



1500 at Founding Convention

Workers Unite, Form Fighting Organization!

Fourteen hundred and thirty-eight registered participants and 50 registered observers from other organizations and the press packed into the Great Hall of Chicago's Pick Congress Hotel, Labor Day weekend for the founding convention of the National United Workers Organization. Workers came from every major industry and area of the country. There were garment workers from New York, San Francisco and El Paso; 200 electrical workers from Boston to San Jose; farmworkers from Salinas, Ca. and Hawaii. More than 130 steel workers came together from the mills of Seattle, Cleveland, New Jersey, Pittsburgh and other places. About 150 auto workers from Detroit, Wisconsin, Ohio, California and the East Coast joined miners from the coalfields of West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Veteran workers and young men and women of all nationalities stood shoulder to shoulder and thundered out enthusiastic cheers as the opening session was called to order. Excitement and the sense that this was an historic occasion could be felt throughout the hall.

At the front of the auditorium, rising from behind the speaker's platform, hung a giant, two-story high, multicolored banner, emblazoned with the motto of the National United Workers Organization. Off to the right of the stage a specially built sound booth provided simultaneous translations in Spanish and Chinese to scores of participants. Bright banners ringed the hall from the balcony: "Pull Together—Jalemos Juntos," "NYC Hospital Workers Say: Stick It To Them! Build a National Workers Organization! On to Chicago!"

For two days the assembled workers met in workshops, plenary sessions, and informally in the hallways and over meals to exchange experiences, discuss and debate how to carry forward the struggle of the working class in a more organized and concentrated way against all the garbage people suffer at the hands of the class of rich owners who run society.

Workers fresh from hundreds of daily battles were in the hall and addressed the sessions. The feeling of the common war being waged by workers on many different battlefields was given voice when the MC at the opening session on Saturday announced that there were workers present from picket lines all over the country: Essex in Indiana, Signal Control in Milwaukee, Rylock in the San Francisco Bay Area, General Dynamics, the list went on and the audience picked it up, calling out the other strikes they represented.

Powerful Opening Session

Speakers at the opening session were given tremendous ovations, not only for what they said, but in recognition of the struggles each represented and the potential strength each was bringing to the formation of this organization. People felt that here were brothers and sisters, fellow workers who were standing up to fight for their class, standing up to the high and mighty and their flunkies who dish out phoney solutions and work to keep the working class divided.

Older workers, veteran class fighters, were received enthusiastically by younger workers who could see in them the determination and continuity of the working class struggle against exploitation and oppression. These veteran workers for their part could see the great importance of this convention. For the first time in several decades, the working class was going to have a nationwide, mass organization to mobilize its ranks and fight for its interests.

The rich always tell workers that they can never get together, that they are and will remain divided along nationality. This convention was living contradiction of these lies and people knew it. There was real excitement about the multinational character of the assembly. White, Black, Asian, Latin, workers of many nationalities were coming together as brothers and sisters, united in a common struggle against a common enemy. Workers of all nationalities felt the determination of this organization to fight all forms of discrimination and national oppression. The Proclamation issued by the con-

Continued on Page 2



Workers gathered in Chicago, the nation's largest industrial center and scene of momentous battles of the working class in the past, to form a nationwide organization that will carry forward the working class' proud history of struggle.

Proclamation of the National United Workers Organization

Working people are tired of being pushed around, driven down and sold out. For too long we have been the victims of the companies' ruthless drive for profit. For too long we have taken the brunt of their decaying and corrupt system which offers no improvement except to the rich. For too long we have suffered the realization that the future they offer us holds no promise, only more of the same and worse.

Fellow workers. The working class and the employing class have nothing in common!

We are told we have union leaders at the top who speak for our interests. But the fact is the kind of labor movement they talk about and promote is a total disgrace, not even worthy of the name "labor." These lazy, overstuffed company-loving sellouts who head our unions are a disgrace to every hard working man and woman in this country. They are a dishonor to our parents and grandparents who built these unions through years of sacrifice and struggle.

They charge us with disrupting the union movement. It has already been disrupted—by them. We are not organizing to eliminate the unions and we will fight like hell against all attempts to bust them. We are organizing to eliminate the unions and we will fight like hell against all attempts to bust them. We are organizing for the purpose of putting the unions back into the hands of the rank and file, for the purpose of organizing the unorganized into unions, for the purpose of rebuilding the unions into strong, fighting organizations.

We have nothing in common with the companies and the company men in our unions!

The owners and their politicians tell us that the work-

ing class can never unite. Yet this same employing class oppresses different nationalities, discriminates by race, color and sex and pushes every possible division in order to further its own enrichment. We are organizing for the purpose of uniting white, Black, Mexican, Chicano, Puerto Rican—workers of all nationalities—both men and women. We are organizing to defend foreign-born workers against deportation, to blame the rich and not each other for the problems we face. We are organizing to eliminate discrimination and all forms of oppression of different nationalities on the job and throughout society.

We have nothing in common with those who discriminate against one nationality to keep all of us down!

There can be no peace with the employing class that throws millions into the streets like useless machinery set out to rust. There can be no peace with our cities falling apart, monuments to the owning class' drive for profits, and another war for their empire gathering on the horizon. Between the working class and the employing class there can only be an organized and protracted struggle.

Today we are building on the proud tradition of our forefathers who waged a powerful and heroic struggle against these arrogant moneybrokers. Faced with a growing crisis and increasing attacks, we are organizing to revive the spirit and build on the struggle waged in the 1930s and carry it forward. Working people produce everything. We have the right, ability and responsibility to change our society. We are determined that our children and theirs will have a brighter future. Through organization and struggle we will change these conditions and the rich be damned! ■



Mike Rosen, From the Opening Session of the Convention

The owning class tells us we can never get together, but we're together all the time. We're together on the picket line, we're together on the unemployment line, and when we go over in the army we get together on the chowline, and dammit, we get together on the assembly line. We work in there and slave in those shops, on those assembly lines and in those plants—all of us together of all nationalities and all ages—why don't we turn this fact that we're all together in there, this tremendous potential, into something for us. We can turn the fact that millions of us are slaving in those plants and thrown together in the mills and the mines, we can turn it to our advantage by mobilizing our concentrated numbers into an organized force, turning every factory, every mill, every mine into a fortress of struggle in this country. ■

Interview With Buddy Cochran

Buddy Cochran was the man who rammed his car into a Ku Klux Klan rally on July 2. He spoke at the NUWO convention to the thunderous applause of the 1500 workers present. Buddy gave this interview to *The Worker* at the convention.

Worker: Tell me about why you took the action that you did in Plains.

Cochran: I've been battling the Klan for years, and this time in the President's home town I went over to listen to them and they finally touched me off enough to do something. They spread their lies and get down on people that I feel I owe something to. I feel I owe the Black community something because a Black man saved my life in 'Nam. I took my action not realizing that other people also hate the Klan, so I went ahead and took the action that I took in defence of the Black people.

Worker: What sort of effect do you think racist, fascist groups like the Klan and the Nazis can have? . . .

Cochran: Well, the power of words has a big effect on people. And groups like the Klan, or the Nazis—their words can actually undermine the foundation of the working people. Working people build the country, and you start undermining the foundation, and you start separating people against people, you're going to have a weak foundation. Like I said, the working people are the foundation of this country, they've got to stay together, they got to work together—and they've got to take these fascist groups and just terminate them.

Worker: Who do you think is behind groups like the KKK?

Cochran: That's a hard question. I think they're just

NUWO...

Continued from Page 1

vention to the American working class said: "We have nothing in common with those who discriminate against one nationality to keep all of us down!"

The crowd roared to its feet, cheering at the surprise introduction of Buddy Cochran, the worker who had smashed up the KKK rally with his car in Jimmy Carter's hometown last July 4. Chants of "Free Buddy Cochran!" boomed off the walls. His message was direct: "Now is the time for men and women of all races, colors, nationalities, the people whose hands are calloused just like mine, yours, to start up against these people . . . Now is the time to take the rich man's lynchmen, like the KKK and the Nazis and other such crud, to put them exactly where they belong . . .!"

What Type of Organization?

Throughout the weekend workers addressed the question of just what kind of organization this will be, what its purposes are and what it will do. People had come to this convention because they were fighters and because they saw the need to get their battles organized a lot better and more broadly. They wanted this to be a fighting organization and programs for action were debated and planned. This orientation was shown in a powerful demonstration on Sunday against the divide and conquer schemes and the threat of racist attacks in Chicago around the opening of schools (see accompanying story).

Everyone recognized that the numbers of workers gathered to form the NUWO, though significant, were small in comparison to the millions of working people across the land. But everyone also knew that the workers at this convention reflected the aspirations of hundreds of thousands, even millions, more.

As a slogan used in building for the convention and repeated often throughout the weekend put it, people are "tired of being pushed around, driven down and sold out!" What came clear in all the stories, discussion and experiences shared at this convention is that at every turn, in every aspect of society, the interests of the working class are different from, and opposed to, the interests of the class of rich owners, the parasites who do no work, but drive the working class like slaves and take the fruits of their labor.

The banner hanging from the Great Hall, proclaiming "Workers Unite to Lead the Fight Against All Oppression," came alive in the convention as workers from all over the country saw that they face a common battle

the rich man's henchmen. They're just like the executioners or slavedrivers for the plantation owners. The plantation owners had somebody that kept the slaves in line, and that's exactly what the Klan are—they're the rich man's slavedrivers trying to undermine and separate the working people.

Worker: Do you consider yourself a member of the NUWO?

Cochran: Yes, I consider myself a member because I'm a working man, and I want to have a voice along with the people and in the unions.

Cochran (Miscellaneous Remarks): . . . My classification of a Klansman is a guy that went to bed drunk, got up and put the sheet on, and is nothing but a village idiot . . . I don't know if I'll get off completely, but we'll sure give 'em a fight . . . We're going to go on a national speaking tour, gonna swing up by the Pendleton 14 and give 'em my solidarity, then down through to Columbus and do something with them [the six people arrested at a demonstration against a Klan rally there on July 4] . . . Put us all together, and you can call us the "chicken plucker 21." ■



Few will forget the enthusiasm and militancy of the convention.

against the same enemy. And it became clearer to many that this same enemy is responsible for all misery and oppression in society. The speaker from the African Liberation Support Committee described the contingent of 300 workers led by the Organizing Committee for a National Workers Organization which had marched in Washington on May 28 under the slogan "Fight Imperialism and National Oppression from the USA (United States of America) to the USA (Union of South Africa)." And a coal miner told how steel workers marched shoulder to shoulder with coal miners from Pennsylvania through the streets of Johnstown, Pa. against the closing of the Bethlehem Steel plant.

The conditions were ripe for the formation of this National United Workers Organization. The attacks on the lives and living standards of the working class and the masses of people are increasing daily. Faced with the threat of depression and another war, with continued inflation and the deterioration of the cities, schools and public services, confronting stepped-up racial discrimination, getting nothing but lies and empty promises from the politicians, people are looking for some answers—looking for a way forward.

Now Is the Time!

Right now, as the rich move with an ever heavier hand against the masses of people, at a time when the struggle of workers across the country is growing and experience has been gained in areawide organizations like the United Workers Organizations in Milwaukee, New York and the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as in a few industry-wide groups such as in steel and auto, the need is urgent and the possibility there to build the National United Workers Organization as a key force in the class struggle.

At the same time, as the Proclamation states: "the official labor movement talked about and promoted by the hacks is a disgrace." Unions once built through the struggle and even the blood of our fathers and grandfathers have been taken over by overstuffed, labor lieutenants of the employers, turned from fighting organizations of the working class by these traitors who eat with the bosses, think like the bosses and sleep with the bosses. Worker after worker got up to give examples of these attacks and the outrageous behavior of the sellout union leadership.

The convention's Proclamation made clear the determination of the NUWO to fight to retake and rebuild the unions, to put them back into the hands of the rank and file. "We are not organizing to eliminate the unions," it says. "We are organizing for the purpose of eliminating that form of 'unionism' which finds more in common with the bosses than with the workers . . . We have nothing in common with the companies and the company men in our unions!"

The 170 workers who had gathered in Cleveland in February had called on fellow workers to "Seize the Time in '77" and build a national workers organization. The 1438 workers who came together in Chicago Labor Day weekend had come to see that it had to be done, that it could be done and they did it.

The NUWO will be an important weapon in the hands of the working class for organizing its struggle, for focusing and concentrating its forces on the most important battles and for fanning the sparks of struggle that arise into classwide battles. In this way what are now small numbers, relative to the whole class of workers, will be able to build and lead big battles, and the active fighters who came together to form the NUWO will be able to reach out to thousands more and increase their ranks. This was behind the resolutions passed by the convention to take up the miners' contract battle this year and the fight against dismantling unemployment insurance as major campaigns of the organization.

In the industrial workshops on Saturday afternoon, workers got a clearer picture of the direction of things

Continued on Page 6

Statement by the RCP

Communist Speaks To Convention

At the closing session of the founding convention of the National United Workers Organization several statements of solidarity were given by representatives of other organizations. Among them was a speech by Vern Bown of the Revolutionary Communist Party, a warehouseman from Oakland, California, a veteran fighter for the working class and lifelong communist. Vern participated, as a member of the old Communist Party, USA, in many important battles. In 1937 he fought as a volunteer in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in defense of the Spanish Republic against the fascist forces of Generalissimo Franco supported by Hitler and Mussolini. He organized for the National Maritime Union before and during World War 2. He was indicted for sedition in Louisville, Kentucky for organizing workers to defend a Black family that moved into an all white area. When the CPUSA abandoned the working class and the cause of revolution in the mid-'50s, Vern stuck to his guns, left the CP, and continued to fight for the workers' interests. In the 1960s when many young people came forward out of the antiwar movement and the Black liberation struggle to take up the fight for revolution, Vern and other veteran fighters united with them. Later, Vern became a founding member of the Revolutionary Communist Party in 1975. (The Worker is put out under the leadership of the RCP.)



Vern Bown, Revolutionary Communist Party.

Fellow Workers, Brothers and Sisters,

The RCP sees this convention as an historic event. A giant step forward for the working people of this country in their constant battle against the fat parasites that we work for every day of our lives. A time that these same fatcats will look back on and curse. And millions of workers will remember and rejoice.

We all know that the attacks of the bosses have been coming down on us harder and harder; that's why we're here. Because we have come up against the hard fact that the attacks we face and the battles we must wage are still bigger than the organizations we have developed. That is why the National United Workers Organization that has been formed here this weekend is important. The working class must have an organization that unites its active fighters to mobilize and bring to bear its united strength in every battle we wage.

This is not the first time the working class in this country has fought their capitalist oppressors. That has been going on since the growth of the capitalist system and the working class along with it. The U.S. working class has a proud tradition of struggle and what is hap-

The NUWO and Anti-Communism

One resolution presented to the convention dealt with what the stand of the National United Workers Organization should be toward anti-communism. Because of a lack of time at the convention, this resolution was not able to be discussed and was referred to the national steering committee to organize further discussion throughout the organization.

The proposed resolution would bar membership to members of fascist organizations like the KKK and the Nazis. The resolution declares that membership in the NUWO would be "open to any and all who stand for the interests of the working class of people, to all fighters who have shown through their actions which side of the fence they're on."

The resolution goes on to point out, "... we refuse to be suckered into the bosses' tricks of trying to lump together fascists and communists. We stand against anti-communism and red-baiting. Both are tried and true con games used by the rich over the years to split our ranks."

This resolution hits the nail on the head. Anti-communism is a weapon in the hands of the bosses used not only to drive communists, who are fighters for the working class, out of the unions and other working class organizations but also to attack all militant fighters and to spread disunity. For these reasons, it is important that as the National United Workers Organization goes into the thick of struggle and helps to lead it forward it does not knuckle under to the enemy's red-baiting and anti-communism.

As to what ideology and long-range goals are in the interests of the working class and the people—that is a question which the workers should and will decide for themselves—without any red-baiting interference from the capitalists. ■

pening here is following in that tradition.

The freeing of the slaves during the Civil War gave impetus to the growth of industrialization and along with it the growth of the working class and gave a powerful boost to its struggle, including the fight for the eight hour day.

From the organizing of the National Labor Union shortly after the Civil War, the early battles in the coal fields and the frame-up and murder of the Molly Maguires, the first nationwide railroad strike in 1877 and hundreds of other battles, through the tremendous upheavals and organizing drives of the 1930s the working class has fought.

I lived through some of the history of the '30s and I remember the impact it had on me. The feeling of pride in the strength and power of workers when we were organized and fighting the bosses we hated.

I remember the terrible depression that started in 1929. The worst of many that had struck periodically before. This time with 17 million out of work.

I remember the 1934 longshore strike on the West coast and the hysterical screams of "communist" by the bosses' newspapers in their attempt to turn worker against worker. But the workers were not to be sidetracked so easily.

The mass organizing drives by the CIO in auto, steel, rubber, packinghouse and many other industries scared the hell out of the capitalists, organizing millions of workers to fight against the hated bosses in a way that had only been a dream before.

The working class fought on other fronts as well. During the first world war they put up powerful resistance to that imperialist bloodbath, and Eugene Debs, a great socialist leader of the American workers, went to prison for his leadership in that battle.

During the '30s the working class led the fight against the frame-up and attempted murder of nine young Black men in Scottsboro, Alabama, finally freeing them. And they sent over 2000 of their sons and daughters to Spain to join the Spanish people in their fight against fascism. And when we went we felt that we were not only helping the Spanish people but that we were linking up with the international working class in a battle against the same enemy we had been fighting at home, only a more brutal form of it.

But the capitalists never stopped scheming to take back what they had lost in the '30s. During the Second World War our rulers cleaned up the largest part of the spoils and there was a period of relative prosperity. And, as the struggle ebbed, the capitalists took the offensive. Through red-baiting and vicious lies and attacks on communists in the unions they were able to promote their stooges into office and drive the communists and other militants out of many unions.

Where they were unable to do this, they split some unions and drove them out of the CIO. These attacks weakened the working class and its ability to fight for many years. Now, as this temporary and limited prosperity has been disappearing and the capitalist crisis deepens, we see a new generation of workers beginning to rise in struggle again, resisting the attacks of the capitalists and organizing to fight them.

This plunging of society into crisis, depression and the destruction of war has gone on generation after generation, and generation after generation of workers has fought back against it. And it will continue this way until the working class carries its struggle through and resolves the conflict by revolution. As communists, we believe there are only two classes in society which

are capable of ruling society. The working class or the capitalist class. Workers have built and we produce everything in this society. Why shouldn't we run it? The capitalists run it for profit at the expense of the workers. The workers would run it for the benefit of the people, transform society to put an end to the division into rich and poor, exploiter and exploited, and establish the community of people who both work and administer society at the same time.

All my life I have been a worker and most of my working life I have been a communist. And I have never seen these two as being in any way separate, or contradictory. As I have always seen it, to be a communist you must be a fighter for the working class.

We recognize, of course, that the National United Workers Organization is not a communist organization and we don't expect it to be. Together all of us at this convention have formulated a program and a basis of unity. The basis of unity being that we have nothing in common with the owning class and we must battle them at every turn, on every question, and every step of the way.

So long as we hold to that, this will be a fighting organization, carrying forward the cause of the working class. This will be an organization where there is plenty of room for discussion and struggle over all the issues that come up and where we welcome all ideas that help advance the fight against our common enemy. And through the course of struggle and uniting with thousands and millions of workers in battle with the enemy we will come to even stronger unity around what the interests of the working class are and what the future of society is in the fullest sense.

We are proud to have helped to build this organization and to have participated in this convention, together with many other workers, and we will certainly continue to work, together with many more workers, to build this organization as a powerful force in the workers movement. It is in this spirit and with this determination that we greet this convention and the founding of the National United Workers Organization.

Thank you. ■



Oden Ng, pictured at right in front of the I-Hotel.

Oden Ng, Workers Committee to Fight for the International Hotel and Victory Building

The battle to keep the rulers of San Francisco from evicting the tenants of the International Hotel and tearing it down for a parking lot has raged for years in that city. Although the tenants were finally evicted by massive military force, the battle continues. When Oden was introduced, the crowd leapt to its feet.

The International Hotel began as a very little thing. There's about eighty or sixty old men in there and you can push them out. They forgot one thing: those old men were old fighters!

Now I am an old man. In the early '30s I was not a leader of the San Francisco General Strike, I was just actively involved because I was a member of the Trade Union Unity League . . .

In the early '30s it was unemployment and hunger. We'd been kicked. We'd been pushed around. And we had a president of the union, Green (AFL) and in the longshoremen had a king, Joe Ryan. You ever hear of a king, Joe Ryan? Because he say he's the president of the Longshoremen's Association for life. And the rank and file organized a strike in San Francisco, and this strike spread throughout the West Coast. And because the rank and file controlled the strike committee, the king Ryan say, "You are illegal! You are wildcat!" And the workers say, "We are not 'cat'—we are tigers!" . . . And that's how the San Francisco General Strike came into being, because the Trade Union Unity League and all the others moved the sentiment of the whole city, and those labor fakers had to carry something off. ■

Convention Maps Battle Plans

The heart of the two-day conference was the discussion around what stand to take on the major issues and struggles of the day and how the National United Workers Organization is going to enter key battlefields to carry out its work.

The convention voted to take up two major national campaigns—one demanding union jobs at union pay for the unemployed and an end to the cuts in unemployment benefits, and the other in support of the miners in their upcoming contract battle.

Now, with the formation of the NUWO, the working class can begin to deal with issues like these that affect it coast to coast on a scale impossible before this convention.

In the plenary sessions and the workshops, as people spoke out about their own experiences and other struggles they had known, a single picture began to emerge—a picture of a system which has caused a million wrongs which cry out to be righted. Yet at the same time, the participants were also confronted with the fact that if the NUWO was to enable active fighters scattered in different industries around the country to unite and begin to arouse and organize the strength of the working class in its millions, the new organization would have to focus on a few key battles, drawing the line between the interests of the ownership class and the working class, so as to unite the most workers against them around a fighting program.

The campaigns are around burning issues which affect a great many workers directly or indirectly. They are battles on which workers across the country can link up with each other as part of a broader workers movement, building their understanding, organization and ability to fight. This, in turn, will both strengthen and be strengthened by the ability of the industrial sections of the NUWO to carry out campaigns within particular industries, and it will help strengthen the ability of workers to take up the battles that arise in their own shops.

In this way, the tremendous unity and power which was felt so strongly in the convention of 1500 workers can become a force through which the relatively small number of active workers can swing millions into motion.

Campaign on Unemployment

The campaign on unemployment will be aimed squarely against the government and its attacks on the unemployed. The cutback in unemployment benefits from 65 to 39 and 26 weeks, Carter's phoney "jobs" program and his welfare program which are meant to force the unemployed to accept minimum wage jobs and in many places replace higher paid union labor—all this is designed to make the unemployed even more desperate by removing the few benefits which stand between them and the street, using their desperation to undercut employed workers' wages and working conditions. Instead of opposing him, Meany and the rest of the AFL-CIO chiefs have all supported Carter in these moves.



Workers spoke from the floor to exchange their experience and understanding, and to discuss the road forward.



Workers listen attentively to the proceedings.

In opposition, the NUWO convention resolved "that we demand: 1) No more cuts in benefits. That the unemployed receive benefits as long as they are out of work. b) Down with Carter's slave wage law and all other rules and regulations which force the unemployed to take low paying jobs. c) All government jobs programs including workfare must be union jobs at union wages."

To put teeth into these demands, the NUWO will join with the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) in a mass demonstration in Washington, D.C. in January when Carter gives his State of the Union speech. Building up to this demonstration there will be other demonstrations in October on a regional level, and a petition which will be taken out to the broadest number of workers possible along with the demand that Carter and the Congress meet with the representatives who will present this petition.

The convention resolution and the discussion around it both put special emphasis on the crucial importance of taking this campaign "into every plant, every factory in the country to build broad support and mobilize our fellow workers to stand and fight." This will mean, in addition to organizing employed workers to come to these actions, using the petition and finding other ways to make it an issue and build support in the factories, and fighting within the unions to get them to endorse the campaign and support it in concrete ways, such as raising money to send official delegations, and the formation of employed/unemployed committees in the unions as key weapons in the fight against unemployment. These committees, made up of laid off workers and their fellow union members still on the job, will help concentrate the strength of the working class as a whole in this fight. Campaigns taken up by the industrial sections, such as the one against layoffs and shutdowns in steel will be linked to this overall national campaign.

Campaign on Miners Contract

The importance of the second campaign, on the miners' contract, was brought out by a speaker who called for the NUWO to "spread the sparks developing in those coalfields to the rest of the working class in this country." As another speaker pointed out, the whole working class is not on the front line of battle all the time, but rather, at various times various groups of workers surge ahead like a forward battalion in battle, where their strength and ability to make gains is in large part determined by the backing they get from the battalions at the rear. In turn, these advanced battalions can win victories which can help the whole working class advance.

"There's a war going on in the coalfields," explains the resolution, referring to the thousands of wildcat strikes since the signing of the 1974 contract and the three big wildcats (including one taking place just before the NUWO convention) on the one hand, and the sellout contract, taking away of medical benefits, the injunctions, jailing, blackmail and red-baiting of the bosses on the other. In trying to smash the miners' wildcat movement and rob them of the right to strike altogether, the capitalists are not only trying to protect their profits in the coalfields, they are also reacting in fear faced with the powerful example and inspiration the miners struggle provides all workers. This makes it all the more important that the National United Workers Organization, as an organization of the working class, take up the battle around the miners' contract which expires December 6.

The capitalists have already launched a propaganda campaign to divide the miners from their fellow workers. They spread the lie that the miners just don't want to work, that their strikes are just an excuse to go fishing. Especially in the various industries directly related

Other Resolutions

To give our readers an idea of some of the things that the NUWO and its industrial sections will take up, we are printing a few of the decisions and recommendations reached by some of the workshops at the convention. These resolutions were referred to the National Steering Committee for further discussion:

—The steel workers workshop agreed to make the fight against plant closings and layoffs at Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna, NY and Johnstown, Pa. a national fight in the industry, voting to call a demonstration in Pittsburgh or Johnstown as part of this fight.

They also voted to support the Hussmann strike in St. Louis, including putting an ad in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* and raised \$189.00 toward covering the cost.

—Meatcutters from ten cities met. They discussed the importance of the current strike at Iowa Beef in Nebraska where the nation's largest meat packer is going all out to try to bust the union. They voted to take up the fight to defeat Iowa Beef and tie it into the whole pattern of attacks and union busting coming down in that industry. One way to do this is taking up the boycott of Iowa Beef.

—A resolution from the city crisis workshop addressed the question of how to deal with the situation that arises when the ruling class tries to "blame welfare, Blacks, and the unions for the crisis," or when the top labor officials pledge the support of labor for calls to tighten the belt. The resolution calls on the NUWO to fight around the attacks on city workers and cuts in social services. It puts forward the slogan "Fight Every Layoff! Fight Every Cutback! Make the Bosses and Bankers Pay!"

—The garment workshop voted to take up a campaign in garment centers to defeat the piece-rate system.

—A workshop on organizing the unorganized workers into unions. The resolution it passed calls for opposing section 14b of the Taft-Hartley that allows "right to work" laws in many states, especially the South. The employers have long used this to keep the few existing unions there weak and the workers unorganized. The resolution also stresses the importance of the rank and file taking matters into its own hands.

—The discrimination workshop discussed and passed a resolution in support of affirmative action in hiring and against the "Bakke decision," a court decision which wipes out affirmative action programs in universities and has implications for such programs in industry. The workshop also passed a resolution against deportations and against Carter's phoney "amnesty" plan for "illegals."

—The auto workshop passed a resolution calling for support for the seven Trenton Chrysler workers who were fired in a four and a half day heat walk-out, where the question of the fight against inhuman working conditions, the right of union leaders to stand with the rank and file, and defense of the right to strike were sharply posed. As part of this fight, resolutions will be raised in auto locals throughout the country.

They also united to oppose the top leaders' proposed merger with the AFL-CIO which at present would only mean unity of the bloated toads at the top and would weaken the rank and file. ■

Continued on Page 5

Songs of the Struggle



"Which Side Are You On?" was the theme of a night of entertainment at the National United Workers Organization founding convention. The song, still sung today, was written by Florence Reece in the time of the struggle to build the United Mine Workers Union. Coal miner members of the NUWO and their families kicked off the program with this song. The music of the different nationalities and different regions of the country were represented, and there were poems and a dramatic reading. The program was highlighted with a set by Prairie Fire, who have released two singles and an album. The material was all produced by activists in the different struggles and to serve the overall fight. Many of the groups participated in events and plant gate rallies to build for the convention.

Of good artistic quality, and reflecting the aspirations of the people, the entertainment showed the growing potential of working class culture as a joy to the people and a true weapon in the fight against the enemy capitalist class. ■

Battle Plans...

Continued from Page 4

to coal, like steel, they blame layoffs on the miners and try to pit steel workers against them. They issue warnings about how the wildcat movement is fueling inflation and making the "energy crisis" worse. They even appeal to the miners to give up the fight for their interests in the name of "national unity."

But as worker after worker brought out in the discussion, miners and other workers have everything in common with each other and nothing in common with the capitalists and their politicians. The resolution on the miners' contract was seconded by an auto worker who spoke to the strong effect the miners' strikes have had on the people in his plant. A worker from Milwaukee spoke about how his father, an iron miner, would not have died if he had had the same medical benefits the coal owners are now stealing back from the miners today. A worker from Atlanta spoke to how much she and others who work in her hospital hate the coal owners for what they've done to the miners they see in the wards every day.

Like the campaign on unemployment, the campaign on the miners' contract will also emphasize taking the issue into the factories, mills and other workplaces, reaching out to broad numbers of workers through leaflets and so on, battling with the so-called "leaders"

of the unions to get these unions to take a stand, and mobilizing the rank and file to take whatever actions are possible.

In turn, this campaign will have a powerful effect on the miners themselves. As one miner explained, "Sometimes when you're on strike it seems like everybody's against you—the courts, cops, newspapers, the companies, even our own union officials. But it's obvious to me today that it's just the rich and their flunkies that's against us. When we go back to the coalfields, we're not going in just under our own banner, we're going to fight as part of a mighty army."

Other Important Battles

In addition to these two national campaigns, a third resolution committed the NUWO to "take a stand against fascist groups—whether it is the KKK, Nazis, or whoever—they are tools of the rich who use them to divide our ranks. Whenever they raise their heads and spout their message of race hatred and terror we will stand up against them."

Many workers have already taken such a stand, some as members of the Organizing Committee for a National Workers Organization which gave birth to the NUWO, and some as individuals. The NUWO decided to take up the defense of Buddy Cochran, who used his car to break up a Klan rally in Plains, Ga.—and whose appearance at the NUWO convention was met with a standing ovation; the six people indicted in Columbus, Ohio for "kicking the sheets off the Klan"; and the 14 Black marines at Camp Pendleton, California who face the brig for trying to break up a Klan meeting on the base. Plans are being made for a speaking tour to build up support and raise money across the country sometime in the early winter.

A resolution on war and war preparations states, "the NUWO stands in solidarity with the people of the world fighting for freedom. We believe that the the working people throughout the world must stand united against our common enemy, the capitalist ruling class. We extend our hand in unity with our class brothers and sisters fighting the ruling exploiters in the Soviet Union and especially we unite with those people who are living in countries occupied or dominated by the U.S. government..."

This resolution calls for the NUWO to fight against "the treachery of the top AFL-CIO misleaders in promoting war... calling for more military spending... raising slogans like 'Buy America'... Just as they betray us and tell us our interests lie in submitting to the employers in the shops, so too they tell us that our interests lie with our rulers in another war. This we do not accept and we'll actively fight against, opposing their war propaganda in the unions and exposing them for the traitors to the working class they are."

Along with this, the convention decided that the

NUWO would participate in the demonstrations around African Liberation Day in May 1978.

A final resolution called for an end to all deportations of so-called "illegal" immigrants and denounced the ruling class' efforts to throw the blame on "illegals" for unemployment.

By focusing the strength of the whole organization on the major campaigns decided on around unemployment and the miners' struggle, while also taking up other major battles, the NUWO will be able to unleash the fury of the working class against the capitalist enemy. ■

Tom Welsh, Auto Worker, Cleveland, Ohio

I'm one of a number of people who was recently indicted for going down to Columbus, Ohio and kicking the sheets out of the Ku Klux Klan... All of a sudden the KKK is a legitimate organization, they got something to say to the people, at least according to the media, to the bigshots who run this country. You see them in the newspapers, on the TV, you see 'em on the radio. They get permits for their demonstrations and their marches. They are being allowed by the rulers of this country to stick their noses into volatile situations and stir up race hatred, try and divide us Black against white so that we're fighting each other instead of standing united against the people who are responsible for the way things are going in this country... We've got to take a stand against them. We've got to go... and kick the mad dogs and also take a good yank at that leash and let the master know he better start sleeping light. ■

Veteran Steel Worker

I am a veteran steel worker. I've been a steel worker for thirty years. I was one of twelve men in Los Angeles that were brought up before the Un-American Activities Committee for activities in the union. I've been union president and vice-president. When I was president we had a strike that was very militant—no scabs crossed our picket lines and we got put in jail. When I was president our local was put in receivership. That says to me we did something right. If we had had an organization that we could draw together forces and experiences, we could have done a lot more. If we can get this organization moving there isn't a damn thing that can stop the workers of this country. ■



People felt the potential strength of the NUWO during the noontime demonstration.

NUWO...

Continued from Page 2

in each industry. The workshops on steel, electrical, auto, garment, mining, meatpacking, textile, agriculture and others enabled people from all over the country to share their common experiences and to discuss the main battles facing them. Participants tried to center on a few key ones that the industrial sections and the whole organization could take up, and tried to get the struggles better coordinated within each industry.

But while this organization will be rooted in the shops, mines and mills, it will also be organized on an area basis to be able to take up all the issues and battles that confront the working class in all spheres of society. In this way also, workers who may not be working in a plant represented by one of the industrial sections of the NUWO will be able to link up and become part of the organization.

Saturday evening there were workshops on discrimination and the oppression of minorities, the development and threat of fascist groups, women workers, unemployment, the threat of war, the crisis of the cities, organizing the unorganized and the role of the trade unions. These workshops took up these broad social questions and discussed the stand of the working class and the NUWO on them. And the convention participants showed a lively and deep interest in the solidarity message given by Al Canfora who had been a student at Kent State during the uprising against the Cambodia invasion and had been wounded by national guard bullets. Similarly during the discussion on war you could hear a pin drop in the hall as Vern Bown, a member of the Revolutionary Communist Party, talked about the transformation of the Soviet Union from a beacon for the worldwide struggle of the working class into an imperialist country contending for control and domination with the U.S. imperialists.

The convention was marked by great enthusiasm. But enthusiasm alone will not build this organization. The convention suffered from the fact that some important issues facing it were not gone into as deeply and sharply as they could and should have been. This was the case around the resolutions on the threat of war, "illegal" immigrants and deportations, and the issue of anti-communism.

Still, the convention marked a historic advance for the working class. An organization was founded with a structure and stand that will enable it to move into action around key issues. Workers returning to their own cities or regions will hold area meetings to elect members to the national steering committee of the National United Workers Organization and to further discuss and plan how to carry out the particular resolutions passed by the convention. These will be a forum for further debate and struggle over some of the questions unresolved in the convention as workers struggle to reach greater unity to move into action.

As workers left the convention to return home, the great majority felt that they had succeeded in building an organization of their own, that a great deal had been accomplished.

In fact, this National United Workers Organization has tremendous potential. It is an organization that will take up both economic and political questions. It will be rooted in the plants, mines, and mills, taking up the struggle there and working to turn every factory into a fortress of struggle for the working class. It will take up every major attack, concentrating its strength on the key battles at any given point. It will fight all forms of oppression that the rulers level against the masses of people, from the legalized murder and brutalization of oppressed minority nationalities to the fight for a decent education for our children and opposition to the rulers' plans for a new war.

Throughout the weekend of this founding convention of the National United Workers Organization the basic stand came out repeatedly and clearly: The working class has nothing in common with the owning class except a common battlefield and a protracted war. Now it has a mass, militant fighting organization, an important weapon in this war. ■

Skip Deiano, Coal Miner, West Virginia

Fellow Workers,

The Miners Right to Strike Committee is proud to join with this founding convention of this National United Workers Organization. For the last ten weeks thousands of miners have been on strike against cutbacks in our medical benefits. If anything has become clear in the last few weeks, in the last few years, it's this: the rank and file has no choice under this system, you either stand up and fight or you're crushed by the bosses. ■



Convention Takes the Streets

Unity & Struggle vs. Divide & Conquer

On mid-afternoon of the second day of the convention, the delegates marched out of the hotel 1500 strong to demonstrate against ruling class divide and conquer schemes and the threats of racist attacks in Chicago.

The demonstration took place three days before school's opening. The racial situation in Chicago is tense, especially on the Southwest Side, where clashes have taken place on the dividing line between Black West Englewood and white Marquette Park. A voluntary busing plan is starting and West Englewood kids, who have been bused five miles to other Black schools for years, are being bused a couple of miles into Marquette Park and other all white areas. The schools in West Englewood are tremendously overcrowded.

Jumping out at this, a Bogan Community Council, a white parents group, has been formed to oppose this voluntary busing. Stirring up reactionary sentiment in general, they have been creating an excellent climate for the local Nazis to launch attacks on the school children being bused. The press in Chicago, and even nationally, has picked up on this and the front pages and airwaves have blared racist statements and the idea that people of different nationalities can never get together. The convention decided that a show of multinational unity and opposition to racist attacks would be a big contribution to the struggle, especially the weekend before school opened.

The demonstration was a powerful sight, a real outpouring of the workers' organized strength. The banners carried by workers, Black, white, Latin and Asian, from various industries and plants displayed the breadth of working class unity.

Chanting "The Rich Are Behind These Racist Attacks, We Won't Take It, Unite and Fight Back!" the demonstration marched down Michigan Avenue to the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry (CACI). CACI is a local ruling class headquarters and

involved in many of the plans for "city improvement" dreamed up by the capitalists.

Many onlookers gathered as the marchers blocked off half the avenue. Police requested that the workers stay on the sidewalk because the demonstration didn't have a permit, a request they didn't dare enforce.

At the rally in front of CACI three speakers spoke out on ruling class divide and conquer schemes and about fighting for decent education for all children and opposing segregation and discrimination. They condemned racist violence and especially hit out at any low-life scum that would attack children. One of the speakers, a Black worker from Boston, told how the Boston busing plan—which unlike the current West Englewood busing was nothing but a divide and conquer scheme and a cover for attacks on education—has really hurt the unity of the working class in Boston. He said that it was critically important for workers in Chicago to unite and fight for the common good of all and not let the capitalists or their Nazi agents create fear and hatred among the different nationalities.

At the convention, heroic action by Chicago workers of earlier times was recalled. In 1919 many thousands of packinghouse workers of all nationalities marched into a Black neighborhood to stop widespread violent assaults on Black people, demanding withdrawal of armed troops from the Black community.

The convention's action was a blow at the masters, standing behind the Nazi dogs and a lively testament to the power of the workers. The local chapter of the National United Workers Organization, along with Youth In Action and Vietnam Veterans Against the War, followed it up by forming a workers defense group of different nationalities to defend the West Englewood children when they reached their new schools on opening day. ■

Al Canfora, Kent State

I am a son of the working class. My father has worked in Akron and Goodyear for 27 years and I have lived in the industrial town of Barberton, Ohio all my life. So I know what the working class is and I know what we need. And one thing we need is a National United Workers Organization. . . . In 1970 when Richard Nixon announced the invasion of Cambodia, the criminal invasion of Cambodia, we took to the streets to take action to say that we opposed that invasion. Millions of students and people all across this country stood up and over three hundred universities shut down and people said we're not going to let you invade Cambodia and get away with it. But we had to pay a dear price. Four people, two beautiful brothers and two beautiful sisters, aged 19 and 20, were shot down and killed and nine others were wounded, myself included. Although my wound was relatively minor, when I was shot through the wrist, I came to understand that when you get shot down on a college campus for doing something that is right, for standing up for the peoples' struggle, that something very serious is wrong in this country and something very seriously wrong with the entire way that things are run around here They

covered up what happened at Kent and what happened at Jackson State, although everybody knows that it was wrong. The courts, the federal government and even the university refused to admit what happened They've covered it up every other way now they are trying to cover it up once and for all with a massive \$6 million gymnasium But we're not going to allow that to happen. . . . I myself have been arrested twice and members of my family have been arrested on numerous occasions, including my mother and father. Almost three hundred in all have been arrested. . . . They can bring in bulldozers and they can drop a damn neutron bomb on this spot if they wanted to because they got all the power. But our power is in the masses and mass action We cannot let them desecrate that site that is sacred to the people's history and to the memory of what happened in 1970, and we want to preserve the lessons of the 1970s. For we had a mass movement that rose up in this country and they don't want us to remember that. And they don't want us to remember that it was their war and their hands are still bloody from that war and they want to cover that up. We want that land to be preserved as a permanent memorial to the cause of the people's struggle and to remind us what that system is all about. ■