

TWO STRIKES in the previous five years and three other near strikes proved that the young Local and its members were united, militant and perfectly ready to put their jobs on the line for decent contracts. But 1950 proved to be a great challenge to Local 234 for reasons within and outside the venue of collective bargaining.

In fact, in just 12 short months, the Local secured two contracts for its members, including the first ever two-year agreement under the TWU banner; won a union shop agreement requiring membership in the union as a condition of employment, and waged a successful campaign to delay the permanent institution of one-man trolley operations.

FEBRUARY CONTRACT

Wearied by the ten day strike of February 1949, PTC management proved less gutsy the following February to take on TWU and possibly another financially crippling strike.

Both sides agreed to begin contract talks early in November of 1949. But talks bogged down and eventually broke off on Jan. 12, 1950. Mayor Bernard Samuel, also wary of another politically embarrassing transit strike, stepped in to appoint a fact finding panel to recommend a settlement.

TWU agreed to participate in fact-finding, which was to begin on Jan. 16. The union sponsored an impressive mass meeting at Town Hall for Jan. 15th to explain the state of bargaining and secure a strike authorization should the union be dissatisfied with the recommendations of the fact finding committee.

A strike proved unnecessary. TWU's persuasive case presented to the fact-finding hearings by TWU's General Counsel John F. O'Donnell, resulted in solid wage gains and an equally strong package of fringe benefits.

The contract totalled \$1,500,000 in wages

1950 Union Shop Secured First 2-Year Contract



and fringes — a huge number for that time.

In addition to the wage package, the union was able to abolish the slavery of swing-time conditions of an over-all 13 1/2 hour spread. And the contract

abolished the 7-day waiting period for sick-pay. The new agreement provided sick pay for the first day sick, an important breakthrough.

UNION SHOP SECURED

The PTC had always maintained that TWU did not enjoy support of the majority of Philadelphia's transit workers. But the company's threats to challenge the union

LEFT: Local 234 members vote on new one-year contract.

ABOVE: Members give union strike authorization. A strike was not necessary.





security clause under the Taft-Hartley law proved an enormous error.

Fresh off the victory in the February contract battle, TWU petitioned the National Labor Relations Board for an election to secure the union shop. Under the law, the union had to do more than win a simple majority of the ballots cast. More than half of the 10,000 members would have to cast ballots as well.

The vote was an overwhelming endorsement of TWU as more than 85 percent of the membership cast ballots. And of that number, 7,805 voted for the

union shop while only 643 voted against it.

The vote, taken on May 5, 1950 effectively ended PTC's challenges to TWU as the sole collective bargaining agent for Philadelphia's transit workers, and it insured that the Local would not only survive, but would thrive in the years ahead.

BATTLE VS. ONE-MAN TROLLEYS

Some struggles are doomed from the outset as the introduction of new technology and modern methods of work sweep aside old ways of doing business. This proved to be the case with two-man trolleys. No sooner had TWU won the landslide union shop vote, than the union was forced to brink of a strike on July 1, 1950 over PTC's planned institution of one-man trolleys on certain routes over the summer.

The battle went down to the wire. But a strike was averted when the company pledged to restore two-man operations at the end of summer, and keep it that way through the end of the contract. The membership accepted the agreement 5,351 to 772. Nevertheless, the controversy over one-man operations in an age of modernization in transit would soon be settled on the PTC's terms as one-

ABOVE: Negotiating committee for first two-year contract included Int'l President Michael J. Quill and Local President Andrew Kaelin and Local officers Paul O'Rourke, Frank Finn, Louis Dwyer and Richard Fisher.

LOWER LEFT: Kaelin denounces one-man trolley cars at street rally in gallant battle to save two-person operations.



person trolleys became the rule on all of Philadelphia's surface rail lines.

FIRST 2-YEAR CONTRACT

In an effort to avoid the acrimony of deadline bargaining, TWU and the PTC began new contract talks two months early.

The strategy produced more outstanding improvements in wages and pension for Local 234 members. And for the first time since TWU came on the property the union agreed to a two-year agreement giving both management and employees labor peace for 24 months.

Most importantly, the contract secured for the workers a guaranteed minimum pension of \$125 per month.

It also brought the hourly rate for maintenance workers above the \$2.00 mark for the first time.

1952

UNION
SECURES
40-HOUR
WEEK
WITH

NO LOSS OF PAY TO LOCAL 234 MEMBERS



The hotly disputed 1952 contract negotiations with the PTC ended with the union securing the 40-hour work-week with no loss of take-home pay. A wildcat strike tied up the City for 4 days prior to the contract vote, which approved the

package 5, 243 to 2,255. TOP: Members take to streets. ABOVE: TWU's negotiating committee including Int'l President Michael J. Quill, Sec'y Treasurer Gustav Faber and new Local 234 President Paul O'Rourke (seated center).

'53-'60 YEARS OF THE WILDCAT, TURBULENCE FOR LOCAL 234

THE battles, strikes and showdowns with the PTC during the first ten years of Local 234 were timid compared to the years 1953 through 1960. This period, rich in activity and history, unfortunately was marked by the removal in 1957 of the Paul O'Rourke administration by the International Union due to allegations of financial wrongdoing. Also, accusations that the following administration led by Charles Robinson cut a "sweetheart" contract with the PTC management in late 1958 led to more turbulence for the Local.

While there were no system-wide strikes during this period there were many wildcats -- nine in fact from the years 1955 to 1960 for a variety of reasons.

The union also battled management constantly over layoffs and workforce reductions through attrition. The union brought the City to the brink of several strikes during these years over the layoff issue.

Despite the low points of the era, Local



234 secured many important improvements in wages and other benefits for the membership.

1955 CONTRACT BRINGS A "FIRST" IN TRANSIT LABOR

The only thing that kept Local 234 members from the picket line in the 1954-55 negotiations was direct intervention from Mayor Joseph Clarke who served well as mediator.

The company finally caved in to the union's demands just minutes before a strike deadline of midnight Jan. 15, 1955. Beyond the wage and benefit hikes of this agreement, the contract contained a "first"



ABOVE: Thousands crowd Town Hall meeting in November 1954. **LEFT:** Mayor Joseph Clarke (center) mediated dispute between the parties. He's shown here at City Hall in January 1955 with among others International President Michael Quill; Local President Paul O'Rourke and International Vice President Louis Dwyer. Both O'Rourke and Dwyer were later ousted from office in 1957 shake-up.



Wildcats Loose

ABOVE: Wildcat sitdown strike in Sept. 1955 on the tracks at the 69th St. Terminal after maintenance inspector was disciplined for refusing to OK inadequately maintained equipment. BELOW: Human chain wildcat halted service on 69th St. El after Local 234 member was terminated for being one minute late for work.





in transportation labor history. The contract provided that a worker's top rates could not be reduced despite the work assigned. This clause was particularly important to maintenance employees.

CONTRACT REOPENER

One year later however, the union demanded this contract be reopened because of the loss of jobs due to layoffs and the conversion of two-man trolleys to one-man operation. In addition, Philadelphia's transit workers had fallen to 23rd place in national wage standings for mass transportation.

With the strike threat as their weapon, the union and management came to agreement on Feb. 23, 1956.

The negotiations produced a historic

\$6,000,000 package that launched pay rates from 23rd to second in the nation.

The contract, which was ratified 5,865 to 223, also secured a 7th paid holiday (the worker's birthday); a hike in pension from \$135 to \$160; better medical coverage; a more liberal guarantee for extra men from 35 to 37 1/2 hours a week, and many other improvements in conditions.

The agreement extended the contract to Jan. 15, 1959.

TROUBLE HITS

Today, Local 234 is a model of fiscal integrity. This wasn't always the case. A period of contention and estrangement, to say the least, between Local union officers and the International union's top officers broke out in 1957.

Accusations of financial mishandling brought down the administration of Paul O'Rourke in late 1957. The International Union took control of the Local for a period of 15 months. International Vice President Frank Sheehan was assigned Administrator.

The next elected Local President Charles Robinson fared little better. Robinson, along with Secretary Treasurer Pasquale Juliano were accused of signing a "sweetheart" deal with PTC management in late 1958 that increased wages but set the workers back by concessions on overtime, pension and layoffs.

Robinson was not treated kindly. At a rowdy membership meeting after the deal was signed, Robinson was sang off the stage by a contemptuous version of "Let Me Call You Sweetheart."

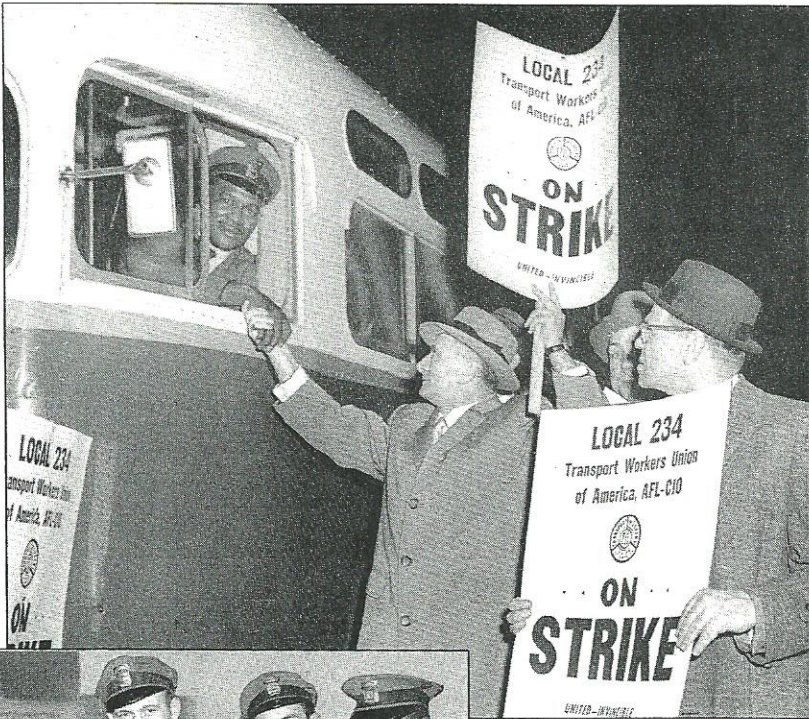
In elections held in the fall of 1960, the Robinson slate was defeated by a new slate of officers headed up by James Shannon. His election led in Jan. 1961 to what was described at the time as "the best contract ever wrested from the PTC to date."

ABOVE: Local 234 members check out their back-pay checks after 1956 contract reopener. **LEFT:** Local officers celebrate the vote count after 1956 victory.

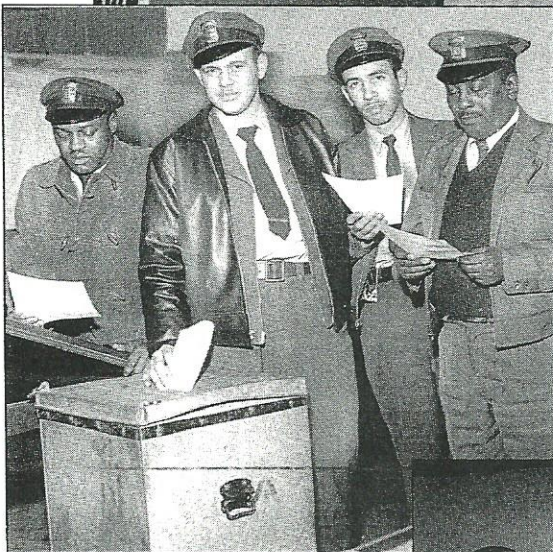


60's

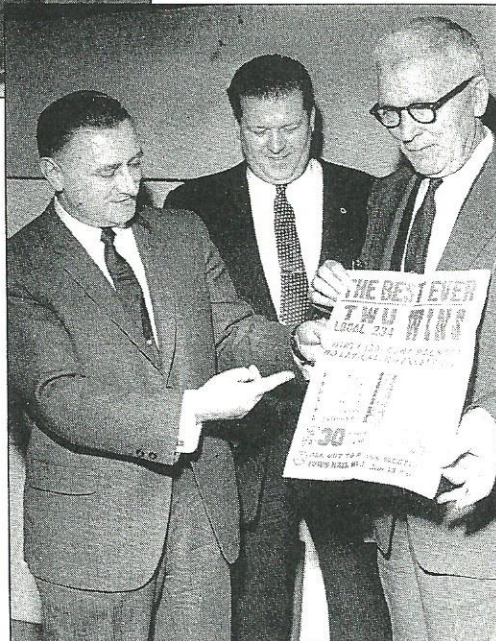
DECADE OF THE STRIKE



ABOVE: Local 234 bus operator returns his vehicle to depot at midnight Jan. 14, 1961 starting a 26-hour strike. Greeting him is International Secretary Treasurer Matthew Guinan and Vice President Andy Kaelin. **LEFT:** Members voting on the 1961 agreement.



RIGHT: Local 234 President James Shannon (right), Recording Secretary Owen Harbison (center) and International Secretary Treasurer Matthew Guinan point out gains negotiated in early 1961. The contract was achieved after a 26-hour strike.



THERE was no rest for the weary during the 1960's. TWU negotiated five collective bargaining agreements for Local 234 members during this decade, but had to shut down the system four times to nail down those contracts. And the union was only minutes away from striking the fifth time. TWU idled the sytem in 1961, 1963, 1967 and 1969. The 1963 strike was a grueling 19 days.

Negotiations were complicated throughout the decade by cutbacks in service, the changeover from the privately owned PTC to public ownership under the Souteastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, an explosion in crime against operators and a frequent turnover of leadership of the union. The Local was led by four differennt Presidents during the period; James Shannon, Dave Reick, Harold Newsome and Dom DeClerico, who was elected to three consecutive terms. DeClerico was also elected to one term in the early 80's.

But the key to success in the decade was the contract battle of January 1961. Management sought to test the Local's new leadership after the breakdown of order in the latter part of the '50s. They shouldn't have. The Union shut down the



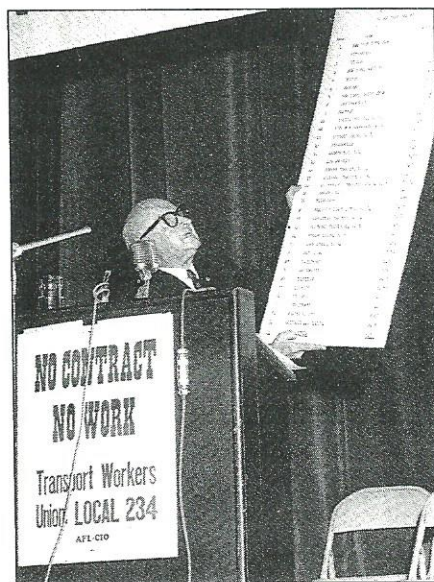
1963 NEWS CONFERENCE is conducted by Local 234 leaders in November of 1962 to describe the issues that were to lead to 19-day strike in January 1963. Explaining issues to press is Local 234 President Dave Reick, who succeeded James Shannon in office.

City at midnight on Jan. 14, 1961. Management quickly crumbled and the strike was over in 26 hours. The new agreement was worth a total of \$7.5 million, the largest settlement with the PTC to that time. But the contract was worth more than wages. The union secured, for the first time, a no-layoff clause; the establishment of severance pay with disability pension options; a hike in the pension to \$200.00 per month; a life insurance policy worth \$2,000 and improved conditions on many items that, according to accounts at the time, "had been annoying the membership for years."

19 Days on Picket Line

The strike in 1963 however, was a different story. It took 19 days on the picket lines for Local 234's membership, which by this time had shrunk to 5,600 due to years of PTC service cutbacks, layoffs and workforce reductions through attrition, to win the agreement. The contract had to be hammered out in Harrisburg with the help of Governor William Scranton. When finally secured,

the contract lifted PTC workers from 35th to 9th place among the nation's transit employees and it nailed down job security. In addition to wages the deal provided four-weeks paid vacations after 15 years service; pensions, sick leave and hospitalization coverage were improved, as well as many other working conditions. But, it was a tough battle winning the agreement. Contentious collective bargaining continued right up



to midnight, January 14th, when PTC hardballing forced a strike.

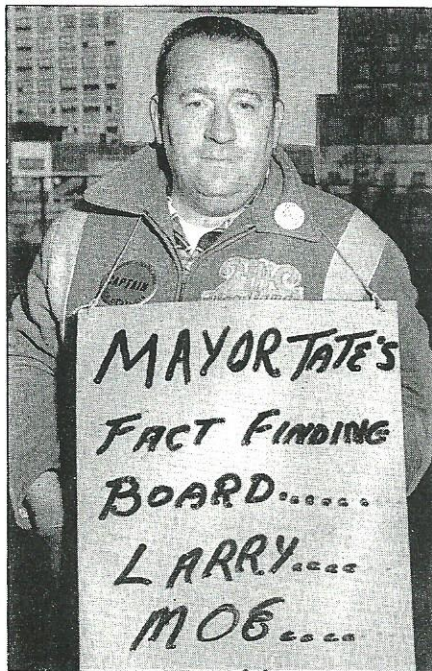
After 11 days of strike, the PTC yielded to the unity and solidarity of the workers, agreeing to a 33-cents-an-hour wage and benefit package which the membership ratified overwhelmingly in a secret ballot vote. Then came one of the more outrageous betrayals in the history of labor-management relations. While the workers prepared to resume full operations, the PTC absentee Executive Committee vetoed its own negotiators, double-crossed the workers, fired its own President and once again stripped the city of its essential transit services. In the face of all this, the membership of Local

(continued on page 20)

TWU's International President Michael J. Quill addresses rally of Local 234 members in early 1963. He's holding up chart which demonstrates that the wages of Philadelphia's transit workers had dropped to 35th place in the nation. The contract eventually brought Local 234 members back up to ninth.



LEFT: Gov. William Scranton (3rd from right) announces end of 1963 strike from Harrisburg. International President Michael J. Quill (2nd from right), Local 234 President Dave Reick and International Secretary Treasurer Matthew Guinan (directly behind Scranton) were among those present. **LOWER RIGHT:** TWU Local 100 sent truck-loads of food from New York to strikers in show of solidarity. **LOWER LEFT:** Local 234 member shows what he thinks of the fact-finding board, whose recommendations were rejected by the union. **MIDDLE:** Father and son lead strikers in night march through the streets of Philadelphia in 19-day 1963 strike.



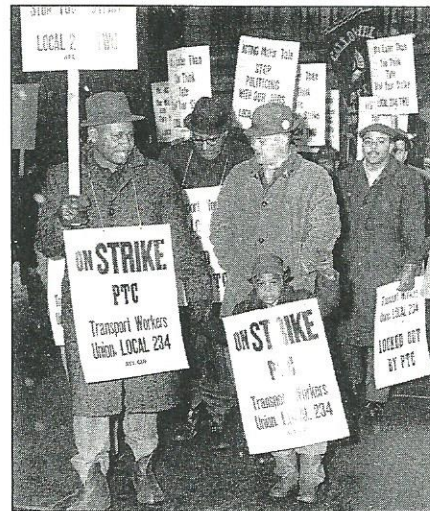
234 rose up with great spirit and courage to resume the battle it had thought already won. Picket lines were re-established in greater numbers than ever and workers dug in for the duration throughout the system. The duration proved to be 8 more long days of strike before an acceptable settlement was finally reached at the state capital in Harrisburg with the assistance of Gov. William Scranton and Mayor James Tate.

1963 Legislative Battle

On top of the exhausting 19-day strike in 1963 the union faced a serious challenge in the state legislature which was for the first time orchestrating the formation of public operating authorities to take over the state's chronically out-of-money private transportation companies, including the PTC in Philadelphia. The original bill

sought to co-opt these entities without recognition of the workers' collective bargaining needs or rights to union representation.

The union succeeded in beating back that bill, and in its place, gaining passage of the Metropolitan Transit Authority bill, which put in place the machinery that established the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) in 1965, which in turn finally





took over PTC property on Oct. 1, 1968.

1965 Contract - Victory Without Strike

Two years later, TWU members did not have to walk the picket line to win contract justice.

Management, wary of a repeat strike performance of 1963, negotiated in good faith. And although bargaining went right down to the wire at midnight on Jan. 15, 1965, a new gain-filled two-year agreement was achieved without a walkout. It featured a solid wage package, a pension increase, sick pay hikes and fully paid Blue Cross.



UPPER LEFT: Handshake secures 1965 contract. Seated from right are Int'l President Michael J. Quill, Mayor James Tate and PTC President Albert Lyons. Standing from left are: Douglas McMahon, Assistant to Quill; Local 234 Exec. Bd. Member Mildred Groody; labor advisor S. Harry Galfand; Local 234 Recording Secretary John Ropars, Sr.; State Turnpike Commissioner John Byrne; Local Staff member Joseph Donato; Int'l Vice President Eugene Attreed; Local President Harold Newsome; Int'l Vice President Frank Sheehan; Int'l Sec'y Treasurer Matthew Guinan; Local Sec'y Treasurer Dom DeClerico, and Int'l Vice Presidents James Horst and Andrew Kaelin.. **ABOVE:** Members voting for contract in '65. **MIDDLE:** Local President Harold Newsome, Exec. Bd. Member Mildred Groody and Sec'y Treasurer Dom DeClerico hold strike signs that were not needed in 1965. **LOWER LEFT:** A January 1965 mass rally.

Strikes in '67 & '69

Management apparently needed wake-up calls in both the 1967 and 1969 contract battles. Both times the union was forced to strike (27 hours in '67 and 5 1/2 hours in '69) to achieve an acceptable contract. Both agreements featured substantial wage packages and other important gains.

The 1967 package created the Federal Credit Union for Local 234 members, while the 1969 agreement increased vacation periods, improved hospitalization coverage, bettered the life insurance policy, and for the first time created a \$50,000 on-the-job death benefit.

Between contracts the union fought for and won an exact fare collection plan after a dramatic rise in robberies placed bus operators in peril. The plan took effect in September 1968.





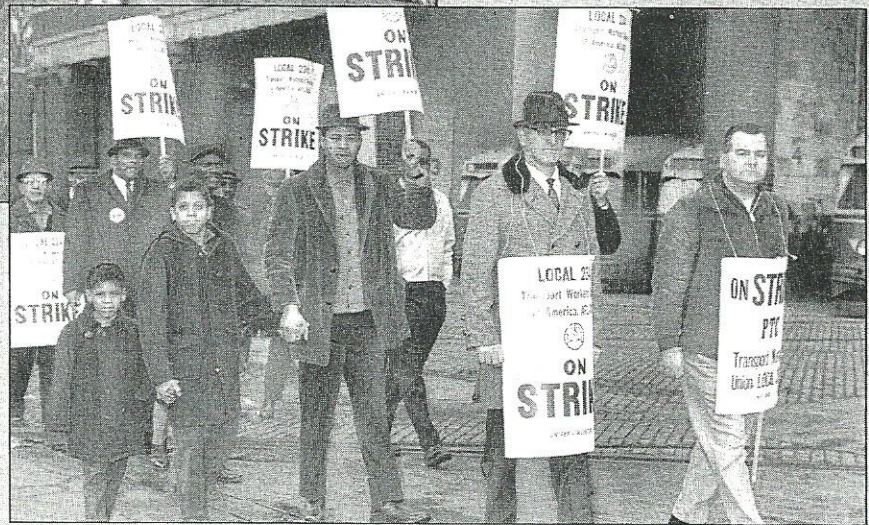
'67 First Contract Without Mike Quill

With the death of TWU's Founding President Michael J. Quill in January 1966, the '67 Local 234 contract was negotiated by a new International and Local 234 team, including (left to right) Local President Dom DeClerico, Int'l President Matthew Guinan, Sec'y Treasurer Douglas McMahon and Exec. Vice President James Horst. **BELOW: Picketing Callowhill.**

'69 First SEPTA Pact

The 1969 agreement was the first with SEPTA. **BELOW: Members at mass rally in '69.**

LOWER RIGHT: Local President Dom DeClerico (center), Int'l Pres. Matthew Guinan (right) and SEPTA boss James McConnon.



50th

ANNIVERSARY