



The idea of college professors joining unions was almost unheard of 10 years ago. Now they are doing it by the thousands, although some are reluctant to do something they consider unprofessional.

To many, professionalism still means concern for the advancement of a profession that is more important than personal reward, and a shared concern between employer and employee for a common goal. The characteristics of professional employment—a salary rather than an hourly wage, moderate supervision, employee participation in decision-making—suggest a gentlemanly arrangement in which neither side tries to get the better of the other.

Now that there are professors professing—sometimes in gentlemanly fashion—this model is unrealistic.

"The American university, like everything else in America, has fallen into the hands of the fixers, or administrators," writes Milton Mayer, a former newspaperman now teaching at the University of Massachusetts.

"Their low statutory function in the university is to minister to the professional needs of their profession better, but this is not what they do. In the private schools they answer only to the tradesmen who constitute the board, in the public schools to the tradesmen who constitute the legislature."

The feeling "I'm treated as a tradesman, so I might as well get what I can out of it" seems to have sparked most collective bargaining movements in schools. Elementary and secondary teachers were first and now more than half the teachers throughout the country belong to unions. Next were community and state teachers' colleges, whose faculty members are hired to perform specific tasks.

In line with the national model, the Commonwealth campuses saw the first attempts to organize faculty at Penn State. PSUBranch was formed as a response to what some faculty members saw as a distant and unresponsive University bureaucracy. When the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board ruled this summer that branch faculty could not unionize by themselves, PSUBranch brought a National

Education Association representative to State College to begin organizing faculty members throughout the University.

According to PSUBranch President Jacqueline Zemel, interest in collective bargaining at University Park first was sparked by dissatisfaction not with the administration but with the state. Legislators' asking how many hours faculty spend working and state Education Secretary John C. Pittenger's planning for an open university without consulting faculty are insults to many faculty members' professionalism, she said.

Robert Scholten, president of the local chapter of American Association of University Professors, recently wrote, "Increased centralization of decision making...has tended to produce a corporate structure in which the role of the faculty is imperceptibly changing from that of a partner to that of an employee."

At about the same time as PSUBranch's decision this fall to organize faculty members on all campuses, the AAUP announced it will work toward collective bargaining and will itself seek recognition as the bargaining agent.

A poll of AAUP local membership last spring showed 71 per cent favored either preparation for electing a bargaining agent or holding the election itself. Six hundred of 800 Commonwealth Campus faculty members have indicated an interest in giving PSUBranch a hearing.

With support growing here, and with Temple University, Lincoln University and the University of Pittsburgh already electing their bargaining agents, Penn State seems likely to follow suit. And the bargaining agent probably will be either the AAUP or the NEA, with its subsidiaries, the Pennsylvania State Education Association and PSUBranch.

At the first organizational meeting in State College, the NEA offered its support for organizing efforts without any condition that the new union later affiliate. But at the meeting several faculty members opposed NEA involvement and refused to participate if NEA did.

AAUP material stresses that each chapter is

under local control and that AAUP seeks "harmony and cooperation in the academic community."

PSUBranch officers at the organizational meeting lauded NEA for its more activist policy, however, and scorned what they saw as AAUP sluggishness.

The first of many study reports from the University Faculty Senate takes no stand on collective bargaining, recommending instead that each person "face this issue in the quiet of personal reason and conscience."

The effects of collective bargaining, when it comes to Penn State, almost certainly will include more concern by faculty members for their own interests. Kenneth P. Mortimer, associate professor of higher education here, has written that faculty members under union contract enjoy higher salaries than do faculty members at comparable schools without collective bargaining. Concern with professionalism indicates faculty will demand a greater role in University decisions and a more structured redress of grievances.

The effects on students, depend almost entirely on the attitudes of those in power. Gerald P. Phillips, a professor of speech who volunteered to spark NEA's organizing effort at University Park, suggested organization would allow faculty to protect student interests. In reality it is likely to do so only when student and faculty interests coincide.

At the organizational meeting, Zemel criticized the University for squeezing faculty pay between a static state appropriation and barely increased tuition. She implied that, should the state fail to meet increased faculty salaries, the increase should come out of higher tuition.

On the other hand, collective bargaining could mean more faculty autonomy and more flexibility for a student working closely with an instructor.

But it was a breakdown in gentlemanly accommodation that resulted in the collective bargaining movement in the first place. In times of "every man for himself" one might wonder whether students will consider bargaining collectively for their own interests.

Collective bargaining:
Many faculty members are caught in the middle between opposing factions in the growing controversy over faculty unionization.

By Andy Isaacs