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Scott strike over!

JERSEY CITY, N.J.—Picket signs finally came down at the Scott Printing Company here, as Jersey City Typographical Union No. 94 reached a settlement in the nine-month-old strike against this commercial printing firm. Prior to the strike the ITU had had a collective bargaining agreement with Scott almost since the company was founded.

Vice-President Bob Wartinger, who joined No. 94 President Stan Lempicki, chapel chairman Joe Parascondola and committee member Phil DeParto in the negotiations, termed the 11-year contract "an excellent long-term settlement."

Crucial in the strike effort was the ITU Executive Council's decision to authorize the 30-day use of the services of Corporate Campaigns, Inc. of New York City, a labor consulting firm on the side of the unions. A strategy was developed with Wartinger's assistance. All participants had high praise for the effectiveness of this move, which, Lempicki said, was "of tremendous help" in winning the strike.

The conflict arose when the company decided to institute new production processes. The union had agreed to consider such changes provided normal grievance procedures were followed and all unresolved questions submitted to arbitration. The company rejected arbitration and insisted on defining the subcontracting of work as "a new production process."

In 1976 the founder's sons refused to renew the firm's contract with No. 94, claiming the composing room had been sold. Their claim was proven false when the National Labor Relations Board found the company in violation of the law, describing the sale as "a sham transaction . . . an alter ego" of Scott Printing Company.

The NLRB decision was appealed through the courts, a process which took five years, while the union continued to work without a contract. A U.S. Court of Appeals ultimately upheld the NLRB decision, reaffirming No. 94's status as the exclusive bargaining agent for Scott employees. It ordered the parties to bargain and negotiations began in January 1982.

An agreement was indeed reached in June 1982. The union ratified it as presented in rough-draft form. Upon receiving the final version of the contract, however, the union discovered that major changes, including deletion of arbitration provisions, had been made by the company. This unheard-of action was the cause of the strike.

The settlement includes a return-to-work agreement with cash payments to employees choosing not to return to their old job; language protecting future work opportunities; union security and dues checkoff.

Other important benefits include termination and severance pay in substantial amounts for some employees; a decrease in work hours from 40 to 37½ hours, and pay scales and benefits comparable to others in the local.

A unique feature of the contract is the so-called baseball arbitration which provides for interim openings during even-numbered years on some limited issues and a novel formula for the selection and function of an arbitrator. His or her award can be entered only for the period of two years, between July 1 and June 30 and he or she cannot enter an award other than the last and final package offer submitted by either the union or the employer. Proposals must be assembled in package form so as to enable the arbitrator to choose either the union's or the employer's package; nothing more or less.

The membership's willingness to "tough it out" and the early support of the pressmen's and bindery union were factors in winning the final victory, Wartinger said.

Lempicki thanked the ITU Executive Council for its consistent and active support and ITU Representatives Tom McGrath, Jerry Brasley and Jim Kelley, who were assigned to assist the local during the strike. "In the final analysis," he said, "it comes down to the fact that with patience and waiting the collective bargaining system does work."