

Industry: Publicly Guarded, Privately Critical

Thomas Aquinas Murphy, President of General Motors:

General Motors support the President and commends him for forcefully focusing public attention on this major national problem... In addition to conservation there is an urgent need for increased energy supply, basically founded on free market principles. National priorities should be established... We support the President.

A senior officer at General Motors:

The package of rebates and excise taxes is extremely simplistic... The plan is very deficient on R and D, and I'm very sorry to see the development of the breeder reactor stopped.

Continental Trailways, in a statement entitled "Common Sense '77":

The question isn't, "Do we bite the bullet?"; rather it's, "When do we bite the bullet?"

The current energy crisis isn't our first 'national emergency.' Two hundred years ago the American spirit faced up to a common problem and conquered it... Common sense tells us the same is true today.

Malthus said there could be "no such thing as over-population... when the numbers of humans outstrip the ability of the planet to feed them, they will simply starve and die-off until a balance of food-to-population is once again restored."... By enduring small hardships today we can avoid hardship tomorrow...

So, we praise President Carter... We pledge our support, even though some parts of his energy policy will cost us as a company.

We do, however, have one additional suggestion for conserving energy. We would suggest encouraging more people to ride the *bus* on their intercity trips.

Colin Lee, a planner for the Continental Oil Company:

Energy is Carter's Gordian knot, but this program is like trying to cut the knot with only one-half a pair of

scissors. The emphasis is on conservation and there is nothing for oil and gas exploration.

A senior official at International Harvester, one of the country's leading farm machinery producers:

Guarded by the insulation of Mr. Schlesinger, there is no way of influencing President Carter on energy policy. As far as I can see, Mr. Carter isn't committed to the growth of *anything*... It's difficult to see how we are going to get along without nuclear energy.

An official at Union Carbide Nuclear Division:

Mr. Carter's position on the fast breeder amounts throwing away a valuable asset... As far as his inclusion of some nuclear energy in his program, frankly we don't know what he's talking about.

An economist at Ford Motor Co.:

If the full amount of the gasoline tax is implemented, this will reduce production by 4 percent. Domestic sales will be affected more, of course... The main problem is not a 1-2 percent rate of inflation, but the uncertainty factor in the market...

An officer of the Corporate Planning Department of Allied Chemical:

Carter says he wants more nuclear development, but I've scoured the program and can't find anything specific.

The head of an independent oil association:

We felt that the glaring shortcoming is no increase in production. They're writing off the ability of the U.S. to increase production.

Gene T. Kinney, editor of Oil and Gas Journal:

Carter's program is artificial austerity without real benefit.

Labor: National Leadership Stalls; Members Ready For A Fight

The first response of the labor movement to this week's formal announcement of the Carter energy program was uneven and marked by contradictions between the wishy-washy statements of the top leadership and the general rejection of the program by secondary leaders and rank-and-file unionists.

AFL-CIO President George Meany offered his "tentative support" to Carter's April 20 speech, stating that

on behalf of the federation, he accepted the five basic premises of the program: the call for conservation, the call to create a strategic oil reserve, the call for increased coal production, the plan to convert utilities to coal, and the need for fair strip-mining regulations. The AFL-CIO President added that he felt the proposed gas tax was unfair, and that the program must guarantee "equality of sacrifice." To this Meany added that the

federation still felt that the President's decision to kill the breeder reactor was "unwise."

Robert Georgine, head of the AFL-CIO's Building Trades Department also was "supportive" of the Carter program, qualifying this with statements that much of the Carter plan was still "undefined" and would require further review. Georgine's public relations man reported that the building trades president had specifically ordered the deletion of statements about support for the breeder reactor — "though we feel damn strongly about what Carter has done to it" — out of fear that "the press might interpret it as meaning the building trades rejected the program and we wouldn't want that to happen."

The office of I.W. Abel, the president of both the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department and of the United Steelworkers made a similar if more brief statement. "Sure we have some disagreements with parts of the program," said the union's press officer, "...but we can't just reject it out of hand."

Members Reject It

However, a sweeping rejection came from almost every layer below the top national leadership and even from some members of the national union staffs.

"Goddamn George Meany should have kept his mouth shut if he wasn't going to say what we really think," said a national legislative director of a building trades union. "A whole bunch of us have been screaming all along that you have to go for Carter's jugular on the energy question or he is going to kill us all." Said another building trades leader from the Midwest: "That speech by Carter infuriated me more than anything in the last 12 years. We can't accept any of it."

"Show me one worker who will support this program of Carter's," said a Midwest steelworker bureaucrat. "If you can find him — I show you a fool."

Back Tracking

Both Meany and Georgine had been singing a different tune when addressing the 3000 delegates to the Building Trades national legislative conference in Washington earlier in the week.

There, Meany told cheering delegates, "Plutonium means jobs... there must be breeder reactors. Labor must lead the fight against zero growth and environmentalism. Little Jimmy," said Meany, is knifing the labor movement in the back.

Georgine attacked Carter's decision to kill the breeder reactor program as "sheer folly":

"32,000 people lost their jobs (because of that decision)," he stated. "\$1 billion in wages lost. Do you think that the Soviet Union and other nations will follow our 'wonderful' example. Well, they won't. Because it makes no sense..."

"We know how many roadblocks the environmentalists and obstructionists can throw up to stop vital programs," he continued. "If all the nuclear plants under construction and blocked by environmentalists were built, we

would have 13 percent less unemployment and less fear of energy shortages.

"But the environmentalists aren't alone in making us hostages to fuel and water shortages. The President's decision to chop off dam projects has cost some 206,000 man years in construction alone. Despite this and despite the needs of our farmers he (Carter) has decided to make these cuts... We oppose such short-sighted budget chops. The dam cuts must be restored... Fighting mad describes how we feel today. We are going to get tough and stay tough. This is our message to friends and foe alike..."

"A bunch of hot air," said one building trades leader from the Midwest, describing Georgine and Meany's conference speeches. "Let's see them act on what they said. We're ready for a fight."

James O'Connor, executive vice president of Chicago's Commonwealth Edison also addressed the conference. Introduced by Georgine as one of "labor's real friends," O'Connor told the delegates: "I support your desire for more and better... We in industry are with you all the way... Democracy will surely crumble if good men do nothing. We will all hang separately if we don't fight together." Thereafter, talk on the floor of the conference was against "any compromise with those guys" in the Carter Administration.

Attempts by three Administration or Administration-linked spokesmen to speak on behalf of the Carter program to the delegates met with no success. Charles Percy, a Rockefeller in-law and the Republican Senator from Illinois tried to argue that "conservation means jobs." As the co-founder of the so-called Alliance to Save Energy stepped to the podium, half of the Building Trades Department's leadership and an equivalent number of delegates left the hall.

James Schlesinger spoke to the Wednesday session and was greeted with silence.

The Crisis of Leadership

In sum, the top leadership of the AFL-CIO has entered into a holding pattern on the energy question, although secondary leaders closer to the membership have no doubts as to what stand the labor movement should take. Sources report that in separate meetings over the last two weeks and especially over the last week, Carter and Schlesinger told various labor leaders that "compromises" on parts of the program would be forthcoming provided they would go along with the "concept of conservation." Similarly, at a special meeting, Carter and Schlesinger reportedly told building trades leaders, including Georgine that the details of the energy program still remain to be worked out and put into legislative form and that there was a lot of room for their "input." They were cautioned against coming out with any "rash statements."

Yet another Washington-based trade union leader gave indication that a second line was being circulated to keep labor in tow. It would be a mistake, he stated, "to burn our bridges with the Democratic Party by attacking the Carter program. We may still be able to get some people to change it."