

Labor in Focus by Marianna Wertz

Finally, a union that's for labor

The LIU is acting like a trade union should: opposing Gramm-Rudman and supporting nuclear power.

The current issue of *The Laborer* (Jan.-Feb.), bi-monthly publication of the Laborers International Union of North America (LIU) bears the welcome headline, "Hundreds of Local 383 Members Take Pride in \$5.9 Billion Nuclear Power Plant's Completion."

Rarely these days does one see a strong pro-nuclear statement, outside of *EIR*. The labor movement itself has been officially anti-nuclear, under the "leadership" of the Trilateral Commission's Lane Kirkland. "Environmental hazards" generally dominate the news coverage of AFL-CIO-affiliate publications.

And, it wasn't a mistake. The same issue of *The Laborer* leads with an editorial "Gramm-Rudman and You," by General President Angelo Fosco. Fosco hits the unconstitutional "budget balancing" bill hard. "The brighter future I discussed with you in my December 1985 message will be possible only if we are constantly on guard against the small minds and weak men who will sell out the future of our nation for apparently quick and easy solutions to current problems. A perfect example of such actions is the Gramm-Rudman 'balanced budget' Act."

Fosco goes to the heart of the problem in the Reagan economic philosophy. "At the outset of this Administration the promise of tax cuts, increased defense spending and a balanced budget were to be achieved by implementing 'supply side' economics. . . . It all sounded good in 1981, but as we have seen, 'supply side' re-

ligion is only so much rhetoric.

" . . . In passing Gramm-Rudman, the Congress was reacting to genuine public concerns about mounting deficits. As the President appealed to our pride in the traditional values of America, his rhetoric masked the dismantling of the infrastructure supporting those values."

The Laborer's feature article on nuclear power demonstrates the benefits of continuing to build that infrastructure. "At the peak of construction, more than 5,000 union building tradesmen were employed at the [Arizona] site." Later this year, the article points out, when all three units of the Arizona Nuclear Power Project are in full operation, they will provide over 25% of Arizona Public Service Company customers' electric needs.

"The Project will also provide a \$13 million annual payroll for area residents and a state tax return representing 20 percent of the state's total property tax receipts."

The nuclear project, located on a 4,050-acre site, 55 miles from downtown Phoenix, is the largest nuclear power plant in the United States, if not in the world. Approximately 6,000,000 cubic yards of earth were excavated during the 10-year construction project. More than 77,000 tons of reinforcing steel were installed and approximately 694,000 cubic yards of concrete were mixed in a computerized batch plant set up on the site and poured into various structures.

The Laborer goes to pains to point

out that the nuclear construction project "has been a leader in industrial safety. The safety of the plant's construction and operations work force has been a prime concern since its inception. As a result, the plant has one of the best construction safety records in the nation."

Though he should be applauded for the union's strong stand against Gramm-Rudman and in support of nuclear energy development, President Fosco fails to propose concrete measures to be taken to defeat the treasonous policies he opposes. He rightly says, "More is demanded of the Labor Movement, however, than merely being a cheering section for congressmen who are attacking the Gramm-Rudman concept in the courts."

But Fosco does not go beyond grandstanding. "Your international union will not tolerate such indifference to the needs of America and its people. I can pledge that we will be in the forefront of Labor's fight to retain a full measure of compassion and social justice in the policies and activities of the federal government."

Specific measures, including the trial of the authors of the Gramm-Rudman bill for treason, need to be spelled out and supported by an actually potent labor movement. Internationally coordinated strikes directed at the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the Trilateral Commission would give these supranational institutions pause before implementing their genocide.

The LIU would do well to listen to its own advice: "America can have a great future. We are still the strongest economy, with the greatest industrial base and the most efficient workers in the world. To achieve that future, we may have to face up to some very hard choices, but that is the nature of achieving greatness."