

The ORGANIZER

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STRIKE BULLETIN

Master Lock strikers get tough

"We're fired up, we're not takin' any more." That chant filled over a mile of Milwaukee's streets on the northwest side on Sat, July 13. It came from nearly 600 Master Lock strikers and their supporters from other unions as they traced the path taken by scabs hired by Master Lock in their vicious attempt to cripple the union, and force a lousy contract on the strikers.

But the 1200 members of

UAW Local 469 at Master Lock have a different idea. They're out to win and they took to the streets to show it.

They've been on the bricks since June 1st fighting a sharp example of the attacks on labor in these hard times.

The union-busting tactics of Master Lock, a subsidiary of American Brands Corp, are a threat to the survival of Local 469 and the rights of all union members to picket and to win what we need.

Issues in the over 2 month old strike center

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Wehr strikers face off with scabs

Every morning at about 7:15 A.M., the quiet of the West Allis morning air is shattered as angry Steel Workers on strike at the Wehr Steel Corporation confront a car caravan of scabs. As the pickets stop car after car, and tires go flat, more and more police arrive to allow the nearly 100 scabs to enter the plant.

475 members of the United Steel Workers of America, Local 2996, have been on strike at Wehr Corporation since May 1st. They are standing firm against a company bargaining team that is attempting to use the economic hard times as a bargaining chip against the strikers.

These foundry workers are on strike against Wehr's attempts to take away time-and-a-half for overtime work, a measly 33¢ wage increase, the company's refusal to give the employees any kind of cost-of-living increase and numerous differences over contract language.

Since a new management team took over at Wehr early last year, the '80 contract had been headed for a show-down. The new management team, who describe themselves as "under 50 and seeking to turn Wehr into a competitive and aggressive growth company" has seen the contract

as a chance to put the screws on its 475 employees. Aggressive growth, the team reasons, can only come to this dirty and old foundry by getting more and more profits out of the workers. Wehr wants more and more production for less and less pay.



As the strike turned from days to weeks, support started coming in from other locals, including a \$500 donation from Steel Worker Local #1527 at Rexnord.

And as the weeks became months, Wehr began hiring scabs. Ads in the Journal and Sentinel have brought about 100 strike breakers and Wehr has announced plans to hire 100 more. Against this, the pickets are standing firm, harassing the scabs and digging in for what seems to be shaping up as a long and bitter battle.

MASTER LOCK STRIKE

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around the need for wage and pension increases and an attempt by the union to get rid of the cap on the COLA. In the last 4 years the Milwaukee area cost-of-living rose over 50%. Master Lock's wages rose only 25-30%. A typical worker lost over \$1.25/hr in real wages, making under \$6.00/hr.

Other issues include a two year contract, voluntary overtime and contract language. Local 469 rejected the company's offer 1049-1.

For its part, the Master Lock management continues to live up to its reputation earned in the violent 1974 strike.

Instead of bargaining they have resorted to outright union busting tactics. They have flatly refused any compromise on their position and have repeated their 1974 tactic of running scabs.

Every morning, like clockwork, they run in over 500 office workers and recently hired scabs to keep production going. They run ads for skilled trades and production workers in the daily papers and have recently expanded their operations to two shifts. They make no bones about their intention to hire more scabs in the fall.

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OVER 500 MARCHED FROM MASTER LOCK TO WASHINGTON PARK TO BUILD THE STRIKERS UNITY AND GET SUPPORT FROM OTHER UNIONS

Labor, Close Ranks

Wehr Steel, Teledyne, Master Lock, Inryco, Geuder Paeschke & Frey, the construction trades and Kearney & Trecker; ALL ON STRIKE AT SOMETIME THIS SUMMER. Now the Briggs and AO Smith unions are talking strike. What the heck is going on?

Area companies are using the current economic recession to try and force through or continue take aways and bad contracts. Meanwhile the Milwaukee workers, with their backs to the wall, have refused to knuckle under to this blackmail and have struck in numbers not seen in this area in many years. Corporations are turning to one of their oldest, dirtiest tricks-the use of "scab" labor to try and break these strikes and the backs

of these local unions. Everywhere company proposals read like the same bad book. They tell us to take it or leave it.

As during the last recession, when the Meatcutters union was totally broken, big business is hell bent on making us workers pay for this system's economic problems. Look at their proposals and tactics.

Productivity-At almost every strike the company has devised a new seniority plan or incentive plan designed to get out more production at less cost. By weakening seniority they are demanding a free hand for using us in whatever way they want.

Wages-At each strike the companies' wage proposals were insults. At places like Wehr Steel and Master



DETERMINED TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE IN THEIR STRIKE-
150 INRYCO STRIKERS & SUPPORTERS MARCH PAST THE PLANT.

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Lock that are trying to just catch up from past contracts with decent cost of living plans, the companies have spit on these proposals, refusing even to bargain. Scabs- Companies like Master Lock and Wehr Steel are using hundreds of unemployed workers and students to take over our very jobs. At a hell hole foundry like Wehr they have the nerve to pay these scabs less than \$5.00 per hour. The police have been there at every turn to make sure the scabs get to work and production continues. With millions unemployed big business is taking clear aim at turning unemployed against employed with them laughing all the way to the bank.

For us, once again, hard times have meant fighting times. Strikers like at Inryco-18 weeks on the bricks-have been willing to sacrifice everything because they know it means their futures and they refuse to be broken.

Who would have thought that in Milwaukee-a union town-scab labor taking union jobs would be an everyday thing? Who would have thought that company after company would offer "next to nothing" contracts and tell the unions to take a jump if they didn't like

it. The workers of Milwaukee have responded. Look at the Masterlock strikers and supporters who marched down Sherman Blvd. demanding their needs be met. Many of the union leaders in these strikes are negotiating their first contracts, having been voted in by a rank and file expecting better contracts.

In the face of all this we must ask where is the Milwaukee Labor Council? Where are our international unions? The sad truth is that they are not responding to these company attacks in any strong way. They are not doing the jobs we pay dues for. **THE TIME IS FOR ACTION.** Support is needed from each and every worker. The outcome of these strikes is of crucial importance to the entire labor movement.

What you can do

1. Donate at the plant gate when collections are taken.
2. Support actions called by strikers. Drop down to one of the picket lines to show your support.
3. Pass resolutions of support including donations in your own local.
4. Demand support and anti-scab action by your international and the Milw. Co. Labor Council.

After Four Months Inryco Settles

After 4 bitter months on strike, the 500 workers at Inryco are back on the job.

They beat back a union busting attack that would have broken down seniority by dividing the plant into separate seniority units. At the same time many members are disgusted with much of the contract language and the wage package which falls far short of people's needs.

However, with the leadership's unanimous recommendation to accept and the length of time on the picket lines, the workers felt they had little choice but to accept the contract.

The determination to carry through an 18-week strike came from years of worsening conditions in the plant. Before the ink dried on the 2nd last contract, 6 years ago, Inryco cut back the dental plan from the 100% coverage they had agreed to. Harassment and verbal abuse from foremen is common as well as discrimination against minority workers. Inryco has made a mockery of the grievance procedure.

As the strike dragged on, the militancy and activity of local members grew. Rank and file members along with union activists from

the UWO organized a solidarity party. Picketline harassment of foremen and office personnel, who were working production, increased.

A unity march that included Inryco strikers, Masterlock strikers, and workers from unions around the area marched right past the plant and through West Milwaukee. The union leadership refused to support and organize this activity. They even openly tried to sabotage the march by telling members not to go. They pulled pickets off the line at noon, claiming a threat of violence, to keep strikers from joining the march. Despite this, the march was a success.

On June 18 Inryco workers voted overwhelmingly against a contract proposal similar to the original offer. The bargaining committee had urged a "no" vote. In force, Inryco workers left the meeting and went to the picket line to give the company their answer to the proposal. Soon after this vote and the unity march the company finally began to bargain seriously.

Local 1934 Boilermakers are now back at work, realizing they did what they had to do.

GPF Shut Down Tight

Workers at Geuder, Paeschke & Frey (GPF) shut down their machines and walked out on strike several weeks ago.

They are fighting against company attacks on seniority rights and incentive rates. The company has not been moving in negotiations, and foremen are working production.

The strike started when GPF made their "first and final" offer at the expiration of the old contract. This offer included demands that seniority not apply to job placements and that GPF has the right to lower piece-work rates.

Since then picket lines have been strong 7 days a

week. Several people have been arrested as the company has used the police to try to keep the strikers in their place.

GPF is not only trying to take advantage of the high unemployment rate, they are also threatening to move more production to their new, non-union plant in Missouri. The workers have vowed to resist this.

In 1975 IAM Local 2110 members at GPF twice marched from work up Muskego Ave. to join Meatcutters from Local 248 during their strike against the packing-houses. Now they are on the front lines, as the industrial valley is again the scene of labor conflict.

Kearney & Trecker Joins Strike Wave

On July 22 over 1000 members of IAM Lodge #76 struck Kearney & Trecker shutting down production. On the first day of picketing management and office personnel were blocked on Highway 100 all the way north to E-94 and south to Greenfield Ave.

The machine tool builders struck for a cost-of-living without a cap, a substantial raise, and a better insur-

ance package. The demand to get a good settlement from K&T was strong among the rank and file. Over 750 workers attended the strike approval meeting. All but 28 voted to shut the plant down.

It seems like this could be a long strike. Old timers recall the 11 week strike in 1967. It's time for K&T to schedule some new talks.

NATIONAL CONTRACT SETTLED

LOCAL TELEDYNE STRIKE CONTINUES!

Right across from Wehr Steel, everything is dead quiet at Teledyne-Wisconsin Motors. Since the middle of June the over 700 workers in UAW Local 283 have had the place shut down tight as a drum.

The national contract, which includes wages, pensions, etc. covers Teledyne plants across the country. Like companies throughout the area, Teledyne is using the bad economy to try and force through a series of take-aways in the local agreement-- in seniority, payments for insurance, and forced overtime.

Disgusted by the company's attitude in the local negotiations and by the money and benefits offered in the national pact, Milwaukee Teledyne workers voted early in July almost unanimously to turn down the national pact.

The national contract went through, partly due to the International's method of counting votes. In the past, the full membership of the local

was counted as having voted, in a "winner take all" vote from each local, no matter how many members actually came to the polls. This time the votes were counted normally, and strikers say the result may have been different if past practice was followed.

Local 283 members point out that a big turnout wasn't pushed here because, under the old rules, it wouldn't have mattered. The International ruling is being appealed. It seems the International is more interested in getting the membership back to work than in winning good contract demands. What makes it worse is that this fighting with the International seems to happen almost every national contract.

As of late July no negotiations are scheduled. With few orders coming in the company is trying to play it tough. Teledyne workers expect a long strike until they get a contract they can live with.

The Milwaukee police have dropped all pretense of being neutral to aid Master Lock in its scab running. Twice a day dozens of "Milwaukee's Finest" rope off the picketers like so many cattle and escort a caravan of hundreds of cars across the Local 469 picket line. Nearly a dozen union members have been arrested for no more than normal picket line activity, such as walking and shouting. This total and deliberate denial of the right to picket has become one of the hottest issues in the strike.

In the past couple of weeks, Local 469 members have begun to take a more aggressive stand in the face of these attacks. Dozens joined in a solidarity march June 21 for the strikers at Inryco Corp (see page 6). This march convinced many Local 469 members to do the same for their own strike. They went back to their lines and talked up the idea. Militant union activists in the Local got together to help build up the strike calling themselves "Strengthen Our Strike." They got behind the march and picnic.

The combination of sharp company attacks, a growing mood among the strikers that "something more needs to be done," and a group that was beginning to organize that sentiment con-

vinced the bargaining committee to give the go-ahead.

Close to 600 Local 469 members, their families and supporters from area unions marched from Master Lock over a mile to Washington Park. At the picnic, strikers heard solidarity messages from a dozen area union, including AMC in Kenosha and Steelworkers Local 65 in Chicago.

The issue of the scabs came up in speech after speech and a Master Lock striker got a big round of applause when she ended her talk by saying, "No matter what else we do, we've got to stop those damn scabs."

"Strengthen Our Strike" (SOS) members have distributed nearly 1000 "victory to the strike" buttons and T-shirts and have pushed for more militancy and spirit on the picket lines. They have also proposed that the union build a mass picket and invite other unions to participate. The union leadership has agreed and leaflets from UAW Local 469 are going out to supporters from other unions across the city to meet at Masterlock Monday morning July 28 at 6 a.m.

Local 469 members have just begun to turn their strike around. Their victory will depend on keeping the momentum they have gained and in part on the solidarity which all union members can offer. Victory to the Masterlock strike.

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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