

# Working 28 years without a paycheck

At the age of 89, Max Wohl finally retired some months ago as comptroller-treasurer and office manager of the Workmen's Circle, a post he has held since 1979. As a volunteer!

Before that he served with distinction as office manager of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Cleveland Chapter, for ten years. Also as a volunteer!

That's 28 years of working in important positions with dedication and without taking home a paycheck. That's the way it had to be for Max Wohl, who has lived his life believing in tikkun olam (repairing the world).

A lifelong socialist, this bright, articulate, thoughtful and self-effacing gentleman said he wanted to contribute his share to build a better world. He retired from his one and only paying job at Tremco Manufacturing Company for just that purpose. A 1926 graduate of East Technical High School, he went to night school at Cleveland College to get an accounting degree. Wohl worked at Tremco for 41 years,



**Max & Sylvia Wohl**

**BY VIOLET SPEVACK**  
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starting as an office boy and concluding his career there as vice president of finance. He took early retirement in 1969 to help in the reorganization of the ACLU Cleveland and to boost its reputation and its membership.

His tenure at Workmen's Circle, spanning changing executive directors, saw him spending eight-hour days at the office.

"Wohl's sense of fiscal responsibility enabled Workmen's Circle to build up a secure financial base," asserted longtime member Frank Stern. "What a straight arrow he is," Stern added. "This guy is so honest that one year, when the Workmen's Circle School did not use up its allotted budget, he returned the surplus funds to the Jewish Community Federation."

The longtime Beachwood resident was instrumental in setting up an endow-

ment fund to perpetuate the outstanding annual "Yiddish in the Park" at Cain Park, which always attracts 2,000 people for the free event. As an active member of Workmen's Circle, Wohl also continued to chair various committees and remain active in all phases of the organization on the state and regional levels.

He did it all with the support and encouragement of his wife, Sylvia. Kindred souls, Max and Sylvia met at a socialist meeting in the early 1930s, when they were both in their early 20s. They have been married for 64 years, sharing their mutual passion for the perpetuation of Yiddish culture and the Yiddish language. They raised three wonderful children: Lenore, Cohen, Arthur (killed in an auto accident some years ago) and Edward of Wisconsin.

On the lighter side, Wohl is a great bowler and skillful bridge player. He would still be ice skating, he adds, if weren't for his two bum knees.

While Wohl says he feels good about the growth and influence of the ACLU in defending the civil rights of individuals in

the workplace and in society, he still sees "a society that has a great deal of unemployment, poverty and social ills," and he regrets that the socialist movement was never strong enough to build up a better society. He is "hopeful," he adds, that the Workmen's Circle "can still play a significant role in the diversity of Jewish life, especially in secular, cultural Judaism."

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Because they believe the ACLU must continue to lead the defense of liberty in the next century, Max and Sylvia Wohl became members of the DeSilver Society. The DeSilver Society honors those who invest in the future of civil liberties through estate and financial plans that support the work of the ACLU Foundation at the local and national levels.

To find out more, call ACLU of Ohio Executive Director Christine Link at 216/781-6277.