

COMMUNICATOR

Q & A

What is PEF?

PEF — the Public Employees Federation — is a union coalition offering a better alternative in representation to state employees in the P S & T unit.

PEF is sponsored by the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), two of the most distinguished names in organized labor.

NYSUT represents more than 200,000 New York teachers and other school workers, including 16,000 professional employees of the State University of New York. All fall under the jurisdiction of the Taylor Law, which also governs employees in the CSEA Inc. state units.

SEIU has more than 150,000 members in 30 locals in New York State, including 15,000 public employees. They recently affiliated the 5,500-member New York Licensed Practical Nurses Association. Nationally, SEIU represents more than 200,000 public employees (including 25,000 social workers and thousands of other professionals) and more than 200,000 health care workers, including health professionals.

Will I lose benefits by joining PEF?

No. The law guarantees a maintenance of negotiated benefits, following an election victory by a challenging union.

This ruling was handed down by the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), in a case involving New York State Troopers.

What about PEF dues?

PEF dues will be about the same as CSEA Inc. dues—\$58.50 per year. All future decisions on dues structure will be made by vote of the membership. There are no initiation fees or assessments.

What about insurance?

Members will have the option of keeping their present insurance, or converting to plans PEF will be offering at the same or lower rates. PEF plans will **not** have the limitation on maximum amount of coverage or unreasonable rate schedules found in the CSEA Inc. plans. PEF plans **will** give you better benefits for your money.

What's better about PEF?

PEF means unit representation in bargaining and governance.

PERB says 'yes'

We're getting an election!

Despite CSEA Inc.'s objections, the State of New York's Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) has ordered that P S & T employees must be given the right to vote in a democratic election.

That means CSEA Inc. will have to face the music. Some time in the next few weeks, P S & T members will be permitted to **judge** CSEA Inc.'s failure

to negotiate good and fair contracts.

Lawyers for CSEA Inc. had argued that — for three reasons — P S & T members should not be permitted to vote:

1. The Public Employees Federation (PEF) is not a real union. (Imagine! **That** came from CSEA, Inc.)
2. Too few P S & T employees really want an election. (**That** despite the fact

that — in just a few weeks — thousands upon thousands of P S & T members had signed cards **asking** for an election.)

3. The cards signed by P S & T members are "not timely." That is, CSEA Inc. has a contract — extended for two years by CSEA Inc.'s sell-out last spring on the salary schedule — and P S & T employees should be forbidden to vote until late 1978 at the earliest.

Leaders of PEF in the P S & T unit were most angered by that third CSEA Inc. dodge.

"What Wenzel and McGowan negotiated wasn't a new contract at all," a State employee in Albany insisted. "It was a deal to get the agency fee. They took money out of our family budgets so that CSEA could fatten its own treasury."

"Wenzel" is Theodore Wenzel, CSEA president until last spring. "McGowan" is William McGowan, who served on the team which negotiated the extension and who is now the CSEA president.

Timely . . . and about time!

State law was entirely on the side of PEF and PS & T employees. That's why CSEA Inc.'s three complaints were thrown out.

According to the law — which CSEA Inc. still objects to — people in a public employee bargaining unit have every right to an election whenever 30 percent or more of them call for one.

All they have to do when they want to change unions is wait for the legal "challenge period" and then submit signatures on enough cards.

The legal challenge period ends seven months before a valid contract expires. Prior to its "extension," CSEA Inc.'s PS & T contract was scheduled to run out next March 31st, and PEF filed over 20,000 (!) signatures well before the August 31st deadline.

Though CSEA Inc. wanted to deny all those people the right to vote, the law was clear: In a democracy you can't do what CSEA Inc. wanted.

PEF: Great 'new deal' for PS&T

Local autonomy and concern for the needs of members, will become a reality for P S & T employees as soon as PEF wins its current election challenge against CSEA Inc.

The election pits the democratic, decentralized PEF structure against the autocratic procedures of the current bargaining agent.

"We believe that no one in Washington, D.C. or even in Albany, knows what state employees require, better than workers themselves," commented John Geagan, general organizer for Service Employees International Union (SEIU), one of the PEF sponsors.

"This has been made especially clear by the failings of CSEA Inc. in adequately representing professionals in the P S & T unit," he added.

"The professional, scientific and technical state employees have been swallowed up and ignored in the CSEA structure. They are outnumbered at their worksites and represented by stewards who do not necessarily understand their problems. The CSEA bargaining process ignores the unique situations they confront on the job.

"On the other hand, PEF cosponsors, NYSUT, and SEIU have long demonstrated that professional employees must control their own governance and contract negotiations. Even within a P S & T unit, it will be necessary to bargain unique contract clauses and language to meet the

special needs of its many classifications. PEF is predicated on the need for flexibility, creativity and self-determination for the professionals it seeks to represent."

The New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) expressed its conviction that PEF could offer the quality and sophistication of services so sadly lacking under the regime of the current association.

"We fully believe that members of PEF, like those of NYSUT itself, are entitled to a full range of competent member services," said Vito DeLeonardis, NYSUT's executive director.

"Our NYSUT members benefit from one of the best lobbying efforts in the state. In addition, we have 16 service centers, with professional staff, labor relations libraries, printing facilities

and conference rooms. We sponsor a host of membership and leadership publications, have a sophisticated research department and run a wide range of training programs. NYSUT and SEIU together retain dozens of full time attorneys to provide member services.

"In addition, we believe in spreading the information around," he added. "We believe that the best union membership is an informed and capable one, so we emphasize self-sufficiency through the sharing of skills. This makes us different from CSEA in philosophy, as well as in our capacity to deliver vital support services.

"Combining NYSUT and SEIU expertise with the high quality of P S & T employees, will make PEF a most successful union."



SEIU, one of PEF's cosponsors, regularly conducts professional conferences. Shown are participants at a nationwide SEIU conference on health care. They discussed a broad range of problems, including ways of obtaining more adequate funding for hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care functions.

20,000 sign PEF cards:

'We're not going to take CSEA anymore'

The Public Employee Federation's (PEF) drive to represent members of the PS & T unit has met with overwhelming support.

The very first PEF mailing drew an avalanche of response. In just a few short weeks, more than 20,000 people signed the forms required for an election.

"We were astounded by the enthusiasm," a campaign coordinator admitted. "We have never seen such interest in having an election."

Outside observers attribute PEF's success to the many unfairnesses in the present contract extension negotiated by CSEA Inc. last April.

In that extension promises of big increases faded when P S & T members learned that their outdated 1974 salary schedule would remain unchanged.

Disappointment changed to protest when CSEA Inc. could not explain which wage adjustments affected which people.

And protest gave way to anger when state employees were cheated out of pay hikes and increments by gaps and ambiguities in the agreement.

Major deficiencies in the salary deal included CSEA Inc.'s failure to negotiate a cost of living (COL) clause.



Members of the PS&T Unit and PEF leaders pose at PERB headquarters with the 20,000 cards sent in by State employees who agree: "It's time for a change."

Not only that, but CSEA Inc. actually gave up previously negotiated benefits.

Under the contract extension, overtime meal allowances are discontinued and the first 10 days out-of-work because of a job-related accident must be charged to an employee's own vacation time.

"It's incredible," an engineer in the PS & T unit exclaimed. "We get hurt doing our jobs and CSEA lets the State take it out of our hides."

Said one nurse: "I don't know of any other major employer that would treat its workers that badly, much less any union that would agree to it."

The deal that CSEA made was so bad that even people who think that state workers have it "too easy" ridiculed CSEA Inc.'s inept leadership.

The **Albany Times-Union**, for example, headlined its story on the extension: "CSEA leaders need (a) course on labor pacts."

AFL-CIO: More clout for State professionals

"The AFL-CIO?"

"It's a bunch of workers with picket-signs marching up and down in front of a restaurant somewhere."

That's a common perception.

Here's another:

"It's some guys strong-arming legislators and Congressmen, always grabbing more, more, more — and then still more again."

Whatever the truth in those views, it's certainly true that the AFL-CIO is a lot more than picketers and lobbyists.

The AFL-CIO is also a proud history of struggle with employers to gain worker rights. It's years of conflict with federal, state and local administrations to write legislation which protects workers and improves the general health and welfare.

In days gone by, the AFL-CIO led the struggle against the robber barons — the Carnegies, Mellons, Fricks and Rockefeller.

Today, they still lead the struggle against the big families — and against their corporate entities — U.S. Steel, Gulf, Alcoa, Goodyear, Rockwell.

In the early years, the AFL-CIO fought for the safety of workers in the sweat shops, the mines and the mills.

Today it still fights for the safety of those industry workers — and for the victims of black lung, brown lung and chemical contamination. And if you think health and safety problems don't affect you, think again. The AFL-CIO Public Employee Department (PED) recently conducted a study which showed that public employees in federal, state and local governments face far more hazardous working conditions than their counterparts in private industry.

The AFL-CIO is also leading the fight for a national health care delivery system, as the major consumer group

confronting the health care industry.

In days gone by, the AFL-CIO fought for the fifty hour week. Now, most of us are down to the 40 or 37½ hour week — and they're still fighting.

In days gone by, they fought for a minimum wage of \$1.00. Now we're up to \$2.65 — and still fighting.

Once the AFL-CIO fought for the right of all workers to organize and be represented by unions of their own choosing. Today, the fight to reform labor laws still resounds in the halls of Congress.

And no one knows the extent of the current struggle better than public employees.

The fight to achieve full rights for public sector workers continues today in Washington, Albany and in thousands of cities and counties across the United States. And that fight is be-

ing led by the AFL-CIO and its member unions.

The fight is even harder than before. And the enemy is bigger and richer than before. But to that struggle, the AFL-CIO and its affiliates bring expertise, experience and an enduring commitment.

PEF — the Public Employees Federation — offers you a chance to be a part of that commitment . . . an opportunity to share in the lessons of the past and participate in the shaping of the future. With that, comes the added clout and leverage of belonging to the strongest labor lobby in the land.

Whether at the bargaining table or in the legislative arenas of Albany and Washington, your voice will be stronger with AFL-CIO backing. And your moves will be surer with the impressive expertise of NYSUT and SEIU.

That alone is worth a great deal.

employee labor movement said our unprecedented affiliation with SEIU would not take," noted Jack Thomas, Local 660's President.

"Now, I believe we've started a whole new movement. Through our efforts in recent years several California employee associations have affiliated with SEIU and more will follow suit," he added.

"Affiliation with SEIU has provided us with much needed support and strength we didn't have as an independent employee association," said Executive Director Harry Gluck. "Collective bargaining and AFL-CIO unionism go hand in hand — it's a natural fit."

SEIU: Strength and support



All over the country professional people are recognizing that "we can't go it alone." They're flocking out of insurance-only, company unions like CSEA Inc. and they're asking for real AFL-CIO unions to negotiate for them.

More than 30,000 public employees who think SEIU is the union to believe in, recently celebrated their five-year affiliation with the union.

Local 660, Los Angeles County's largest public employee union, marked the occasion with a "Quinquennial Celebration."

Formerly the L.A. County Employees Association, Local 660 became the eighth largest local in SEIU when it first affiliated in 1971. Since then it has nearly doubled in size.

The local's 30,000 public employees have helped make SEIU the largest AFL-CIO union in California

"Five years ago many in the public

No clout in Albany
No change in salary schedule
No decent insurance scales
No concern for PS&T

Don't get mad.

Just get better.

**Better salaries
Better leverage
Better services
Better benefits
Better governance**

Vote PEF.

November 10, 1977

Memorandum

To: All PS & T Unit Members
From: NYS Public Employees Federation

You don't give up, and we don't either. Unlike CSEA Inc., which is never around when you need them, PEF keeps coming back. We are determined to win higher salaries and a better contract for you.

The more than 20,000 of you who signed cards supporting PEF's call for an election deserve very special thanks.

To all of you we send congratulations. A better day is coming.

By the way, if you've moved recently (or are going to move), please let us know your new address. You may write us at 80 Wolf Rd., Albany 12205.

And if you've got any questions about PEF or the election, you may call us at either of these toll-free numbers: 800-342-4306 (PEF/Albany) or 800-742-1865 (PEF/Elmsford).

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