Organizing and Representing Clerical Workers: The Harvard Model

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Organizing and Representing Clerical Workers: The Harvard Model

Abstract

[Excerpt] The private sector clerical work force is largely nonunion, simultaneously offering the labor movement a major source of potential membership growth and an extremely difficult challenge. Based on December 1990 data, there are eighteen million workers employed in office clerical, administrative support, and related occupations. Eighty percent of these employees are women, accounting for 30 percent of all women in the labor force. Among private sector office workers, 57 percent work in the low-union-density industry groups of services (only 5.7 percent union) and finance, insurance, and real estate (only 2.5 percent union). With barely over ten million total private sector union members, the labor movement can ill afford to overlook the thirteen million nonunion women who work in private sector clerical occupations.

Concerned trade unionists are now searching for appropriate models for organizing and representing these workers. Two schools of thought have emerged. Some believe that clericals are like other workers and can be organized when job-related concerns predispose them to action. According to this view, private sector clerical organizing can proceed if and when unions devote sufficient attention and resources to the endeavor using conventional organizing techniques. Other unionists argue that clericals are different. Not only are they primarily women, but they also tend to be traditionally feminine and turned off by macho blue-collar unionism. According to this interpretation, a special approach is required regarding style, tactics, and/or issues to be addressed.

I will focus on one highly visible private sector clerical organizing victory: the 1988 union win among Harvard University clerical and technical employees. The Harvard case is, in many ways, representative of the success unions have experienced among university-based clerical workers in recent years using rank-and-file grassroots oriented campaigns. And, as a private sector campaign that confronted intense management opposition, it also offers tactical lessons that are relevant beyond the confines of academia. Perhaps most important, the Harvard case presents us with a distinct organizing and bargaining model whose relevance to other organizing efforts deserves careful evaluation: the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) not only employed a grassroots organizing approach, but also devised a unique bargaining strategy that succeeded in institutionalizing and preserving rank-and-file involvement.

Keywords

union, organizing, office workers, clerical workers, labor movement, gender

Disciplines

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Organizing and Representing Clerical Workers

The Harvard Model

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The private sector clerical work force is largely nonunion, simultaneously offering the labor movement a major source of potential membership growth and an extremely difficult challenge. Based on December 1990 data, there are eighteen million workers employed in office clerical, administrative support, and related occupations. Eighty percent of these employees are women, accounting for 30 percent of all women in the labor force. Among private sector office workers, 57 percent work in the low-union-density industry groups of services (only 5.7 percent union) and finance, insurance, and real estate (only 2.5 percent union). With barely over ten million total private sector union members, the labor movement can ill afford to overlook the thirteen million nonunion women who work in private sector clerical occupations (BLS 1991).

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force is largely nonunion, simultaneously a major source of potential union organizing difficulty. Based on million workers employed in office and clerical occupations. Eighty percent of for 30 percent of all women in the clerical force work in the low-paying occupations (only 5.7 percent union) and finance, service, and retail. With barely over ten per thousand, the labor movement can ill afford to ignore women who work in private sector clerical positions. Two schools of thought have been developed to explain why and when unions devote their organizing efforts to this sector. According to one interpretation, clerical work is traditionally feminine and traditionally women dominated. According to this interpretation, the clerical force is traditionally organized around the concerns of its traditional women workers. The Harvard case is, in many ways, representative of the type of organizing success that unions have achieved among university-based clerical workers in recent years. The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) not only employed a grassroots organizing approach, but also devised a unique bargaining strategy that succeeded in institutionalizing and preserving rank-and-file involvement.

How Organizable Are Clerical Workers?

The available evidence suggests that clericals are just as likely to be pro-union as other workers. This conclusion is based in part on recent opinion polls and union-sponsored surveys that have consistently disclosed that unrepresented women workers are more positively disposed toward unionization than are unrepresented men. Reinforcing evidence is offered by Ruth Milkman, who has uncovered a secondary phenomenon: the propensity of women to support unionization increases as the proportion of women in the work unit grows (Milkman forthcoming). In other words, women in gender homogeneous work groups offer the most congenial target for union organizers. Because clerical work is predominantly staffed by women, this information should be encouraging to unions interested in organizing clericals.

Additional support for this optimistic assessment is offered by Phil Comstock, of the Wilson Center for Public Research, and Cynthia Costello. Based on thirty-eight thousand responses from nonunion women to Wilson Center surveys between 1982 and 1989, Comstock concludes that women workers are increasingly attracted to unions because the majority now work out of economic necessity and have a long-term attachment to the labor force (BNA 1990b:C-2). Costello’s research demonstrates that women clerical workers are potentially as oppositional and militant as unionized male workers (Costello 1987).

Although there is general agreement among trade unionists on organizing potential, there is considerable disagreement about the best strategy for reaching clericals. Many concurs with Comstock that organizing women clericals is not substantially different from organizing other workers. Comstock argues that the concerns of the “new women workers” are converging with those of their male counterparts. He points specifically to low-paid office workers who...
are responsive to organizing because they “have job related complaints, [and] believe that ‘something needs to be done’ to improve their earnings, treatment and opportunities” (Comstock 1989:10). Comstock offers an optimistic assessment of the potential for traditional unions to organize clericals with standard approaches emphasizing issues of pay, benefits, and working conditions.

Others are skeptical of the ability of male-dominated unions to effectively address the concerns of women clericals. Milkman (forthcoming) and Costello (1987) see clericals organizing, in part, on the basis of gender ties. Similarly, Naomi Baden argues that unions must use approaches that are sensitive to gender differences. Female office workers are most likely to respond positively to women organizers who develop collective workplace leadership and emphasize the emotional and personal rewards of unionization (Baden 1986). Ruth Needleman adds that women expect more from unions than men, and they respond best to organizers who pay attention to the complexity of workplace relationships and who facilitate rank-and-file participation (Needleman 1988).

Even among those who agree that standard union approaches are inappropriate for women clericals, there is some disagreement over whether the work culture and values of clericals promote or hinder unionization. In a case study of a strike by clerical employees at a Wisconsin insurance company, Costello concludes that the women’s willingness to fight management’s sex discrimination practices reflects a more militant style than is usually attributed to clerical workers (Costello 1987). But Roberta Lynch of AFSCME disagrees. She views the “female” culture of clerical work as a hindrance to unionization. Clericals tend to be passive and traditionally feminine, and thus averse to strikes and other forms of direct action. Furthermore, they value their close working relationship with professionals and managers, and worry that a third-party union might create an uncomfortable adversarial environment (Lynch 1986).

Karen Nussbaum of 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women, partially reconciles these apparently contradictory views. She notes that organizers must be patient because most clericals have no experience with unions. Trust must be cultivated in order to help clericals overcome their fear: of the unknown, of being ostracized by their boss or coworkers, of being mistreated or fired, of strikes, of unions as impersonal third-party intruders, and so on. Once clericals resolve to support a union, their commitment is firm because the process has been painful and they have exercised such great care in reaching the decision. When challenged, this commitment readily transforms into militance (Nussbaum 1986).

Organizing and Representation

One of the clearest indications of the success unions have experienced amosts. Although many of the victories extension of the growth in public service are available, it is probable that unionization universities are comparable to those in the private sector. It is also clear that the college more likely to be union members if they are in a university. Roughly half of the bargaining agreements with very few university clericals remain. Clerical workers now have union representation where organizing campaigns were co (Baden 1985).

Although on a broad scale unionization among clerical workers in higher education, specific success stories are not the norm. Organizers are initially skeptical of union support in an organizing campaign. It is the grassroots approach in which the representatives internal committee; therefore, the most of the organizing is one-consuming, grassroots organizing in nature. Two successful examples of this style include the United Auto Workers District 65 Hotel Employees and Restaurant Union (Taylor 1985).

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Clerical Organizing in Higher Education

One of the clearest indications of the potential for clerical organizing is the success unions have experienced among the employees of colleges and universities. Although many of the victories in this arena have resulted from a natural extension of the growth in public sector unions in the 1970s, unionization has also spread to clericals at private institutions. While precise figures are not available, it is probable that unionization levels among clericals at public universities are comparable to those of other state and local government employees. It is also clear that the clerical employees of private universities are more likely to be union members than are other private sector white-collar workers.

Although on a broad scale unionization has spread rapidly among clerical workers in higher education, specific campaigns tend to move slowly. These workers are initially skeptical of unions and carefully evaluate the decision to support an organizing campaign. In response, most unions have adopted a grassroots approach in which the union staff member helps build a large representative internal committee; the committee then does the actual organizing. Most of the organizing is one-on-one, worker to worker. Although time-consuming, grassroots organizing builds a base of highly dedicated activists. Two successful examples of this style are the Columbia University campaign by United Auto Workers District 65 and the Yale University campaign by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (Hurd 1989a, 1986; Ladd-Taylor 1985).

If leaders of a preexisting staff association support union affiliation, a win is more likely. At Vassar College, for example, a staff association was formed in 1975 by clerical, technical, and professional employees to organize social events and, on occasion, to present concerns to the college’s administration. By 1985 the association’s leaders had become frustrated with the administration’s lack of responsiveness and invited six unions to make presentations at
open lunchtime meetings. The leaders then decided to seek collective bar­
gaining rights with the assistance of the Communications Workers of America
(CWA). In a subsequent National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election,
the membership voted 76 percent in favor of joining the CWA (Beluardo
1986).

Where a substantial portion of the work force is familiar with unions,
reticence diminishes and organizing proceeds more quickly. Cuyahoga Com­
munity College is located in heavily unionized Cleveland, Ohio. When SEIU
District 925 decided to organize the college's clerical workers in 1982, two
bargaining units, representing the blue-collar workers and the faculty, already
existed on the campus. Because of the heightened familiarity with unions there
was less fear, and District 925 distributed union authorization cards only two
months after its initial contact, quickly signing up 65 percent of the workers
(Hill 1985).

Although diverse in many ways, most successful college and university
campaigns share one important element: the clericals involved come to view
the union as their own organization. At Vassar and Cuyahoga Community
College, the organizing efforts were initiated and controlled by the clerical
workers themselves, with the parent unions providing technical and legal
support. At Yale, Columbia, and Cincinnati, the campaigns were based on
the grassroots organizing philosophy, and the workers "assumed ownership"
of their locals. College and university clericals are more likely to support
unionization if they are convinced that the bargaining agent will be controlled
by the membership. The specific parent union is largely irrelevant, with at
least sixteen national unions and many independent locals serving as bargain­
ing agents at campuses across the country. Although there are some cases
where clericals view the union as a service organization and have neither
demanded control nor asserted ownership, the typical university clerical union
is created and thrives because of rank-and-file activism.

The Early Stages of Organizing at Harvard

Harvard University's clerical campaign, the first in which a grassroots ap­
proach was fully institutionalized into the ongoing representational activities
of a union, confirms the importance of the grassroots organizing approach.

Union organizing among white-collar workers at Harvard spanned nearly
two decades. Early organizing led to elections in 1977 and again in 1981 at
Harvard Medical School, both resulting in narrow defeats for District 65.
District 65 affiliated with the United Automobile Workers (UAW) in 1981,
and the UAW then assumed responsibility for the organizing efforts at Har­

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yard. In 1984, the UAW filed for a third election at the medical school, but
the university challenged the unit definition and the NLRB agreed, expanding
the bargaining unit to include all of Harvard’s clerical and technical employees
(Golden 1988:40–41).

Kristine Rondeau went to work as a research assistant at the Harvard School
of Public Health in 1976, and was a volunteer in the 1977 District 65
campaign. During the 1981 election she worked full-time as a member of
the union’s organizing staff. After the 1981 defeat she stayed with the UAW and
became the lead organizer at Harvard. In 1985 Rondeau and six other staff
members left to form the independent Harvard Union of Clerical and Techni-
rical Workers (HUCTW) (Golden 1988:41).

For a year and a half the seven organizers (all former Harvard employees)
operated on a shoestring budget funded primarily by donations. The
HUCTW’s perseverance during this difficult period was instrumental in win-
ning respect from a broad cross-section of the clerical and technical employees
and dissolving concerns that the union was an outside force (Solomon 1990).
Although the HUCTW affiliated with the American Federation of State,
County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) in January 1987, it had estab-
lished itself as the grassroots domain of Harvard clerical workers. AFSCME
provided much-needed financial support, but the local was allowed almost
complete autonomy (Golden 1988:40–42, 45).

Rondeau and her fellow organizers developed HUCTW’s strategy, borrow-
some tactics from the successful clerical campaigns at Yale and Columbia.
Virtually all organizing was conducted one-on-one, usually over lunch. In
these discussions, HUCTW’s staff members and rank-and-file activists em-
phasized how a union could help individual workers confront their power-
lessness. As Rondeau said, “You have to strengthen people as individuals, and
you have to find a way for them to develop their own self-confidence. You
have to find a way for them to express anger at being powerless yet somehow
represent themselves in a positive way that works for them” (Green 1988:6).
Each worker was encouraged to define her own issues, while the union pro-
vided the support and sense of community necessary to overcome isolation.

The organizing task at Harvard was enormous: thirty-seven hundred em-
ployees working in two thousand isolated offices and laboratories scattered
among four hundred buildings. With AFSCME’s financial support, the local’s
organizing staff was increased in 1987 to sixteen. Eight were former Harvard
employees and the other eight continued to hold part-time jobs at the uni-
versity. The organizers divided the campus into twenty-two areas, each with
its own organizing committee. These area organizing committees met weekly
over lunch with a staff member to discuss progress and strategy and to identify
potential recruits for a campus-wide organizing committee. Eventually, the larger campus-wide organizing committee included 450 members, with at least one from each building (J. Diamond 1988).

The organizers worked with the committee members to help them develop basic interpersonal skills, concentrating on how to form a relationship and how to listen. Committee members had to overcome their own fears and approach other workers to discuss the union one-to-one. Workers were not pressured, but were encouraged to support the union and to become involved to the degree that they were comfortable (Leavitt 1990). Member Donene Williams said, "There was a strong emphasis on doing it ourselves, and doing it our way" (Williams 1990a).

The 1988 Victory

In December 1987, HUCTW staff and rank-and-file leaders decided that support was sufficiently broad and solid to initiate a card campaign. Members of the campus-wide organizing committee were given cards and went back to the workers in another series of one-on-one meetings to collect signatures. In March 1988 HUCTW filed for an election with the NLRB after signing up a majority of the unit (V. Diamond 1988).

The union’s reliance on face-to-face organizing by Harvard workers was designed to build commitment prior to filing for the election and to provide the best possible defense against management’s inevitable resistance efforts. Rondeau described the reasoning behind the philosophy: "They have to be intellectually and emotionally committed. Otherwise, when there’s an anti-union campaign, you lose them" (Golden 1988:41). The preelection organizing merely reinforced the earlier attention to individual worker concerns. Organizing committee members kept track of all union supporters. Anyone who was wavering received diligent one-on-one attention at home, at lunch, and at work in a process one organizer called "polite yet ruthless" (Golden 1988:44).

The union’s campaign encouraged workers to stand together to gain power. Its central theme was the "philosophy of voice." By emphasizing worker empowerment and involvement in determining the conditions of their employment in order to improve quality of life on the job, HUCTW was able to avoid confronting management on specifics. With democratic decision making as the key issue, stronger group identity was also facilitated (Leavitt 1990; Byrne 1990a).

This is not to say that specific issues did not arouse the ire of workers. Susan Manning identified pay as her key concern, while Bertha Ezell expressed frustration that personnel rules had her not have the correct credentials for young children, affordable day care a special effort to highlight this concern on matters important to older to health care (Feinberg 1987). The issues, however, HUCTW’s focus on potential solution to the problem. HUCTW also emphasized how individuals realize that they were not coworkers as well. Pauline Solomon (the organizers) took the approach issue then I should support their involvement was precipitated by our skills with men doing work if training, we would be making more.

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HUCTW also emphasized how needs were interrelated and helped individuals realize that they were not just unionizing for themselves but for their coworkers as well. Pauline Solomon, for instance, said "From the beginning [the organizers] took the approach that if I wanted someone to support my issue then I should support their issue" (Solomon 1990).

Group support and cooperation was facilitated, in part, by the workers' common identity as women. Women made up over 80 percent of the unit and many viewed their job-related difficulties from a feminist perspective. Barbara Horell supported HUCTW because she did not want "to be relegated to undervalued 'women's work'" (Chicago Tribune 1988). Pauline Solomon's involvement was precipitated by concern for pay equity: "If you compared our skills with men doing work that required a similar level of education and training, we would be making much more money" (Solomon 1990).

The way pro-feminist union organizers defined certain issues also fostered gender consciousness among workers. The union focused on the affordability of child care, a major burden for low-wage clericals but a minor irritation for the mostly male faculty. Similarly, pension deficiencies were discerned as particularly severe because of the blocked upward mobility and substandard pay typically associated with the clerical and technical jobs held mostly by women. At union rallies organizer Joie Gelband would hop on a piano and sing to the tune of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend": "A pat on the head can be quite condescending, but unions are a girl's best friend" (Warren 1988).

Because specific issues were secondary, it was possible to forego traditional campaign literature. Instead the organizers and committee members concentrated on building relationships among supporters to strengthen the feeling of community. Newspaper articles about the campaign were copied by the union and circulated to reinforce the notion that the HUCTW was doing something important. Newspaper articles, however, never substituted for personal contact.

Although traditional campaign literature was scarce, posters, bumper stickers, and buttons were integral to the campaign. This paraphernalia helped popularize two slogans that became central to the organizing effort: "It's not
Anti-Harvard To Be Pro-Union” and “You Can’t Eat Prestige.” The prestige associated with university employment is a barrier to organizing university clericals, and was especially noticeable at internationally renowned Harvard. The union slogans attacked this issue head-on, pointing out that on the one hand, to be rewarding a job must offer more than prestige alone, and on the other, that unionization need not undermine the institution itself. The HUCTW went to great lengths to convince workers that they could use the union to increase their influence, improve their work environment, and make Harvard a better university in the process (Golden 1988:47).

From the beginning of the organizing process, the HUCTW reached out to the broader university community and to potentially sympathetic organizations and individuals outside of Harvard, informing them of the clerical workers’ concerns and updating them on campaign developments. In 1988, when the university unleashed a sophisticated anti-union campaign in response to the union’s card-signing effort, the HUCTW was prepared and called on students, faculty, and community supporters to urge Harvard president Derek Bok to refrain from engaging in an anti-union campaign (Rondeau and Manna 1988). Bok received hundreds of letters and phone calls imploring him to permit a fair vote.

Shortly after filing, the union’s “neutrality campaign” went into high gear. Twenty-seven distinguished Harvard professors (many holding endowed chairs) issued a public statement urging “that the University management remain scrupulously neutral during the organizing drive” (Adams et al. 1988). The Boston City Council passed a resolution requesting that Harvard “refrain from anti-union campaigns and further attempts to delay a representation election” (Boston City Council 1988). Students signed petitions; church, civil rights, women’s, and labor organizations sent representatives to visit Bok; and hundreds attended a candlelight vigil outside of Bok’s home (J. Diamond 1988). Although Harvard continued to wage war on the union, the “neutrality campaign” clearly put the university on the defensive.

Harvard’s carefully crafted anti-union campaign balanced on a fine line between academic free speech and union busting, as the university attacked the union with what the Chicago Tribune called a “velvet scalpel” (Warren 1988). The university emphasized Harvard’s record as a “progressive, responsive employer,” one that paid competitive salaries with good benefits, and offered quality child care (Weinstein 1988). The administration attempted to appear objective, factual, and academic. Four booklets titled “Consider the Facts” and numerous letters stating management’s case were sent to each employee. Throughout, union representation was portrayed as inappropriate for Harvard’s white-collar workers that would result (J. Diamond 1988).

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Can't Eat Prestige." The prestige helped to organize university internationally renowned Harvard. On, pointing out that on the one more than prestige alone, and on ermine the institution itself. The workers that they could use the heir work environment, and make Golden 1988:47).

The HUCTW reached out to potentially sympathetic organizations, informing them of the clerical campaign developments. In 1988, an anti-union campaign in response to the campaign (Rondeau and Manna 1988), informing them of the clerical campaign (Rondeau and Manna 1988). In 1988, the HUCTW was prepared and called on to urge Harvard president Derek to resign: requesting that Harvard "refrain from union activities" (Adams et al. 1988). Professor (many holding endowed that the University management representing the case were sent to each employee, using somewhat tortured reasoning to explain his position:

[Unions are] a good thing for America and for working people. . . . However, I am not at all persuaded in this case that union representation has resisted efforts to allow supervisors and employees to vary the way they work in response to their special needs and capabilities (BNA 1988).

The university held 120 "captive audience" meetings on work time. Although attendance was technically voluntary, recalcitrant employees frequently received notices of meetings with an added message that their supervisors "have been made aware of the day and time of these meetings and will join [the administration] in encouraging you to attend" (Harvard Crimson 1988b). Clerical and technical employees opposed to the union joined together as the "Staff Support Action Committee" to assist management's campaign (Weinstein 1988).

The administration relied heavily on supervisors to assist their effort. A 104-page briefing book, full of such information as lists of legal anti-union statements (and their unlawful counterparts); strikes at other universities; examples of restrictive and undesirable clauses from "representative" AFSCME contracts; and the positive aspects of pay, benefits, and working conditions at Harvard, was prepared for supervisors (BNA 1988). Supervisors were informed that they had the right to fire those supervisors who were uncooperative (Harvard Crimson 1988a).

President Bok attempted to remain above the fray. He had established his own academic reputation in the field of labor-management relations, writing books and articles that in some cases were explicitly critical of management efforts to resist unions. But as an administrator facing an organizing campaign, Bok saw the situation in a different light. A few weeks before the election he sent a four-page letter to each employee, using somewhat tortured reasoning to explain his position:

[Unions are] a good thing for America and for working people. . . . However, I am not at all persuaded in this case that union representation and collective bargaining will improve the working environment at Harvard. . . . [Unions have] resisted efforts to allow supervisors and employees to vary the way they work in response to their special needs and capabilities (BNA 1988).

The administration attempted to portray the campaign balanced on a fine line using, as the university attacked called a "velvet scalpel" (Warren 1990b). The administration attempted to portray the campaign as inappropriate for Harvard's white-collar workers because of the rigidity and needless conflict that would result (J. Diamond 1988).

The university held 120 "captive audience" meetings on work time. Although attendance was technically voluntary, recalcitrant employees frequently received notices of meetings with an added message that their supervisors "have been made aware of the day and time of these meetings and will join [the administration] in encouraging you to attend" (Harvard Crimson 1988b). Clerical and technical employees opposed to the union joined together as the "Staff Support Action Committee" to assist management's campaign (Weinstein 1988).

The administration relied heavily on supervisors to assist their effort. A 104-page briefing book, full of such information as lists of legal anti-union statements (and their unlawful counterparts); strikes at other universities; examples of restrictive and undesirable clauses from "representative" AFSCME contracts; and the positive aspects of pay, benefits, and working conditions at Harvard, was prepared for supervisors (BNA 1988). Supervisors were informed that they had the right to fire those supervisors who were uncooperative (Harvard Crimson 1988a).

President Bok attempted to remain above the fray. He had established his own academic reputation in the field of labor-management relations, writing books and articles that in some cases were explicitly critical of management efforts to resist unions. But as an administrator facing an organizing campaign, Bok saw the situation in a different light. A few weeks before the election he sent a four-page letter to each employee, using somewhat tortured reasoning to explain his position:

[Unions are] a good thing for America and for working people. . . . However, I am not at all persuaded in this case that union representation and collective bargaining will improve the working environment at Harvard. . . . [Unions have] resisted efforts to allow supervisors and employees to vary the way they work in response to their special needs and capabilities (BNA 1988).

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to overturn the election. The union was ecstatic. Kristine Rondeau proclaimed, "We want to make this a model for women everywhere" (J. Diamond 1988). Ecstasy did not cloud reality, however. HUCTW representatives declared they would take one day off and then resume organizing the people who voted no (BNA 1990a).

Management interpreted the union's get-out-the-vote tactics as "harassment," "threats," and "systematic interrogation," and seven days after the election they (management) filed technical objections to the vote with the NLRB (Fatsis 1988). The union responded by staging a protest at Harvard's June 9 commencement (United Press International 1988) and by requesting that supporters call or write Derek Bok and ask him to "reconsider this intentionally divisive behavior" (HUCTW 1988).

Although the administration persisted with its appeal, NLRB Administrative Law Judge Joel Harmatz dismissed all charges against the union on October 21 (Harvard College JD (BOS)-257-88). Harvard decided to halt its legal challenge at this stage and forego appeals. On November 4 President Bok announced that the university would recognize the union. He also promised to pursue a "constructive and harmonious" relationship with the HUCTW (Butterfield 1988).

The HUCTW Contract

With the election outcome settled, the HUCTW was determined that its emphasis on grassroots participation would continue. The union's commitment to the philosophy of voice influenced its bargaining strategy, and its goal of worker empowerment eventually produced an agreement that incorporated innovative models of democratic decision making. Union certification was followed by a burst of organizing and the addition of many new members. HUCTW leaders adopted a cautiously conciliatory posture, reminding the university that they desired to work cooperatively to improve Harvard. President Bok's appointment of Harvard professor emeritus and former U.S. Secretary of Labor John Dunlop as chief negotiator signaled a softening on management's side as well. The two sides agreed to forego formal negotiations for ninety days. Instead, they established two eight-member transition teams (one for each side) that held regular meetings. This allowed the two parties to learn about each other, while simultaneously permitting the animosity created during the election and appeal process to cool (Bureau of National Affairs 1990a).

During the ninety days, the union surveyed members and prepared contract goals and objectives. In February 1989, the HUCTW distributed a list of bargaining objectives to all of the cle扫 were standard union concerns such as a benefits, fair transfer and promotion pol as well as less common objectives such pati, and mutual respect and coop union held an election to choose s (HUCTW 1989; Williams 1990a).

The first set of discussions focused on the structure for the formal bargaining. It established separate sets of sections; pensions and retirement; family practices; education and career development; health and safety; benefits; and mutual respect and cooperation (HUCTW 1989; Williams 1990a).

Negotiations were a resounding success on June 25, 1989, and the contract was ratified by voting in favor (Bureau of National Affairs 1990a). It not only offered sizeable raises but also dramatically altered workplace a voice. The HUCTW estimated that members of 32.5 percent over the life of the

2Calculated from data included in HUCTW
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The first set of discussions focused on devising a unique participatory structure for the formal bargaining. Nine separate bargaining tables were established to deal with separate sets of key issues: salaries and job classifications; pensions and retirement; family policy, child care, and elder care; affirmative action; health and safety; health and disability benefits; personnel practices; education and career development; and employee participation. The elected members of the union negotiating team each served on only one table. Each table met at least once a week, although some tables met more frequently as the two sides approached final agreement (Williams 1990a; BNA 1989a).

The bargaining format was also unusual. The typical adversarial approach of offer and counteroffer was shunned, and lawyers were excluded from the negotiations. At each table general discussion of the issues under consideration was followed by a review of various options for dealing with the concerns of both sides. Specific contract proposals were debated only after a reasonably thorough understanding of mutual interests and conflicting objectives had been achieved. This approach was possible because of the union members’ commitment to Harvard, and because John Dunlop recognized that the union was interested in constructive changes (BNA 1989a).

Although negotiations proceeded amicably, the HUCTW did not abandon its aggressive side. The union continued to organize nonmembers, and the rank and file actively participated in a contract campaign that culminated in a series of rallies workers enthusiastically supported (average attendance was nine hundred) (Williams 1990a).

Negotiations were a resounding success. The two sides reached agreement on June 25, 1989, and the contract was ratified June 29 with 94 percent voting in favor (Bureau of National Affairs 1989c). The contract itself was remarkable. It not only offered sizeable economic gains to the members, but also dramatically altered workplace relations by giving workers more of a voice.

The HUCTW estimated that members would receive average pay increases of 32.5 percent over the life of the three-year agreement. More astonishing

2Calculated from data included in HUCTW 1989; Harvard Vice-President for Finance
than the substantial wage gains were the considerable improvements in a broad range of fringe benefits, including health insurance, dental insurance, disability, and pensions. Nonmonetary protections were also achieved, including an agency shop, strong affirmative action and equal opportunity language, and health and safety protections (HUCTW 1989). As the AFL-CIO News pointed out, the contract broke "important new ground in a number of key areas" (AFL-CIO 1989). Harvard agreed to scholarships for child care, a cooperative effort to expand affordable child care options, a thirteen-week maternity leave period, an extensive family leave program, and a referral service for elder care (Harvard University and HUCTW 1989a:16–17).

But the contract's most unusual feature was its extensive reliance on joint labor-management teams. The family policy section included a union/university committee to administer the child care scholarship program. Health and safety committees were called for in each school or administrative unit. A joint committee was established to promote affirmative action and antidiscrimination programs. Three separate committees were set up to study and implement changes in the job classification system. And, the first substantive section of the contract outlined an extensive employee involvement program (HUCTW 1989).

The contract established a participatory system featuring the Joint Council (JC), "intended to be a forum for the discussion of all workplace matters which have a significant impact on staff" (Harvard University and HUCTW 1989a:4). Each school and administrative unit was required to set up at least one JC. In essence the JCs were designed to provide forums for ongoing discussion and to resolve concerns that normally would be processed through contract provisions with specific work rules. The Harvard contract was devoid of such rules.

Each JC was required to have equal representation from the bargaining unit and management and a cochair selected by each side. Either side would be allowed to raise issues for consideration and every effort would be made to reach consensus on these matters. Consensus recommendations would then be passed on to the dean of the school or a top management official of the administrative unit. If consensus could not be reached or the relevant dean or administrator failed to act, the issue would be referred to the University JC (UJC). The UJC was empowered to seek the assistance of a mediator. In no case would the individual JCs or the UJC have the authority to modify the collective bargaining agreement (5–6).

The HUCTW-Harvard agreement specific contract violations normal procedures. The agreement also defined most contracts, thus allowing for specific conflicts to be resolved under differing workplace-related difficulties. The situation informally was handled by the personnel office would assist if possible. The case would move to made up of an equal number of each school or administrative unit consensus solution. If it failed, Problem Solving Team (UPST) choose to select a mediator. The agreement, and if this were not possible, this arbitration power interpretation or application of the contract. A final remarkable aspect of the personnel manual was the lack of a rigid rule book. The agreement, and if this were not possible, this arbitration power interpretation or application of the contract. A final remarkable aspect of the personnel manual was the lack of a rigid rule book. The agreement, and if this were not possible, this arbitration power interpretation or application of the contract. A final remarkable aspect of the personnel manual was the lack of a rigid rule book. The agreement, and if this were not possible, this arbitration power interpretation or application of the contract. A final remarkable aspect of the personnel manual was the lack of a rigid rule book. The agreement, and if this were not possible, this arbitration power interpretation or application of the contract.
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collective bargaining agreement (Harvard University and HUCTW 1989a: 5-6).
The HUCTW-Harvard agreement also set up a separate system to address
pecific contract violations normally handled through standard grievance pro-
cedures. The agreement also defined a dispute much more broadly than in
ost contracts, thus allowing for subtle issues of "harassment" or "personality
blems" to be resolved under this procedure. A worker (or workers) experi-
ting workplace-related difficulties would first be required to attempt to
olve the situation informally with the supervisor. The HUCTW and the
personnel office would assist if necessary. If informal resolution proved im-
possible, the case would move to the Local Problem Solving Team (LPST),
ade up of an equal number of management and union representatives from
each school or administrative unit. The LPST would attempt to reach a
ensus solution. If it failed, it would refer the case to the University
blem Solving Team (UPST). If the UPST was also unsuccessful, it could
ose to select a mediator. The mediator would attempt to facilitate an
ement, and if this were not possible she or he could make a final decision.
ever, this arbitration power was limited to disputes that involved inter-
retation or application of the contract (Harvard University and HUCTW
989a:7-8).
A final remarkable aspect of negotiations was a cooperative effort to rewrite
the personnel manual. After deleting all sections of the old manual that would
be covered in the contract, the personnel practices negotiators discussed a
variety of preexisting rules and regulations for possible changes. Among the
topics considered were hours of work, holidays, vacation, sick pay, layoffs,
breaks, and disciplinary policy. In most cases, reaching agreement on specific
ules was reasonably easy and policy changes were undramatic. More difficult
especially important to the union was integrating flexibility throughout.
ltimately, the introduction to the negotiated manual made clear that it was
"not intended as a rigid rule book applicable to every situation and workplace
in a highly diversified University" (Harvard University and HUCTW 1989b:
2). According to Joie Gelband, who represented the HUCTW at the personnel
actices table, "The whole purpose of the manual is to promote flexibility
and the whole issue of mutuality—that it’s in the best interest of everyone for
the employee and supervision to reach agreements" (Gelband 1990).
Both sides praised the agreement. Derek Bok declared, "We look forward
with increasing confidence to a positive relationship between Harvard and the
union." Kristine Rondeau was ebullient: "It’s the prettiest contract you’ve
ever seen. It’s got great economics and cooperative labor-management rela-
tions, and it addresses the concerns of working women" (Cooperman 1988).
The tone of the language in the contract and personnel manual reflected the harmony evident in the public statements from former antagonists. The contract preamble stated:

It is our common purpose . . . to work together to advance the long-term role of Harvard University as a premier center of learning. . . . We have learned that we share a commitment to the processes of reasoned discourse in resolving problems and issues that may arise. . . . We are optimistic about [the] future (Harvard University and HUCTW 1989a:2).

Similarly, the personnel manual proclaimed: “The University and HUCTW share the view . . . that participation and creative problem-solving are basic features of the relationship” (Harvard University and HUCTW 1989b:2).

Among the union leaders and rank-and-file activists, the most important contract provisions were about employee involvement. As Kristine Rondeau said when the agreement was announced: “From our first step in organizing Harvard back in the seventies . . . our union’s goal has been to get our members on the other side of Harvard’s doors into the rooms where decisions affecting workers’ lives are made. We stand on the verge of making that goal a reality” (PR Newswire 1989). While the joint councils and other committees were viewed as pivotal by local leaders, they conceded that most rank-and-file members placed higher value on the wage and benefit improvements (Williams 1990a; Leavitt 1990; Byrne 1990a).

Both the union and Harvard’s administration praised the contract’s flexibility, which was achieved in three ways. First, the contract established a decentralized employee involvement plan allowing each school or administrative unit to retain its own autonomy and focus on its own problems. Second, many aspects of the relationship between management and workers (such as discipline) were omitted from the contract and consigned to the personnel manual, with the qualification accepted by the HUCTW that the manual offer only guidelines that might not be applicable to every situation. Third, the contract was largely devoid of work rules, a feature that was the university’s highest priority. Vice-President Scott noted:

The deans indicated that the highest priority in negotiations should be given to retaining flexibility of administration by avoiding work rules such as seniority, bumping, limitations on hiring, transfer rights, job guarantees, prohibitions of layoffs, etc. (BNA 1989b).

Another aspect of the contract that appealed to both management and labor was the absence of a standard grievance and arbitration system. As noted, individual workplace problems were to be handled by joint labor-management teams rather than by individuals; the definition of a grievance was broadened, and the procedure encouraged combination with arbitration.

In essence, the management similar to that of the union’s lead decided to pursue “a long-term v and to promote "employee parti of trust and open communicatio:

Implementing the Contract

After three years under the co the participatory system. The UJCAs have been formed by scho biweekly and, in effect, continu addition, the UPST and nineteen typically meet only when there is

The JCs have proven to be th system. The experience to great . . . , one-third making p attention” (Williams 1990b). In better prepared than managemen for discussion. How effectively a attitudes of the management rep mon characteristic: management involved are self-confident man threat (Williams 1990b). In inst should be fighting the union, th Healey, a professor of industri HUCTW contract disputes, co resistance, where administrato a way which subverts the proces Even where JCs are staffed by where communication is poor, t process. HUCTW activist Mari have accomplished is subtle, in management that we are commit and can contribute to the decis The successes offer the union c initiated by JCs are new or ref more desirable summer and hol
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In essence, the management assessment of the contract was remarkably
similar to that of the union's leadership. According to John Dunlop, Harvard
decided to pursue "a long-term vision rather than any short-term advantage"
and to promote "employee participation and individual initiative in a spirit
of trust and open communication" (Bureau of National Affairs 1989b).

Implementing the Contract

After three years under the contract, the union retains its commitment to
the participatory system. The UJC has been constructed and twenty-seven
JCs have been formed by schools and administrative units. The JCs meet
biweekly and, in effect, continually negotiate over working conditions. In
addition, the UPST and nineteen LPSTs have been set up, although they
typically meet only when there is a specific complaint requiring attention.

The JCs have proven to be the most important component of the partici-
patory system. The experience to date has been mixed, with "one-third doing
great . . . , one-third making progress . . . , and one-third requiring close
attention" (Williams 1990b). In most cases union representatives have been
better prepared than management for JC meetings and have initiated topics
for discussion. How effectively a JC functions tends to be determined by the
attitudes of the management representatives. The successful JCs share a com-
mon characteristic: management representatives and the dean or administrator
involved are self-confident managers who do not view sharing power as a
threat (Williams 1990b). In instances where management still believes that it
should be fighting the union, the JCs are making very little progress. James
Healey, a professor of industrial relations at Harvard selected to mediate
HUCTW contract disputes, concedes that "there are islands of unspoken
resistance, where administrators give lip service to the concept but then act in
a way which subverts the process" (BNA 1990c:C-5).

Even where JCs are staffed by recalcitrant management representatives or
where communication is poor, the HUCTW retains its commitment to the
process. HUCTW activist Marilyn Byrne observes, "A lot of what the JCs
have accomplished is subtle, in the realm of gaining credibility by showing
management that we are committed, are reasonably intelligent, have initiative,
and can contribute to the decision-making process" (Byrne 1990b).

The successes offer the union cause for optimism. Among the improvements
initiated by JCs are new or refurbished staff lounges in individual schools,
more desirable summer and holiday leave policies for library employees, better
Richard W. Hurd

work sharing when vacancies arise, steps to reduce workplace inconveniences during construction, and revised hiring procedures (Gelband 1990; BNA 1990c:C-3). The HUCTW views the University Health Services JC as a model; barriers have been broken down between doctors and support staff and a positive atmosphere has been created by focusing on the mutual goal of providing high-quality health care. A specific innovation developed by the Health Services JC is an orientation program for new physicians coordinated and delivered by support staff who are HUCTW members (Williams 1990b).

So far, the LPSTs have played an auxiliary role. Each LPST has been involved in only a few formal cases. The university-wide UPST has recommended solutions or assisted in about twenty-five individual cases, three of which eventually went to mediation before being resolved (BNA 1990c:C-4). The HUCTW, however, believes that the greatest measure of success in the problem-solving process is that 350 complaints have been resolved informally, either directly by the employee and supervisor or with the assistance of a union representative and personnel officer (Williams 1990b).

In sum, the participatory system is considered to be a qualified success by the union. That the problem-solving process is working is evidenced by the limited reliance on the LPSTs, resulting from the resolution of difficulties at the lowest levels. The experience with employee involvement in decision making through the JCs has been uneven due to pockets of management resistance. Nonetheless, much has been accomplished, partly because the union has taken advantage of the relatively open system and undefined nature of the process to set the agenda for many JCs. As a result, specific improvements have been achieved that would normally be possible only during contract negotiations. Given the unit-specific nature of these gains, it legitimately could be argued that many never would have occurred under a traditional bargaining relationship.

In explaining the HUCTW’s ongoing commitment to the participatory system, local president Donene Williams notes that “JC work is slow, the consensus decision making process is slow . . . [But] the flexibility to reach a consensus decision together gives our contract its strength” (Williams 1990b). Marilyn Byrne adds, “I don’t know if it’s the kind of process that can work in every environment. For union members it requires a large obligation” (Byrne 1990b). Because extensive rank-and-file involvement is required, HUCTW leaders view continued union diligence as essential. Kristine Rondeau warns that “a union that’s not well organized shouldn’t even think about doing this” (Bureau of National Affairs 1990c:C-5).

Significantly, the participatory system negotiated at Harvard actually has served to foster union involvement. Union membership has expanded and commitment has remained remarkable now belong to the local, and nearly in union affairs. Approximately one fourth on special joint labor-management As of 1992, many of the union HUCTW organizing committees, twenty to thirty members each, long-term employees who have members also serve as a communication continue to work in literature in the organizing committees, the union board members, and 108 elected representatives’ primary duties are to processes, and to meet one-to-one concerning rights under the contract. The extensive member involvement the HUCTW is prepared to meet a meaningful participation wanes to Rondeau, “If we ever really meet if they fight us, we’ll fight; if we have it as well as anyone” (BNA 1990c: not want to do it the old-fashioned way, because of its conviction that the system is the work talking, and using moral reasoning (Gelband 1990).

Learning from Harvard

The labor movement has cause but was it any more than just an it contract has some appealing features. It had the lure of a relatively young, well-educated group of progressive (Chicago Tribune 1988; Weis). The employer. Even prior to unionization it o working conditions. Harvard’s liberal tra it more susceptible to outside pressures th
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ganized shouldn't even think about 90c:C-5). negociated at Harvard actually has n membership has expanded and commitment has remained remarkably high. Seventy-three percent of the unit now belong to the local, and nearly 15 percent of members actively participate in union affairs. Approximately one hundred serve on JCs, sixty on LPSTs, and forty on special joint labor-management committees (BNA 1990c:C-5). As of 1992, many of the union representatives to the JCs also serve on HUCTW organizing committees. There are five organizing committees with twenty to thirty members each who attempt to organize new employees and long-term employees who have not yet joined. Organizing committee members also serve as a communication link to the membership as the HUCTW continues to eschew literature in favor of one-on-one contact. In addition to the organizing committees, the union structure includes 4 officers, 13 executive board members, and 108 elected union representatives. The elected re-

presentatives' primary duties are to assist informally in the problem-solving processes, and to meet one-to-one with members to answer questions concerning rights under the contract (Williams 1990a; Leavitt 1990).

The extensive member involvement explains local leaders' confidence that the HUCTW is prepared to meet all challenges. If management's commitment to meaningful participation wanes, the union is ready to respond. According to Rondeau, "If we ever really need [contract guarantees], we'll fight hard. . . . If they fight us, we'll fight; if we have to do it the old-fashioned way, we'll do it as well as anyone" (BNA 1990c:C-5). But it is clear that the HUCTW does not want to do it the old-fashioned way. The union eschewed a rule-based relationship because of its conviction that no one set of rules would apply to all of Harvard's workers and workplaces (Williams 1990b). The members are convinced that the system is working because "employees and supervisors are talking, and using moral reasoning rather than rules to solve their problems" (Gelband 1990).

Learning from Harvard Clerical Workers

The labor movement has cause to celebrate the Harvard organizing victory, but was it any more than just an isolated NLRB election win? The HUCTW contract has some appealing features, but what difference should this make to workers not employed at Harvard? Although the case is exceptional in some ways,3 and the clerical work force will not unionize en masse because of what 3The prestige of Harvard and the lure of Cambridge (a mecca for leftists) combine to attract a relatively young, well-educated group of clerical workers who are highly mobile and politically progressive (Chicago Tribune 1988; Weinstein 1988). Furthermore, Harvard is not a typical employer. Even prior to unionization it offered its employees relatively good pay, benefits, and working conditions. Harvard's liberal traditions and contacts with the labor movement made it more susceptible to outside pressures than many private sector employers.
happened in Cambridge, an evaluation of the experience reveals several important lessons for unions.

The Harvard case confirms that clerical workers generally and university clericals in particular respond favorably to a grassroots organizing approach. The clerical and technical workers at Harvard clearly wanted a union that encouraged their full participation. Specific tactical aspects of the campaign helped to reinforce the union's philosophy of voice. The HUCTW focus on empowerment allowed workers to define their own issues, and offered them a credible process for solving problems, achieving fair treatment, and attaining influence. Similarly, the decision not to use traditional campaign literature served to reinforce the grassroots campaign since committee members themselves became the conduit of information.

Because of the skepticism clerical workers feel toward unions, it is essential that organizing campaigns reflect a clear understanding of the concerns of the workers. At Harvard this meant emphasizing voice and building an extensive grassroots structure. Workers responded positively when they could embrace the union as their own. In contrast to organizing constructed upon worker dissatisfaction, the process at Harvard created a positive environment from which worker empowerment evolved. The organizers did not sell the union to the workers, but rather sold the workers on their own potential. The HUCTW broke new ground by taking the logical next step and institutionalizing participation through the bargaining process and the contract itself. The experience demonstrates that the grassroots approach can produce not just a union victory, but an excellent first contract.

The union built power through its enduring attention to organizing, which continued even after the contract was ratified. The ability to be both adversarial in certain instances and nonadversarial in others meant that the HUCTW could bargain from a position of strength and also maintain its commitment to worker involvement. Those portions of the contract that institutionalize participation through JCs, LPSTs and other joint labor-management committees will undoubtedly appeal to clericals (and other white-collar workers) who are seeking respect and influence through their unions. The participatory system enhances the clericals' close association with professionals and managers, whereas a purely adversarial union could interfere with workplace relationships. The model of labor-management cooperation propagated by the agreement could prove to be an effective organizing tool in other campaigns. The desire of clericals to seek justice while preserving harmony in the workplace has at last been fashioned into a contract that can serve as a prototype. The example of the HUCTW agreement lays bare management's claim that unionization necessarily creates a poisoned by third-party interloper.

To return to the debate raised earlier about strategy for organizing clerical workers to those who argue that special Harvard responded to a campaign Kristine Rondeau has referred to a 1990b:C-1). Most of the union leadership system was developed empowering rewards of unionization. The Harvard experience could of those who describe clericals as maintaining good relations with the clerical work culture is co-seeming contradiction was best met with the prestige issue. Rather than between clericals and professors HUCTW attacked the issue head on. This slogan also is a typical adversarial union. Although this model created an environment for strong union advocates.

Although the Harvard case representing university clerical worker places. Particularly instructive is university's sophisticated union organizing Harvard's supervisors' management's campaign. Even more impressive is the following contact with support efforts. This grassroots approach out of proportion. In addition, the issue of women's organizations allies served two functions: It put the academy, the HUCTW persuaded faculty barrier. On campuses where the faculty  

"Similarly, the union handled the fact that for neutrality so that a reason to the office, the HUCTW persuaded faculty barrier. On campuses where the faculty s can be quite helpful."

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the experience reveals several im-
portant aspects regarding the campaign strategy for organizing clerical workers. The HUCTW, the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, clearly wanted a union that would represent workers generally and university workers specifically, and they sought to build a strong, democratic union that could speak with a unified voice. The grassroots organizing approach taken by the HUCTW was characterized by a focus on the concerns of the rank-and-file members, who were encouraged to become active participants in the organizing process. This approach was particularly effective in winning support from the women who were the majority of the union membership.

The HUCTW leadership recognized that building a strong union required more than just recruiting members; it also meant creating a positive environment where workers felt valued and respected. This was achieved through open communication and a commitment to treating all workers fairly. The union emphasized the self-empowering rewards of unionization, such as improved working conditions and greater job security, which helped to attract new members.

One key to the HUCTW's success was its ability to maintain a positive relationship with the university administration. The union recognized that negotiating a contract was not just about winning better pay and benefits, but also about preserving harmony in the workplace. This was achieved through a strategy of direct action, where organizers worked closely with the rank-and-file to develop a grassroots leadership system that was based on interpersonal bonds. The slogan "It's not anti-Harvard to be pro-union" was a clear expression of this approach.

The Harvard experience could be interpreted as consistent with the views of those who describe clericals as traditionally feminine and concerned with maintaining good relations with their supervisors as well as those who argue that the clerical work culture is conducive to the expression of militance. This seeming contradiction was best reflected in the way that the HUCTW dealt with the prestige issue. Rather than allowing the close working relationship between clericals and professors to become an impediment to organizing, the HUCTW attacked the issue head-on. Status concerns were turned into an advantage as the workers embraced the concept that "It's not anti-Harvard to be pro-union." This slogan also sent the message that the HUCTW was not a typical adversarial union.

Although the Harvard case may be most relevant to organizing and representing university clerical workers, key aspects are generalizable to other workplaces. Particularly instructive is the tactical response of the union to the university's sophisticated union resistance activities. Reprinting and distributing the university's supervisors' manual, for example, served to demystify management's campaign. Even more important was the union's reliance on regular one-to-one contact with supporters as its primary response to management's efforts. This grassroots approach helped to resolve doubts before they got blown out of proportion. In addition, the effort to reach out to the broader community of women's organizations, labor unions, religious groups, and political allies served two functions: It put management's anti-unionism in the limelight and laid the foundation for a strong, well-organized union that could speak with a unified voice.

Similarly, the union handled the faculty skillfully. By reaching out to the faculty and asking only for neutrality so that a reasoned choice could be exercised in the best tradition of the academy, the HUCTW persuaded faculty to remain silent and thus largely defused this potential barrier. On campuses where the faculty are unionized, more openly courting their active support can be quite helpful.
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and put Harvard on the defensive. Simultaneously, it helped tie the clerical workers into the broader labor and social movement, diminishing the feeling of isolation that can be so debilitating in the face of management’s anti-union onslaught.

Clearly, no one model is appropriate for every union and every group of workers, and the Harvard case does not prove that traditional organizing and representation methods cannot be successful. Nonetheless, unions would be well served to consider the innovations reported here. The HUCTW’s success in institutionalizing participation after the organizing phase ended, and its flexibility in pursuing cooperation with management while maintaining tenacious membership commitment to the union are especially noteworthy.

It would be a mistake to conclude that the participatory model of organizing and representing workers followed at Harvard should only be implemented in clerical campaigns or in other settings where women workers predominate. In fact, the HUCTW success presents a serious challenge to traditional union methods. It is increasingly difficult to “sell” unions today, and most would benefit from certain aspects of the HUCTW model, regardless of the occupations or demographics of their constituencies. Developing rank-and-file involvement and collective leadership, letting workers define the issues, and promoting worker empowerment are all essential to a long-term strategy to outlast management and fulfill the goal of organizing the unorganized.

In an era of nearly pervasive gender movement, it’s exciting that on instances where working women demonstrated courage, strength, and proving conditions for themselves studies are not atypical; I am confident.

The common thread in Richard’s book is the persistence of collective bargaining victory. Quan is right that the union as a tool for change that is how and file women developed their own support around those issues, and the established union eventually offered something from within the group itself.

In the Gwartney-Gibbs and L...