

AFL-CIO program: barely disguised corporatism

by Carol White

For everyone familiar with Lane Kirkland's AFL-CIO operation, which acts as a front for the Harriman-KGB wing of the Democratic Party, its call to rebuild America may at first be surprising. The new program issued by the Industrial Union Department (IUD)—"Rebuilding American Industry"—almost seems on target when it asserts that "America's industrial base is dangerously eroding." Going on to stress unemployment and the loss of competitive edge in high technology industries, Kirkland's report justly notes: "No modern developed country can afford to allow its basic industry to deteriorate."

After blocking efforts to oust Federal Reserve Chairman Volcker and force interest rates down, the Kirkland-Harriman faction has the temerity to pin responsibility for the more than 12 million unemployed on Reagan policies.

Nonetheless, this program can sound credible to the unwary worker who sees the steady erosion of jobs. The program calls for a reversal of the "current painful process of deindustrialization [which] will require a national commitment to a new American industrial policy designed to rebuild our country's ailing industrial base—and to foster new industries—as the foundation of sustained, balanced economic growth."

Written by Kirkland's protégé Howard D. Samuel, a member of the U.S. Association for the Club of Rome, the document is, of course, not straightforward. It has the typical corporatist Second International program, including control of industry by "tripartite committees representing labor, business, and government in each industrial sector."

The pro-high-technology veneer of the report is thin. Indeed, when policy recommendations include the typical greenie-environmentalist demand that all new technology be submitted to impact analyses, the pretense becomes pathetic. At best, the program's promoters suggest a bit of modernization to keep up with the Japanese Joneses—as a cover for their real push to keep out Japanese products and seal U.S. borders.

Their policy recommendations are a replay of the German left Social Democratic program in the last elections. They call upon: "Management [to] be required to provide the community and workers its rationale for any proposed technological change. Their statement should detail the economic and

human impact of new technology. . . . Only new technology which improves the quality of working life as well as traditional productivity measures should be introduced."

Thus, they would do to American industry as a whole what the environmentalists have succeeded in doing to the nuclear power industry. This, with recommendations for job-creation programs, forms the basis for the National Employment Priorities Act which they propose.

All of the above, however, is merely the setting to demonstrate a context for accelerated economic warfare against America's international competitors. This is laid out in an accompanying policy document, "International Trade, Industrial Policies, and the Future of American Industry," a subject of future *EIR* coverage.

As the recession deepens, and as more and more jobs become non-union and more and more union members are out of work altogether, the Kirkland forces could not be a credible political force without addressing the erosion of America's industrial base—particularly in the face of the active campaign by the National Democratic Policy Committee for a national economic mobilization modeled on the 1939-45 recovery of the economy.

As this magazine has documented, there is no recovery going on. While most Americans can smell a rat, even when the rat talks about making jobs, the rhetoric of the IUD program suggests the experience of the World War II recovery or the pull-back from the postwar recession when the Korean war began. Most Americans confuse the effect of the spillover of new technologies into the civilian economy with the much more meager benefits of production running at capacity levels.

The IUD program is a deliberate fraud; but it is interesting precisely because it is credible, as opposed to those fascist programs which openly push labor intensive job-creation.

As recent LaRouche-Riemann economic model studies have documented, there is no pathway for recovery except a major technological revolution of the sort implied by the massive introduction of lasers into the process of production. Without such a boost to productivity, even lowered interests rates cannot do more than temporarily halt the downward slide of the economy. As this magazine has documented, the World War II defense industries were a stimulus to recovery precisely because they led a forced-march introduction of new technologies into production, and, as in the case of the aluminum industry, created whole new branches of industry.

The U.S. economy will recover only as it absorbs the technologies which will be developed as President Reagan's program for beam weapon development is implemented. As recent LaRouche-Riemann model studies have shown, only the levels of productivity indicated by massive mobilization of the civilian economy to absorb these technologies at a rapid rate can replicate the economic boost to the economy which we experienced from 1940 to 1945.

This is a program which Lane Kirkland has explicitly opposed.