

LABOR PERISCOPE

Parkhurst gets into the act

Sometimes-violent protests by independent truckers against the Carter administration-induced shortage of diesel fuel and its skyrocketing costs spread to the East Coast last week. Groups of independents—truck drivers who own their own rigs—blockaded truck stops along interstates in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, while at least two attempts by truck caravans to tie up traffic on the George Washington Bridge were narrowly averted by New Jersey state police. Sniper fire hit nonstriking trucks in the Midwest and Rocky Mountain states, while the wife of a truck driver was critically wounded in Alabama. Police and the National Guard have been placed on alert in several states.

With the violence and highway terrorism spreading, Mike Parkhurst the editor of the semi-pornographic *Overdrive* magazine and the head of the Independent Truckers Association, got into the act. Declaring that truckers could no longer wait for redress of their grievances, Parkhurst called for all independents to park their rigs. Parkhurst, who earned the name "field marshal" for his activities in promoting the violent shutdowns of the winter 1973-74, called on truckers to disrupt shipments of food. "We are going to make people hurt," he boasted. The media immediately began to zero in on Parkhurst, covering him as the "leader and chief spokesman" for the independents.

Who is this would-be field marshal who boasts of a "military command center" at his *Overdrive*

headquarters in Los Angeles?

Parkhurst has made a good living out of playing on the fears and desperation of the independents and attacking the Teamsters union. In the space of 15 years, he has built advertising and related income from his magazine. But some people are wondering who he really works for.

Overdrive has received heavy doses of income from the Paccar Corporation, whose finances are controlled by the Lazard Freres investment bank of Felix Rohatyn and on whose board sits former CIA director McCone. Advertising represents a standard vehicle for conducting Wall Street money to controlled front organizations. Articles in *Overdrive* in 1973 supported the coup in Chile—an operation directed by the U.S. State Department and National Security Council under the direction of Henry Kissinger; few people have the nerve to support the overtly fascist Pinochet regime. Quack economist Milton Friedman advises Pinochet, and Parkhurst has said that he supports the economic policies of Milton Friedman and calls himself a "radical free market capitalist in the tradition of Adam Smith..."

When Milton Friedman's "free market" think tanks such as the American Enterprise Institute or the Heritage Foundation, which push trucking deregulation, need somebody to represent the "poor independents," Parkhurst is the man who shows up.

And then there is the paramilitary manner in which Parkhurst conducted the 1974 shutdowns,

with his "war room" and "choke points." Everything about Parkhurst, according to informed sources, points to him being a "domestic counterinsurgency specialist" in charge of deploying the independents in operations against the country.

In 1974, Parkhurst's "shutdown" mapped into plans drafted by the Office of Preparedness and the Department of Defense for a full militarization of the transportation system—using Parkhurst-provoked violence as a pretext. This plot fizzled when the U.S. Labor Party and sections of the Teamsters union exposed it.

Will Meany retire?

Is George Meany, the 85 year-old battle axe, planning finally to retire as AFL-CIO president? That's the word going around federation circles, as reports of Meany's debilitating physical condition began to make their way into the press last week. The AFL-CIO president, according to the reports, has been a near invalid for months. Sources quoted in the *New York Times* claim that Meany remains mentally alert, though others say that he has almost no attention span.

Number one in line to replace Meany as federation president is Lane Kirkland, the Secretary Treasurer. Kirkland is even more pro-British, anti-Soviet, and anti-detente than the senile Meany. A close ally of Energy Secretary James Schlesinger and one of the most hated men in all of organized labor, Kirkland, an executive committee member of the "Committee on the Present Danger," is now on a crusade against the SALT treaty.

The real question is not whether Meany will retire, but whether Kirkland, who already effectively runs the AFL-CIO, will be able to steer the federation behind the presidential candidacy of Gen. Alexander Haig.

—L. Wolfe and M. Moriarty