

Special Report

Crash Fusion Support Grows; ERDA Plans More Sabotage

Nov. 15 — Fusion researchers present at the Plasma Physics Conference of the American Physical Society in St. Petersburg, Fla. this week endorsed an international crash program for the development of fusion power. Simultaneously, pro-development industry circles have strongly endorsed the expansion of the U.S. fusion effort. This convergence of renewed scientific ferment with increased industrial interest in fusion research threatens a full exposure of the Energy Research and Development Administration's (ERDA) sabotage of controlled thermonuclear fusion development.

ERDA representatives at the St. Petersburg conference hoped to down-play recent Soviet fusion breakthroughs in the Tokamak T-10 and laser fusion research with calculated slanders of the Soviet fusion effort. Ignoring conference reports to the contrary, ERDA insisted that the Soviet program was really not all that good.

Fusion in the Open

An editorial and lead article on the collapse of the nuclear fission industry in the Nov. 17 issue of *Business Week* indicates the growing factional alignment behind fusion. Widely read by the business community, *Business Week* stated bluntly that the U.S. energy program "must be re-oriented." Citing the "exponential growth" of radioactive wastes from fission reactors as a potentially unmanageable problem, the editorial urges the government to "shift the emphasis of the (nuclear energy) program...Instead of launching a massive push for more fission plants — including breeder reactors which produce fissionable plutonium as a by-product — the U.S. should pour more money into fusion power, which uses hydrogen isotopes....Fusion's promise of clean, controllable, efficient power is too good to pass up. The U.S. should put the brakes on the breeder program and push hard for fusion."

This week, the *Baltimore Sun*, a widely read daily, correctly labeled fusion power as "the best hope" for solving the world's energy problems. The much-touted solar energy alternative was relegated to a mere secondary priority.

Industry Backs Fusion

Industrial representatives, particularly within the agricultural machinery sector, are similarly backing the expansion of the U.S. fusion program. Hans Voss, Executive Vice President of International Harvester, the leading manufacturer of tractors, informed

IPS this week that International Harvester representatives are tremendously impressed by the Soviet fusion program. "The Soviets told us they would be producing power from fusion by the mid-1980s," Voss said. A few days later, Harvester representatives said they would consider lobbying in Congress for a crash fusion effort.

A representative of Caterpillar Tractor, the second leading producer of agricultural and construction equipment, was sent to the St. Petersburg conference on Plasma Physics to gain information on fusion. The representative informed IPS that Caterpillar is considering private investment in the development of fusion power.

Fusion Scientists Factionalize

More than 1500 world fusion researchers attended the Plasma Physics Conference in St. Petersburg. The heads of nearly every U.S. fusion laboratory entered into informal alignments to reorient the crippled U.S. fusion program towards a broad-based approach with primary emphasis on basic research — a necessary requirement for the successful development of fusion power in the next decade. In private discussions, the scientists attacked ERDA policy of limiting fusion research to the single Tokamak machine at the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab. Such a singular approach would virtually assure the failure of fusion development.

In fact, on the first day of the conference, ERDA's Division of Military Applications classified a conference paper on "Very High Gain Pellet Configurations in Laser Fusion" which was to report on the work done at the Lawrence Livermore Lab in Calif. on the structure of laser pellets for inertial confinement fusion.

Two scientists have agreed to talk to members of the staff of the Senate Government Operations Committee, who next week will begin investigation of ERDA's sabotage of fusion.

Faced with growing opposition to the ERDA program, ERDA officials reacted with typical blundering. ERDA head Robert Seaman mysteriously failed to show up for his scheduled presentation, while Robert Hirsch, head of the Controlled Thermonuclear (fusion) Research division, attempted to create a controlled environment for the discussion of the fusion program. To cover for ERDA's policy of the "one road" to fusion

development, Hirsch took advantage of President Ford's proposed \$28 billion general budget cuts to threaten major cuts in the fusion budget. In particular, the important Syllac theta-pinch machine at the Los Alamos Lab would be terminated. According to sources at the conference, Hirsch had stated earlier at Los Alamos that "the science phase of the controlled thermonuclear research effort has been completed. Technology is now the major object of the program." Hirsch did "not want any bad mouthing of the Tokamak."

Research reports presented at the conference were sufficient to show that the single track program just will not work. In case after case, plasma physicists reported on major advances in other approaches to fusion development. The Soviet and West German scientists reported that the Stellerator machine, a variant long ago dropped in the U.S., achieved plasma confinement com-

parable or even better than the Tokamak. Scientists from Lawrence Livermore and the Francis Bitter Magnet Labs reported that if recent successes with the respective Mirror and Alcator machines were followed up by new major experiments, their experimental work would reach breakeven conditions in the next few years.

Soviet progress in both the Stellerator-magnetic confinement approach and the laser-inertial confinement approach prompted ERDA to circulate their slanders of the Soviet program. According to this whispering, "The Soviet Tokamak leaks...their Stellerator is not as good as they say...their laser work is just not competent." But U.S. scientists were fully aware that the Soviet approach has put them years ahead of the U.S. effort. The Soviets' Tokamak program is scheduled for power production in the early 1980s.

Special Report

Press Covers Up Drive of French Communists to Contain PCI Agents

Nov. 18 (IPS) — It is not often that the New York Times devotes glowing front-page coverage to the meetings between Western European Communist Party leaders. Yesterday's Times, joined by such authoritative European newspapers as Die Welt, Le Monde, the Danish Politiken and others, reported the joint communiqué issued last weekend in Rome by Italian (PCI) and French (PCF) Communist leaders Berlinguer and Marchais as a major victory for the notorious CIA-agent "polycentrist" leadership of the PCI.

Informed political analysts have noted that the so-called "joint communiqué" is a mere paste-up of the fundamentally opposite policies of the hardline internationalist PCF leadership and the Italians. The first half of the document, stressing a conjunctural crisis perspective and the demand for scientific and technological advance under the essential vanguard leadership of the working class — was probably written by PCF Politburo foreign affairs specialist Jean Kanapa. The second half, which puts forward the typical PCI garbage of "pluralism" allowing capitalist tendencies the

"democratic right" to sabotage needed working-class economic policies — reveals the fine hand of PCI Secretariat member Gian Carlo Pajetta.

The contradiction indicates that the real content of the PCF-PCI meeting occurred behind closed doors and was not reflected in the communiqué. According to a reliable source high in the PCF leadership, the public document was an official appeasement tactic aimed at the European communist parties generally, and most notably the West German party (DKP) which is known to house an agent faction set up and controlled by the Italians. The source revealed that the PCF has put intense pressure on the PCI over the weekend to re-orient the Italians' anti-Soviet policy. This is the traditional way in which Communist Parties handle interventions into fraternal parties.

Complementing what may be a PCF move to take the leadership of the Western European Communist Parties in anticipation of the Berlin meeting of the European parties, the Soviet military newspaper Red Star published an article which calls in the strongest

terms for inter-party coordination in political and economic matters to "define the common line." The author names each party in the Soviet bloc that has affirmed this principle at their party congresses—with the pointed exception of "polycentrist" Rumania. This not-so-subtle reprimand to the Rumanian peasant-king Ceaucescu is in addition a warning to the PCI and a model for the PCF, significantly timed with the PCI-PCF meeting.

While the Marchais-Berlinguer talks proceeded in Rome, the Provisional Organizing Committee for a new leadership in the Italian Communist Party held its regular meeting in Bologna, the traditional communist stronghold in Italy. The P.O.C. mapped out steps for building the Italian party of Cunhal by ousting the agents Amendola, Berlinguer, and Pajetta from the party. The assembled PCI cadres, all experienced pro-Soviet organizers over recent years, approved a letter to fraternal parties urging them to support their historic effort to clean the agents out of the ranks of the communist movement.