

Seize the Time in '77!

Call For a National Workers Organization

The following call from the Organizing Committee for a National Workers Organization has been sent to workers' organizations in many industries and areas and is being distributed in the tens of thousands to workers across the country—Ed.

Fellow workers,

Working people are catching hell on all sides. Millions walk the streets unemployed, while those on the job are driven harder and faster. The threat of war hangs over our heads like a dark cloud. Our cities, schools and neighborhoods are falling apart. Inequality and discrimination are rampant on the job and throughout society. We are caught in a vise between the crime that stalks the streets and the terror of the police. Our very labor is stolen and twisted into a means to tighten the chains of oppression on us. Everything is sacrificed to the god of profits. The result is continued chaos and suffering for the great majority of people.

The class of profit seekers tells us that these are separate problems, faced by small and isolated groups of people. They try to divide us by industry, union, nationality and other ways. But these problems all come from one source—their class and their system. We are one class, men and women of all nationalities with one common interest in fighting all this.

We have fought these attacks in a hundred different ways, from filing a grievance to battles throughout industries and in our unions, to nationwide strikes in the coalfields, auto and rubber plants. We have battled their attempts to cut our unemployment benefits, stood up to their police terror, and raised our voices against military aggression and threats of war in South-east Asia, Southern Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. In the summer of '76 we marched over 3,000 strong in the streets of Philadelphia on July 4th, the day the rulers of this country celebrated 200 years of their rule. We rallied around our own banner declaring: "We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years—Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!" And we have built organizations to wage these battles.

In the advances we have made, we have come up

against the fact that the attacks we face and the battles we must wage, still are bigger than the organization we have developed. We need a national organization of workers, that rallies and solidifies the active fighters from our class to mobilize the millions of workers in the plants of this country into a mighty force, fighting every key battle, and rallying others behind them. We need an organization that can unleash the potential strength and power that exists in the plants, mines and mills where millions of us are concentrated, turning every factory into a fortress of struggle.

Now is the time to take a bold step. Now is the time to unite our fighting ranks all across the country. Now is the time to build one national organization, an organization of the working class of people to serve as a united center of leadership in all the battles we face, that mobilizes the strength and power of the millions in our class. Only the working class has the power, only we have the strength, only we can forge the unity to stop the way things are going, to turn things in this country around.

On February 19th, workers from around the country gathered in Cleveland, Ohio to build this important organization. From the struggles in the coalfields in West Virginia, the steel mills in Gary, the auto plants in Detroit, the fields in California, out of the many battles our class is waging we came determined to take this vital and necessary step. On February 19th, we resolved to hold a convention on Labor Day, 1977 in Chicago, Illinois to launch this organization, and we laid the beginning plans for this.

The organization must be firmly rooted in the struggles in the plants and industries, against speedup, wage cuts and the other attacks that come down there. This is not a call for a new union, or an organization to replace the unions. An important part of our fight is to break the chains the union officials put on our struggles, kick the traitors out, and fight to make the unions into weapons in the hands of the rank and file. But that is not all—we must have an organization that is rooted in the plants and industries, an organization geared to mobilizing our ranks around campaigns of our entire class. Think what it would have meant if

during the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, or the recent strikes of auto, mining, and rubber workers, we had an organization to mobilize the strength of the working class on a national level in these fights.

The question has been raised; how can we do something this big; maybe we should clean up our own backyards first?

Yes, we have to clean house wherever we can. But how can our backyard be kept clean when it's sitting in the middle of a garbage dump? With millions laid off, the threat of war, and our futures and children's future pointing to more of the same and worse, we have to deal with the entire garbage dump. If we don't, who will?

There are some who ask, do we really need such an organization now; maybe we should just concentrate on changing our unions? It is true our unions have been ripped off and we must fight to retake them. But we cannot and will not wait to kick the rats off our union ship before we stand up for ourselves. The enemy we face is more than the traitors who have seized our unions and the battles we must wage are bigger than the fight to control our unions. At all times we need a vehicle to rally the ranks of our working class inside and outside the unions to deal with the burning questions that face us—the threat of war, unemployment, discrimination, and countless other attacks on the job and throughout society. At any given time we need to use this vehicle to concentrate the forces of our class against the main forms of these attacks. We must take these battles head on, relying on the strength that we have as a single united class with one common interest.

There are some who say that building a national workers organization is a good idea, but ask is it really possible?

The fact is that it is impossible to continue going forward by fighting only in smaller groups and local battles, isolated from each other. If we can fight so hard in hundreds of smaller battles involving thousands and even millions of people, why not make this step that will allow us to move these thousands and millions in a more unified and co-ordinated way?

Yes, this is a bold step, but the times and conditions call for, demand it. It can be done, but it is up to us to do it. Area organizing committees are being set up in every part of the country to rally our fellow workers to this course.

We must get down to the business of getting our class organized, taking all the necessary steps to prepare for the founding convention in Chicago on Labor Day. We must mobilize the largest numbers of our class brothers and sisters around this cause.

**Seize the Time in '77—
Build a National Workers Organization!
On to Chicago Labor Day Weekend!**