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The historic decision issued last month unanimously upheld the findings of a PERB hearing officer who ruled last summer that the city committed an improper practice when it subcontracted out services without negotiating its decision to do so with the City of Poughkeepsie Unit of Dutchess County CSEA Local 814.

Hearing officer Deborah H. Sabin noted then that "The opportunity afforded to CSEA's representatives to speak to the Finance Committee and the Common Council were no more than a meaningless prelude...the essential give and take of prior negotiations was clearly lacking." PERB rejected all the city's arguments and ordered it to "offer reinstatement under their management rights clause of the collective bargaining agreement authorized contracting out, even though it did not.

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Union official says TV position misleading

Reagan editorial draws response from O’Connor

NEW YORK CITY — CSEA Southern Region President Ray O’Connor was recently given an opportunity to respond to a WPIX-TV editorial which supported President Ronald Reagan’s economic policies.

Here is the text of Mr. O’Connor’s response broadcast the weekend of May 7:

“A channel 11 editorial claimed only 2% of Americans, the newly unemployed, are worse off today than they were when Ronald Reagan became president.

“But, if you’re an elderly woman in Westchester who lost a minimum Social Security benefit, a college student in Nassau County cut off from a student loan or a working parent in New Jersey whose day care center is about to close, you, too, are a victim of Reaganomics.

“A recent study by the Community Council of Greater New York found that 26 New York City neighborhoods — like Sunset Park, the Upper West Side, Fordham and South Jamaica — have lost a total of $17 million since the start of 1981.

“More than 3 million people live in these neighborhoods. Many of them can’t find work, lost CETA jobs, can’t get food stamps.

“Channel 11 claimed that lower inflation has saved the federal government from $40-$60 billion in the last year. But you didn’t mention that each 1% increase in the unemployment rate costs the federal government at least $23 billion a year lost taxes and increased unemployment and welfare benefits.

“And the Reagan tax cut only makes the well off a lot better off. The Congressional Budget Office found that in 1983 the Reagan program will increase the spendable income of households making over $20,000 a year by $15,000; households making under $10,000 a year will lose $240.

“Policies that reward the rich and pound poor working people don’t make life better for 98% of us.”

Evening at the theatre to celebrate the role of the American worker

ALBANY — “Unions’ Evening at the Theatre” will bring attention to the worker for one day, and to the men and women behind the American labor movement.

“Streetcorner Kabaret,” a New York Street Theatre production, is a collection of skits, music and dance celebrating the American worker. Ranging from jazz to swing to rock, the show will focus on timely issues as well, with pieces such as “Will unions spoil the economy, or is the economy spoiling the unions?” and “Should women fight for the ERA or squeeze back into the corsets of Victorian era?”

A wine and cheese reception will be held for theatergoers at 6:30 p.m., before the 8 p.m. show on June 4. It will be in the Performing Arts Center at SUNY at Albany.

The show is sponsored by the Labor Advisory Council of the Capital District Extension Office of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations in cooperation with area unions. Tickets at $5 each are available through the Capital District Office of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at 113 State Street, Albany, N.Y. 12207.

Orange County EAP POLICY STATEMENT SIGNED — The 1,500 employees of this Southern Region county will now have the benefits of an Employee Assistance Program as the result of negotiations between labor and management. Signing the agreement, above, are County Executive Louis Heimbach and CSEA County Unit President Kay Cayton. Looking on are, from left, regional EAP Coordinator Clark Brown and EAP Committee chairman Rosemary Claffin. Mr. Heimbach noted the agreement means “services that we’ve been providing constituents will now be provided for our employees,” while Ms. Cayton added, “EAP saves lives, saves jobs.”

NEGOTIATOR OF YEAR

Collective Bargaining Specialist Ron Mazzola, second from left, who is assigned to the Southern Region, has been named “Negotiator of the Year” for enrolling seven new bargaining units in the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund. Taking part recently in the presentation were from left, EBF Assistant Director Tom Linden, Mazzola, Regional President Ray O’Connor, statewide Secretary Irene Carr, statewide President William L. McGowan, and Regional Director Tom Luposello. Mr. McGowan chairs the Employee Benefit Fund while Mr. O’Connor and Ms. Carr serve as trustees.

Nassau Local president warns about crackdown

MINEOLA — Nassau County Local 830 President Jerry Donahue has warned county employees that a crackdown on sick calls is under way and that any employee threatened with disciplinary action has the right to assistance from the union.

“Many employees have received charges and have been suspended from work pending a hearing,” Donahue noted.

He advised members affected to contract the union office immediately. He also reminded members that the CSEA contract guarantees that no employee may be asked to sign a resignation without first being given the opportunity to consult with the union.

Should charges be filed, the employee will be represented upon request, he said.
Six-year legal battle ends with major CSEA victory

ALBANY — CSEA has won the latest round in the legal battle in behalf of SUNY employees who for the past several years have been directed not to work the day after Thanksgiving.

"The impact of this case is enormous, because it really deals with the issue of the State's right to 'furlough' employees," commented attorney Marjorie Karowe, who has been handling the case.

"If the Appellate Division decision stands, it will mean that furloughing is an improper practice and may not be unilaterally commenced by the State but must be negotiated," she explained.

The issue began in 1976, when various SUNY campuses closed their facilities the day after Thanksgiving and directed employees not to come to work and to charge that time to their leave accruals. CSEA filed an unsuccessful contract grievance.

In the three following years, CSEA filed improper practice charges, challenging the State's right to diminish fulltime employees' working time. A PERB hearing officer found in the union's favor, stating that fulltime employees had the expectation to work every day except those excluded by statute, contract or practice.

The Public Employment Relations Board reversed the ruling. They found CSEA had waived its right to negotiate the impact of the closings by not bringing the issue to the bargaining table.

CSEA appealed the PERB ruling to the Supreme Court Appellate Division, which decided in CSEA's favor earlier this month.

In their decision, the Appellate judges pointed out that a waiver "must be clear, unmistakable and without ambiguity" and that the record contained no evidence of such waiver.

The Appellate Division annulled the PERB decision and sent the matter back to the Board for further proceedings in compliance with the new ruling.

According to attorney Karowe, it is not certain whether PERB will take the case to the Court of Appeals or go ahead and reinstate the original hearing officer's decision.

Women are affected adversely under the policies of Reagan

WASHINGTON — With the nation sinking deeper into recession, the nation's jobless rate jumped to 9.4 percent in April, the highest rate since the Great Depression 40 years ago.

The Labor Dept., in its April report on the job picture, said the ranks of the unemployed increased by 450,000 over the month to a total of 10.3 million seeking work in vain.

Counting a record 1.3 million who have stopped looking for work altogether and a record 5.7 million forced on part-time, this means a total of 17.5 million people are jobless or on short hours.

Labor reacted sharply to the new unemployment figures.

"With recovery only a dim hope for the future," declared AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, "the President and Congress must turn their full attention to writing a new economic program that makes the creation of jobs the nation's No. 1 priority.

"The New Hooverism is a failure — it is time to promote the recovery before we slide into a new Depression."

Other labor leaders had these reactions:

• President Gerald McEntee of the AFL-CIO, and serves as the president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) and vice president and director of social services for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union.

She attacked Reagan for hurting the plight of the working woman, and suggested some solutions union members should pursue.

"He's saying, 'I'm for equal rights for women, but I'm opposed to the passage of ERA,'" she said. From that stand, he goes downhill, she added.

Because of Reaganomics, women workers are facing a bleak economic picture. Among the problems are:

• Women are earning 59 cents for every dollar men are earning, and this pay gap is growing.

• In the first quarter of 1982, 17.6 percent of all black women who were heads of households were unemployed. At the same time, 8.1 percent of all white women heads of households were unemployed. The current second quarter is likely to bring even higher jobless figures.

• CETA funds, which many women depended on for training and employment, are cut back to the bare bones. "Now many of these women are trying to pay for their own training," she said.

"It's a shame, a hoax, because they're being trained for jobs in industries that are experiencing massive layoffs."

Calendar of Events

Calendar items should be mailed to The Public Sector, 1 Columbia Place, Albany, New York 12207. Items must contain the name and telephone number of the sender for verification purposes.

MAY

21 — Region V Political Action Training session, Canton.

25 — Region V Political Action Training session, Syracuse.

36 — Region V Political Action Training session, Binghamton.

JUNE

15 — Deadline for ballots, CSEA statewide officers election.
Cimino to be honored at testimonial dinner

UTICA — Hundreds of state employees, friends, and statewide representatives of CSEA, are expected to attend a testimonial dinner to honor Nicholas J. Cimino on Monday, June 7, at Hart's Hill Inn in Utica. Mr. Cimino, who recently retired after 35 years with the New York State Department of Transportation, is being honored for his distinguished service in the Civil Service Employees Association, having served as vice-president and treasurer of Utica-based Local 505 for three years and its president for more than 27 years.

During his 30-year span of CSEA activities, Cimino participated in state contract negotiations and served on numerous other regional and statewide committees.

According to Anthony Cimino, committee chairman, the event is scheduled to get underway at 6:30 p.m. Persons interested in obtaining tickets should call the chairman at (315) 732-5838.

KEEP CSEA INFORMED ON MAILING ADDRESS
In the event that you change your mailing address, please fill out the below form and send it to:
CSEA, Inc., P.O. Box 125, Capitol Station, Albany, New York 12224.
This form is also available from local presidents for CSEA members, but is reproduced here for convenience.

Change of Address for 'The Public Sector'
Please allow 3-4 weeks for change to take effect.
My present label reads exactly as shown here (or affix mailing label)

Name ____________________________
Street ____________________________
City ____________________________ State _____ Zip _____
Agency where employed ____________________________
[Signature]

Send to: CSEA Supports Special Olympics
33 Elk Street
Albany, New York 12224

Yes, I can help.
Please send information on how to set up fund raising events for Special Olympics.

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________

Send to: CSEA Supports Special Olympics
33 Elk Street
Albany, New York 12224

Nicholas J. Cimino
Fred Odgers, photo technician, identifies 8-time Suffolk bank robbery suspect

YAPHANK — The visual memory and quick thinking of an alert CSEA member has led to the arrest of a man suspected of committing six bank robberies and two attempted bank robberies.

Fred Odgers, a civilian photography technician at Suffolk County Police headquarters, was processing surveillance photographs from a bank camera when he suddenly recognized the suspected robber as a person he had seen working at an OTE office.

Odgers told his police supervisor at the identification section where he works. Based on Odger’s information, police arrested the suspect who confessed to the string of crimes.

It was the first time that Odgers had processed bank surveillance film in the two and one-half years he has been on the job. Usually the 34-year-old CSEA member develops the photos taken by members of the photo identification department to be used as evidence in cases.

"Because there had been a string of robberies, this was a hot case. The department wanted 200 eight-by-ten photographs made to distribute to police officers," Odger said.

While Odgers received a letter of official recognition from the commanding officer of the robbery squad and a commendable action letter from the chief of detectives for his help in the arrest of the bank robbery suspect, he, like many civilian police employees, remains anonymous to the public.

"In many cases, CSEA members are the unsung heroes of the investigative work that solves crimes," said Charles Novo, president of local 852. "We're proud of Fred and think he deserves all the recognition he can be given."

Cornell Summer School offers labor courses

ITHACA — The New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations Extension Division is offering four courses at the Labor Studies Summer School at the Cornell campus in Ithaca.

The first three courses offered by the summer school will be held July 11-16. They are "Quality of Work Life," "Arbitration II," and "Worker’s Compensation and Disability."

The fourth course, "The Impact of Economic and Political Factors and Collective Bargaining in OSHA," is scheduled for July 18-23.

Orientation for all four of the credit courses begins on Sunday and classes are scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The course on "Quality of Work Life" covers such issues as organizational structures, styles of supervision and the impact of stress and burnout. "Arbitration II" studies the roles of management and union representatives in the grievance-arbitration process.

"Worker’s Compensation and Disability" is an introduction to the operation of the program and its statewide operations.

The OSHA course explores political and economic issues which determine regulatory policy in job safety and health. It emphasizes tools such as collective bargaining and the labor law, which are used to encourage employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

Anyone interested in registering for these courses or finding out more about them may contact Ann Herson, Labor Relations Credit Program, 306 Industrial and Labor Relations Extension Division, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853 or call (607) 256-3287.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE of political power, the Southern Region political action committee is on a "Spring Offensive" to register new voters. Pat Nealon, president of state Judiciary Local 332, is chairing the effort which has set a preliminary goal of signing up at least 500 new voters in each of the region’s seven counties. Initially, shop stewards will be asked to distribute voter registration forms at workplaces and, in the near future, registration tables will be staffed in public locations to reach non-members. Meeting in Fishkill recently to plan the drive were, from left, Ms. Nealon, Brian Dalton of Wassaic Developmental Center Local 426, Region Second Vice President Rose Marcinkowski, and Wilbert Wilkins of Letchworth Village Developmental Center Local.
NEW YORK CITY — The leaders of 20 labor unions, representing more than a million workers in New York State, gathered recently to announce the formation of the Labor Committee for Mario Cuomo. The committee is coordinating labor's efforts to elect Mario Cuomo governor of New York.

Metropolitan Region II President George Calumeno represented CSEA at the committee's first meeting which was held in New York City.

At a press conference following the committee meeting, candidate Cuomo noted that the organized labor backing for his gubernatorial campaign is “the strongest support any candidate in any primary election has ever received from labor.”

In response to a reporter's question on the endorsements Cuomo's opponent in the Democratic primary, Edward Koch, received from four New York City Democratic Party bosses, Cuomo said, “If I had to choose, I would rather have the support of these labor leaders here with me today who represent the working people of this state.”

“The last time four political leaders got together in this area to endorse someone who won was in the Iroquois Confederacy,” he added.

Jack Sheinkman of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, head of the labor committee, reported nearly $250,000 in contributions and pledges from organized labor for Cuomo's campaign. Sheinkman added that the labor support for Cuomo will go “far beyond money. Labor unions will provide Mario with ‘people power.’ ”

In a prepared statement delivered to the press, the committee observed that Cuomo is “the only real Democrat running for governor of New York. Unlike his opponent in the Democrat primary, Mario Cuomo has always adhered to the principles of the Democratic Party throughout his seven and a half years of exemplary public service.”

The committee noted that Koch has endorsed four Republicans seeking elective office and “embraced and been embraced by a conservative, Republican president.”

“The Labor Committee for Mario Cuomo believes that he is the best qualified candidate to mobilize the Democratic Party within New York and to provide strong leadership for the benefit of state residents and on the national scene as well.”

LABOR FOR CUOMO — Lt. Gov. Mario Cuomo speaks at a New York City press conference to announce the formation of a “Labor Committee for Mario Cuomo” comprised of leaders of 20 labor unions. Among those visible in the background, from left, are Morton Bahr of the Communications Workers of America; CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Calumeno and AFSCME District Council 37 Executive Director Victor Gotbaum.

The labor committee's statement of support for Cuomo reflected Cuomo's commitment to the goals of organized labor: “His (Cuomo's) positions on preserving communities, on aid to the elderly, on improving public services, and dealing fairly with the needs of working people of New York are fully in the interests of the members of unions, their families and all New Yorkers.”

“We will back Cuomo to the fullest of our resources because he supports political, social and economic programs needed to restore sanity, humanity and equity in government,” the statement continued.

Following the Labor Committee for Mario Cuomo press conference, Cuomo received the endorsement of the New York City Central Labor Council, representing the city’s trade unions.

TROY — “I want you to be prepared to come to Albany on 24- to 48-hour notice ready for one hell of a fight,” CSEA statewide President William L. McGowan told an audience of 310 union leaders at a recent Capital Region dinner meeting.

“CSEA wants local legislators to hear our message against furloughs as a budget balancing gimmick from their own constituents. Maybe then we can form our own SEFA (State Employees Federated Appeal) program — there is no EAP program. And if the State wants to dictate changes without listening to CSEA, we can form our own EAP program without the state.” The audience roared its approval of this stance.

McDermott said he was upset with the actions of the State in the Employee Assistance Program. He stated “Our position is clear — without the participation of the state's largest public employee union in the EAP program — there is no EAP program. And if the State wants to dictate changes without listening to CSEA, we can form our own EAP program without the state.”

The committee, chaired by Shirley Brown with Betty Collins, Lee Fisher-Yarter, Charles Staats and John D. Corcoran Jr., as members, recommended that the State abide by the decision of the SEFA Steering Committee as it relates to the participation of charities in the campaign.

Also the committee recommended that those charities that want to participate in the SEFA campaign must be willing to stipulate that they will not subcontract for personal services with the State or any of its political subdivisions in which the union has any interests. Resolutions covering both recommendations were passed by the union leadership.

The resolutions will now be presented to the SEFA Steering Committee and the State of New York for action.

EAP, SEFA issues top Region IV meeting agenda

STATEWIDE CANDIDATES — All nine candidates for statewide CSEA union offices were in attendance at recent Region IV meeting. Region IV President Joseph McDermott, standing left, candidate for statewide executive vice president, chats with, from left seated, statewide president candidate Robert Lattimer; Barbara Pauser, candidate for treasurer; incumbent statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jack Moore; incumbent Executive Vice President Thomas McDonough; treasurer candidate John Francisco, and incumbent Treasurer Jack Gallagher.
Public Employees have never had so much to lose as that which hinges on this year's gubernatorial election. That's exactly why CSEA has broken tradition and backed Mario Cuomo in the Democratic Primary.

Let's look at Cuomo's record and public employment. As New York Secretary of State, Mario developed a trust and respect with his employees, many of them CSEA members.

His fight for upward mobility programs resulted in a record number of promotions during his tenure as Secretary of State.

Volunteer when CSEA political activists call on you. Arm yourself with facts about the election and tell your friends. And help by giving. We can counter the big bucks of our opposition by all giving a little.

With Mario Cuomo as Governor, public employees of this state can breathe a lot easier.

We need Mario Cuomo. Now.
Major decisions impact judicial workers

Landslide vote wraps up pact

ALBANY — By an overwhelming margin of better than 21 to 1, CSEA members have voted to ratify the agreement the union's Judiciary Negotiations Coalition team reached with the Unified Court System.

The final tally when votes were counted May 11 with 1,231 in favor of ratification and 58 opposed was "It called it a 'lanslide' when the Administrative, Operational and Institutional units ratified their agreements 19 to 1. So that must make this approval vote somewhere between an avalanche and a tidal wave," commented collective bargaining specialist Patrick J. Monachino who served as chief negotiator for CSEA.

The new agreement calls for a 29 percent salary increase over three years, increments and longevity payments, uniform allowances and streamlined grievance procedures.

The judiciary negotiating team, chaired by Local 694 President Thomas Jefferson, reached agreement with the State March 30, following several months of talks.

Members of the team included: Local 019 President Joseph Johnson Jr., Local 333 President Patricia Nealon, Local 333 President Kenneth Hoffman, Local 333 President Frank Gentalez, Local 334 President Jerrold Goetz, and Local 335 President William Johnson.

Also serving on the team were: Edward Satran, Mel Schnitzer, Allen Hanley, Maisie Forbes, Victor Ort, Edward Heffernan, Richard Szymanski, Louise Hauser, Joan O'Riley, Sondra Brodsky, Shirley Cartwright, Nancy Roark and Sam Nataro.

Clerks now allowed representation

ALBANY — Law clerks and legal assistants working for judges are eligible to be represented by CSEA.

That was the latest in a series of rulings on whether these positions are managerial or management confidential and therefore barred from membership in CSEA.

More than two years ago, the state Office of Court Administration (OCA) stirred up the issue with a "mammoth petition" to the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) asking that these positions become managerial, said CSEA attorney Stephen Wiley.

In response, PERB first ruled that the law clerks and legal assistants were not managerial or confidential since they did not have a major part in making legal decisions.

OCA appealed the ruling, saying these positions played a major role for the judges; and a state Supreme Court justice agreed with OCA, reversed the ruling and sent the case back to PERB.

PERB decided again that these positions were not managerial or management confidential. This time, they based their decision on the fact that, under the Taylor Law, participation in decision-making does not automatically place a position in the managerial category. These positions could still be protected by the union, they concluded.

OCA again appealed to the state Supreme Court, but in this most recent legal action, the court agreed with the PERB decision, ruling in favor of CSEA.

Wiley said that while he was pleased with the decision, the story might not end here. "I wouldn't be surprised to see OCA challenge the decision," he said.

Convention jogger run to raise funds for state political races

ALBANY — CSEA delegates to AFSCME's biennial convention in Atlantic City next month will be on the run. Their three-mile jog down the famous Boardwalk on June 23 is a fund-raising event for PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality), the political action arm of AFSCME.

Money pledged to support each "PEOPLE-THON" participant will be used to support candidates in this year's Congressional races.

The 'PEOPLE-THON' is a terrific way to raise much-needed money for these important political races, and offers an opportunity to work off some frustration against President Reagan's administration," said Ramona Gallagher, CSEA's coordinator for PEOPLE.

Each run (or walk) entrant must obtain at least $30 in voluntary pledges for PEOPLE. Pledges should be made payable to PEOPLE, and must be submitted by 5 p.m., June 22.

Awards will be given to the first three male and female finishers and to the oldest and youngest finishers in the race. The entrant collecting the greatest pledges will receive a grand prize. All race entrants will receive PEOPLE-T-shirts.

Any delegate, family member or staff member attending the AFSCME convention can run in the PEOPLE-THON. Registration forms will be available at the Atlantic City Convention Center beginning June 29. Or entry forms may be obtained in advance from the CSEA Legislative Office, 150 State Street, Albany, NY 12207, Phone 518/436-8622.

Please send me pledge forms for the PEOPLE-THON run in Atlantic City, June 23, 1982.
Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________

I cannot join the run, but here is my contribution to PEOPLE:

$3 $5 $10 $15 _______________________
(Make checks payable to "PEOPLE")

Mail to: CSEA Legislative Office
150 State Street
Albany, NY 12207

All pledges should be made payable to PEOPLE and must be submitted by 5 p.m., Tuesday, June 22, 1982. In accordance with Federal law, the PEOPLE Committee will accept contributions from AFSCME members and their families.

CSEA Staff Openings

CSEA has just announced an opening for the position of union organizer in Region II.

The organizer must develop and encourage growth of CSEA membership in the five boroughs of New York City. The individual must also direct CSEA members and staff in efforts to gain more members.

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a related area, or a high school diploma and three years of experience with government or union representatives. A car for business and a New York State driver's license is required.

Those interested in the job should send their resumes to the CSEA Personnel Director, P.O. Box 125, Capitol Station, Albany, New York, so they will be received by June 7.
FOUND HER STATION — Jeanette "Scotty" Scott is shown on the job at the Refuse Derived Fuel plant in Albany with plant Safety Coordinator Dave Stevens. Scotty is one of three women being trained as a stationary engineer through a unique labor-management program.

McEntee: High unemployment Reagan's fault

WASHINGTON — The president of the nation’s largest public employee union declared today that President Reagan should have the guts to admit responsibility for the 9.4 percent unemployment rate just released.

Gerald W. McEntee, International President of the million-member American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) said that today’s unemployment figures — showing 10,307,000 Americans out of work — is not only the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression but is a national disgrace. He laid the blame directly at the White House doorstep.

“In January 1981 when this president took office the overall unemployment rate was 7.4 percent; today it is 9.4 percent and climbing. There were then 7.8 million Americans unable to find work; today there are 10.3 million desperate Americans. Mr. Reagan, quite frankly ought to have the political guts to admit that his misguided economic programs are responsible for this disaster,” McEntee declared.

“Black unemployment is now at 16.9 percent and virtually one out of every two blacks between 16-19 (48.1%) can’t find work. Make no mistake about it, this is a depression for black Americans,” McEntee charged.

McEntee noted that major industrial states are already in a state of economic depression, citing the unemployment rates of Illinois 10.4 percent, Ohio 12.4 percent, and Pennsylvania 10.7 percent.

“You just can’t have it both ways,” he continued. “Reagan wants to claim credit for lowered inflation, but not accept the blame for outrageous unemployment figures.”

The overall rate of unemployment is up 21 percent since Reagan took office 16 months ago, and up .4 percent since March’s figures were released last month.

McEntee noted that inflation is low because demand is low. “People without jobs can’t buy goods no matter what inflation does.”

McEntee scored the president for his attempts to shift responsibility for the high rate of unemployment on past Democratic Administrations. “His latest excuse is that his 5 percent tax cut in October was offset by the Social Security tax hike. That’s ridiculous — he gave away the store to the corporations, and there is no surge of investment as he predicted. This recession/depression is his responsibility.”

By Tina Liner First
Associate Editor

ALBANY — “Sure, I’m scared to death of not succeeding,” says Scotty, a stationary engineer trainee with the state Office of General Services. “All I can say is, I’m gonna give it my best shot.”

Not that manual labor is anything new to Scotty. The CSEA member has farmed, fixed cars and cleaned buses.

But as a participant in the joint labor-management Apprenticeship Training Program, Jeanette “Scotty” Scott is one of the first three women in the Capital Region to be hired for the state’s stationary engineer job series.

“I feel all three of us should feel honored that we’ve had the stamina to make it this far,” said Scotty. “There’s pressure on all of us, but we’re just three determined females.”

Scotty and her two female colleagues, Kristen Stutz and Barbara Owsten, are among the 25 Capital Region residents signed for the three-year program, which combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction.

Launched last November as a pilot program funded through the CSEA-state Committee on the Work Environment and Productivity (CWEP), it is designed to provide a pool of trained workers to run and maintain the state’s stationary machinery.

The pioneer program is being greatly expanded, and will receive $900,000 in funding under provisions of the new state contract for employees in the Operational Services Unit. A labor-management committee will monitor the program and determine areas of expansion.

Apprentices start at a grade 6 and advance two salary grades each year. Upon finishing the program, they move to a grade 12 and are assigned to state facilities managed by OGS.

Scotty is learning the trade at downtown Albany’s Sheridan Avenue Steam Generating Plant, in the plant’s Refuse Derived Fuel section. It is there that refuse generated by area residents is burned and converted to steam energy, which in turn is used to operate the heat, ventilation and air conditioning systems in the Empire State Plaza, the Capitol, the Smith Building and the Education Building.

For Scotty, the work is “intriguing . . . a real opportunity. And the people I work with are right there — what knowledge they have, they’re willing to share with you.”

“Everybody wants to be somebody, but you gotta learn specifics, you know?” said the earnest, forthright woman, dressed in blue maintenance uniform and blue hat, in a recent interview at her job site. “You can’t just jump on the machinery.

“If you boil it down, I like being able to learn something new,” she said. “When you learn something new, you’re broadening yourself, and when you broaden yourself, you make yourself a better person.

“Of course, growing up on a farm, it was nothing new to me to get my hands dirty.”

A native of Nassau in rural Rensselaer County, Scotty, 32, was a mechanic’s assistant for the state Garage Building before joining the Apprenticeship Project.

She is included in the representative group of 28 CSEA members who appear in the current CSEA/AFSCME television ads campaign promoting public employees. In the commercials, she is shown in safety goggles, maintenance garb and hat, threading a pipe.

“She’s something else — an exceptional worker,” said Plant Maintenance Supervisor E. Peter Brown. Added he: “All of the women have responded very well to this program, and it’s a totally new ballgame for them. This is a man’s trade."

Man’s trade? According to Scotty, she and the other women are there to stay. “I think when the three years are up, you’ll find we’ll still be here,” she said.
Security guards get special training, recognition thanks to union efforts

At Suffolk County Department of Social Services:

Security guards get special training, recognition thanks to union efforts

By Hugh O'Haire

The Suffolk County Department of Social Services has brought its security guards in for special training as part of a new department's security program. The guards will receive new uniforms and will be trained in defense tactics, how to handle threats and the proper use of restraining devices.

Social Services (DSS) officials looking into CSEA Shop measure of checking and offer protection from injury. car carrying out their duties professionally special police training as part of a new department's security guards completed and camera flashes was that the What was not apparent amid the Suffolk Social Services Menesses listens.

GUARDED TALK - Security guard George Larig speaks to Guard Rose Herrhy, right, as Suffolk Social Services Unit President Betty Mennes listens.

Security guards get special training, recognition thanks to union efforts

Lorig speaks to Guard

In the past, guards were trained by county, CSEA arranged for instruction. As the full contingent for the first time ever the county has brought staffing levels up to as peace officers, which will enable guards to receive additional training for the first time. In addition, several senior guards will receive additional training as police officers, which will enable them to make arrests.

Most important, CSEA says, the county has brought staffing levels up to the full contingent for the first time ever and will hire an additional four guards to staff the health clinic. In the past, guards were trained by DSS and placed in one of the nine social services centers or in one of the four county health clinics. They were stationed in waiting rooms without authority to make arrests and were, thus, without any clear authority to break up fights or other outbreaks. Moreover, their legal rights were as poorly defined by the county that many feared they could be sued by the very people they tried to prevent from being injured in fights.

The guards' cause was taken up by CSEA Social Services Unit President Betty Mennes, who was also a member of the countywide Health and Welfare Committee. Members contacted County Executive Novo, president of parent Local 852, assigned Mennes, First Vice President Kevin Mastronardi and Third Vice President Peter Calliano to a county that focused on improving the conditions and upgrading the guards. The committee took the guards to the Suffolk County Legislature and worked closely with Legislator Foley. After months of negotiations, the county, CSEA arranged for five-week training for all guards conducted by the Suffolk County police department.

"What delayed the long-overdue recognition of the problem, Lorig said, is that few county officials ever saw the guards waiting waiting in the reception areas of the health clinic. The guards' conditions were more serious, Lorig said.CSEA brought them to the attention of the Legislature and the county."

Lorig. "In the past we were worried guards Bob Kelly can testify. Kelly's training didn't finish trying to break up a scuffle in the reception area of the health clinic."

In the past, guards could only talk to people, try to reason with them if they were being a menace, as guard Bob Kelly can testify. Kelly's training didn't finish trying to break up a scuffle in the reception area of the health clinic."

Another guard, Tom Koehler, was struck over the head while trying to stop an attack with a heavy flashlight by an enraged client on a welfare examiner in the Bayshore office. As Koehler struggled in the floor with the assailant, other clients in the office laughed and applauded. Koehler suffered a severe assault, however, the welfare examiner had to help Koehler to his feet in a loud commotion.

A new guard, Robert Ruvio, security supervisor. "We don't have to worry about our legal rights," said Lorig. "In the past we were worried we had to restrain people and call the police."

"The training gave us more ways of handling disturbed people," said Herrhy. "It can make your ears ring," added Herrhy. "In the past we were only trained to be a diplomat. That's the most important part of the job," said Koehler, a five-year veteran of the department. "If a diplomat didn't work your hands were tied because you didn't have the authority to do anything."

"I've run into quite a few cases where we had to fight," said guard Doris B. Biddle, another guard, who has been in law enforcement for 15 years. "I've had to fight many clients who have been violent," she said. "I've had to use restraint and make arrests."

"I've been told by the department that the county attorney would defend guards in court," said Koehler. "We have to wait up to an hour to see a person. People get angry and frustrated. People get angry and frustrated."

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ALBANY — If you are one of the thousands of CSEA members who work in health-related jobs, Ronald Reagan's proposed budget for the 1983 federal fiscal year should be of interest to you. Healthy care services, according to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Last year Congress, stampeded by the Reagan bandwagon, enacted unprecedented federal cuts that are still taking place. For example, if Congress does nothing, Medicare funding for fiscal 1983 will be cut $817 million and Medicaid funding will be cut by $656 million.

And more than two dozen formerly categorical programs like health planning, emergency services and mental health will have to compete against each other for less than 75 percent of the money they had individually before they were placed in seven block grant programs.

But the cuts already scheduled haven't satisfied the administration and additional cuts of $5 billion are now being proposed for Medicaid and Medicare. AFSCME says that if these cuts are made, an additional 1.1 million Americans would lose Medicaid cards, among them 661,000 children and 181,000 adults now on welfare.

Making matters still worse is Reagan's proposed "New Federalism" that would dump federal programs like Aid For Dependent Children, Food Stamps, and some 43 other programs on the states in exchange for the federal government assuming complete responsibility for Medicaid programs.

AFSCME estimates New Federalism would put a $17 billion drain on the states next year and the burden would increase to $86 billion by 1991. These costs it should be remembered, will be placed at the door of states that have already seen tens of billions of dollars of federal aid evaporate. It is this problem, the reduction of federal assistance to state and local governments, that poses the real hazards for public employees directly.

As federal funding dwindles, the demand for increasingly limited state and local resources gets much worse. In this climate, public employee jobs, working conditions and contract negotiations can be affected. Contrary to common belief, while budget cutting can directly affect a minority of workers, indirectly, budget cutting affects all public employees.

For health care workers in state and local government, the effects may be particularly acute since the 1983 federal budget proposed by the Reagan Administration would back an additional $4 billion of state and local health care funding. Hospitals, mental health and mental retardation facilities could be most seriously affected, AFSCME says, and the loss of jobs could be substantial nationwide. In New York City alone, AFSCME projects, 1,000 hospital workers could lose their jobs.

But public employees certainly aren't the only people directly affected by the Reagan plan. In addition to the 661,000 children who would lose Medicaid entirely, 750,000 pregnant women would lose pre-natal nutrition support and one-third of the children in need of vaccination against polio, measles and mumps would not receive treatment.

Several thousand mentally and physically disabled people would be cut from Supplemental Security Income (SSI). AFSCME projects, with $37 million more cut from Medicaid funding for the mentally ill and an additional $93 million cut from Medicaid for the mentally retarded.

Hardest hit of all, according to the International, would be the elderly. Tighter regulations on Medicaid could have serious impact on nursing home residents, requiring them to liquidate any assets they own, and relatives could be compelled to provide financial assistance.

Senior citizens on Medicaid would also be required to pay daily fees of $1 to $2 per day on hospital rooms for the first time, and hospitals are already lobbying for authority to pass along a 2 percent cut in Medicaid reimbursement for services to the elderly directly to elderly patients.

Senior citizens on Medicaid and Medicare would also begin paying a part of charges for doctor's visits and senior citizens would also be forced to pay part of the cost of their home health visits.

Working poor people would lose Medicaid coverage if they continued to work instead of going back on welfare, and adults on AFDC and other "non-categorical" welfare programs would have to begin paying part of the cost of doctor and hospital visits.

For the rest of the nation, a 42 percent cut in enforcement staff for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will have an obvious effect on workplace hazards; community health centers and family planning centers are facing reductions; and even the Food and Drug Administration's antibiotic testing laboratory is scheduled for elimination.

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EAP committee training held in Region I

HAUPPAUGE — The importance of the CSEA Employee Assistance Program, the role of EAP committees and chairpersons and the future of EAP were among the topics covered at a recent EAP Committee Training Program held in the Region I office in the Hauppauge Atrium Building.

Some 80 people, including EAP committee members and coordinators, local presidents and facility directors attended the day-long session, designed to equip them with the skills to set up new EAP programs and improve existing ones.

EAP is a voluntary and confidential service that provides support, referral and follow-up for public employees and their families who may be experiencing personal problems, such as alcohol or drug abuse, marital stress, financial strain or legal difficulties.

ADDRESSING THE GROUP, pictured below, were Margaret Fields, above, chairwoman of the EAP Committee at Pilgrim State Psychiatric Center, and Maureen Duggan, Region I EAP coordinator, shown at right.
BUFFALO — CSEA union stewards... they’re often compared to the unsung hero who defends his allies on the firing line of battlefield. But, if he or she is to emerge victorious in behalf of the membership, the proper ammunition must be used.

CSEA Region VI Director Lee Frank provided 35 newly-appointed Region VI stewards with an arsenal of information during a recent training seminar.

The 3-hour session focused on CSEA’s statewide effort to facilitate a standardized grievance-filing procedure for Institutional, Administrative and Operational bargaining units, as well as to outline the stewards’ basic scope of responsibilities within CSEA locals.

“The steward plays an indispensable role in the overall CSEA union structure and should be knowledgeable of all aspects of the position,” Frank stated.

Assisted by CSEA Field Representatives Tom Pomidoro, Bob Massey, Thomas Mullen and Vince Sicari, members were also briefed on the proper organizational structure of CSEA locals with special emphasis placed on the interdependent functions of Institutional, Administrative and Operational representatives in the grievance procedure. “They should be consulted on specific matters which pertain to their respective contracts,” Frank noted. Additionally, the designation of a grievance chairperson, who is familiar with all three bargaining unit contracts, is a key element.

Tom Pomidoro, in a step-by-step explanation, reviewed the channels through which a grievance should follow, some ultimately reaching the fourth-step arbitration stage. Throughout the process, “the steward’s involvement is important,” he noted, “not only in initiating grievance claims but in maintaining comprehensive files on same.”

CSEA members were given “hands-on” experience during a mock arbitration session, where Field Representative Vince Sicari, acting as arbitrator, rendered a decision in a case which actually occurred with a CSEA-represented employee.

Among other topics discussed were instructions for stewards’ involvement in disciplinary proceedings, the importance of union bulletin boards and what information should be posted, a detailed history of the U.S. labor movement and principal sections of the Taylor Law. A short test was administered at the conclusion of the seminar.

Local 003 President Pat Pfleger said, “the sessions were a long time coming, but well worth the wait. Lee Frank presented it so that it was very easy to understand by the new stewards. The labor history segment was good,” continued Ms. Pfleger, “because it gave everyone a positive background on the labor movement.”
involved workers from seeking has attempted to discourage the Fulton County administration. Previously negotiated by CSEA and the situation and discussed changes in the matter.

The filing of the contract grievance and the IP charges have caused the county to table the recommendations of the Public Health Committee until the matters are settled. However, in order to educate the general public to the dangers of the situation the Local has gained CSEA Capital Region approval and Statewide Board approval and funding for a media campaign centering on the services the home health care program provides to county residents.

We are in for a long uphill campaign in this situation," CSEA Local President William Sohl said. "But when the public realizes that public sector home health care saves the county residents. The answer:

JOHNSTOWN — A three-pronged campaign against a recommendation by Fulton County’s Public Health Committee to terminate the county’s Home Health care services has been launched here by CSEA Fulton County Local 818.

During the past several weeks the county’s Public Health Committee has recommended that 32-public employees who are now involved in the delivery of home health care services be terminated and “transitioned” to a private health care corporation at the Littauer Hospital. CSEA views this action as a form of contracting out.

In order to defend the rights of the involved members, the local has filed a contract grievance directly with the employer; lodged improper practice (IP) charges with the state’s Public Employment Relations Board and gained CSEA’s support of an education advertising campaign.

CSEA Field Representative Joseph Bakerian filed the contract grievance, charging that Fulton County is ignoring the rights of its employees and the rights of CSEA in this matter.

Bakerian explained these allegations in the IP charges lodged with the state PERB. The union alleges they met with selected public employees who are now involved in the delivery of home health care services and the county to table the recommendations of the Public Health Committee until the matters are settled.

The reason we’ve seen so many federal budget cuts this year is because there wasn’t enough organized opposition to those cuts last year,” AFSCME’s Mr. Nayman says. "There weren’t enough groups and coalitions to oppose the cuts, not enough town meetings and not enough people letting their Congressmen know how they feel about the budget."

But not everyone was silent. Last year more than 200 CSEA activists at a Central region conference signed post cards blasting federal budget cuts, said Dorothy Penner, a member of the CSEA’s Statewide Political Action Committee (PAC) and vice chairman of the region’s PAC. About 75 percent of those cards went to Republican Congressman Donald Mitchell and they had an effect.

"He realized his constituency would be hurt by the cuts," Penner said, and he voted against the cuts. "These public officials have to answer to us," the political activist says, "and if they realize that so many people back home take the time to write a postcard, then they realize we’ll take the time to vote.

While nothing can be done now about the budget cuts passed last year, the present battle is to head off some $6 billion of additional cuts proposed by Reagan in the federal budget for fiscal 1983, beginning in October. If Reagan gets his way, New York State stands to lose an additional $381 million in federal aid for the mentally handicapped, the elderly and the poor on top of the several billions of dollars that Reagan has proposed for this year, the loss to the state would be nearly $391 million!"

The answer:
By Richard Chernela
CSEA Communications Associate

NEW YORK CITY — Charging the state with disregarding the needs of seriously disabled claimants and its own employees, Metropolitan Region II President George Calumeno and New York City Local 010 President Joseph Johnson, Jr. blasted a proposal to move the offices of the Workers' Compensation Board from the World Trade Center in Manhattan to Jamaica, Queens.

"Moving the Workers' Compensation Board to Jamaica is, in my eyes, tantamount to a criminal act," Calumeno charged. "The proposed location is inaccessible to the vast majority of claimants who are frequently seriously disabled."

Johnson noted that the Workers' Compensation Board serves injured workers from throughout New York City and that the employees of the board, members of Local 010, also come from all parts of the city.

"The World Trade Center is easily accessible by public transportation to anyone in the five boroughs," he said. "The Jamaica location is simply not accessible."

The World Trade Center is served by nearly every subway line in New York City. The Gertz Building, the proposed site for the Board, is served by only one subway line, making a trip from almost any part of New York City to Jamaica an adventure, requiring two or three transfers to different trains. To make matters worse, the Gertz Building is a six-and-a-half block walk to the nearest subway station. By contrast, the World Trade Center subway station is in the building.

Calumeno and Johnson agree that accessibility is the main issue. "Imagine a person on crutches having to navigate six and a half blocks in the rain," Calumeno said. "We recognize that the Workers' Compensation Board offices are going to be moved," Johnson said, "but there are far better locations than Jamaica."

Johnson cited a vacant state-owned building on Hudson Street in lower Manhattan as one alternative. Community pressure killed the state's plans to move the Parole Board offices to that building.

After a high-level meeting between CSEA representatives, headed by CSEA President William L. McGowan and Workers' Compensation Board Commissioner Thomas Gleason, President McGowan expressed his concern over the proposed move and pledged to "put the full resources of CSEA to work to stop the move to Jamaica."

"Moving the Workers' Compensation Board to Jamaica makes absolutely no sense," McGowan said. Indeed, he said, "by employees of the Workers' Compensation Board reveals that claimants come from all boroughs for hearings and that for the near 99.9 percent of the claimants who do not live in Queens, getting to Jamaica would be a problem."

The claimants apparently agree. "It took me 35 minutes to get to the World Trade Center for my hearing today," Charles Stulewski said while waiting for a hearing. "It would take me a good hour to get to Jamaica."

Ellis Alvarado said his subway trip from the Bronx to the World Trade Center took about 45 minutes. He estimated that it would take him twice as long to get to Jamaica, and it would cost him twice as much money.

Claimant Rafael Roman noted that "everyone knows how to get to the World Trade Center," but he doubts that most people know how to get to Jamaica.

"The World Trade Center is centrally located," said Carl Rennhack, who works for the Workers' Compensation Board. "Everyone is tied into long-term leases," Olin explained. "Most leases are 10 years, and many are even longer. We can't just pack up and move."

"Good medical testimony is the key to any workers' compensation case," Olin said. "It's hard enough to get good doctors to come to the World Trade Center to testify. I doubt that many good doctors will come to Jamaica."

Olin also fears that good physicians will be reluctant to treat workers injured on the job if a trip to Jamaica will be necessary for testimony, and that workers will be forced to seek medical attention at "mills."

"Every physician I've spoken with about the move to Jamaica is against it," Olin said. "And the insurance carriers are also against it. Everybody is against it."

The employees, the claimants, the attorneys, the physicians and the insurance carriers are all against the move, and the New York State AFL-CIO passed a resolution opposing the move to Jamaica.

"I can't conceive of who thought of this," Olin said. "Jamaica is absolutely the worst location."
ALBANY — At a time when the federal government is hacking away at Medicaid funds, and medical institutions are crying poverty and threatening to turn away Medicaid patients, hospitals have been using millions of dollars of Medicaid funds for union busting, a study says.

The charge of the illegal use of Medicaid money came from a year-long study by the state Assembly Labor Committee, which found that hospitals and nursing homes had not only flagrantly violated the law, but had arrogantly refused to testify at the committee's hearings.

The institutions had brought in hired guns, in the form of management consultant firms and attorneys, who specialize in fighting the formation of labor unions or breaking up already existing ones. The committee found that they had hired “security firms” that used threats or actual assaults on employees who helped in union organizing.

The monies were also used in underhanded attempts by management and private firms to intimidate employees who showed any interest in union formation. The committee found that some of these firms encouraged lying, over-manipulation, spying on union meetings and threats to employees, in addition to favored treatment for those opposed to unions.

The funds for these activities came from general revenues made up of Medicaid funds. Meanwhile, many of these same institutions have bitterly complained about deep cutbacks in Medicaid and threatened to turn away some elderly patients if cuts are enacted.

Not only have management’s anti-union actions hurt employees—they have siphoned off “millions of dollars of Medicaid funds that are supposed to be used for patient care,” to go toward these activities, according to the committee report.

The investigation focused on three hospitals and two nursing homes around the state, but “there are literally thousands in the state” who misuse the funds to hurt unions, said Assemblyman Frank J. Barbaro (D-Brooklyn), chairman of the committee.

“The substantial segment of the state’s health care industry is anti-union and will use legal and illegal means to prevent employees from forming or joining labor unions,” the report said.

The report, instigated by charges of such abuse made by members of Local 141 Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, will be turned over to a special prosecutor on Medicaid abuse.

Much of the testimony in the committee’s hearings came from employees who saw these events. It also came from supervisors, who had been trained and pressured by private consulting firms, to break up union activity and strongly discourage any organization. Most administrators and private firms refused to testify; despite subpoenas; others simply walked out on the hearings.

The report is not the end of the story. Other investigations into similar charges are being conducted by federal groups, and the committee has introduced legislation to curb such abuses.
Politicos urge membership's participation

FISIKILL — A series of workshops are being held in the Southern Region to give elected officials an opportunity to tell the rank and file the importance of political action.

Recently, for example, Dutchess County Executive Lucille Pattison and Assemblyman Steve Saland met with union activists to share their campaign experiences. Regional President Ray O'Connor set the mood by noting their presence was "part of the learning process."

Ms. Pattison, a Democrat, and Mr. Saland, a Republican, shared more in common than past CSEA endorsements. They both stressed the importance of organization and the role public employees can play as campaign volunteers. She stated, "as important, if not more important than campaign funds, is the work public employees do telephoning, mailing, staffing headquarters." He noted, "you have to have people you can rely on since the nature of volunteers is critical."

The need for sophisticated polling techniques was emphasized and unions were seen as having natural constituencies. At the same time, Mr. Saland warned, "perception is more important than substance," as he cited the example of Mayor Ed Koch.

The workshop was concluded by Ramona Gallagher of the legislative office who spoke of CSEA's various resources in the field of political action. And so, preparations have begun for Campaign '82 in the Southern Region.

DUTCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE Lucille Pattison (left photo) seated next to Local 814 President Ellis Adams.

A NUMBER OF RETIREES were present including, in above photo from left, Tris Schwartz, Madeline Mackey, Jeanette Plum and Myrtle Misner.

DUTCHESS COUNTY UNIT PRESIDENT Scott Daniels, standing, introduces Assemblyman Steve Saland who represents parts of Dutchess and Ulster counties.

Seminar for Region I union treasurers

TREASURERS SEMINARS are being conducted by CSEA staff personnel for Local and Unit treasurers in various parts of the state. At recent seminar for Region I treasurers, Region President Danny Donohue, above left, joins with CSEA Supervisor of General Accounts Cathy Brune, center, and statewide Treasurer Jack Gallagher to review financial information. In photo at left, Region I Treasurer Jean Wichmann discusses training material with Joseph Salvino, CSEA's Assistant Supervisor of General Accounts.
CSEA, NYSUT ok EAP guidelines for schools

EAP AGREEMENT — CSEA President William L. McGowan, right, joins Thomas Y. Hobart, left, president of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), in signing a joint agreement for guidelines on negotiating Employee Assistance Programs in school districts throughout the state that would serve instructional and non-instructional employees represented by the two giant labor unions. Looking on for the unprecedented cooperative effort is CSEA’s EAP Director James Murphy, standing right, and NYSUT Research Director Charles Santelli. The two union presidents will be notifying local union leaders of ways to combine their efforts to negotiate joint EAP programs in school districts throughout the state to help employees deal with personal problems and save taxpayers money.

Decertification attempt backfires

‘With CSEA there is strength, and in strength there is SOLIDARITY’

NEGOTIATOR MANNY VITALE tells Ulster County employees they must hang together to get the best contract possible while Negotiating Committee Chairman Bob Burhans, center, and Regional Director Tom Luposello, listen.

TAKING PART IN THE SOLIDARITY RALLY to oppose attempts by the county to decertify CSEA were, from left, County Unit President Sean Egan, Director of Field Services Paul Burch and Regional President Ray O’Connor.

KINGSTON — Ulster County workers are beginning to draw some parallels between the way their county government treats CSEA and the way the Polish government treats Solidarity. In a recent newspaper ad, CSEA made the statement: “In Poland they use water cannons and tear gas. In Ulster County they use blackmail.” The ad referred to a demand made April 21 by Deputy County Administrator Chuck Dodd that if CSEA did not agree to remove approximately 70 people from the bargaining unit, the county would attempt to decertify the union.

The threat has backfired. County Unit President Sean Egan explains that the prospect of losing union representation has given many of his co-workers second thoughts about the need for union representation, and they are beginning to sign up. An aggressive membership drive has begun with the theme, “With CSEA there is strength, and in strength there is SOLIDARITY.” County workers are being told frankly that benefits they take for granted, such as medical insurance, paid vacation, a salary schedule and seniority would be endangered if CSEA is decertified. Moreover, with contract talks about to begin the only way CSEA can negotiate from a position of strength is by increasing membership. Accordingly, several hundred county workers took part in a Solidarity Rally held Thursday, May 13.

Southern Region President Ray O’Connor set the mood by reminding those assembled of the words used by Benjamin Franklin at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, “We must hang together, or assuredly we shall hang separately.”

Bob Burhans, who is chairing the unit’s negotiating team, put out a call for contract talks to begin immediately. He introduced his team which includes Margo Balmer, Kathy Cavano, Gary Decker, Gloria Egan, Abe Friedlander, Ralph Hayner, Morgan Lyle, Beasie Seaman and Shirley Williams.

Finally, it was left to Collective Bargaining Specialist Manny Vitale, who will assist the team, to put the challenge directly to the rank and file. He told them: “You and I, from this day on, are going to be unified. The only way we can survive is to be together, and we’re going to shake the hell out of this county.”

Political action named as theme of Central Region Summer Conference

SYRACUSE — Taking direct aim at upcoming Fall elections, the CSEA Region 5 summer conference scheduled for June 4-6 at Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay will give top priority to all phases of legislation and political action.

According to James Moore, President of the 20-county central region, another record turnout of 300 regional and statewide officers and special guests is expected for the three-day meeting. Friday activities will officially begin with state, county and school workshops discussing current legislation.

Saturday morning will also offer a full slate of politically-related topics including a political action committee meeting, plus two educational sessions “How to organize a local Political Action Committee” and “Affects of the Reagan budget.”

The theme of the combined afternoon workshop will be “How to Get the Vote Out.” A Sunday morning regional business meeting will conclude the conference.
CSEA is seeking repeal of Tier III and placing all of its members on the Tier II schedule effective June 30, 1982. The union and the PEC are sponsoring legislation introduced in the State Assembly (A.11891) and the State Senate (S.10095), to do just that.

But business and public employer special interest groups have banded together to fight for making Tier III permanent. One business leader even wanted Tier III's reduced benefits mandated on Tier I and Tier II members, an act clearly forbidden by the New York State Constitution which prohibits any reduction in an employee's pension benefits after the employee becomes a member of a particular pension system.

The business groups and so-called, "citizen watchdog groups," have even distributed voluminous, and sometimes erroneous statistics purporting to show that New York's public employees receive higher pension benefits than state workers elsewhere in the nation, an allegation finally rejected by the PEC which has tagged Tier III, "the worst public pension system in the nation."

CSEA, meanwhile, is actively lobbying for pension improvements for Tier III members, pressing an election year legislature for equity for public employees and pointing out the unfair situation that currently exists throughout public employment in this state with three hypothetical public employees all doing the same job but receiving widely different pension benefits. It is the three percent contribution and the coordination of pension benefits with Social Security payments, however, that have evoked the anger of some 500,000 New York public employees who now are covered by the Tier III pensions.

Adopted in the mid-70s, in the midst of the financial floundering of both New York City and the state, Tier III was hailed by its proponents as an equitable reform of pension benefits which, through effective negotiations and lobbying by CSEA and other unions, had become expensive. The legislature suspended the authority of all public employers to negotiate pension benefits and then implemented Tier II and Tier III with the latter being on a trial basis and renewable every two years.

As increasing numbers of public employers were covered by the Tier III system, however, it became clear that the actuarial estimates of its cost were wrong and, in fact, it was costing far less than anticipated, primarily as the result of federally imposed cost of living escalators in Social Security benefits which cut into the pension benefits payable under Tier III. It also became clear that the complicated administrative procedures to collect the three percent "contribution" actually cost more than it collected.

Public employee unions, many legislators, and even the Republican Comptroller of the State, Edward Regan, all agree that real reform of the system is needed. A legislative commission recently proposed that the three percent contribution be ended and the benefit coordination improved somewhat.

"Tier III is unfair to public employees," says President McGowan, "and we will not rest until it is improved. The business groups are running around complaining about the cost of providing a meager pension to a dedicated public worker who has given his or her life to public service, but at the same time those same businessmen are quietly lining their pockets with big tax cuts and special loopholes provided by the Reagan Administration. It's a disgrace!"

In addition to the lobbying by the PALS, the Statewide Political Committee has been meeting with legislative leaders. Members are also encouraged to individually contact their Senators and Assemblyman and tell them that public employers have had enough of Tier III.