

The real fireworks erupted over an attempt by the centrists to expand the executive positions in the Central Committee in order to avoid Kyokai's demand for the removal of Eda from the Party's Vice-Chairmanship.

Despite initial resistance to the proposal, Kyokai eventually relented, declaring "We wash our hands of this dirty trick."

But members of the Japanese section of the International Caucus of Labor Committees attending the conference laid out to Kyokai and others what a real alternative to Eda and his Rockefeller-dictated policies would have to be: a programmatic united front between the Communist Party and serious, pro-socialist elements of the JSP.

Laying the first necessary foundations for such a united front, the ICLC organizers held intensive discussions with left-wing elements of the JSP and distributed copies of the recently published Japanese edition of the ICLC's journal, the International Bulletin.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR HELPS IMPLEMENT "SHARE-THE-WORK" PLANS

Dec. 31 (IPS)--The Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor is tailoring its enforcement of federal laws to enable employers to institute "share-the-work" shortened workweeks, plantwide wage cuts, and other productivity measures. A bureaucrat at the division's headquarters in Washington, D.C. that he is now telling workers who file complaints against miserable working conditions and low wages that "having a job at \$2 an hour is better than not having a job at all."

The federal administrator of the division, Betty Murphy Southard, says she will give very serious attention to employer recycling programs. She already has approved a West Coast company's plans to close one week a month for three months, an across-the-board wage cut, and another company's plans for plantwide wage reductions.

The division is responsible for enforcing the Fair Labor Standards Act (which contains the minimum wage and overtime premium provisions), the Child Labor Laws, the Age Discrimination Act, and other laws. These laws often create legal nuisances for employers who want to "rationalize" production.

At present, the division still seems constrained to obey the "letter of the law" while giving employers as wide a latitude as possible to institute their plans. In the future, all pretensions of legality in this and other matters will have to be dropped as the Department of Labor enforces Rockefeller's labor policies.

Brennan Rumored Out

Rumors of the imminent sacking of Labor Secretary Peter Brennan are circulating. Brennan, the former head of the construction trades in New York State, lacks the sophistication to pull the Department together for Rockefeller's drive. Today the Wall St. Journal, a leading business newspaper, speculated that Brennan may be named Ambassador to Ireland.

Slave-labor and speedup expert John Dunlop, who has led the way for corporatist policies, is reported to have been offered Brennan's position, according to "high Administration officials."

FRENCH PRESS TOUTS STRAUSS TO INTIMIDATE PCF

Dec. 31 (IPS)--Le Nouvel Observateur, a French weekly closely related to the CIA-controlled Socialist Party, is raising the specter of German fascism in the person of West Germany's Christian Democratic Union chief Franz-Josef Strauss. This maneuver is a blatant attempt to intimidate the French Communist Party (PCF) into toning down its leftward turn and dropping its blistering attacks against Socialist Party General Secretary Francois Mitterrand. Le Nouvel Observateur warns that unless the PCF drops its turn, falling back into the arms of the Socialist Party, they will be faced with the dreaded "law and order" alternative exemplified by Strauss.

The article in Le Nouvel Observateur Dec. 30 plays on the demoralization which has permeated the ranks of the ruling West German Social Democratic Party as a result of the policies of Rockefeller men like Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Schmidt's anti-working class agency has caused resounding defeats for the Social Democratic Party in recent elections, even in traditional socialist bastions. "The specter of order has taken hold even in the midst of the Social Democracy," Le Nouvel Observateur gloats, "but Schmidt's severity -[in kicking out leftists, notably ELC sympathizers] is not enough....The Germans are calling for an even stronger man."

The article then describes the many purges of West German Communist Party members in state teaching or civil servant positions. Hardly taking the pains to hide his real colors, Schmidt has been heard to declare that Strauss' neo-fascist movement is just what he needed to get rid of pro-Communist elements in the Social Democratic Party.

There is evidence at this point, however, that the PCF will not get sucked in by such a scare tactic. The Dec. 23 issue of the French Communist Party's weekly journal, France Nouvelle, points out that the existence of a mass-based Communist Party in France makes the kind of operation envisaged by Strauss virtually impossible.