

## AFL-CIO Leadership Endorses Carter's Energy Conservation

Jimmy Carter told a press conference two weeks ago that he just really couldn't understand why everyone was making such a fuss about disagreements between himself and AFL-CIO President George Meany. Although Meany might not realize it, Carter said, he really supports my policies. For a change, Jimmy Carter was offering a fair approximation of the truth.

The fact is that the AFL-CIO has accepted the centerpiece of Carter's fascist program, his energy conservation policies. As for the rest of Carter's program, the leadership of the labor federation is operating under the delusion that they can horsetrade with Carter and energy advisor James Schlesinger.

The endorsement of "conservation" has provided the cover for the AFL-CIO's Trilateral Commission members Lane Kirkland, AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer, and I.W. Abel, out-going president of the United Steelworkers, to steer the labor movement into energy "conservation" projects, such as the Pittsburgh area's national pilot project Operation Pacesetter, modeled on the Nazi economy. Run under the auspices of the Americans for Energy Independence, Pacesetter has as its publicly announced purpose the total involvement of Allegheny County, Pa. (Pittsburgh) in "drastically reducing energy consumption." But according to its Washington-based organizers, who have been working in coordination with Schlesinger's office in the White House, there is "no way to save energy by nickel and dime methods like turning down thermostats." Pacesetter is after big energy savings and the only way to achieve that is through a massive productivity drive in the steel industry. Pacesetter and the Federal Energy Administration staff members are organizing plant-level energy "conservation" (productivity) schemes focusing on the "energy intensive" steel industry. Pacesetter's "prime movers" are Abel and Edgar Speer, the head of U.S. Steel.

### *Bending Over Backwards*

Pacesetter defines the context for the goings-on at the May 4 meeting of the AFL-CIO Executive Board. Since the public announcement of the Carter energy program April 20, trade-union leaders, especially in the building trades, expected that the national AFL-CIO leadership would be compelled to "call the troops into battle." "We can't live with the Carter program and its conservation and neither can George Meany," said one midwestern building trades leader. However, the May 4 meeting emerged with an endorsement of the Carter program.

"The AFL-CIO concurs with the general objectives of the national energy program outlined by the President... By and large there are more pluses than minuses in the proposal..."

"We agree with the emphasis placed on tough conservation measures. We have long recognized that conservation is an essential component of any comprehensive national energy program..."

Starting from the acceptance of conservation — there is no defense of workers and working conditions against Pacesetter-type productivity.

While stating that "development of alternate energy source is "equally important," the report states that "development of new energy sources" will not make conservation unnecessary.

The AFL-CIO statement, while it refuses to endorse the cancellation of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor Project, represents a dramatic retreat from what had been a strong public commitment to nuclear power in general and to the fast breeder program in particular. A month ago, Meany had told the legislative conference of the building trades, "Plutonium means jobs," and pledged a fight on the breeder program.

### *What Gives?*

The Federation's response to the Carter energy program is the result of a combination of "black operations" by Lane Kirkland's office and of outside manipulations of the AFL-CIO executive council by individuals associated with the Schlesinger Administration.

Kirkland's office has been ceded almost total responsibility for the formulation of AFL-CIO energy policy, a coup which Kirkland accomplished prior to this winter's general session meeting; all questions about "official" AFL-CIO energy policy are referred to his office — including all media inquiries that can't be answered by the federation's PR staff. He has sold the AFL-CIO on the need for a strong conservation policy that would make the U.S. "less vulnerable to an OPEC oil embargo." The May 4 policy statement makes no attempt to justify conservation policies on the basis of "dwindling oil supplies," "future scarcity of energy supplies;" however, the need to eliminate dependence on foreign oil — especially OPEC — is stressed.

The AFL-CIO thus sees the energy program from a foreign policy-national security standpoint; as right-wing Social-Democrats, such AFL-CIO leaders have expressed their willingness to have their members make sacrifices in what they perceive is the "national interest."

The principal focus of opposition to the program in the statement is Carter's energy taxation policies, which Meany has denounced as "retrogressive" and "a form of hidden rationing." Whispering in the ears of Meany et al. on this question have been the networks associated with

Lee C. White, the former Kennedy aide, ex-head of the Federal Power Commission, a confidant of Schlesinger and Carter (with a title of consumer advisor) and the head of the Consumer Federation of America. White is hooked into the AFL-CIO through the Abel-directed Industrial Union Department. A statement issued by White this week on Carter's energy pricing policy parallels the "criticisms" in the AFL-CIO document. The day after Carter's energy speech, I.W. Abel made identical criticism and called for a national rationing policy.

White is presently trying to convince his "labor con-

tacts" which include individuals in the leadership of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) to push in that direction. A spokesman for White's group described its ultimate goals vis-a-vis the labor movement as changing its perceived constituency from the "working man alone" to the consumer — a non-existent "interest group" invented principally by the Rockefeller's Ralph Nader. White's principal aim is to misdirect labor away from any programmatic alliance with industry capable of defeating the Carter program.

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