Negotiations represent a potentially productive vehicle for improving educational planning and the profession's economic status . . .

Labor Psychology and Industrial Planning

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PRIOR to the 1961 New York teacher strike, a turning point in teacher-school board relations, it was a generally accepted article of faith that the use of collective bargaining and of the strike was "unprofessional" and that such activities tended to place educators in an infra dig position. This argument has suffered a considerable loss of credibility in light of recent developments in public sector bargaining. It seems obvious that the teaching force is embracing the bargaining or negotiations mode of action, if not enthusiastically, at least with an apparent grim determination to "do something" about conditions in the schools.

Through utilization of professional negotiations and collective bargaining, which will hereafter be referred to as collective negotiations, and through employment of strikes and "sanctions," teachers have succeeded in altering their working conditions and rates of remuneration, often to a considerable extent. While economic determinations have loomed large in the teachers' minds throughout the past six years, some feel that money is symptomatic, rather than causative. A more basic cause of the movement toward militancy is an evident desire on the part of teachers for increased power to control their conditions of employment.

Corwin defines professionalization as the drive of a group to control its conditions of work.[1] Acceptance of this definition casts a positive light upon the controversy that normally surrounds negotiatory situations in education. It further serves as a counter to the oft-voiced claim that negotiations are not in keeping with appropriate standards of professional behavior, such as those exhibited by physicians.

Ignoring the fact that doctors in Belgium struck in 1966, one should note that the medical profession has historically been able to reach its economic goals by the power to control the available supply of physicians and to set fees, and its professional goals by its control of those bodies legally responsi-

[1] Ronald G. Corwin. *A Sociology of Education*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965. p. 262.

ble for standards of training. Teachers, on the contrary, have lacked such controls over supply, fee setting, or training programs. These have been externally imposed by the states as part of their responsibility for operating the public schools.

In response to this lack of legal control over their conditions of work, teachers have increasingly adopted the tactics of organized labor. Pragmatically speaking, this is a rational approach. Substituting political muscle for legal mandate, a significant minority of teachers have made salary gains and are beginning to invade areas previously reserved for administrative fiat.

Both the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) currently insist that all topics of professional concern are proper subjects for negotiation. The argument advanced for this position is that teachers, as highly trained professionals, know better what is good for education than do lay board members, and that they are at least as well qualified to operate the schools in an educationally desirable manner as are their administrative superiors.

It is interesting to consider the plight of administrators, for many years the champions of teacher professionalization. Educational journals prior to 1960 contain numerous articles by administrative personnel replete with urgent calls for upgrading the status of teachers. There is little doubt that the efforts of superintendents and principals in this direction have borne fruit. In fact, American teachers are better trained and have higher aspiration levels than ever before. It seems inevitable, then, that they should challenge forms of administration geared to a time when teachers expected and needed considerable direct guidance in performance of their daily activities.

If one embraces Corwin's definition of professionalization as a movement toward control of working conditions, it would appear that teachers are behaving consistently. Yet some administrators have professed shock at militant developments, branding such tactics "unprofessional." By this logic, then, teachers who engage in professionalizing acts are unprofessional, and it appears that those "shocked" by such developments are "hoist with their own petard."

Scope of Negotiations

The scope of negotiations, that is, those items which are considered negotiable, has expanded rapidly since 1961-62. From almost total attention to salary and fringe benefits, the purview of formal contractual arrangements between boards of education and teachers has come to include a plethora of items, many affecting the course of the educational program itself. Length of school day, class load, duty-free lunch, class size, and the yearly school calendar are negotiated with some regularity in those states possessing a sophisticated teacher-board negotiatory mechanism. Limitations on the assignment of nonprofessional tasks; appropriate use of teacher aides; job protection for nontenure teachers; protection against possible unfair administrative evaluations; promotion procedures; and, in Brockton, Massachusetts, provision for an administrative internship program have been negotiated.

Teachers in Saginaw, Michigan, in-



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cluded contract provisions requiring that "to the extent possible without additional cost," the Board provide copies of texts in such numbers as to provide a single copy of the same text to every child in elementary school social studies and that a dictionary is to be provided for each child in elementary language arts. The board is also required to confer with the teachers prior to changing a textbook or selecting a new one. Interestingly enough, the teachers have won the right to be consulted concerning the design of new school facilities.

Springfield, Massachusetts, has a contract clause requiring that pupil workbooks be considered as supplementary teaching aids in the elementary schools.

Provisions for protection of academic freedom of teachers, optional extended contract, and even a provision freeing teachers from the obligation to report to school in case of a riot have been negotiated.

In New York City, the teachers union has conducted extensive negotiations over implementation of its "More Effective Schools" program (MES) which involves provision of small class size, extra teachers, and supplementary extra-class support such as psychological, psychiatric, and social services. MES is operating on a limited basis in several other major cities, and constitutes a major program thrust of the American Federation of Teachers.

Negotiation is under way to provide for teacher involvement in curricular decision making. Executive Secretary Sam Lambert, of the National Education Association, emphasized in a recent speech that his organization ". . . will insist that the profession at all levels

have a voice in the formulation of educational policy, in curriculum change, and in educational planning." Not to be confused with the pseudo-decisional involvement prevalent in the literature of "democratic administration," this movement is toward the delegation of substantive decision-making authority to teacher curriculum committees in some areas of the country.

Curricular Decisions

According to Allan M. West, a recent survey conducted by the National Education Association showed that 105 of 243 recently negotiated agreements in Michigan included provision for teachers to participate in procedures for curriculum study (as of April 1967).[2] Developments of this nature have also occurred in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Article 6 of the Quincy, Massachusetts agreement calls for the establishment of an "Educational Development" committee composed of an equal number of members from the association and from the school board.[3] The committee is to develop proposals relating to curriculum, teaching methodology, classroom supplies and teaching aids, facilities, and the design and equipping of new and remodeled school buildings.

Even more interesting is the fact that the agreement requires the school board to "give serious consideration" to all proposals generated by the Educational Development Committee, and prohibits the board, except in emergency, from authorizing studies or instituting changes in methods, materials, remodeling or construction prior to consideration of such change by the committee. While the school board retains the right to make a final determination, it is apparent that real control over these matters of professional concern has moved toward the teachers of Quincy.

The sometimes quiet, sometimes explosive struggle for decisional control just described is perceived differentially, as is the general rule in controversial matters. It is legitimate to state that school board members and administrators are less than enthusiastic about these developments. Teachers, on the other hand, are rapidly becoming knowledgable in the area and manifest a degree of positivism toward the procedure. This is particularly true in the 13 states having collective negotiations legislation in force.[4]

In the southern states, where relatively little negotiation has taken place and where few negotiations laws are in force, much less interest has been manifested to date. A recent study of attitudes toward the negotiations process showed teachers in North Carolina generally uncommitted in their attitudes toward teacher negotiations and "sanctions," but negatively disposed toward use of the strike.[5]

[2] Allan M. West. "Collective Agreements in Public Education: New Developments." From a speech given at Harvard Institute on Collective Negotiations, August 7, 1967.

[3] "Quincy, Massachusetts, Contract Between Quincy Teachers Association and the School Committee of the City of Quincy." Reprinted in "Educators Negotiating Service," April 15, 1967, p. 15.

[4] These are: N.Y., Mass., Conn., R.I., Minn., Wis., Mich., Wash., Calif., Ore., N.H., Fla., and Alaska. In addition, the New Jersey legislature recently passed a resolution on teacher-board negotiations, bringing the total to 14.

[5] Patrick W. Carlton. "Attitudes of Certificated Instructional Personnel in North Carolina Toward Questions Concerning Collective Negotiations and Sanctions." U.S. Office of Education Report #6-8367, 1967.

Members of the public express varying degrees of hostility or approbation toward collective negotiations. It is to be expected, of course, that taxpayers will exhibit some reservations concerning the increases in taxes needed to pay for quality education. During the difficult days prior to passage of the third school budget election in Eugene, Oregon, last Spring, taxpayers time and again voiced the sentiment that they had voted against the budget because of the intolerable property tax situation, not because of antipathy toward teachers or negotiations.

It is likely that increased respect for teachers, albeit grudgingly accorded, will develop as a result of their current militancy. Such is the case in Oregon, where a number of citizens made the statement, during the 1967 salary negotiations, that "it's about time teachers did something for themselves." Conclusions based on personal observation suggest that teachers in communities where negotiations occur have somewhat higher morale and a more pronounced sense of being "involved" in educational matters than do teachers in other communities.

Future Trends

No clairvoyant powers are claimed by the author. However, it seems reasonable to predict an intensification of the drive by teachers for more control over their working conditions. Teachers will gradually assume a predominant role in curricular decision making and will have substantial strength in the area of salary and working conditions, as a result of more general utilization of their bargaining power. Probably a peer group or "collegial" relationship will develop during the next few years, in which strictly operational matters will be the area of concern for the current administrative hierarchy, while curriculum and other professional matters will fall increasingly within the purview of the organized teaching profession.

Already, there is evidence of the rise of a new hierarchy in education parallel to the current administrative component, this one composed of administrative personnel employed by teachers to act for them in matters of concern to the staff. These "teacher administrators," personified as local and state executive secretaries of teacher organizations, will wax ubiquitous during the next decade, acting as a counterbalance to pressures from the "board administrators."

It appears to the writer that, rather than necessarily being an interjection of potential conflict into teacher-administrator-board relationships, collective negotiations involve recognition of the current reality of the situation (i.e., that conflict over certain matters of mutual concern exists) and offers a relatively rational means of coping with this reality.

Collective negotiations equalize relations between teachers, administrators, and boards, and thereby create a situation which is seen as more likely than the traditional interaction pattern to encourage constructive professional inputs by the teaching staff. So long as teachers exhibit maturity in their actions, the negotiations process represents a productive vehicle for improving educational planning and the profession's economic status.

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