

# Building Trades cheer Kennedy

*The following is the first of a two-part article covering the Building Trades national legislative conference held in Washington, D.C. this week.*

*We include in this part ample quotes from speeches made to the over 2000 Building Trades delegates by Senators Patrick Moynihan and Ted Kennedy as well as the speech made by Building Trades President Robert Georgine. The second part will include hefty coverage of the panel discussion entitled "Nuclear Energy—Its Future and the Environment," as well as coverage of the speeches made by Labor Secretary Ray Marshall and Vice President Walter Mondale.*

The national-three day legislative conference of the Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO opened April 23 with a suicidal retreat from the fight for a nuclear energy-based economy. Instead, the Building Trades gave a warm embrace to the fascist policies of Senator Edward Kennedy and Energy Czar James Schlesinger.

From the opening remarks of Building Trades leader Robert Georgine, which failed to even mention nuclear energy, it was clear that the leadership had decided to ignore the overwhelming sentiment of their members to wage a post-Harrisburg offensive for nuclear power. Georgine and AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer Lane Kirkland offered an impotent attack on the Carter Administration's social programs and a prescription for a New Deal-styled recovery from an inevitable depression.

Georgine specifically joined the call for militarization of the economy, privately supported by inflation czar Alfred "Genghis" Khan and Federal Reserve Chairman William Miller, and publicly endorsed by the AFL-CIO President George Meany and, most recently, by United Autoworkers President Doug Fraser. The Building Trades leader is clearly looking backward to the fascist public works programs of the New Deal to bail the trade union movement out of the present recession. Georgine called for a renewed offensive for Humphrey-Hawkins type slave labor programs—policies which are not supported by the majority of skilled workers and which if implemented will lead to the depression he seeks to avoid and to the destruction of the trade union movement.

## **Bad Times Ahead**

The delegates hardly rose to applaud either Georgine or Kirkland. Many had gone into the meeting knowing that the future of nuclear energy and the jobs of their members were on the line. Their national leaders, who have chosen to hide behind the delphic oracle of nuclear power, James Schlesinger, gave them no marching orders.

This laid the assembled delegates open to demagogic appeals by Senators Daniel Moynihan and Edward Kennedy.

Moynihan, an architect of genocidal austerity policies for the Third World and American ghettos, incredibly presented himself as the champion of the labor movement. To the cheers of the delegates, he delivered a delphic attack on the Carter Administration and "no growthers"—never once mentioning nuclear energy.

Termining the Democratic Party a "disgrace," he lashed into an undifferentiated attack on American employers. He followed up with an attack on his "fellow liberals," tailored to his audience: Painting an erroneous picture of the isolation of the labor movement, even more dismal than that of Georgine, the flap-jowled Moynihan pontificated: "The AFL-CIO may now have to fight alone for strength and prosperity of the country." The delegates cheered. But Moynihan's blustering was merely a preliminary to the appearance of Ted Kennedy.

Sounding every bit like a President, Kennedy offered a demagogic program for fascism. Each component would destroy the American system that the building trades had taken part in creating. And after each pronouncement, the brainwashed delegates applauded.

The delegates gave Kennedy a standing ovation—despite the fact that he is a leader of the congressional antinuclear lobby.

## **In the corridors**

While Moynihan and Kennedy made their anti-capitalist, delphic pro-growth pitch, several representatives of industry—the potential allies in a labor-industry alliance—cringed in disbelief.

As delegates walked out of the hall, many appeared

to have second thoughts about fawning on the environmentalist Kennedy. The leadership had forced much of the discussion of nuclear power to take place in the corridors. The support, and the will to fight for it, were evident; only the nationally coordinated orders were missing.

And many delegates blamed leaders like Georgine for this rotten state of affairs.

## **Building Trades leader demands wage price controls**

*The following are excerpts from a speech given on April 23 by Robert Georgine, President of the Building Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, at the Building Trades national legislative conference:*

Reviewing the last year we can see that our original hopes of the Carter Administration and a liberal Congress making significant strides have not been realized....

Despite our defeat on labor law reform, we can point to some victories—the minimum wage bill, Humphrey Hawkins, and local public works jobs....

We did not advance, we did not fall back....

The national economy is headed toward a recession, hitting first in housing. Only swift action to control inflation can prevent a depression.... Carter will fail unless an enforceable system of controlling prices, profits, credit and interest rates is established. We don't like controls, but we will not stand for wage controls without price controls. If we must have controls, we must have controls on everything....

We must expand our energy supplies, we must develop all our resources with the proper safeguards for health and safety...we must free ourselves from OPEC....

## **Moynihn rallies labor against Congress**

*These statements were made by Senator Patrick Moynihn to the delegates attending the National Building Trades conference this week:*

I am glad to be here today, in fact I am glad that I am here with you rather than back on Capitol Hill with a U.S. Congress which has disgraced the tradition of the Democratic Party....

American employers have lived with the most stable patriotic labor force in the western world, and now they are turning against you. They have not been there when you need them. ... It is time you stop being taken for granted....

I want to talk about three things....

First, the efforts to repeal the Davis Bacon Act must be stopped. All those Senators who are trying to repeal Davis Bacon are the same Senators who want twice their share of public works.... I say, if you vote against Davis Bacon, you get no public works....

Second, you must become concerned about the multilateral trade negotiations. One of the codes concerns removing technical barriers to trade; if the trade agreement goes through it could wipe out building codes in the U.S....

Third, there is the problem of the budget cutters ... the people who have bumper sticker solutions to the collapse of the economy. The budget going into the 1980s has a zero increase in the expense of the government.... You are the people who build things ... this zero increase (for public works spending) is not a future good enough for the greatest republic in the world. ...

## **Kennedy courts Building Trades**

*Here are excerpts from the address by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) to the AFL-CIO Building Trades national legislative conference:*

You know people complain that they can't find decent housing any more. Well a friend of mine just bought a 12 room house for \$20,000 within walking distance of schools, shopping ... and Three Mile Island....

The Administration is part of the energy crisis. It has decontrolled oil prices, allowing companies to make tremendous windfall profits. And then it comes to the Congress and asks us to bail them (the Administration—ed) out. The national government should control the price of oil ... not OPEC!...

But the House and the Senate are awash in special interest groups. We have the best Congress money can buy. ... It's a disgrace to every principle of government that we know. We must have public financing of campaigns ... We need better leadership from the Congress and the Administration ... the nation has a crying need for houses, roads, schools, plants ...

The wage price guidelines are not being applied equally. Workers' wages under collective bargaining contracts over the past several years have been held to a cap of 7 percent.... But the cost of living has shot up by 10 percent, interest rates have risen to 11 percent and corporate profits have risen by 24 percent....

We must have a comprehensive national health insurance plan. ... In Canada, when they implemented (such a health plan—ed.), the doctors went out on strike. They said the plan wouldn't work ... but the plan does work... We don't need doctors, if they are going to rip people off....