



Hundreds of unemployed workers marched on Congress in Washington, lived in Tent City in Philly and demonstrated on the 4th. Many stayed to discuss strengthening UWOC as a fighting organization of the unemployed.

Meeting Follows July 4th Demo

UWOC Maps Plans At Conference

Following the victorious July 4th march, the establishment of Tent City of the unemployed in exile, and four days of actions and struggle in Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, unemployed workers took an important first step in organizing their ranks on a national level. Representatives of more than 30 chapters of UWOC met in a day long conference in Philly to discuss the key battlelines for the coming period and to make plans for strengthening organization among unemployed nationally. Representatives cheered as the roll was called and delegates stood up from places as far apart as Hawaii, Los Angeles and Lawrence, Mass.

With official unemployment hovering around 7.5% and an acknowledged 10 million American workers out of a job, the unemployed are organizing their ranks to fight the increasing attacks from the capitalists and their attempts to pit employed and unemployed against each other.

The capitalists have been floating several "different" schemes: so-called public service jobs that would force the unemployed to take low paying jobs in competition with the employed, and "creating jobs through stimulating private industry." And while they are trying to use the national elections to make these different approaches to attacking workers look so different, they both boil down to the same thing—let the unemployed starve, or use the threat of starvation to force them to take jobs that make them a scab force to drive down the wages of their employed class brothers and sisters.

Ford already has plans in the works to cut \$2.5 billion from unemployment benefits—forcing thousands to choose between low paying jobs and welfare—and at the same time to mobilize the unemployed as a force to lower the wage standard of the whole class. The Democrats, with smiling Jimmy Carter at the head and George Meany bringing up the AFL-CIO right behind, have meanwhile lined up behind the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, which opens the door to wage cutting and union busting under the cover of the Democratic platform "to put American back to work."

Hoffman Bill

At the same time, in the areas hit hardest by run-aways and shut downs, the capitalists are trying to offer up the workers in those states as cheap labor, to attract new industry and keep what's there from running away. The attack is spearheaded by the proposed Hoffman Bill in New Jersey, which would deny unemployment insurance to any worker who refuses a job at up to 35% less than what he was making before—offering thousands the choice between working at minimum wage or getting thrown off unemployment compensation. Governor Rhodes of Ohio has said publicly that "we have to make labor in Ohio more competitive," and meanwhile more than a dozen states have attempted to throw thousands off the unemployment rolls by raising the eligibility requirements—

placing more and more workers in a position of taking wage cutting jobs, while dangling the "offer" of outright scab jobs.

In the face of this, UWOC united on placing special emphasis on carrying the slogan "We Won't Scab and We Won't Starve" out among the unemployed and into every one of these battles, as part of the overall campaign for Jobs or Income. Already New Jersey UWOC chapters have been taking on the Hoffman Bill, on June 14 marching right in the chambers of the N.J. State Legislature chanting "The Hoffman Bill's a Scab Bill, We Won't Scab and We Won't Starve!"

This and other actions have helped publicize and organize opposition to this bill, which the ruling class had hoped to sneak by the working class without a struggle. Defeat of this bill, which Hoffman proclaimed to be "Just 10 yards of the mile we have to go," will be a key focus of UWOC's work, concentrating in the N.J. area.

At the same time, UWOC will be mobilizing the unemployed under the slogan "We Won't Scab and We Won't Starve" to build unity between employed and unemployed workers during strikes, not mainly by walking the picketlines, but by organizing against the recruitment of scabs from among the ranks of the unemployed and building around the slogan "Employed—Unemployed, Same Crisis, Same Fight!"

An example was set by the Milwaukee chapter, which had organized unemployed workers to demand (and win!) that the unemployment centers stop sending unemployed workers out to the packinghouses during the 15 month long meatcutters' strike.

All this will be in the context of building the overall campaign for Jobs or Income, focusing on the demand of the working class for jobs. While continuing to use the petition for Jobs or Income (over 250,000 signatures led the July 4th march), UWOC will be seizing on every spark of mass struggle for jobs. Where thousands are gathered at the factory gates for a handful of jobs—UWOC will be there organizing the anger and frustration of the masses into demonstrations for jobs. And UWOC will be uniting with employed workers in the fight against runaways and shutdowns, organizing picket lines and car-caravans, raising funds and organizing defense of Tom Bornson and Lonnie Davis, two brothers without jobs or means of support, sentenced to nine and seven years in prison respectively, for taking over a food stamp office in Portland, Oregon, demanding assistance sooner than see their families starve.

Out of the soil of these isolated and sporadic struggles will grow the organized movement of the working class around unemployment and the system which constantly gives rise to it.

Through all this came through the necessity of building UWOC among more recently unemployed industrial workers as a base to go out among all the unemployed—to build it among those who most readily

grasp not just the necessity of hitting back at the capitalists, but the potential of the working class to change and remold all of society—those who most readily grasp the working class as a productive class and whose first demand is for jobs.

With this orientation, building off the strength of the unemployed pulling their forces together in the Philly-Washington, D.C. actions in the first national demonstration since the '30s, UWOC will be back out there among all sections of the unemployed—at the unemployment centers, the hiring halls, in the communities, wherever the unemployed are to be found.

National Convention Planned

Out of the conference and four days of struggle, more unity was reached on the orientation and direction for struggle in the coming period. UWOC is beginning to pull together as a national organization and pull together the struggles of the unemployed on a national level. The conference called for the first national UWOC convention to be held sometime in the spring, building off all the struggles of the unemployed UWOC will be in the thick of. Recognizing the potential strength of a united nationwide organization of the unemployed, the delegates at the conference stood up and cheered when the proposal was made.

Bitter battles against the capitalists and their system are ahead. The unity and organization that workers are developing, and which was reflected in the victory of the July 1-4 demonstration in Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia are a big step forward.

Delegates left the UWOC meeting determined to go back to their own cities and build on this victory and to work to make leaps in developing UWOC as a powerful weapon for the working class. ■

1,500 Erupt Against Cops In Ohio Walkout

All hell broke loose earlier this month in Sidney, Ohio, when hundreds of strikers and townspeople waged a pitched battle with police and sheriff's deputies, after the cops had attacked a picketline at the nearby striking Copeland Manufacturing plant, which makes electrical equipment.

Anger had been building up for a long time. Contract talks had gone on and on. The officials of the IUE had signed an early-bird contract, which the rank and file immediately rejected. When the contract expired, the workers had walked—only to be told by the International that it was an "unsanctioned strike." Thirteen workers were fired.

Ten days later, the 2600 Copeland workers walked out again, this time with union authorization, determined to win a substantial wage increase (the average pay is only \$4.00 an hour) and win back the jobs for the thirteen.

In the past the strikers said, when a contract expired, "we went out on a short strike, everybody went fishing and we came back with nothing." This time the company began hiring scabs and the workers decided it was time for action.

All day Thursday, July 15, mass picketing blocked the front gate. This continued on Friday and was clearly beginning to have some effect as trucks and scabs turned away.

On Friday evening, July 16, as it began to get dark, approximately sixty people were on the picket line outside the main gate. Spirits were high and Copeland was getting scared. To break the workers' spirit the company called the cops to enforce the injunction they'd obtained. Cops from every county and town within fifty miles responded to the company's call. They arrived in full riot gear with dogs, tear gas and shot guns at the ready. But the strikers stood their ground as the whole picket line took up the chant, "We Are United!"

The Sidney police chief stalked over to the picket line and tried to serve copies of the injunction on the strikers. But no one would accept these scraps of paper and they fluttered uselessly to the ground. Backing off, the cops turned water hoses on the picketers, but people just sat down and wouldn't budge.

The cops then viciously beat and arrested twenty-five people, including a woman who was nine months pregnant.

Pushed beyond endurance the brothers and sisters

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