

The ORGANIZER

BRIGGS WORKERS DOWN COMPANY UNIONISM

At the August union meeting at Briggs and Stratton the table was turned. For the first time in a long time the membership of local 232 ran the union.

Almost twice as many people as usual came out to vote on 3 important by-laws. At the heart of each by-law was the fight for more and better union backing on the job, a fight that has been opposed at every step by Tom Liederbach, president of local 232, and Regional AIW representative Anna Schmitt.

One of the new by-laws was a proposal to add a third shift grievance rep. It was first brought up at the April union meeting that there was no union representative for the 1000 3rd shift workers. The UWO wrote up a by-law proposing the additional grievance rep and circulated a petition that was signed by over half of the people on 3rd shift. In the last month, the UWO put out several leaflets and sold hundreds of buttons urging people to support the by-law change. Tom Liederbach and the executive board did everything

in their power to oppose this issue. At the stewards' meeting Anna Schmitt went so far as to call it a "communist issue" that nobody on third shift was concerned about.

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"STOP THE GAS RIPOFF" UAW HITS ENERGY COMPANIES

Across the country auto workers signed petitions, wore buttons and some stopped work to protest the gas price rip off that's hitting over \$1.00 a gallon and caused mile long lines on both coasts.

The United Auto Workers (UAW) leadership called the action mainly as a media event, failing to build it broadly among the union membership. Doug

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Victory at Ladish!
Bell murder cover-up

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For Help On The Job---Call

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION(EEOC) 291-1111
a federal agency to see to file charges of sex and race discrimination
on the job or in the unions

ESPERANZA UNIDA 671-0251
a citizens' organization that helps workers fight for Workers Comp-
ensation for on-the-job injuries and is working for better Workers
Compensation laws

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD(NLRB) 291-3861
a federal agency to see if you were harassed or fired or discrimi-
nated against for standing up to your company

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT(OSHA) 224-3315 in Milwaukee
elsewhere 1-800-242-9680
a federal agency to call for help in changing unsafe, unhealthy
working conditions

WISCONSIN COMMITTEE on SAFETY AND HEALTH(WISCOSH) 643-0928
a private organization that advises workers of their health and
safety rights and is working for better occupational health and
safety laws

WISCONSIN EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION(WERC) 224-4384
a State of Wisconsin agency for filing sex and race discrimination
charges against companies

WORKERS COMPENSATION DIVISION 224-4382
Wisconsin commission that administers compensation payments for
on-the-job injuries and job-related illnesses

Coming Events

SEPTEMBER 23--SATURDAY. Rally to commemorate the death of Daniel
Bell and others murdered by the Milwaukee Police Department. Time
and place to be announced, for more information, call 445-5816.

SEPTEMBER 27--THURSDAY--7PM Speakers from the United League
of Northern Mississippi at North Division High School.

SEPTEMBER 29--SATURDAY Demonstration at Zion, Illinois,
nuclear power plant to protest nuclear power.

Unionization Victory In Sunbelt

A big victory for organizing the non-union south came last July 19 when workers at the huge Oklahoma City, Oklahoma GM plant voted more than 2 to 1 to join the UAW.

It was a tough fight. Oklahoma is a bastion of anti-unionism, and the local press used a smear campaign against the union. GM violated their "neutrality" pledge won in the last contract, and distributed anti-union literature in the plant.

GM's big hustle to get around the union, and make it seem "unnecessary" was the "team concept." Workers were being grouped into teams of 12 to 15. They were supposed to be able to elect "team captains" and vote on issues in the plant. Foremen were called "advisors". This game fooled people for a while, but not long.

"I grew up on anti-unionism" said one assembler at the plant.

"In eastern Oklahoma all you hear are scare stories about graft & violent strikes. Newspapers put out that stuff every day. My uncle says he'd have to quit his church if he ever joined a union, because his dues would be going into bombings and killings."

But these kind of illusions about unions lasted about as long as GM's "team concept." When the cars started rolling off the line at the rate of 75 or more an hour, and workers had to be constantly on the run to keep up, it became clear how useless the "teams" were.

The Oklahoma City plant had been GM's biggest move so far to the non-union Sunbelt. The plant, which will employ 4,600, is so big that the designers of the building had to take the curve of the earth into account.

But the breakneck line speed, no relief, practically having to beg to go to the bathroom, all added up to a lot of opened eyes about unions and GM.

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KEEP NORTH DIVISION FOR THE COMMUNITY!

As the public schools opened on September 4, over 300 Black students, parents and community residents rallied in front of North Division High School. They were demanding, as they have since late last spring, that the School Board drop its plans to transfer all present Black students out of the school and turn it into a city-wide medical specialty, 60% white school.



For years the Black community, led by North Division students, had fought to have a new high school built on the site of the old, run-down North Division. No sooner was this battle won and the new \$20 million dollar school constructed, than the School Board came up with a plan, in the name of desegregation, to remove the Black students who went there. The School Board's view is that North Division can be neither a

quality educational institution nor really intergrated with the "low socio-economic Black students" who go there. They want to attract middle class whites and Blacks. To do this they want to clear out the present students who one School Board member called a "cesspool."

This openly racist proposal has met widespread opposition from the day it was proposed in early May. Then, 600 students and parents marched to a school board meeting, packed it, and spoke against it.

The School Board had hoped that the fight to save North would die with the summer recess. But the Coalition to Save North has kept the issue alive.

Since the de-segregation order came down 3 years ago, Black students have born the brunt of it; 8 Black students are bused for every one white, Lincoln has been totally shut down, King is now mainly white and the board is threatening to bus all the Black students out of North. There is no reason that the new North facilities cannot be integrated but mainly Black and be a quality school. While school has opened and the plan is in its first stage, the fight against it is continuing. This is an important issue on which labor must take a stand. If you want a speaker for a community or union meeting: call

224-7593

EDITORIAL

Cop Convicted Of Bell Murder

21 years ago Daniel Bell was shot to death by the Milw. Police Dept. (MPD). At the time it was said by the MPD that the youth came at the police with a knife in his hand and was shot so the officers could protect themselves.

21 years later the truth has come out- Daniel Bell was murdered. The knife in his hand was planted by the MPD!! To protect the officer that shot him down in cold blood!!

But in the past 21 years there have been several other people shot by the police- Ford, Starks, Pendleton, Prookshire, Flynn, Daily and Lyons. All of these killings outraged the community forcing McCann to conduct inquests. But in every case the killings were ruled justifiable - some even over the accounts of eye-witnesses who contradicted the police accounts.

Now that the truth is out charges of reckless homicide have been filed against the officer involved. Why not first degree murder as it should be? What about the others involved in the coverup?

Breier was a captain of detectives 21 years ago. Today he's Chief of Police. His shoot-first-ask-questions-later attitude is the spirit behind the killings since the Bell murder and expresses his wish that "the good old days" could stay forever.



CLOSE TO 200 PEOPLE MARCHED THROUGH THE NORTH SIDE TO COMMEMORATE THE DEATH OF DANIEL BELL SUN., SEPT. 9

File For Pregnancy Benefits

If you were out of work on a pregnancy leave during the last 300 days and were not paid sickness & accident benefits, you may be able to file a claim for those benefits with the Wisconsin Equal Rights Commission.

A Wisconsin law passed in 1969 makes it illegal and discriminatory to refuse sickness & accident benefits to women on pregnancy leave if they pay benefits for other types of disability.

Some women at Briggs & Stratton recently got as much as \$2,500. in back benefits.

If you think you've got a case **5** Call the Wisconsin Equal Rights Commission at 224-4384.

Grain Workers Fight 7% Guidelines

Since July 6 over 560 workers at eight Superior - Duluth grain elevators have been on strike. Their main demand is a quarterly cost-of-living provision. But the elevators, giants like General Mills, Continental Grain Corp., and Cargil Inc., have stalled behind Carter's 7% guidelines.

The Twin Ports handle grain from eight states and have witnessed boom operations. The elevator workers, pressed into a lot of overtime, want fewer hours and a way to keep up with inflation. American Federation of Grain Millers Local 118 officers are locking for 9.5% raise annually. One striker said, "These companies are

making big profits. They're ripping us off. All we want is to earn a wage without having to spend 18 hours a day on the job."

As a result of the elevator operators stalling tactics farmers' grain has piled up with another harvest in progress. Rail cars and trucks remain unloaded and ships are turned away empty. Gov. Dreyfus and Gov. Al Quie of Minn. have called on President Carter to invoke the Taft Hartly Act. So far that hasn't been acted on. Whatever the outcome the grain elevator workers have taken a stand. Their livelihood is more important than the Grain Corporations profits.

St Regis Can't Crack Union

Workers at St. Regis Paper Co. on strike since June 18, stand their ground and hold out supervisors specially flown in from around the country to continue some production. The St. Regis workers burn a company sign that welcomes them to cross the picket line and scab on the strike. The company goes to court and gets an injunction limiting the strikers to 3 picketers.

Local 200 of the United Paper Workers Union, representing the nearly 90 St. Regis strikers, called the strike after 17 days of attempting to negotiate beyond St. Regis' one and only proposal. 18 months ago the company brought in

a new management team that has fired people, combined and sped up jobs, add refused to settle grievances in what looks like a familiar union busting attempt. Now the company is trying to get a contract that would worsen vacation pay, insurance, forced overtime provisions and lousy contract language. Meanwhile the union is trying for improvements in these things plus money.

But what St. Regis did not take into account is the strong spirit and unity of the strikers. While the strike would be stronger if it was coordinated with other St. Regis companies around the country

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LADISH VICTORY

After nearly 5 months on strike the workers at Ladish are back to work. Their unity beat one of the biggest companies in the area and they go back to work stronger on two counts: Ladish met nearly every demand of the strikers without compromise and Ladish and the workers know that when the union and the people get together, they mean business.

The 2,000 members of Machinist Lodge #1862 struck April 11 because Ladish wanted to take away their right to strike over grievances, seriously weakening the workers' ability to get day-to-day problems resolved in their favor. Ladish also wanted to force some machine operators to run two machines where before they ran only one. Ladish made Carter's 7% guidelines a big issue until several months into the strike.

Vending machines

FROM PAGE 10

As everyone gathered in the canteen area one Chief Steward explained the reasons for the boycott and what was wanted from ARA. It was a 100% display of unity as both the union stewards and the people in four full departments put ARA on final notice.

At 12:30 everyone stayed away from the machines, with the exception of one scab supervisor, who was booed and heckled as she purchased her lunch.

At 1:00 ARA agreed to the following demands: the addition of new vending machines, an add-

The new contract keeps the previous contract language around grievances and gives a healthy wage increase with a quarterly, unlimited cost-of-living allowance.

During the strike, the union stopped back-to-work movements initiated mainly by the company. Ladish sent out several deceptive letters playing up the offers they had made to the union. At one point some workers petitioned the union to call a special meeting to consider a company offer. The meeting was held August 17 and the offer was rejected by an 8 to 5 margin.

That show of unity broke Ladish and they started giving in to the union's demands one by one.

The combination of a determined membership and strong union backing won a big victory for the workers at Ladish. Its an example we can learn from.

ditional micro-wave, additional snack bar, all beverage machines would have their coin mechanisms replaced at a cost of \$400 each, and when available a mechanic would be on call at 9:30 and 12. These improvements came to a total cost of \$12,000.

Union victory FROM PAGE 3

The big election victory in Oklahoma will be a real shot in the arm for organizing the non-union south, and a real sock in the jaw for the companies who are running there for low wages. As the union supporters chanted on election night, "Everything's OK in OK City!"

Zion, Ill. - Sept. 29

Protest Area Nuclear Plant



On Saturday, September 29, hundreds of people will converge on the Zion, Ill. nuclear power plant to protest nuclear power in the Wis.-Ill. area. The Zion plant is one of the lowest ranked in the country. The protest will start with an Energy Fair at 10:00 in the morning. At 11:00am there will be speeches on the effects of nuclear power on our lives, followed by music and a march to the plant.

Some facts behind the Zion plant reveal why it should be one of the most protested plants in the country:

- **The Zion plant operated a full year with its emergency core cooling system incorrectly wired.
- **The Zion plant dumped over 10,000 gallons of radioactive waste water into Lake Michigan for 4 years without telling the public or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
- **Last summer workers at Zion were filling open 55 gallon drums with dangerous radioactive waste until one worker complained in

a public meeting with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**The Nuclear Regulatory Commission regional director describes Zion's management as being so bad "the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing."

**COMEDISON, owner of Zion, is the largest nuclear utility and one of the wealthiest

With Zion's poor safety record and with the suggestion that Zion's already overfilled and leaking spent fuel rod storage facility take on even more spent fuel rods, South East Wisconsin and Northern Illinois residents have cause to worry. There are no adequate evacuation plans for our area (Milwaukee is only 40 miles away.) It's time the people put their foot down on this blatant violation of our safety and the safety of future generations. Five buses are being rented by the Mobilization for Survival. Come join this demonstration. For more information call 445-5816.

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BUS DRIVERS

998 BOARD REJECTS NITE STEWARDS

The Executive Board of the Transit Workers Local 998 reversed an earlier decision to establish night stewards at the Sept 7 union meeting. This decision seriously undermines efforts to strengthen the union's ability to represent the drivers and mechanics. They went against a motion passed almost unanimously at the April union meeting

Before the union elections on June 19, the present officers backed having nite stewards. They were ready to promise anything apparently to get a few more votes. Many of them worked with Running Hot, a rank and file group of bus drivers, to get this passed.

According to their so-called reasoning, 1. the day stewards are enough, 2. there's nobody from the company on nights to

deal with and 3. there's no money.

Well if the need wasn't there it would never have been brought up in the first place. Night drivers hardly ever see the day drivers let alone the day stewards.

If there's no money for the nite stewards, then where is the dues money going? Local 998 has one of the highest initiation fees (\$100.00) in the city! The day this executive board gets up and resigns, because "There's no money," then the drivers will believe them.

Most work places have stewards on all shifts, the workers at Briggs & Stratton, Local 232, just unanimously voted to have a nite grievance person.

The bus drivers need night stewards. Running Hot is planning to let the rest of the drivers know about this rotten deal and keep up the fight to get union backing on the job.

By Brant Parker and Johnny Mart



American Motors Workers Win New Vending Machines

American Motors workers took action to get some decent vending service in Kenosha. It started when some workers in one department met and voted to do something about the poor food and highway robbery of change.

Firstly, the stewards passed petitions in two departments that gathered over 740 signatures demanding an immediate change in ARA's policies. When no dramatic change

occurred, a boycott was started a week later on Aug. 20.

It started off slow on Monday morning as some people had forgotten over the weekend. But by 9:30 break the word was out and hundreds of people wore "Boycott ARA Today" signs on their backs. At breaktime the stewards from 3 departments formed a picket line in front of the vending machines to insure that everyone was well informed about the boycott. Most supervisors did not even use the machines.

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UAW Energy Demo

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Fraser, UAW international pres. said "The time has come to put the oil companies and their political allies on notice that the American people have had it." If he was serious about mobilizing the 150,000 UAW members to do this, he needed to organize it throughout the union structure down to every shop floor. Instead, he merely ran a lot of talk to the press. But the UAW call opened the door for workers to hit the oil companies' rip off.

The auto companies tried to put the brakes on any work stoppage. After the workers shut down the Twin Cities Ford Truck plant in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a week early because there was a plant shutdown planned, the auto companies posted notices that any work stoppage would get a disciplinary.

When locals called in to ask

if the International would back the workers, they were told "to use your own discretion."

In Framingham, Mass. when the workers stopped work for 6 minutes, the company threatened disciplinary action and the whole shift walked out. Chrysler Local #174 in Detroit shut down the plant for half the shift. A steward at International Harvester in Chicago used his own discretion and called his shift out of work.

The UAW's media approach guaranteed that most of the 150,000 auto workers couldn't flex their muscle and use their power to hit the oil companies. Further the cards they asked people to sign targeted both the oil companies and the OPEC nations. This amounts to a call to rip off the Arabs.

This was the first round in the fight against the gas rip off. A national demonstration in Washington D.C. is being planned for Oct. 17.

BRIGGS WORKERS DOWN COMPANY UNIONISM

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The activity and unity that developed around the fight for a 3rd shift grievance rep threatened the executive board's weakening hold on the union. Recently, more people have raised hell in the union meetings and in the plant about unjust firings company favoritism, discrimination and unsafe working conditions. In every instance the executive board has opposed dealing with these issues and sided with the company.

Anna Schmitt even proposed a by-law that would require union officers to sign a loyalty oath. Under the name of fighting communism, the proposal was aimed at getting rid of all the officers and stewards who were fighting for more and better union backing. The by-law committee also proposed a third by-law that would give the executive board full power to pick and choose which members went to union schools and conferences, taking away the membership's right to vote on delegates.

LOUIS ALLIS STRIKE SETTLED

After 6½ weeks on the picket-line, the 700 members of IUE 1131 at Louis Allis signed a contract. Several gains-changes in calculating some piecework rates, a dental plan, a modified 30 and out, plus increases in wages, pensions and insurance were achieved. The biggest failing was a 20¢ a year cap on the cost of living, which will see wages fall way behind inflation.

As the union meeting approached, all three by-laws became big issues in the plant. Everyone was talking about the state of the union and how to make the membership stronger.

Hundreds of people came to the Aug. 19 union meeting wearing the third shift grievance button and ready to fight for a strong union.

The loyalty oath by-law and "appointee" by-law were defeated.

By the time the by-law for the third shift grievance rep came up, the momentum was overwhelmingly in favor of it. President Leiderbach didn't even have to call for the "no" vote. Hundreds of people stood and cheered at this victory.

After the meeting, a victory party was held across the street. This meeting was living proof to many of us at Briggs that we can change things. The victory was the result of hundreds of union brothers and sisters turning out for the meeting, standing together and fighting for real unionism.

St Regis

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the workers here continue to picket 24 hours a day. The strikers were glad to see workers from other plants representing the UWO coming to their picket line in support. The plant is at 5600 W. Good Hope Road if anyone wants to show support and talk. Even though they are a small local, up against a giant corporation, the union members refuse to be broken.

Join the United Workers Organization

Higher prices...unsafe working conditions...harassment...increased discrimination...gasoline shortages. Working people are catching hell on all sides. The United Workers Organization was formed to get working people organized to fight sellout contracts, company productivity drives and other problems we face on the job and in the communities. An important part of this fight is to make our unions fighting organizations that we can use in our struggle.

The United Workers Organization is composed of shop committees in plants around the Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha area. If you're tired of being pushed around driven down and sold out--Join the United Workers Organization.

Contribute Articles

The pages of the Organizer are open to anybody wanting to publicize their struggles on the job or in their unions.

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