

# Momentum Builds For July 4th Demo

*The following report is based on the first-hand experience of people building in Philadelphia for the demonstration planned for there on July 1-4. Their experience is similar to what people working on the demonstration in other areas have begun to report. It is important to learn from this in building everywhere for a powerful demonstration in Philadelphia—the scene of the capitalists' Bicentennial extravaganza—Ed.*

As July 4th approaches, the capitalists and politicians are really heaping it on. The Bicentennial minutes are becoming Bicentennial hours. But as much as they would like it, their efforts to rally people around themselves are not unchallenged. Posters, manifestos and stickers put out by the July 4th Coalition are beginning to cover transit stops, light poles and abandoned buildings all over Philly proclaiming: "WE'VE CARRIED THE RICH FOR 200 YEARS—LET'S GET THEM OFF OUR BACKS!"

The work has begun in a big way in Philadelphia to build around that slogan and the demands: Jobs or Income! and We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War! The forces are out to build the struggle against the capitalists and to build the movement and organization of the working class and its allies. More and more workers are seeing clearly that this is why we are building the July 4th demonstration and they are taking it up on that basis.

From the start much work has been done to spread the word broadly about the demonstration, to put it out as a big question for people to think and talk about. The word is getting out and people are responding. Coming from many different struggles, they are united in opposing the way things are and demanding a better life. At the unemployment office, one worker read the manifesto and commented, "This thing says what my life has been for the last 35 years." Others question what we are saying. Some ask, "Is it real? Can we change things?"

Another older worker came to the coalition office after reading the poster. "I like what the manifesto says, where do I sign up," and then he added, "me and my friends have to organize for this." And people are organizing—taking the campaign to their neighbors, fellow workers and relatives.

We have tried to build the campaign as a fight against the enemy. We have been taking the campaign out boldly into the shops and organizing workers around the slogans and the demands, trying to link these together with the ongoing struggles in the plants to help bring out the common bond between our growing struggles. In a local steel fabricating shop literally hundreds of stickers were put up all over. The bosses went nuts and told a forklift driver to take all the stickers off his truck. He refused, saying "I didn't put them on there, but I sure as hell ain't going to take them off."

## Tied Deeply to Ongoing Struggles

Efforts are beginning to agitate for the demonstration in the shops, and to hold plant gate rallies, to get unions and rank and file workers' organizations to support it. Going all-out to get thousands of signatures on the UWOC JOBS or INCOME petition has been a key tool for building the demonstration and mobilizing the class. We are trying to make it an organized way for workers to express their feeling about this rotten system and to express their determination to do something about it.

The petition can be made into a real focus for many things the working class hates about the rule of the



## Momentum...

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capitalist class. The petition can be passed out at the gates and inside the plants. And it's important to see that there is no reason why thousands of signatures can't be obtained in larger plants if it is put forward boldly and connected to the fight of all workers.

Workers are enthusiastic and ready to sign once they find that it is not just "another petition." When they hear that the petition is going to be brought to the demonstration as proof that working people are standing with the campaign even if they cannot make it to the demonstration and that it is to be driven at the head of the march on a forklift, the signatures flow.

UWOC is using the petition and other agitation to link the July 4th demonstration to the day to day struggles of the unemployed and their work at the unemployment centers. Workers are getting a concrete understanding of the meaning of the slogan EMPLOYED, UNEMPLOYED, SAME CRISIS, SAME FIGHT! The development of the overall campaign and the use of the UWOC petition in the plants as well as on the unemployment lines are good examples of uniting the employed and the unemployed.

Workers are responding with real interest to the plans to dramatize the demands of the unemployed by setting up a tent city of the unemployed in Philadelphia. UWOC in several cities is also planning to build for the July 4th action by setting up mini-tent cities in the coming weeks.

The local July 4th Committee in Philadelphia is taking the campaign right into the heart of the birthday party the capitalists have planned for themselves. While emphasizing building existing and ongoing organizations, the committee has brought together workers from different industries, the unemployed, veterans, youth and students to develop, broaden and systematize the work of building for the demonstration. Discussion at the first meeting centered around the slogan and the two demands: Jobs or Income and We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War. People focused on the importance of taking the campaign to build for the demonstration into the plants in the area and to struggle to unite as many workers as possible around the demands, showing how they expose two of the ugliest characteristics of the system that makes life miserable for the working class and the overwhelming majority. Out of these meetings plans have been laid for plant gate rallies to build for the demonstration.

### Role of Wide-Scale Agitation

Although this work in the plants is very key, it is directly related to the equally important task of doing broad and large-scale propaganda and agitation around the demonstration. This will have results beyond the actual turnout at the demonstration. The effect of the work done in building the July 4th campaign goes far beyond this particular demonstration. It is part and parcel of the contradiction people feel, of the turmoil and struggle between classes intensifying throughout this society.

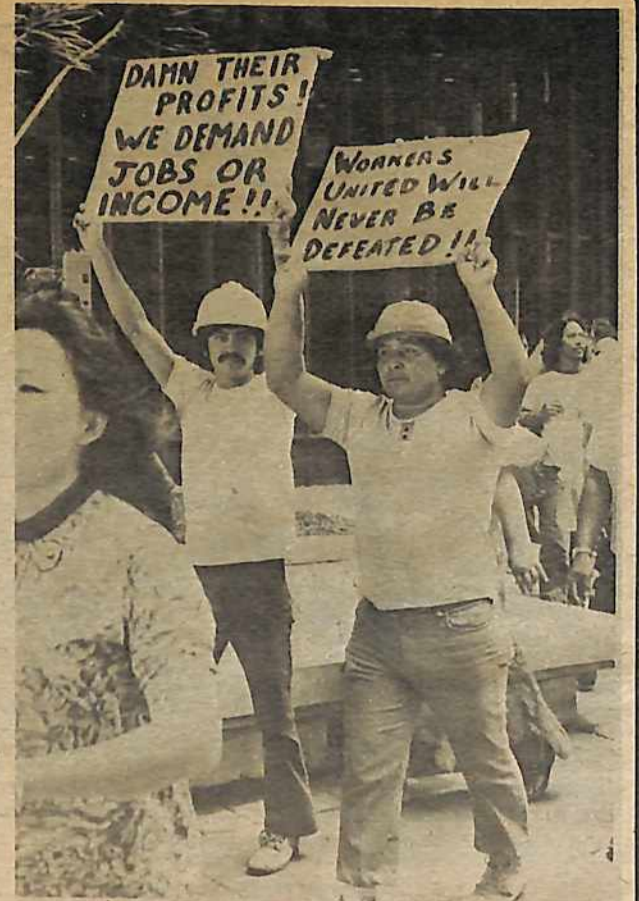
A big part of our task is to counter the bourgeoisie's "public opinion" work with our own, to concentrate and express the disgust and the anger people feel about the way we are forced to live, particularly around the questions of unemployment and the growing threat of another imperialist war, to hit back at the bourgeoisie's line that we've had 200 years of the best of all possible worlds and should eagerly await another 200.

We are trying to get the masses of people involved on whatever level possible in building for this demonstration to get the rich off our backs—and in the process advance in building the understanding and organization necessary to really carry this fight through.

Every Saturday people in teams of ten from the local committee and the groups that make it up set up a table with literature in places like shopping centers and raise high a banner proclaiming, WE'VE CARRIED THE RICH FOR 200 YEARS—LET'S GET THEM OFF OUR BACKS—DEMONSTRATE JULY 4th. At the same time people fan out "soap box" speaking, leafletting, making contacts for further outreach and getting signatures on the Jobs or Income petition.

At the same time a car with a speaker system on the roof rolls through the area announcing that we are in the area and giving a short rap about July 4th. After just three weeks many signatures have been gathered on the petition and almost one hundred people who've signed petitions have volunteered to participate in one form or another.

There are few people we have found whose families are unaffected by unemployment. We meet workers, housewives, youth—people coming forward for hundreds of different reasons, all tied to a common hatred and desire to fight the source of our problems. Con-



## Hawaii: 300 Join UWOC Rally Vs Benefit Cuts

On April 12, 300 angry workers converged on the Hawaii state capitol to demand that the legislature keep its hands off unemployment benefits. As in dozens of other states, Hawaii is attempting to put the axe to the benefits in total disregard for the workers' needs. A bill is pending that would deny unemployment insurance to anyone who quits, is fired or suspended.

The demonstration was organized by Honolulu UWOC on a few days notice by going out to unem-

ployment lines, shopping centers and even door to door, passing out leaflets and collecting signatures for a petition against the bill. Carpenters got UWOC into their union meetings and showed up in large numbers for the action, along with pineapple workers and others.

The demonstration was the biggest action of the unemployed in years in Hawaii and shows clearly the determination of the workers not to carry the capitalists through their crisis. Fight, Don't Starve! ■

tacts and organization are beginning to grow on this basis.

One woman recently came forward from the Saturday outreach. After signing a petition, she was contacted. She invited her friends into her living room for a presentation and discussion. This meeting brought the committee into contact with a local anti-police repression committee, and some multi-national youth groups. These people in turn are discussing reaching still others.

As can be seen this work affects more than the people who originally hear our rap or sign the petition. People who volunteer to participate are contacted by one of the sponsoring organizations or the outreach committee, who set up presentations for the initial contact's friends and neighbors. They in turn are encouraged to set up similar events. As a consequence the movement continues to build and broaden.

And while the local July 4th committee has been an important form for doing this work particularly in Philadelphia, because it is the site of the demonstration, ongoing groups of workers and others like VVAW and UWOC are also growing in influence and contacts in the course of this. In Philadelphia and elsewhere they will be building the same movement after the demonstration is over.

### Political Discussion

The local committee meetings themselves are not just technical meetings to discuss where we are going to poster, or what street corner we are going to satur-



ate. They are seen as political events in themselves that are built for, where people's understanding about the slogan, demands, and the very nature of the capitalist system itself is deepened.

At one meeting the Vietnam Veterans Against the War film "Only the Beginning" was shown. The film, which draws on the perceptual understanding of veterans about Vietnam and shows veterans throwing their medals back on the Capitol steps during that war, sparked discussion about how that war was summed up and how the rich were preparing to get us in another war, only this time with the Soviet Union.

People gained a further understanding of the slogan, "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War!" and how it had to be taken out. At the end of the discussion one of the workers commented, "If I would have known in 1966 what I know now, I'd have joined VVAW instead of the Army!"

### Local Outrages

These meetings are also used to bring forward ideas about how to broaden the campaign through unleashing the initiative of the people against the outrages and decay of the system. Two such ideas are being carried out now. One is for a special poster to put up on the 40,000 condemned and abandoned homes in Philadelphia that proclaims "another bicentennial monument to the rule of the rich, demonstrate July 4th," and a sticker to be plastered all over the Red, White and Blue public transportation system exposing the absurdity of painting over the junk that is falling apart.

The Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB) and the Vietnam Veterans Against the War have been taking the call out to campuses throughout the area. Plastering walls, bulletin boards and dormitories with posters, setting up tables and passing out literature about the 4th. On almost every campus, forums about the demonstration have been held and from these have sprung local school committees to continue to build the campaign. A student at one campus stated after joining a local committee, "I came here [to the school] and really tried to make it in the system. But you can't. You've just got to do something." Many of the students are coming forward from these to join the RSB.

People everywhere are responding to the slogan and demands not because they are flashy or "wrapped nicely" but because they speak the truth about the nature of this system. They can see concretely all our struggles coming together, can see the face of the enemy much clearer and so too they see clearer why we've got to unite to get the rich off our backs. The demonstration is growing and with it so is our unity and strength. ■