

# The Battle To Enact A Competent U.S. Energy Program

Over the past two weeks, the U.S. Congress has begun to revolt against the negative growth economic program scripted for the Carter Administration by David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission. In rapid succession, Congress has restored the President's proposed cuts in federal funds for 19 water projects, stalled his \$4 billion public works employment boondoggle, and is now threatening to block his scheme to save the New York banks via a Treasury Department-IMF bailout. The wretchedly incompetent "two chickens in every pot" \$50 tax rebate plan has run into potentially fatal opposition. No doubt about it, Carter's honeymoon with Congress — if indeed it ever really existed — is turning into an acrimonious divorce battle.

Whether Congress will carry through on its rebellion against White House "government by Trilateral emission" will likely be determined during the next 60 days on the keystone issue of a national energy policy. Since last winter's natural gas crisis, Carter and his would be energy czar James Schlesinger have made it clear that the basis of the energy blueprint they will officially unveil April 20 is a commitment to "belt-tightening" massive reductions in U.S. energy consumption for industry and consumers alike, and outright sabotage of vital energy sources, particularly nuclear power. Reports from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation spelling out such programs in detail have been acknowledged by Administration spokesmen as accurately reflecting the White House point of view. Their impending savage impact on the U.S. economy's productive forces is widely perceived, feared and resisted in Congress.

Not surprisingly, the strongest opposition to the Carter program has come so far from Congressional representatives of constituencies where the highest concentration of technologically-advanced, energy-intensive industries (aerospace, defense, electronics, etc.) exist. Many Congressmen understand, however, that the appeal of

crash energy development program is general — "The American people support nuclear power 2-1," as one spokesman put it.

Yet to emerge, however, is a competent Congressional alternative energy program under bipartisan sponsorship — the key weapon needed to defeat the Administration's planned onslaught of deindustrialization. The Congressional power centers of resistance to Carter have decided to "wait till after April 20" before taking significant action on energy, passing up the opportunity to take the offensive and giving the Administration more time for its "conservation" crusade.

Whether sufficient Congressional votes are assembled in time to kill the Carter program and enact competent legislation now depends largely on forces outside Washington, D.C., emphatically including forces outside the USA itself. With respect to the United States, it demands on how fast popular sentiment for expanded energy development can be transformed into institutional support from business and industry, the trade unions, state and local governments, community organizations, consumer groups, the press, and so forth. A broad, centrally directed alliance for industrial progress — not a loose coalition — is required.

The role the U.S. Labor Party and the Fusion Energy Foundation have played so far in bringing this alliance into being was expressed by a spokesman for a top Congressional leader recently: he told USLP representatives, "Without you, the resistance to Carter's fusion cuts wouldn't have happened."

Should this privately acknowledged, de facto leadership role become public through an open Labor Party alliance with national, political, industrial, and labor leaders, the American political geometry would be radically transformed, to the point that defeat of the Carter energy package would be extremely likely.

The following category-by-category assessment of the state of the energy fight in the USA was compiled with the assistance of the U.S. Labor Party.

## The Potential For A Congressional Offensive

The way in which the Congressional energy battle has developed so far clearly demonstrates that the immediate potential exists for shaping it into an all-out fight for a fusion-based energy policy in the context of a general reorientation of U.S. policy toward worldwide industrialization. Three developments in particular underscore this potential: 1) Several key Congressional groupings,

especially the House Science and Technology subcommittee on Fossil Fuels and Nuclear Energy, have sought to establish that fusion power, given appropriate funding, is realizable within the decade; 2) Congressional spokesmen including Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) and Senator Harrison Schmitt (R-NM) have publicly stated that the fate of the Third World and of world peace