely by the workers involved, at the negotiating table.

Public employees are law-abiding, tax-paying citizens. In many instances, they assume influential and important roles in our society. For these types of individuals to knowingly break the law, and accept the consequences for their actions, is an extreme situation.

But when these circumstances arise, the general public should look not at the workers, but to the laws that create such a crisis.

Frederick Douglass once declared, "Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the roar of its many waters."

Until unionism is accepted in the public sector, there will continue to be militance, disruption, and police arrest of otherwise law-abiding citizens.

Until the laws are enacted or restructured, Americans will continue to face union pickets as organized labor seeks a redefinition of the employer-employee relationship in the public sector.

Political Clout: What It's All About?

Unions have come into their own in the past few years as the most effective lobby group on the political scene. The New York State United Teachers for example, have moved into the forefront in political action by endorsing a slate of teacher approved candidates throughout the state and backing them with the votes and VOTE/COPE contributions that help put their choices in office and keep them there.

Under New York State's election law unions can solicit voluntary contributions from their members to be used as contributions in both the primary and election campaigns of political candidates. The newly passed law is very specific in

reporting procedures for political contributions and requires disclosures by the union and the political candidate.

NYSUT examined this new law, along with other public and private sector unions. They reasoned that if big business can make political contributions in a legal and above board fashion under the act then it was time for unions to be more active in this area. Thus, VOTE/COPE was born and in its first year of existence collected a record \$450,000 in voluntary contributions. Endorsement procedures drew on the resources of NYSUT Election Districts, local leaders and members. Local presidents were called together and

subsequent endorsements based on that input were voted on by the Board of Directors.

"You can ask any legislator," says Ray Skuse, legislative representative for NYSUT. "the hardest thing for an Assemblyman or Senator to do is tell a constituent that he is not going to vote for a bill." Teachers from all over the state come to Albany on important legislative issues and speak to their elected representatives. They know the issues because they are aware, and have been trained to represent themselves. "After the preparatory work is done there is little a legislator can do but listen. Most often

they go our way," said Skuse.

Political action isn't the answer to all labor problems. If it was there would be no need for a union; but it is an important adjunct to the public sector labor movement. Under the Taylor law the legislature is the final step in any negotiation process for state employees. The elected officials of the Senate and Assembly in effect become the ultimate step in the management process. This being the case, political activism becomes the year round effort every good union must make to insure a clear message to lawmakers — that the next election is only two years away! ■

STATE WORKERS: Did you know, CSEA is a corporation, not a labor union.

Look at their name — "Civil Service Employees Association Inc." Even if the membership votes down the Contract, CSEA Inc. can sign it ANYWAY!

Look what happened to the New York State Thruway Authority employees:

On October 23, 1976, the CSEA Inc. reached an agreement with the New York State Thruway Authority. Enraged at its inadequacy, the rank and file Thruway Negotiating Team and the members VOTED IT DOWN.

Thereafter, Dr. Wenzl, CSEA Inc. Czar, fired the Negotiating Team, changed the date on which the contract bonus was to be paid (leaving the rest of the contract intact), and personally imposed the contract on 2,200 Thruway workers.

A brave Thruway employee, who was a CSEA Inc. Chapter President and a member of the Negotiating Team, Mr. Lewis Lingle, brought suit. The case was heard in the New York State Supreme Court on January 28, 1977.

CSEA Inc. defended its dictatorial action with these words, in a legal brief by James Roemer, Jr., attorney for the defense:

"WHAT RIGHT DO THE MEMBERS OF CSEA HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS? IT IS CSEA ITSELF WHICH THE MEMBERS HAVE ELECTED TO REPRESENT THEM IN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT. SO LONG AS CSEA REMAINS THE CERTIFIED BARGAINING AGENT, IT IS CSEA, AND NOT THE MEMBERS, WHICH HAS THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS."

(Reprinted from page 5 of Mr. Roemer's Memorandum filed in Supreme Court on January 28, 1977.)

THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL CORPORATE POWER!!! Bona fide union By-Laws always (by law) give the last word to the member. After all, you should know best, it's your job, isn't it?

Wouldn't you rather have a union?

SIGN TODAY



**PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES
FEDERATION**



PETITION FOR ELECTION

I, the undersigned, designate the New York State Public Employees Federation AFL-CIO and its representatives to negotiate all terms and conditions of a collective bargaining agreement on my behalf. This form calls for a representation election. I am not obligated to join PEF and there is no cost involved.

YOUR SIGNATURE IS ONLY A SHOWING OF INTEREST

SEND ANY SIGNATURES TO:

PEF, 258 Sawmill River Road, Elmsford, NY 10523, or
PEF, 80 Wolf Road, 6th Floor, Albany, NY 12205.

1. Signature X _____ Print Name _____
 Job Title _____ Soc. Sec. # _____
 Department _____ Work Phone / / Date _____
 I WANT TO BE ACTIVE IN THE CAMPAIGN YES NO

2. Signature X _____ Print Name _____
 Job Title _____ Soc. Sec. # _____
 Department _____ Work Phone / / Date _____
 I WANT TO BE ACTIVE IN THE CAMPAIGN YES NO

3. Signature X _____ Print Name _____
 Job Title _____ Soc. Sec. # _____
 Department _____ Work Phone / / Date _____
 I WANT TO BE ACTIVE IN THE CAMPAIGN YES NO

4. Signature X _____ Print Name _____
 Job Title _____ Soc. Sec. # _____
 Department _____ Work Phone / / Date _____
 I WANT TO BE ACTIVE IN THE CAMPAIGN YES NO

5. Signature X _____ Print Name _____
 Job Title _____ Soc. Sec. # _____
 Department _____ Work Phone / / Date _____
 I WANT TO BE ACTIVE IN THE CAMPAIGN YES NO

6. Signature X _____ Print Name _____
 Job Title _____ Soc. Sec. # _____
 Department _____ Work Phone / / Date _____
 I WANT TO BE ACTIVE IN THE CAMPAIGN YES NO

As a professional you may feel a union is not your "cup of tea" At SEIU and NYSUT, professionalism and unionism go hand in hand

However, Dr. Al Nash of Cornell University disagrees. Dr. Nash has written, "The professional can use his or her union to counteract the bureaucratic obstacles between self and work and to express the broader humanistic traditions of the professions—the ethics and ideas of service to mankind."

We understand your problems and have found some realistic and progressive solutions. We know employees but, as professionals, you also have separate and special concerns. These problems include protecting your professional standards and confronting an increasingly large bureaucracy and cost-conscious administration.

PEF believes it is important that you retain your separate identity throughout the process of negotiations and representation. This means electing your own representatives to carry your ideas to the bargaining table and formulate a contract that addresses your needs.

With the help of PEF professionals, you can negotiate a contract that protects you from job phase-outs, loopholes in the civil service system, patronage firings and discrimination.

PEF specialists will also be there to help you with grievance procedures, research problems and legislative priorities.

Under established collective bargaining procedures, professional employees are entitled to a separate, secret ballot election. In this election, you will choose the organization you believe has the skills and expertise to see you through the bargaining process.

SEIU and NYSUT, AFL-CIO unions will provide you with the best opportunity to strengthen your professional community in the face of stifling bureaucracy.

However, before a collective bargaining election can be scheduled, the professional employees in your department must request an election. You can do this by signing the petition on this page. This form says that you want an election and that you want PEF on the ballot.

It is the first step toward your professional contract.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
 PEF, 258 Sawmill River Road
 Elmsford, NY 10523 • (914) 592-2656

or

PEF, 80 Wolf Road, 6th Floor
 Albany, NY 12205 • (518) 459-5400

