

Where The Trade Unions Stand On The Energy Issue

A polarization is now taking place within the American labor movement over support for an energy policy.

On one side of the fence sits the AFL-CIO national leadership, who are currently in the hip pocket of Trilateral Commission member Lane Kirkland, the Federation's Secretary Treasurer and the Trilateral Commission's candidate to replace 84-year-old George Meany as AFL-CIO president. Kirkland and his national staff are the leading organizers for the Ford Foundation's anti-nuclear, conservation-oriented energy policy — the policy of fellow Trilateral Commission member Jimmy Carter. This grouping has relied on the organizational loyalties within the AFL-CIO and outright threats and intimidation to hold union leaderships in line behind the emerging Schlesinger-Carter energy policy.

On the other side are a group of unions, which includes sections of the AFL-CIO-affiliated United Steel Workers of America (USWA), and various building trades unions and key leaders within the non-AFL-CIO International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the United Mineworkers Union as well. Sections of these unions have fought against energy cutbacks and supported the expansion of nuclear power facilities and are now beginning to coalesce around the U.S. Labor Party's fusion energy development program.

Fearing the outcome of this sharp polarization, Rockefeller-linked intelligence operatives have attempted to create a Third Way countergang faction. This paper-grouping, which has been mooted by the New York Times, is to be led by the Trilateral Commission-controlled leadership of the International Association of Machinists and the United Autoworkers, who are slated to rejoin the AFL-CIO sometime this year. They would become the loyal opposition to Kirkland, supporting an even more radical zero growth version of the Ford Foundation policy — and thus make Kirkland and his energy policy more appealing to gullible unionists. So far they have received almost no support.

Kirkland Sabotages AFL-CIO Energy Policy

The AFL-CIO Executive Council assembled for its general session meeting in Florida last month with debate already raging among member unions about what the Federation's energy policy should be. Kirkland, according to Washington sources close to the AFL-CIO, went to Bal Harbor with a singular mission — to prevent the Executive Council from taking a strong counterstand to Carter's energy policy and to "de-emphasize" the volatile energy question.

Kirkland, who chaired and dominated the AFL-CIO energy policy committee, proceeded to offer a "compromise" energy resolution which he justified as being something that "everyone could live with." To the building trades, whose participation in industry-labor pro-nuclear energy coalitions represented a threat to the Carter energy program, he "offered" token support for nuclear power. To this, he welded the Ford Foundation's recommendations for cutbacks in energy consumption and energy growth. Fusion power was omitted from the hodge-podge list of "alternative energy sources."

According to one source, the AFL-CIO proposal was now "worse than useless." "We have no energy policy," said another.

More importantly, Kirkland and other agent-allies succeeded in getting the energy question — the number one topic of debate in the Federation — formally de-emphasized and subordinated to synthetically created issues like the so-called "right to organize legislative package." That issue and the related common situs picketing sop thrown to the duped building trades were specifically aimed at fanning a confrontation between conservative industrial interests and labor — the very elements coming together in coalitions like Northern Indiana's HIRE (Help Implement Regional Employment) to fight Carter's energy policy.

The Membership Rejects Kirkland

The membership of the trade union movement overwhelmingly rejects the Kirkland-backed Carter policies of energy cutbacks and its correlative de-industrialization programs. This was indicated by two signpost developments over the last three months.

First, Edward Sadlowski, the Institute for Policy Studies-Joe Rauh-created insurgent candidate for USWA president, suffered a landslide defeat by a ticket headed by non-Fabian Lloyd McBride in last month's steelworkers election; rather than voting "for McBride," steelworkers were voting against Sadlowski and the Carter-backed zero-growth energy policies he represented. Sadlowski's backers were at the time of the election involved in activities aimed at preventing the construction of a nuclear power plant in northern Indiana and were even conspiring to shut down the largest steel complex in his home District 31, U.S. Steel's Gary works, for "environmental reasons."

Last week, it was learned that LeeRoy Patterson, the nationally recognized pro-growth candidate in the United Mineworkers, had swept the primary election for that union's presidency. Union sources indicate that Patterson is certain to become the next mineworkers president.

Both Patterson and McBride were thus given a mandate which is conditional on their leading their respective unions into a public fight for growth and development against Carter's policies.

This shift in the U.S. working class as signaled by these elections has already been accompanied by sections of the leadership of the building trades and the Teamsters coming into open support for the Labor Party's energy program. Last week, over 1000 Teamster members of Local 456 in Westchester, N.Y. gave a standing ovation to USLP candidate Michael Billington presenting the party's energy program, and heard the union secretary endorse the USLP candidacy. This weekend, Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 22 in Waterbury, Conn. endorsed the Labor Party's fusion energy memorialization legislation in the state legislature. One of the most important expressions of this shift was the endorsement of the USLP's national call for crash fusion development by two building trades leaders of HIRE, Indiana's pro-nuclear

labor-industry coalition.

This has been followed in recent weeks by participation and promises of participation by trade union leaders in a series of national energy policy forums sponsored by the Fusion Energy Foundation.

In this charged political environment, Kirkland's effort to establish a phony set of political priorities for the labor movement around the "right to organize" has met with little success. As one building trades leader told a spokesman for the U.S. Labor Party after last week's scuttling of the common situs legislation in Congress, "Common situs? Who cares about that. The real issue is energy."

Kirkland and Carter Respond

The potential for whole sections of the labor movement to bolt from under the Trilateral Commission's control around the energy question has prompted the Carter Administration and Kirkland to attempt a "counter-offensive."

Orders have gone out from Kirkland's office to member unions to stay away from the Labor Party and the FEF—or else. AFL-CIO contracted lawyers have advised labor leaders that "if you work with the Labor Party, you'll bring more trouble on yourselves." They have told leaders of the HIRE coalition to "back off from collaboration if you want to get nuclear power plants built."

Meanwhile, Kirkland has helped organize "discussion sessions" between representatives of the Carter Administration and union leaders to convince the wary union-

ists that Carter's program is not bad as it seems. Two weeks ago, the leadership of the mineworkers and other unions were brought to a meeting in West Virginia where they were addressed by Carter and energy czar James Schlesinger. They were told that the Carter program would have "something for everybody" and were promised increased coal projects, nuclear energy, solar power, and "more jobs through conservation programs." Less than a week later, the Ford Foundation released its energy report which contradicted much of what was promised.

Kirkland and Carter are ready and willing to use what "clubs" they have to get stubborn opposition to knuckle under." The current offensive against the Teamsters' leadership and the threat that it will expand into a far-reaching anti-rackets attack on other Carter enemies, as we exposed last week, has the short-term objective of bullying those forces opposed to the Carter-Schlesinger energy policy.

Trying to delay what in the end must come down to a policy confrontation, Kirkland and his allies have circulated the story that the union movement cannot comment on the Carter energy program until it is promulgated on April 20. By so doing he has in fact put his whole operation on a short fuse.

As one trade union leader told a USLP spokesman recently, "If what you say about Carter's program is true, there isn't one trade union leader in the country that can support it."

Except Lane Kirkland, that is.

Regional Press Bucks Administration Energy Policy

While the national news media by and large continues to barrage Congress and the U.S. population with the myth that Jimmy Carter's "energy conservation" program enjoys widespread popular support, a few large circulation urban dailies are increasingly critical of the Administration's policy, and in many cases are calling for the expansion of energy resources, most notably nuclear power. A number of smaller regional papers have been equally outspoken.

This pro-growth press coverage serves as an accurate gauge of popular sentiments for elected officials. Moreover, it reflects regional institutional resistance to the Administration program.

The following is a brief summary of such coverage of energy policy in various regional press.

The Seattle Times, the daily serving the immediate locales of both the huge aerospace concern of Boeing and forest-product manufacturer Weyerhaeuser, demanded in an editorial March 21 that the "U.S. Must Keep Pace in the Technology Race." The editorial rapped Administration policy by stressing the absolute necessity of government funding to protect domestic R and D capacity. It concluded with a quote from Harry Truman: "We have come to know that our ability to survive and grow as a

nation depends to a very large degree upon our scientific progress."

Earlier in the month an article in Tacoma, Washington's main paper, the *News Tribune*, reported George Weyerhaeuser's declaration during a speech to local businessmen on the need to develop the port city, "And those who don't want to use more power or see more development — we'll be against them." In a follow-up, the same paper printed a letter to the editor from the USLP that stressed development of nuclear power, flanking it with two strongly anti-Carter editorials — one of which attacked the Administration's proposed cuts in the breeder and fusion programs.

In nearby Vancouver, British Columbia, the *Province* gave prominent coverage to Fusion Energy Foundation nuclear engineer, Jon Gilbertson's visit to the city. The article was accompanied by a report from a poll the *Province* had conducted among some of the major U.S. research laboratories, on fusion power. The report corroborated Gilbertson's work.

A continuing series of editorials in the Conservative Republican *St. Louis Globe Democrat* have explicitly opposed President Carter's undermining of the necessary development of fission and fusion. "Fusion power is the energy of the future. It is foolish and costly