

Labor in Focus by Marianna Wertz

A cure worse than the disease

The President's commission has released its report on crime in the unions—with recommendations worse than the crimes.

The President's Commission on Organized Crime issued its report on "Organized Crime, Business and Labor Unions" to the public on March 6. In its accompanying statement, Commission Chairman Judge Irving R. Kaufman noted, "Now that the Commission is able to release its entire report publicly, we can more fully delineate the scope and extent of this persistent and pernicious problem."

In January, the Commission had publicly released its recommendations only. Kaufman presented the full report to President Reagan. At the same time, the Commission urged adoption of a national strategy to attack organized-crime infiltration of businesses and labor unions.

That national strategy was denounced in January by AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland as "a virtual blueprint for a police state." He described himself as "shocked" at suggestions by the report "that we become informers; that the Attorney-General be empowered to go before the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] and secure the decertification of trade unions. . . . They are an Orwellian collection of proposals," Kirkland declared.

While we can't even agree with Trilateral Commission member Kirkland on the color of the sky, he is right to denounce the report, though his reasons for the denunciation are rotten. Kirkland denounces the report because it demands that organized labor clean out the mafia connections which

are thoroughly and accurately documented in the report—something he doesn't want to do.

As the introduction states, "The report devotes significant attention to a series of factual case studies and summaries of key unions and corresponding industries with histories of control or influence by organized crime. There are chapters on the International Longshoremen's Association, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the Laborers International Union of North America." All but the IBT are affiliates of the AFL-CIO.

The problem with the report is not its documentation of organized crime influence in trade unions; that is known to any honest, local leader who has tried to conduct a strike for a living wage in recent years.

The problem with the report is that it proposes as a "solution" to organized crime's influence, a worse case of the disease on which organized crime feeds—"free enterprise." And it proposes that the Federal Bureau of Investigation, perhaps the most corrupt government agency in American history, be given more power to enforce "free enterprise" on trade unions and businesses suffering under organized crime.

The "objective of the national strategy recommended by the Commission," the report states, "is to eliminate organized crime from the mar-

ketplace and to permit the *natural forces of the market*, working in conjunction with the efforts of honest trade unions and businesses, to set prices and provide goods and services [emphasis added]."

That is something like saying that organized crime must be eliminated so that organized crime can take over.

What are the "natural forces of the market"? In a candid admission to the Commission, one of America's most successful businessmen, Maryland chicken producer Frank Perdue, outlined the market forces which led him, quite "naturally," to invite a leader of La Cosa Nostra, Peter Castellana, to join his company as sales manager. "I decided that if I could be protected, that I would get my share of his [Castellana's] business. But he had to give us a letter of credit, like he has to give all the other shippers who ship him, so the shipper is protected. . . . I know what he is. But I have my money; he unloads my trucks on time. We have no problems. He pays his bills."

The "free market" is a fiction created by the same banking forces which today are looting the world economy through usurious debt payments. "Free market forces" are the nation's bank creditors who are demanding that the budget be balanced by killing old people, inner city residents, and other victims of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings cutbacks—which cutbacks, as that law states, are never to adversely effect debt service payments.

The "free market" is the hoax used to convince honest trade unionists that a living wage is not possible when "competition" is forcing companies to shut down.

It is, indeed, the organized crime known as "free trade" which is the biggest enemy of both business and labor in this country. La Cosa Nostra is small potatoes next to the power of the banking oligarchy.