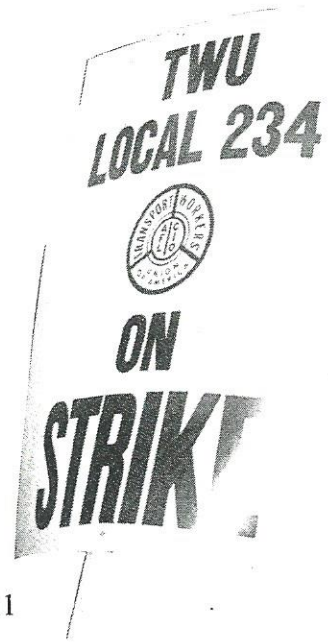


1971-1981

FOUR MORE STRIKES



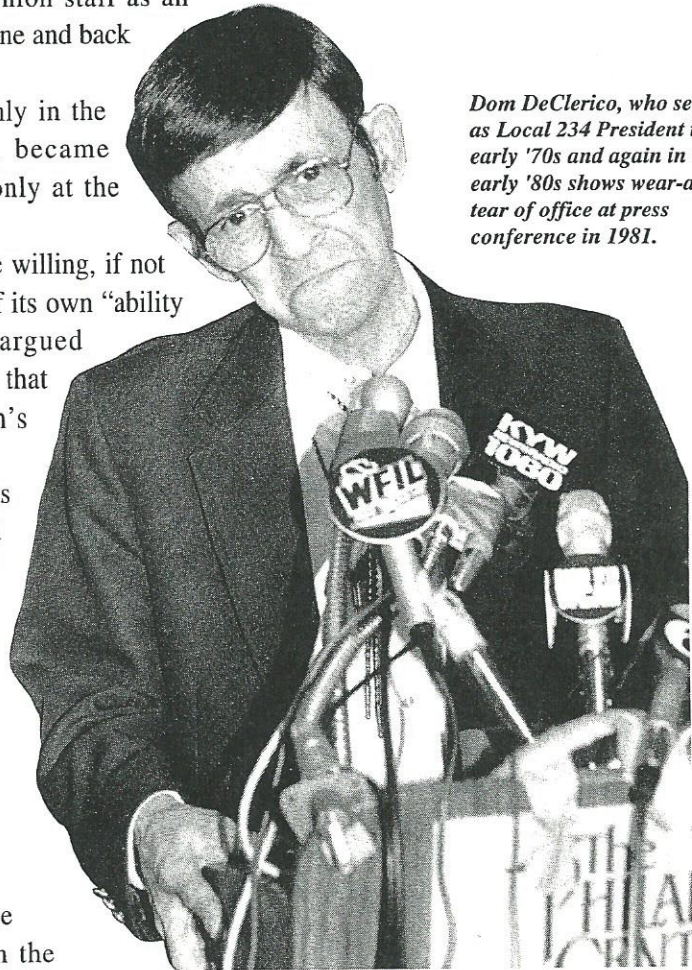
THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT contention of the '60s continued unabated throughout the next six contract years from 1971 through 1981 as the union was forced onto the picket lines four more times. All of the strikes were difficult lengthy affairs: nine days in 1971; 11 days in 1975; 44 days in 1977 and 19 days in 1981.

Leadership in the Local changed hands five times; from Dom DeClerico to Ned LeDonne, to Merrill Cooper (who left office to join the International Union staff as an International Vice President) to Hank Millbourne and back again to Dom DeClerico.

During this period, management, now firmly in the hands of the public authority, SEPTA, became increasingly negative and aggressive not only at the bargaining table, but on-the-job as well.

Management during this period seemed more willing, if not eager, to "take on" the union over the issue of its own "ability to pay." SEPTA, as a matter of course, argued strenuously at fact-finding after fact-finding that they were not "able to pay" for the union's demands.

As the 1970's wore on the Local was confronted by a number of internal and external factors and trends that made it increasingly difficult to withstand the pressures exerted by a hard-nosed SEPTA management. The leadership team that successfully carried the union through the triumphs of the late 1960's began to splinter, and as the contention for leadership of the Local heightened so did its internal divisions. This gave rise to an isolationist strategy and the TWU became more and more removed from its allies in the political arena, the media and the community. These



Dom DeClerico, who served as Local 234 President in the early '70s and again in the early '80s shows wear-and-tear of office at press conference in 1981.



LEFT: Mass rally on March 7, 1971 gives its unanimous approval to strike action.

BELOW: International and Local 234 leaders announce settlement of the 1971 strike. International President Matthew Guinan and Local 234 President Dom DeClerico do the honors for TWU.

unfavorable developments were aggravated by a rising tide of anti-unionism in the country, concession bargaining, and the alienation of the public at large from the labor movement. By the end of the decade a weakened TWU would suffer two major setbacks and be faced with a struggle for survival.

NINE-DAY STRIKE IN '71

The 1971 negotiations were particularly difficult. The talks dragged on for nearly

three months. Management would not budge off its demands for concessions. The union would not budge off its demands for improvements. Head to head negotiations failed. Fact finding failed. The union's leadership believed it had an acceptable agreement on March 30, but it was rejected by a vote of the membership.

Then on April 12, 1971 the union shut down SEPTA. Two days later, management succeeded in securing a

court order enjoining the strike. But the union defied the court action and stayed out leading to fines and the brief incarceration of Local President Dom DeClerico.

The union finally called off the strike on April 21 because, as stated by the Local and International Union leadership at the time: "nothing can be gained for the workers and their families by continuing this strike in defiance of the law, the court, the Mayor, the Governor and the best interests of the union membership."

Seven days later, the union secured a contract containing a 75-cent an hour increase and an improved pension plan among other gains.

1973 - No Strike

Two years later, the union embarked on another marathon bargaining campaign for contract justice. While Local 234



members were spared a strike this contract go-round, the talks were no less difficult than the previous one.

The company once again demanded contract-smashing concessions that the union rejected out-of-hand. A fact-finder's report, as in 1971, was rejected by the union's leadership. But Mayor Frank Rizzo, unwilling to accept the political fallout of yet another crippling transit strike pressured both sides to continue bargaining past the strike deadline of midnight March 20, 1973.

At 4:14 A.M. on March 21 the two sides emerged with a deal in hand. The package brought Local 234 members a three-stage wage increase, full Blue Cross Blue Shield coverage, retirement at age 56 with 30 years service at a reduced benefit level, and improved sick benefits among other gains.

1975 BRINGS 11-DAY SHUT-DOWN

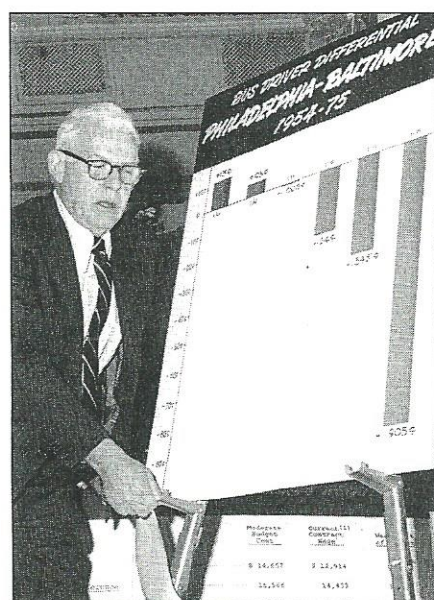
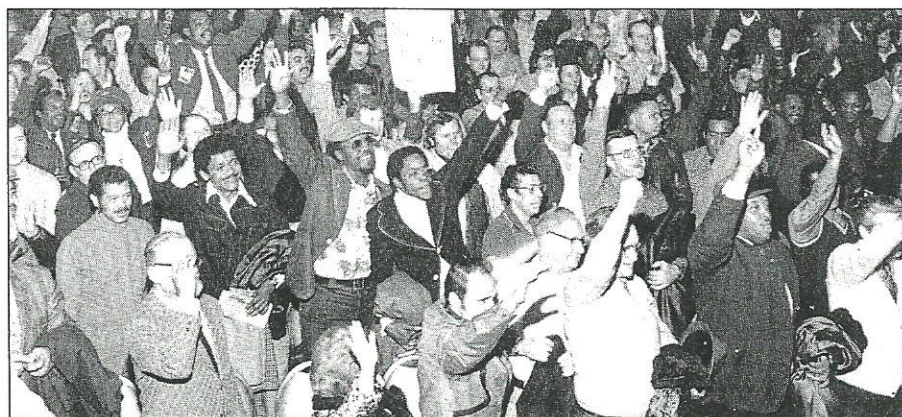
Local and International Union leaders kicked off the 1975 contract campaign on Oct. 27, 1974 at a mass membership meeting at the Bellevue Stratford Hotel. Soaring inflation had eaten away previous gains. The union's leaders and members wanted a cost-of-living clause in the 1975 agreement as protection against what appeared to be no end in sight to rising prices.

Negotiations were hamstrung by Gov. Milton Shapp's announcement at a

ABOVE RIGHT: *Announcing end to 1975 strike (seated from left) are: Local officers Sol Meyer, Merrill Cooper, Earl Kidd, SEPTA negotiator William Coleman, Local President Dom DeClerico; Int'l President Matthew Guinan and mediators Jack Soloff and Edward Feehan.*

MIDDLE: *Members show support for union position at mass rally in March 1975.*

RIGHT: *TWU General Counsel John F. O'Donnell at fact-finding in 1975.*



critical point of the talks that no new state money would be forthcoming and that the contract should be extended from March to June.

The union, with Local President Ned LeDonne leading the way, rejected this slap in the face and hit the bricks on March 15, 1975. SEPTA immediately went to court to enjoin the strike. But the union successfully filibustered against the injunction in court.

The impasse was finally broken when Mayor Frank Rizzo announced the City would kick in an additional \$7.5 million to its subsidy for SEPTA.

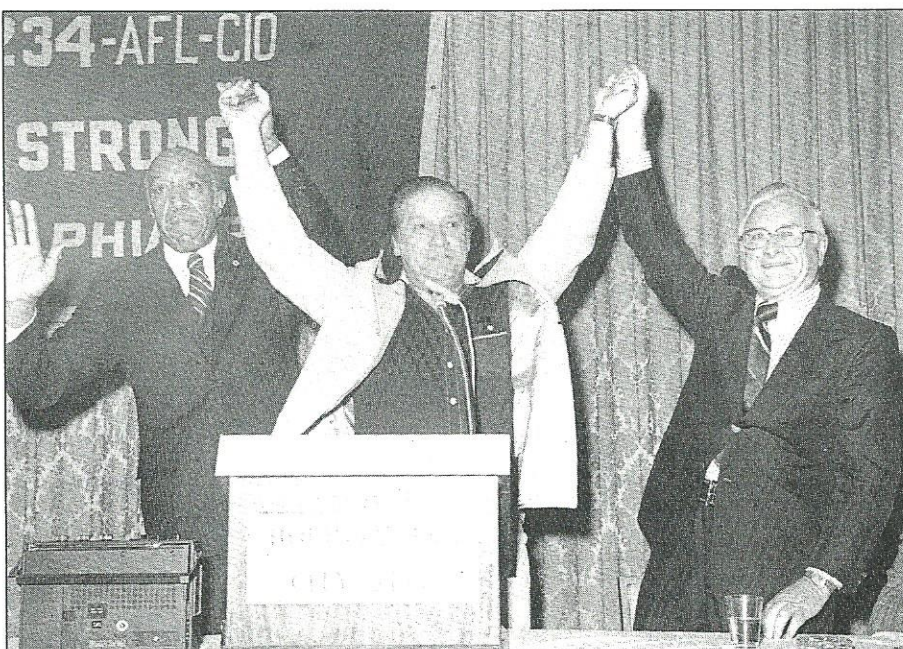
The two sides, which had actually had an agreement in principle after six days of

the strike, announced the settlement on the 11th day of the shut-down after the City's pledge of new funding. The package brought a \$1.10 an hour wage increase, pension at any age after 30 years service, a cost-of-living clause, a 10th paid holiday, a drug prescription plan and increased sick benefits.

But the end of the strike was not the end of the problems. In June of 1976, management brought the union to the brink of another strike over service cutbacks and layoffs. A July 4th, 1976 walkout was narrowly averted when management pulled back on plans for drastically reduced schedules.

LONGEST CITY WIDE TWU STRIKE

By the eve of contract negotiations in 1977, the negative trends mentioned earlier placed the Local at a grievously disadvantageous position at the bargaining table. Inflation was destroying the standard of living of the membership. Concession bargaining nationwide was becoming more and more in vogue and the media was daily conditioning public opinion against labor.



The Local was adrift in the face of these developments. Old methods of doing business were ill-suited to deal with the new realities, but it would be six more years before the Union could see its way through these difficulties and begin to turn the situation around.

1977 brought possibly the most difficult period in Local 234's stellar history of fighting for the rights of Philadelphia's transit workers.

ABOVE: Huge mass rally of March 1977 gave TWU leaders the go-ahead to strike if need be. Shown from left are: Local Vice President Merrill Cooper, President Ned LeDonne and International President Matthew Guinan giving a victory greeting to crowd.

BELOW: Local 234 members at above-mentioned mass rally.



Negotiations started out a full six months before the anniversary of the old contract. As in the past three contract periods, the union and management reached impasse and fact-finding commenced. And as in the three previous contract periods, the fact-finder's recommendations for contract settlement, which were announced on Feb. 24, 1977, were quickly rejected by the union's team headed up by Local President Ned LeDonne.

The union finally secured a negotiated settlement on the eve of the strike deadline of midnight March 14, 1977. The package, which was blasted by the Philadelphia press as "costly and generous," was however rejected by the membership in a secret ballot vote.

TWU members put up the picket lines on March 24 and settled in for the longest city-wide transit strike in Local 234 history.

Mayor Frank Rizzo exploded at news of the rejection and roared to the press that the strike "can last ten years as far as I'm concerned. It is absolutely outrageous and I hope the people (of Philadelphia) won't forget it." Rizzo vowed, "we're not going to pay one more dime."

Apparently, the trashing the union received from Rizzo and the press cost TWU any support it might have hoped for from the riding public or the community at large. Public sentiment ran heavily against the striking workers, with three out of every four citizens opposing the actions of TWU and demanding that the Mayor, SEPTA and Gov. Milton Shapp take a hard line against the union.

The strike was further undermined by two reports from the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce and the Wharton School of Business that concluded that

The strike "can last ten years as far as I'm concerned. It is absolutely outrageous and I hope the people (of Philadelphia) won't forget it. We're not going to pay one more dime."

Mayor Frank Rizzo
1977

the strike was having "little impact" on the region's economy.

The strike dragged on for more than seven weeks. Brutal negotiations and mediation proved fruitless, with Rizzo sticking to his word of "not one more dime." In fact, mediation broke off on April 28, 1977 with Mediator Edward Feehan reporting that "I have nothing more to work with."

But, mediation resumed on May 3, the same day that Gov. Shapp stated there was nothing he could contribute to ending the strike. Finally, on May 5, the warring parties reached a settlement that was

worse than the contract turned down on March 24.

The settlement, while ending the strike, did not end the bitterness. Nor was the union able to gain the support of the people of Philadelphia for nearly 10 years.

1979 — BATTLE OVER PART-TIMERS

In the fall of 1977, the membership elected Merrill Cooper President of the Local. As preparations began for negotiations of a new contract, Cooper and the Executive Board found themselves in a very difficult spot. The 44-day strike of 1977 left the membership icy cold toward the prospect of another walkout. This placed the union's bargaining team in a weakened position.

The Local was cut off from its allies and politically isolated. Without the genuine threat of a walkout hanging over their heads, SEPTA negotiators could stiffen their resistance to the union's demands and push that much harder for concessions.

At the opening of negotiations, Cooper and his team were greeted with a long list of company giveback demands, including the right to hire part time employees, an end to the union's no-layoff clause and an extension of the progression rate for new hires.

Things did not look good as the March 15 deadline rapidly approached. As in the past four contract periods, the union was forced to reject the fact-finders report which essentially gave management the green light on part-timers.

The leadership of the Local opted to protect *the active membership* from the onslaught of concession bargaining. Management was forced to retreat from its demands for part timers and the elimination of the no lay-off clause. The members received across-the-board wage hikes, two cost-of-living increases, and improved sick pay. The contract was ratified by an overwhelming margin, but



Local Vice President Merrill Cooper addresses crowd of TWU picketers during 44-day 1977 strike in a snow storm. Note at the extreme right is a young Steve Brookens, now Local Executive Vice President.

the gains achieved came at a price. The time it took a new employee to receive the top rate of pay and full benefits was extended to 30 months and the door was opened for the introduction of a new job classification system that would cause controversy in the Local for years to come.

1981 - Back on the Line

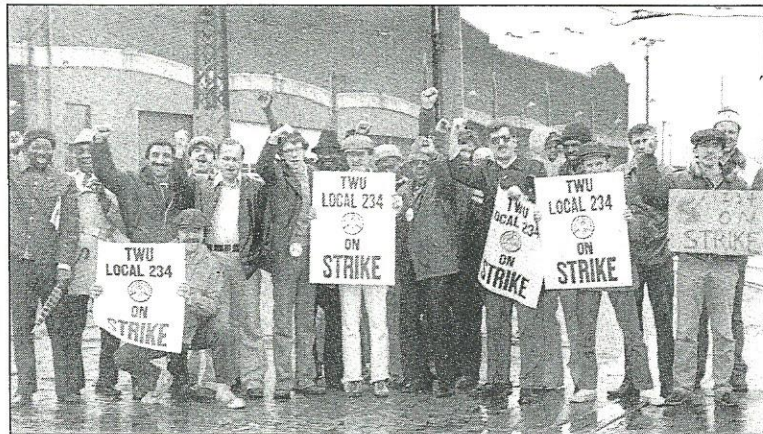
After the 1979 agreement was in place, International President Matthew Guinan elevated Local President Merrill Cooper to International Vice President. The Local's leadership was briefly handled by Hank



Reading strike signs for the strike that did not come in 1979 are from the left: a young Harry Lombardo, then a Business Agent and fellow Business Agents Ted Bradley, Saul Meyers and Charles Keller. Lombardo is now President of the Local.



ABOVE: Picketers were addressed at a snowy rally by Local 234 President Dom DeClerico and International President William G. Lindner, who had taken over the reigns at the International Union in May 1979. BELOW: Picketing at Luzerne.



Millbourne. In the next election, the membership elected former three-term President Dominic DeClerico to the top spot.

DeClerico, a veteran negotiator, was faced with a new and unforeseen challenge. Ronald Reagan had been elected President, and his pledge to drastically reduce federal subsidies to big city transit was used by management effectively in its usual pronouncements of "inability to pay."

The union for its part demanded big wage hikes, improved COLAs and elimination of the unpopular Maintenance Reorganization Plan that had been agreed to in 1979.

The two sides were simply too far apart at the March 15th strike deadline to reach accord. The resulting stoppage lasted a full 19 days.

The membership's historic militancy and solidarity carried the day for the union. Management caved in on its concession demands and agreed to a contract of wage and benefit improvements as well changes in the Maintenance Reorganization Plan. Wages were upped 12.5 percent; the waiting period for medical coverage for new employees was dropped from 30 months to 24 months; vision and life insurance were increased, and assault insurance was raised a full \$10,000.

1983-1993

A Decade of Change & Progress

THE 1983 CONTRACT WAS A GOOD ONE. The union secured a solid wage package; SEPTA's giveback demands were turned back; the cost-of-living clause was retained, and modest increases in pension, life insurance, assault insurance, and sick pay were secured.

But, things had changed radically at SEPTA in the early '80s. A new-breed management team, surrounded by lawyers and emboldened by an anti-union sentiment emanating from the Reagan Administration, had been hired by the Authority.

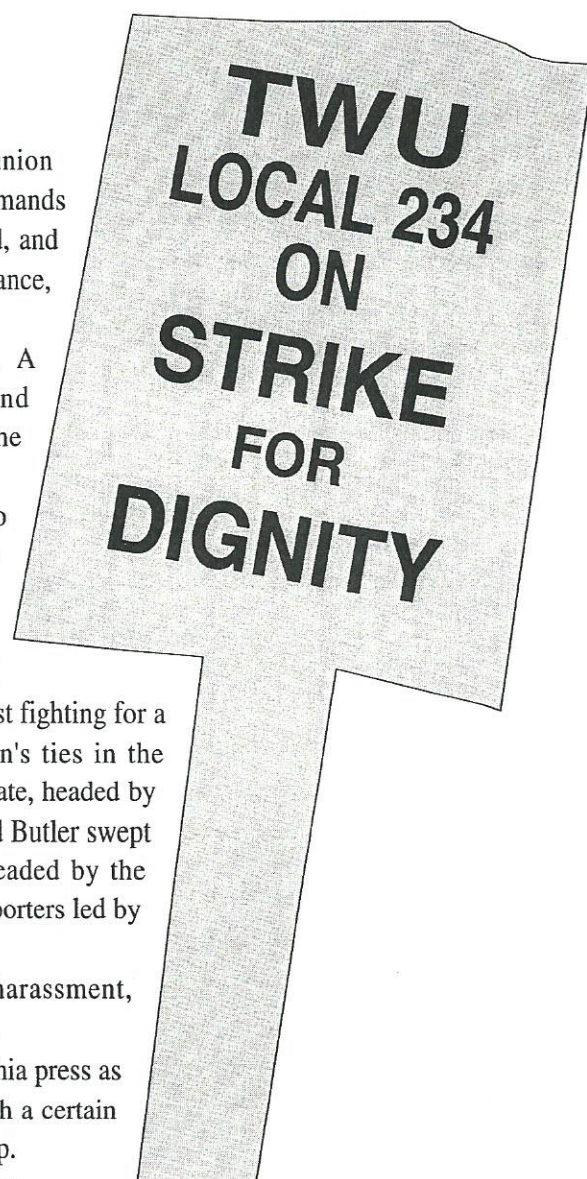
This new management believed the way to manage was to harass and intimidate the employees and keep the union off-balance by forcing any and all kinds of discipline and contractual grievances to costly arbitration.

These pressures produced a split in the Local leadership and the emergence of a challenge from a new breed of union activist fighting for a renewal of the Local and the reestablishment of the union's ties in the political arena, the community and the media. This activist slate, headed by Roger Tauss, Harry Lombardo, Steve Brookens and the late Ed Butler swept the membership elections in late 1983 toppling a ticket headed by the powerful Dom DeClerico and a slate of former DeClerico supporters led by Joe Bebco.

Tauss focussed his campaign on the issues of ending "harassment, humiliation and degradation" on SEPTA property.

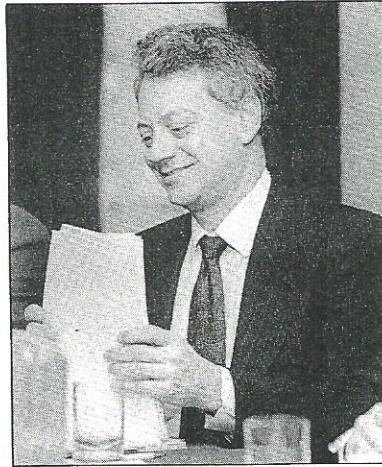
The election of Tauss, who had been labeled by the Philadelphia press as "a union dissident," and "a political activist," was viewed with a certain amount of apprehension by the International Union's leadership.

After all, Tauss, Lombardo and Brookens were for the most part

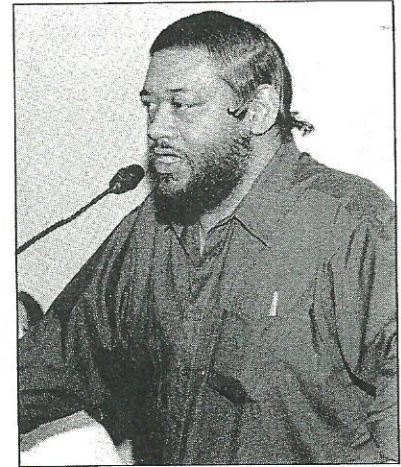




Harry Lombardo



Roger Tauss



Steve Brookens

unknown entities. And the relationship between the Local and the International Union, which over the course of time could often be described anywhere from strained to hostile, was in need of repair.

But as things turned out the Tauss leadership team proved to be a highly competent and complimentary mix of dedicated trade unionists. Tauss, from Upstate New York, was a college graduate and operator out of the Allegheny depot. He was a civil rights activist in the late '60s and a vocal opponent of Philadelphia's strong armed Mayor of the '70s Frank Rizzo. Tauss was uniquely positioned to begin the process of winning back critical political and media support for the union.

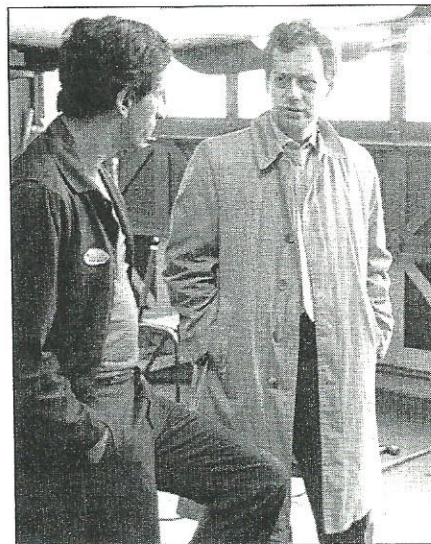
Lombardo and Brookens were life-long transit workers from Philadelphia and both graduated with honors from the "school of hard knocks." Lombardo was a leader of maintenance workers from Luzerne Depot and a former Business Agent. Brookens was a section officer at the biggest transportation depot in the system. Both were tough, intelligent dedicated, street-wise union activists determined to restore the Local to prominence in the labor movement.

MOVING AGAINST MANAGEMENT

Since a three-year contract was already in place, the new Local 234 leaders started "organizing the organized."

The union's new leadership launched an aggressive campaign to reach out to the Local 234 membership through better communications. One-on-one contact on the property by union staff was dramatically increased and a new newsletter and regular mailings were instituted.

Staff members were issued beepers for better communication between union



Local 234 President Roger Tauss talks with TWU member on the job.

headquarters and the field.

The staff was sent to the AFL-CIO's George Meany Center for Labor Studies to learn the latest methods of handling grievance and arbitration cases. This move paid off almost immediately as the union began winning nearly 90 percent of cases going to arbitration.

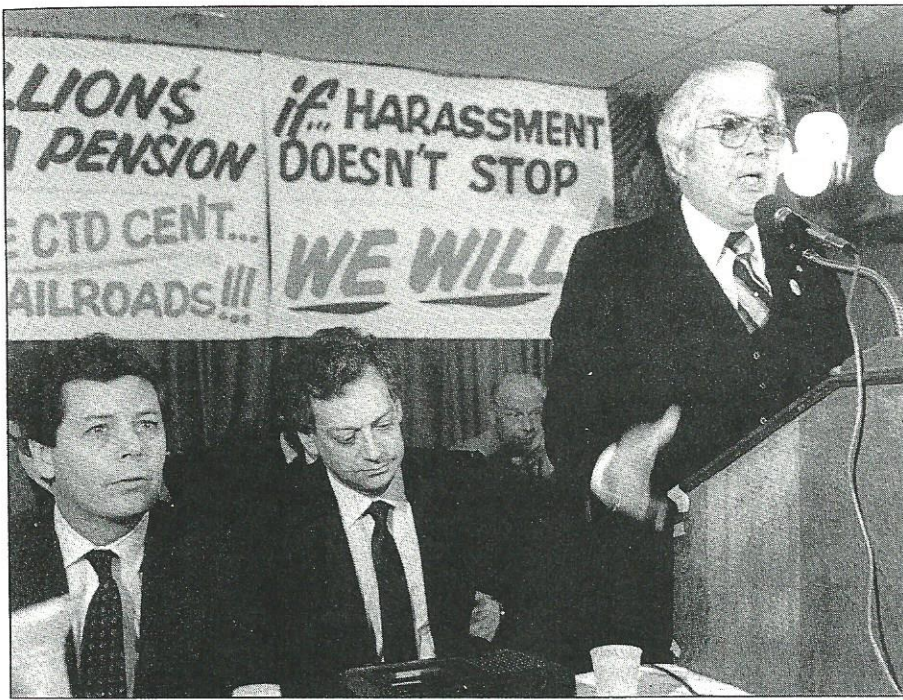
The leadership also forged a closer relationship with the International Union and began to reach out beyond the borders of Local 234. They built lasting coalitions with other city and state-wide unions, neighborhood and passenger advocate groups and religious and minority communities. The leadership impressed upon these groups that TWU was not only interested in better wages and benefits for its members, but it was genuinely concerned about adequate transit service and properly maintained rolling stock for the safety of the riding public.

Finally, the union began reaching out to the press in an effort to gain a fair hearing for its issues. Up to this time, the relationship between the press and the union was essentially an adversarial one.

HIRING EXPERTS

POLLING THE MEMBERSHIP

The new team also took preparation for negotiations to a different level. In



LEFT: International President John E. Lawe addresses mass rally in 1986 as (seated left to right) Harry Lombardo and Roger Tauss listen.

LOWER LEFT: Local 234 member puts strike sign up on telephone poll.

LOWER RIGHT: Local 234 members cheer their leaders on in the effort to secure a contract in 1986.

historically anti-TWU, did an about face. For the first time ever, the press began running editorials trashing SEPTA's management style and disciplinary practices. Public sympathies had shifted as well, and for the first time in memory Philadelphians at large sided with TWU's positions.

4-DAY STRIKE IN 1986

Despite the flood waters coming down on them, SEPTA management still resisted the union's four key demands; an end to harassment on the job; pension improvements; sick benefits and wages in that order.

TWU was forced to strike SEPTA on March 15, 1986. But unlike the four previous strikes, this one was only four days. In the end the union secured an outstanding agreement that made harassment a contract violation; secured for the first time a vested pension,

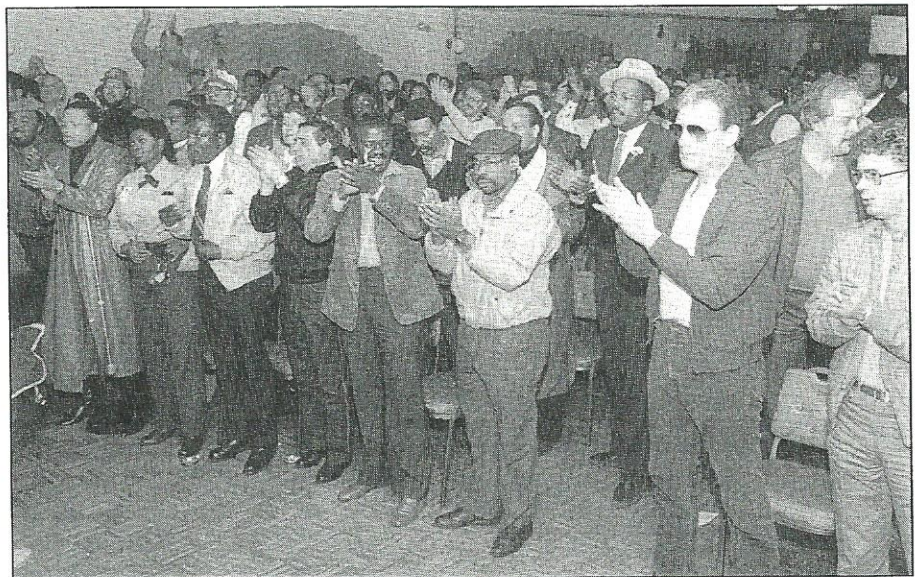
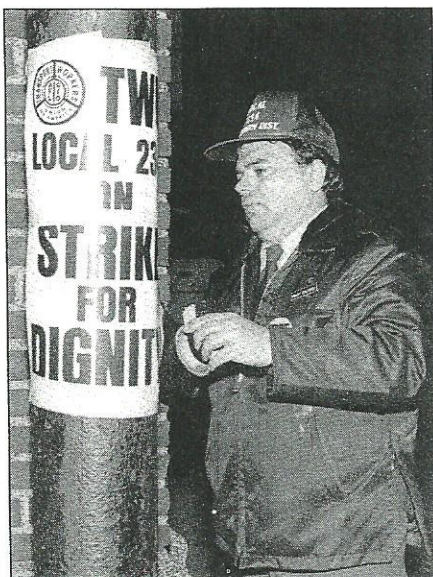
in addition to properly utilizing the services available to it through the International's Research Department, the Local hired actuaries and pension experts to thoroughly investigate the true financial status of SEPTA, its true "ability to pay," and the real long-term costs to management of pension overhaul, which at the conclusion of the 1983 contract was a paltry \$300 per month.

The union also polled the membership on its collective bargaining priorities and

then ratified the results at a mass membership meeting in late October 1985 before new contract talks with management began. The membership cited an end to harassment and unnecessary discipline as its number one priority.

PREPARATION PAYS OFF

Management did not greet the union's proposals kindly. But all the preparation had paid off for Local 234. The press,





LEFT: Local President Roger Tauss shakes on new contract in March 1986. Standing extreme right is Lombardo and Brookens, 2nd from right.

BELOW: Tauss being congratulated by Int'l President George E. Leitz (right) and Executive Vice President Sonny Hall after being named an International Representative in April 1989.

survivor benefits and a significant hike in the benefit itself from \$300 per month to \$540 per month with 30 years of service. Sick coverage was increased from 150 to 180 days a year, an important improvement for members with long-

term illnesses. And the union secured a 10 percent wage hike over the three-year contract. The package also included a host of improvements in non-economic areas.



1989 - VICTORY WITHOUT A STRIKE

The Tauss, Lombardo, Brookens team did not let up after the impressive contract victory in 1986. New challenges regarding mandatory drug testing, privatization, rising health care costs and more confronted the union.

During the three year period between contracts, the Local launched a multi-faceted "corporate campaign" to unseat the reactionary elements in management who had gained control of the company in the 1970's. The campaign paid off. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* would soon editorialize that labor relations at SEPTA were of the Neanderthal era and blamed SEPTA management for it. A public mandate was being formed to replace SEPTA's Board Chairman and General manager to end the internal wars between labor and management. The campaign paid big dividends with the appointment of Lou Gambaccini as General Manager of SEPTA on the eve of the 1989 negotiations.

With both sides approaching the 1989