

# The ORGANIZER

PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED WORKERS ORGANIZATION

MARCH 1980

AFTER 4 MONTHS

## INT'L. HARVESTER STRIKE STRONG

After over 4 months on strike tens of thousands of International Harvester workers and their families are continuing their righteous struggle against the company's "take-away" contract offer. After all this time, the company has gone back to square one in the negotiations.

International Harvester has the best contract in

the UAW. Not only does the company want to take away some of those hard-won benefits, but if allowed to win, would do no less than go after the union itself in the near future.

Some of the things they're after are:  
1. Mandatory overtime.  
All overtime at IH is completely voluntary.

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## AMC GUILTY OF MURDER

On Thurs. night, Feb 7 word spread quickly through the plant that AMC employee, Clarence Ellis, 60, had slipped into a 180-200 degree tank of water by the drop forge. This ground level tank is used to heat metal for the forge. On a cold day it is often surrounded by a cloud of steam so thick you can

barely see the edges.

On 2nd shift that night, Clarence Ellis slipped into the 4 foot deep tank of near boiling water. He received 2nd and 3rd degree burns over 59% of his body. On Feb. 19, 12 long and painful days after the accident, Clarence Ellis died in St. Mary's burn center in Milw.

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# Inflation: Time to Fight!

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Inflation has reached crisis levels. For the last 2 months the rate has been an unbelievable 19%. The standard of living of the American worker is being drastically slashed. Gas will reach \$2 a gallon this year while heating bills are expected to be over \$100 a month. Even with overtime our paychecks are gone by Monday.

Carter's solution has been an anti-inflation program consisting of major job cuts in federal job programs. While increasing the defense budget by 7 million, Carter has cut 500,000 summer youth jobs, 70,000 CETA jobs, 15% of the public service jobs and 21,900 jobs for youth in national parks. In a conscious effort to deepen the recession he increased the gas tax 10¢ and cut back credit. Maybe the peanut man thinks the way to fight inflation is to starve some people to death.

Working people and our unions must say no to this attempt to make labor bear the burden of this present crisis. With contracts coming up throughout Milw at AO Smith, Cutler Hammer, Briggs and Stratton and the



Vince Ferragamo, father of the L.A. Rams quarterback, pickets the White House after losing his job at Ford. Below, protesters hit closing of Ford's L.A. assembly plant.

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bus company we will be faced with a choice. Accept more takeaways and attacks on our standards of livings or take a stand and fight. Already strikes have broken out at Allis Chalmers and Inland in the last few weeks. The choice is clear. We can either allow our living standards to be driven down by the companies and soaring inflation or we can mobilize the strength of all working people to stand up and fight. How much more can we take?

# INLAND STRIKERS DIG IN

At midnight, March 10 the workers at Inryco at 4101 W. Burnham St. hit the pavement. Despite a wind chill of 20 below, the picketers vowed to stick it out until the company came up with a contract for the 80's.

This determination came from years of worsening conditions in the plant. Before the ink dried on their last contract 3 years ago, Inryco cut their dental plan from the 100% coverage they had agreed to provide. Harassment and verbal abuse from foremen is common as well as discrimination against minority workers. One Black worker was fired for allegedly cussing at an insurance director over the phone--and there wasn't even a single witness.

A major issue is the company's attempts to further break down the union. Inryco has made a mockery of the grievance procedure by forcing even minor grievances all the way to arbitration. Inryco has six divisions in Milwaukee, all covered by the same local union, and the company is stepping up its

attempts to divide them. In its latest contract proposal, Inryco "offered" to make them into separate bargaining units.

The determination to keep the plant closed down tight also comes from the lousy offer Inryco made--less than an 8% wage increase and a cut in the cost of living formula--in a time of 20% annual inflation rate. Their pension offer of 50¢ more per month per year of service was worse than an insult.

The Inryco workers are digging in and unless the company comes across with something, the strike could be a long one.



"We're sorry you lost all your teeth. The new dental plan should cover at least half of them, maybe."

# BUS DRIVERS PREPARE FOR CONTRACT BATTLE

The contract of local 998 and the Milwaukee County Transit system expires March 31. When the MCTS' initial proposal did not even include a money offer, but instead many take aways, the transit workers sent an angry message downtown with over a 90% strike authorization vote.

The union's proposals are very "reasonable"- a \$1.00 an hour raise for one year, a better cost of living and pension formula, as well as improvements in sick pay and dental care. With inflation soaring to 20% and Milwaukee Transit workers being nearly \$2.00 an hour behind other drivers like in Chicago, Many 998 members feel these are "bottom line" proposals.

The company is banking on a proposal to hire part time drivers as a way to keep wages down as well as weakening the position of the union. The proposal would eliminate the 40 hour week guarantee that is currently in the contract. As the deadline approaches the company is cracking down on drivers while holding back on any proposals on the major issues.



TRANSIT WORKERS STRUCK FOR OVER A MONTH IN '78.

The new union president is under a lot of pressure to come up with a decent contract. He was elected after the last president was dumped for trying to sell the membership out during the 1978 strike. Running Hot, a rank and file group that formed during the strike in 1978 has been actively organizing for this year's contract. They have pushed the union to have a special contract meeting as well as clarifying the main demands.

The union executive board has been floating out the idea of going to binding arbitration if no agreement is reached.

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# Settlement Near At Allis Chalmers?

After having their contract extended nearly 4 months, Allis Chalmers workers at 4 plants around the country went on strike Feb. 22. At the 2000 member local in West Allis, a noon walk-out and rally kicked off the strike. The West Allis plant, which once employed up to 14,000 people now has two separate owners--Allis Chalmers and Seaman-Allis (German). In the past week news has come of a proposed settlement on the national contract issues. With a lot of pressure to settle the local issues, a contract vote is probably near.

Allis Chalmers' workers have a proud tradition of standing up to the company--there has only been one contract without a strike in the last 20 years. This year is no different as AC workers fight for a decent raise, the resolution of 100s of unsettled grievances with the right to strike over future griev-

ances, and over other issues like vacations and rates of pay. As of now, the company seems to have given in on an attempt to take away the union's totally voluntary overtime.

Strikes have marked this year's contracts in the Ag-Ind. industry. John Deere, Caterpillar, International Harvester and now Allis Chalmers. Over 150,000 workers have walked out as the companies have been willing to give less and less and tried to take more and more. With inflation soaring out of sight and the companies at their throats, there has been no choice but to fight.

The strike is nearly a month old. Pickets have been pressuring the company by blocking cars and trucks. Strikers have been arrested both here and in Indiana. This is one more sign that AC workers like workers everywhere have had just about enough!

VICTORY TO AC STRIKERS!

# REX WORKERS WIN RIGHT

The workers at Rexnord won a round in the fight against company unionism and for more union backing on the job last month. They unanimously passed a by-law that allows members of their local, USWA#1527 to elect their own stewards. Up 'til now the grievance committee appointed most stewards.

Almost three times the normal number of members showed up to vote at the March union meeting to make their voices heard. They were sick of "business as usual"-as in the example of one steward who, for 6 years, had never filed a grievance.

They were sick of stewards like the guy in the foundry who wouldn't fight lousy piecework rates, but was given the best jobs in the dept. And they were sick of telling the grievance committee who they wanted for steward and then being told that somebody else was the "people's choice."

Members of the Steel Worker, a rank and file newsletter at Rex, talked up the proposal throughout the Rex plants. The Steelworker activists organized for the vote the week before the meeting. The sentiment at Rex was so strongly in

## TO ELECT STEWARDS

favor of electing stewards that neither the local leadership or the international rep dared to oppose the change.

This is a small step forward in an international union that is notoriously run from the top down. Most USWA shops can't elect stewards. The 400,000 workers in basic steel aren't even allowed to vote on their own contract. The workers at Rex made a crack in this system when they approved the new by-law. With new steward elections soon, Rexnord workers have advanced their fight for union backing on the job.

For union backing  
**VOTE**  
**SUNDAY**  
TO ELECT STEWARDS  
on the job

# 300 Celebrate Int'l. Womens Day

This year International Womens Day was celebrated as close to 300 women and men packed the Jazz Gallery on E. Center St.

IWD originated in 1910 to honor 30,000 women garment strikers fighting sweatshop conditions.

The program reflected the struggles of women today. A slide show of last falls "Take Back the Night" march focused on the growing movement against sexual assault and rape. Another march will be held this coming fall.

A woman union steward at A.M.C., a U.W.O. member, gave a short talk on the problems of sexual harassment that women face on the job. She was cheered when she spoke of a successful fight to get rid of a "titty-twister" Foreman by UAW members in her area.

LaRhonda Bearden from N. Division High School talked about the fight the community is waging to keep the school open to their community. Speaking with anger at the discrimination of the school board and with pride as a Black woman fighting for her rights, LaRhonda told how the school board is trying to close the new, \$23 million school to the Black community.

Following this presentation, two women spoke on the growing fight for quality, company sponsored daycare. Even though the fight for low-cost industrial daycare is a new fight and an uphill battle, several unions have fought for and won industrial daycare.

Linda Hoelzer of the Women's Coalition called the discussion of whether to draft women "hypocrisy". People who never cared about women's rights are all of a sudden the biggest proponents of "equality" when it comes to fighting for the interest of big business abroad.

Throughout the program there were cultural performances including dramatic reading from the Black Progressive Theatre and singing by Jesse Hawk.

IWD '80 closed as it had begun, honoring the hard work and the progress that has developed in the last year, and focusing on the necessity to continue the fight against sexual assaults, discrimination, and for quality daycare to be developed during the coming year.

For more information call  
449-0476.

# Fight the bosses attack on OSHA

The "Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1980" was introduced in the Senate in January. This bill, with the backing of both conservative and liberal congressmen, would exempt roughly 90% of factories from regular safety inspection. A company would only have to file a report claiming there had been no deaths and less than two lost time injuries per 100 workers in the past year to exempt it from inspection. It is reported 43 million workers would be affected by this law change.

The cut in OSHA on the job inspection powers comes during a productivity drive in industry. Workers know that when the bosses push for more productivity it's at the expense of workers' health and safety. The toll of job related injuries and illnesses rose to a record high in Wisconsin last year: the fourth record high year in a row.

Since the beginning of OSHA in 1970 it has only been a bandaid on the open sore of unsafe working conditions. Now they are even trying to rip this tiny bandaid off. Workers

have called OSHA sometimes as an harassment tactic against companies that have grossly open unsafe conditions. The head of OSHA has said the 1980 bill would take away any preventative powers which OSHA now has.

This outrageous attack has forced even the AFL-CIO and several international unions into action against it. The AFL-CIO is calling the bill, "a very dangerous attack on the principle of providing a safe and healthful workplace." The Allied Industrial Workers (AIW) has begun a petition drive against the bill. A letter and telegram campaign to Senators has gotten under way by the United Electrical Workers (UE). The Steelworkers Union (USWA) has sent letters to every union member calling for a similar campaign.

Here in Milwaukee, Rex Nord USWA local #1527 members passed a motion calling on their union to petition against it.

Work is beginning in this area against this outrageous bill. Union activists, including United Workers Organization



members are beginning to coordinate activity against this important bill. For more information call: 444-8725



"We've had one meeting on safety but he still broke the drill!"

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

## AMC GUILTY!

Last week, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) issued a charge of negligence against AMC.

AMC has done their best to cover up the fact that they are guilty of gross criminal negligence in this pre-ventable death. The fact is that the south end of the tank has always been left wide open. The fact is that the railing on the north end had been knocked down for months.

This happens periodically because of the tight squeeze of dipping 16 foot steel bar stock into an 18 foot tank.

According to a tradesman who called Fighting Times, "There had been a work order in to fix the railing for months, but as usual nothing had been done". The fact that the railing on both the north and south ends was knocked down was confirmed on Feb. 27 in a statement that read, "James Bradley, AMC public relations official this morning confirmed that the lower railings were missing from each end."

The facts paint a very clear picture of what actually happened on the night of Feb. 7. Clarence Ellis slipped into the tank because the company had once again neglected to replace a broken safety railing.

The night of the accident, the company had maintenance welding boiler plate around the edge of the tank. But by then, the company's criminal negligence had made it too late for Clarence Ellis and his family.

In closing, all the company had to say to the Kenosha News was that, "Ellis was a very good, long-term employee, assigned specialty jobs in the drop forge..."

# Snap-on Workers Snap Back

Last Sat., Snap On strikers rejected the company's latest offer by a vote of 98%. Since Feb. 1 the strikers have braved winter temperatures and anti-union court injunctions to continue their struggle against company takeaways that include going backwards on pensions, paying part of their insurance, and placing a cap on the COLA.

Snap On recorded profits last year of \$360 million, but since the strike began stocks have dropped in half. The stockholders are meeting in Kenosha on March 15 and the strikers have discussed plans to greet them with a mass picket.

## Picketer's wife writes of strike's hardships

To the editor:

Six weeks ago my husband, an electrician at Snap-on Tools, went on strike. Somehow, over the days and weeks that followed "his strike" became "our strike". We slowly came to realize that Snap-on Tools Corporation did not have our best interests at heart.

First, our medical and dental insurance expired, then the company began sending letters to our home. These letters attempted in a very patronizing way to undermine our union leadership. The company's next actions were clearly designed to break the union — requesting a news blackout and then not

respecting it, seeking an injunction against "mass picketing" and having office workers scab in the factory.

Back in February, we couldn't understand why the company would deliberately offer such a miserly contract after a year of record profits. Perhaps Snap-on wanted a strike as a tax write-off? Now we see that this pre-planned strike is designed to break the union.

Don't let that happen. Striking Snap-on employees and their families must show the company that we can hold out as long as it takes to obtain a fair settlement.

-- Union man's wife

LETTER  
PRINTED  
IN THE  
KENOSHA  
LABOR  
PRESS.



BUTTON USED FOR THE INT'L.  
HARVESTOR STRIKE

TRANSIT-cont'd from pg.4

**Many drivers including Running Hot oppose the idea of having their future decided by a 3rd party. An arbitrator has no real understanding of the conditions of bus drivers but even more than that the strength of any union lies in a united determined membership not a good legal case. Two years ago transit workers struck after the contract was extended several weeks. The extension weakened the strike as it continued after schools were out into the season of lowest ridership. Now with gas prices going further out of sight, more and more people are relying on the buses. If MCTS officials don't come across with something decent, transit workers may decide to make it a long, hard spring for them!**

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## UWO RESPONDS TO CARL ZIMMERMAN

The following is the response given by the UWO to an editorial by Carl Zimmerman of Channel 6. It was aired on Thurs., March 6.

Last week Carl Zimmerman delivered an editorial attacking government programs such as unemployment compensation, the trade readjustment assistance program (TRA) and welfare saying they were a waste of our tax dollars.

As a worker who has been recently layed off and receiving unemployment as well as TRA payments, I would like to respond. It has been hard working people like myself and thousands of others who have payed taxes and demanded these programs. It was not our fault that AWC, Singer Controls where I worked or many other companies have moved production out of the country to seek lower wages and higher profits.

These programs are not enough. We can only collect unemployment for a maximum of 31 weeks. TRA provides for retraining, but with companies leaving town, we are still not assured a job when our funds run out.

Instead of attacking workers who have been forced on these programs and out of jobs, Channel 6 should be calling for action to stop the run away of jobs, the passage of windfall profits tax and using that money to create more jobs at a living wage.

# McGEE FOR ME

In the 7th district, the race for alderman has become a struggle between a "business as usual" candidate, Robert Weber, and Michael McGee, the challenger who is trying to speak to the issues and demands in this diverse community.

Many U.W.O. members have been active in the McGee campaign. We encourage residents of the 7th district to vote for McGee on April 1st.

McGee is a 28 year old Black man, active in the community for 10 years. He served as a combat soldier

in Vietnam and is a founder and leader of Project Respect, a neighborhood crime program.

McGee is also a member of the Coalition to Save North Division and is chairman of the committee for a Democratic Police.

Weber supported the present restrictive parking regulations. He has failed to consistently support the fight to bring Chief Breier and the Police Dept. under the control of the community.

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## *Overcrowding, Unresponsive Schools Turn Small Incidents Into Problems*

A statement by "Humbert Hot," a rank-and-file transit workers organization of Local 998.

On Valentine's Day, a bus driver was beaten on the head by students going home from Wilbur Wright Junior High School, windows were broken and locked out after the driver called for help. The police never answered the driver's call. He was taken to the hospital and has been off work ever since.

Every couple of days, there have been stories in the paper and on TV about violence on the buses. Many people are content to say, "The kids are hopeless" and leave it at that. But that's not enough. It doesn't solve the problem of

safety for the drivers and passengers. And it doesn't recognize that the School Board, transit company and the police also share the blame.

On Monday, March 10, O.C. White and Michael McGee of Project Respect announced the formation of a community task force to investigate the situation on the buses. The group includes bus drivers, community leaders and concerned parents. In their first day of activity, committee members were at Wilbur Wright when school let out to ride the buses with the students, talking to them about the problems on the buses and investigating the problem first-hand.

Several things were immediately clear. The first bus to load at the school was so full that the committee members could barely manage to get on. This was no surprise to the drivers, who experience the same overcrowding at many schools throughout the city. With such overcrowded conditions, small incidents blow up into major problems. Fights are common.

It was also obvious that the majority of the students on the bus were Black, although the neighborhood around the school is predominantly white. The School Board's busing plan forces Black students to ride the bus -- often

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# ANTI-KLAN MOVEMENT GROWS IN GREENSBORO

On Feb. 2, 7,000 people from throughout the South and across the country marched in Greensboro, N. Carolina to protest the rising activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Greensboro has been the scene of struggle against racism and Klan terror over the past two decades. In 1960, the sit down struggle that ended segregation in public facilities in the South began when 4 local college students sat in at a local Woolworth's lunch counter. This last November, members of the Klan murdered 5 marchers in an anti-Klan rally. The people are demanding prosecution of the Klansmen responsible.

A broad coalition of clergy, community activists,

and Black organizations, as well as anti-klan activists organized the march.

Throughout 1979, Klan activity has increased. Bill Wilkinson's Klan now claims 2,000 members in the Tennessee River Valley. Incidents of terror and harassment are increasing as the economic situation deteriorates, and the peoples movement has grown in response.

The march in Greensboro is an example of how the Black struggle is still on the move. No legal obstacle put up by the city of Greensboro officials could stop it. The march was a great victory of unity and dealt the Klan a serious blow.

## ***Running Hot***

Continued from page 12

more than an hour each way -- to schools that aren't oriented to the needs of minority students. At school, there is hostility from some white students and a curriculum that doesn't relate to their needs and aspirations. The student's frustration and anger surfaces on the bus. Several years ago, bus drivers were forced to call a wildcat strike before radios were installed on the buses. Now as our calls for help are ignored, more action may be necessary to get the help we need.

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If McGee is elected, he will be a voice downtown against overnight parking restrictions, the abuses of the Police Dept. and Chief Breier.

McGee is running a grass roots campaign, emphasizing the need for aldermen to be actively involved in the community and act as a watchdog on City Hall downtown. We urge 7th district residents to vote on April 1st and say "McGee for Me".

# UAW Activists Meet

On March 1st UAW activists from 10 locals in the N. Illinois/SE Wisconsin area (including strikers from International Harvester and Allis Chalmers) met in Chicago to plan reform slates for elections to the International Convention held the first week of June in Anaheim, Calif.

This campaign promises to be one of the widest challenges in a long time within the UAW to the "business as usual" policies of the International. The campaign will be coordinated nation-wide.

Pete Kelley, a respected, articulate long-time fighter from the GM technical center in Detroit, spoke on the need to reorganize the UAW to meet today's needs; needs which are either sabotaged or ignored by the present top leadership.

The tone of the campaign

will be "Dues and democracy". We are now denied the right to vote for Int. officers; we want that right. Union dues keep climbing while the big shots only use the money to sit on the chest of the membership; we want a dues freeze.

Candidates who are elected are pledged to raise hell against the sellout policies of the International, and to boycott the usual partying, back-scratching bullshit that is the usual union big shots behavior at these conventions.



# INT'L. HARVESTER STRIKE STRONG

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The company wants to be able to force people to work on Saturday.

2. Seniority, Transfer. Now IH workers are able to transfer jobs 4 times a year and don't have to take the job they bid on with turning down the job not being held against the worker. IH wants to limit the number of jobs they could bid on with the employee being required to accept the job.

3. Pieceworkers right to go home. The company wants to cut out the right of pieceworkers to go home when they run out of work.

4. Holiday pay eligibility. The company proposes that an employee must work his last scheduled work day prior to and his next scheduled work day after the holiday. There are no such restrictions now.

And this is just a partial list. Up against this huge corporation with its slick, high paid lawyers, the workers of IH have been active in building support for their strike. There've been two rallies by hundreds of IH workers and their supporters at the IH world headquarters in

the Chicago Loop. A third was planned but the UAW International felt there was too much rank and file activity and strong armed the 5 area Harvester locals into calling it off at the last minute.

They also made Local 72 at American Motors cancel the two buses they chartered and stopped them from sending a \$500 support check.

Harvester workers also put together a Christmas party financed totally by donations.

At the IH plant in Libertyville, Ill., the company has to go as far as writing a letter to the local asking the members to stop their "pattern of destructive behavior" which includes serious company property damage and rocks thrown through the windows of scab trucks.

This strike is an inspiration because it shows what working people can do to keep what they have got and to make some gains.

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# Who We Are?

The United Workers Organization is just that—united workers. We are union members, rank and file and officers who are tired of being harassed and pushed around on the job. We are working to organize the rank and file members of our locals to stand up to the increasing company attacks and violation of our rights and to demand our unions do the same. We are dedicated to building our unions into the fighting and democratic organizations they must be. We are active in the shops

and locals where we work, and in building more unity among all workers in the area through strike support and other activities.

The UWO also serves as a co-ordinating center for various information such as workers legal rights, workers comp. regulations etc. If you need information or help in organizing or want to have a struggle in your shop written up in the Organizer call: Milw.: 445-5816; Kenosha: 652-3759; Racine: 632-6689

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