

## SENIOR CITIZENS

# Gray Panthers focus on health

**By Ruth Dear**  
Over 300 people, one-fourth of them young people, gathered in Chevy Chase, Md., Oct. 27-30 for the second national convention of Gray Panthers.

"We will come out of this convention with renewed bodies and spirits, marching, singing and raising hell," National Convenor Maggie Kuhn told the opening session.

Later on the first day Rep. Claude Pepper (D-Fla.) made an unexpected appearance to talk about his mandatory retirement act. He also said that civil rights and anti-sexist legislation had eliminated discrimination in these areas. There were noticeable gasps from the audience and Dr. Paul Nathanson of the National Senior Citizens Law Center replied that Congress could pass any number of laws but unless it also appropriated funds for enforcement and informed people of their rights, legislation was meaningless.

The second day was devoted to health care, a major focus of the convention. Rep. Ronald Dellums (D-Cal.) described his bill for a no-fee national health service, community based and tax supported, to be made available to all, and said that he will reintroduce his bill (HR-6844) to establish such a service in January. Dellums pointed out that in 1976 \$140 billion was spent on health care in the U.S., even more than was poured down "that rat hole in Virginia, the Pentagon."

"Very few of my colleagues will turn down socialized medicine at Walter Reed or Bethesda or attendance by the House physician," he added. It is the poor and oppressed who are being denied health care.

Dr. Quentin Young of Chicago's Cook County Hospital and Dr. Bernard Winter elaborated on this theme. Karen Ignani of the Committee for National Health Insurance presented the case for the Kennedy-Corman health insurance bill, but the Gray Panthers registered overwhelming preference for the Dellums proposal.

Although health was intended as the main theme of the convention, emotionally and controversially debate on a position paper, "Economic Rights/Economic Democracy," nearly stole the show.

A commitment to social change has always been a part of Gray Panther programs and philosophy. Maggie Kuhn said in her keynote speech: "Gray Panthers must be part of the action involved in radical social change," and the next day Michael Harrington spoke on "Economic and Social Justice." However, the attempt to formulate a specific program for social change aroused intense feelings. There was a plea from a Farmer-Laborite from Minnesota to go more slowly; some newly recruited people were crying as they tried to decide whether they had made too radical a commitment.

In the end, the draft program was not officially adopted. It is to be sent to local networks for discussion—partly because of the intense reaction and partly because socialist participants saw it as inadequate.

In other resolutions the convention urged that taxation be based on high income rather than property, that profit-making organizations be excluded from the delivery of health care, and that Medicare-Medicaid provide home services for the chronically ill. A real first was a resolution to make all pensions subject to cost-of-living increases. Resolutions in support of the ERA, a military embargo on South Africa, gun control and an end to the proliferation of nuclear power plants also carried. A national task force on outreach to minorities was established.

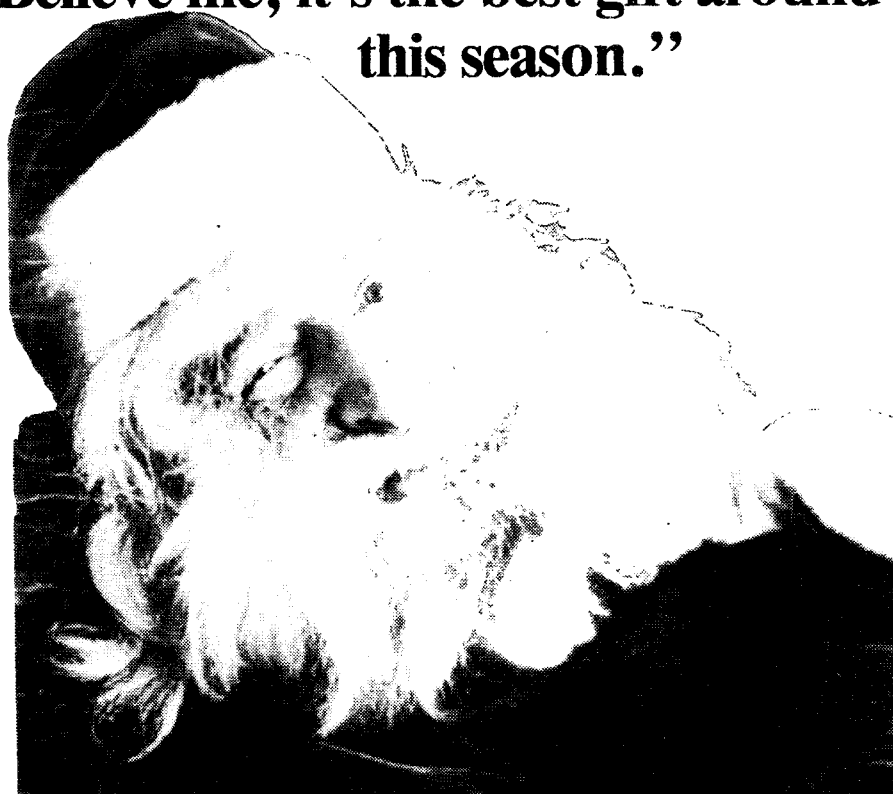
On Monday, Oct. 31, the day after the convention, about 50 Gray Panthers picketed outside the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in support of the bill for a government office of consumer representation.

*Ruth Dear is co-convenor of the Chicago Gray Panthers and attended their national convention.*



Gray Panther leader Maggie Kuhn.

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## ENERGY

# Dakota rejects grant

**By Nellie Scott**  
PIERRE, S.D.—A unique provision of South Dakota law has enabled 11 state legislators here to scuttle a \$1 million federal grant to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission.

South Dakota is one of only two states in the nation that require the state legislature to "appropriate" a federal grant before it can be spent. So, when the utilities commission, which regulates private utility companies in the state, won a competitive federal grant to investigate new ways to structure gas and electric utility rates, they had to receive legislative approval.

Rate restructuring is seen as a means of energy conservation, and the South Dakota grant was one of a number of grants awarded. The grant, which came from the Federal Energy Administration, also included funds to increase the staff of the small South Dakota commission by 40 percent, giving it the resources to carry out the experimental project.

Utility commissioners anticipated no special problems getting approval from the state Appropriations committee. The four private utilities that the rate design experiments would involve had cooperated with the commission in developing the proposal, and had promised future cooperation. And the federal government was providing 100 percent of the money.

The commissioners got the first inkling of a problem at a meeting shortly after the grant was awarded. Commissioners

responded to a list of 40 questions from Montana-Dakota Utilities, a company that does about 5 percent of its business in South Dakota, but representatives from another utility, Black Hills Power and Light, left the meeting dissatisfied.

Black Hills took its complaints to the newest of the three utility commissioners, a young Republican the utilities consider their "friend in court." After consultation with Black Hills, the commissioner wrote to the Appropriations committee recommending turning back the \$1 million grant.

That was enough to doom the grant when the committee met on Nov. 14. Despite the best efforts of the remaining utility commissioners to gain Republican support, the committee split along party lines, with the six Democrats losing to the 11 Republicans, who voted down the appropriation.

One disgusted state official commented that the Appropriations committee considers itself "a committee to balance the federal budget," and takes pride in turning back federal funds regardless of their purpose.

Although the full legislature could reverse the decision of the Appropriations committee when it convenes in January, concerned people hold out little hope. Democrats in the state legislature are outnumbered by more than two-to-one.

*Nellie Scott covers energy and related matters for IN THESE TIMES.*



# Random Samples



Rep. John Conyers, second from left, hosted a congressional briefing on the Rosenberg case Oct. 19. Other participants included (from left) Roger Shattuck, Robert Meeropol, Vern Countryman and Marshal Perlin.

## Issues in Rosenberg case heard on Capitol Hill

For the first time since 1951, when Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Morton Sobell were convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage, their case has broken through the "silence on the Hill" and obtained a forum in the Congress.

On Oct. 19 Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich) hosted a Congressional Briefing in the Rayburn House Office Building to discuss the conduct of federal judge Irving R. Kaufman in the Rosenberg case. Among the panel were Professor Vern Countryman of Harvard Law School,

Robert Meeropol, son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, attorney Marshal Perlin of the National Committee to Reopen the Rosenberg Case (NCRRC), and John Shattuck, Washington office director of the ACLU.

Since June 1976, when the FBI released some documents relating to the Rosenberg case, serious questions have risen concerning Judge Kaufman's conduct during and after the Rosenberg trial at which he presided.

Countryman described three types of

judicial improprieties: out of court contacts between the judge, the FBI and the prosecutors, continuing interference in the case after it left his jurisdiction, and attempts to stifle criticism of the case.

Countryman added that "the picture may not be as bad as the FBI papers indicated. On the other hand, if Kaufman and those he is reported as talking to were interrogated under oath, it might be worse." He called for a congressional investigation to determine whether impeachable offenses had been committed by the

judge and to determine whether there needed to be more legislative standards of judicial conduct than presently exist.

Countryman was joined in his call for a congressional investigation by more than 100 law professors from around the country who signed a letter to the House and Senate Judiciary committees. Shattuck added that the ACLU had called for a similar investigation in March.

Marshal Perlin, who represented the sons of the Rosenbergs in the Freedom of Information suit that led to the release of the FBI documents, said: "They have one million, one hundred thousand pages on this case, but we've obtained so far only 30,000 pages of documents from the CIA, FBI and other agencies. If we had one-tenth of the documents at the time of trial, we would have been able to establish that each and every one of the prosecution witnesses was lying, and a goodly percent of them were lying with the knowledge of the prosecution."

(Ruth Pinkson, Washington)

## Undocumented workers

On Oct. 3 some 200 workers, many of them without immigration papers, stopped work at Goldmar Inc.'s Arrowhead Ranches near Phoenix and presented a list of demands to the management of the citrus ranch. (ITT, Oct. 19). On Nov. 1 Arthur Martori of Goldmar, a joint enterprise of the Goldwater and Martori families, agreed to most of the demands in negotiations with the Maricopa County Organizing Project (M-COP) and a committee of ten workers.

"The Goldmar work stoppage was the first time in U.S. labor history that undocumented workers organized for better pay and conditions. The courageous workers at Arrowhead have succeeded in winning their demands, and this has excellent implications for the rights and future of undocumented workers anywhere," said Jesus Romo, M-COP director.

(Tom Barry, El Mirage, Ariz.)

## Indians oppose copper leaching

By Stephen Most  
Pacific News Service

CERRILLOS, N.M.—A mineral-rich hillside—protected by local Indian tribes for 1,000 years and blasted to smithereens by a mining company last January—is the focal point of a heated controversy here over an experiment in a new copper-mining technique called on-site leach mining.

The controversy pits citizens of the town of Cerrillos and residents of six nearby Indian pueblos, who charge that the new technique will destroy the area's water supply, against the Los Angeles-based Occidental Minerals (Oxymin), whose executives argue that leach mining is a relatively clean, inexpensive method of gaining access to mineral deposits buried too deeply under the earth's surface to be mined by conventional methods.

Oxymin wants to prove the value of leach mining through a pilot project on a low-grade copper deposit in this, the oldest mining region of North America. As a preliminary step last January the mining company blasted a local hillside into a heap of fragmented rock, extending some 100 feet beneath the ground.

The company now wants to pour a solution of water and sulfuric acid into the rubble heap. The acid will leach copper from the rock, filtering it into a pipe beneath the blasted area. The mineral and acid solution—called leachate—will be pumped to the surface through the pipe.

According to a recent study by the Rocky Mountain Center on the Environment, a host of mining companies stand ready to adopt the technique on a variety of hard-to-reach mineral deposits in New Mexico and other mining regions across the country if projects like that at Cerrillos prove successful.

Union Carbide, for example, already is making plans to leach mine uranium several hundred feet beneath the ground

near the San Felipe Indian Reservation, only 20 miles from Cerrillos.

"If there's a best of all possible worlds in the mining business," explains industrial hydrologist Dr. William M. Turner, "it's leaching. The economic advantages are very attractive." Leach mining, Turner says, eliminates the need for shafts, waste dumps, smelts, tailings disposal, excavation and much labor.

Because of the low capital and labor costs, Oxymin reportedly will require no more than 20 employees to extract 18 tons of copper a day from its planned mining operation here.

If the Indians and concerned residents of Cerrillos have their way, however, Oxymin's pilot mine will never become operative. Despite the long history of mining here, the populace is almost unanimously opposed to the copper leaching project.

"We're not against mining copper," says Hugh Hazelrigg of the Concerned Citizens of Cerrillos, "but we are against anybody experimenting with our water table."

Residents are worried that leachate will seep through the broken rock into the town's wells. "The area is so fractured that the acid could go all kinds of ways," charges Hobart Durham, a chemist in Santa Fe, about 30 miles north of Cerrillos. "Sulfuric acid is a very good solvent. It dissolves lots of things—skin and everything."

Durham also is concerned that the blasting of the copper deposit could damage the entire Santa Fe water basin, whose northern edge lies beneath Cerrillos.

Oxymin's planned leaching operation, notes Deidre Hazelrigg, president of the CCC, would cover 40 to 60 acres and go 250 feet deep. That, she says, would require the "largest non-nuclear explosion in history" to fragment the rock.

Oxymin president Paul A. Bailly has acknowledged that its plans include blasting on a scale 10 times larger than

the one-million cubic foot explosion last January.

Although hesitant to discuss specifics, Oxymin officials argue that similar leach mining techniques already have been employed successfully for the commercial mining of uranium in Texas, potash in Utah and sulfur in Louisiana and Utah. The process, they say, was first developed some 50 years ago for the salt mining business.

While the CCC concentrates its opposition on the effect on the quality of the area's water, local Indian tribes are objecting to the quantity of water copper leaching will require.

"If Oxymin uses 500-acre/feet of water each year (as is planned), there will not be enough water for farming," says Ernest Lovato, executive director of tribal affairs for the Santo Domingo pueblo.

Lovato points out that "there has been a heavy Indian population here for many thousands of years. The mineral rights, the surface rights, everything falls under Indian title."

Last year, the Santo Domingo pueblo joined the citizens of Cerrillos in demanding that the state monitor and control the Oxymin project. At their urging, Gov. Jerry Apodaca appointed a task force of state officials to study the leach mining plans. Apodaca declared that Oxymin should not begin its operations until all questions regarding the project's safety were answered.

The task force allowed the test blast to take place last January, arguing that "several technical questions can't be answered without it."

In mid-September the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Agency ruled against Oxymin's bid to proceed with its pilot project. Oxymin, however, plans to appeal the decision, and the fate of the project remains up in the air.

Stephen Most is a California free-lance journalist and playwright.

## There all the time

Sir George Solti was scheduled to conduct three concerts at Chicago's Orchestra Hall Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Oct. 27-29. The program was Mahler's Eighth Symphony, which requires a full symphony orchestra plus a chorus and a children's choir—there were almost as many singers and musicians on the expanded stage as there were listeners in the packed house.

Thursday's concert was a big hit and Friday's was sold out, with people standing outside before the performance waving handfuls of big bills and bidding "anything you want" for a ticket.

Saturday also sold out, but before the concert Sir George stumbled getting out of a hotel elevator and wrenched his back. The concert was cancelled. As if that were not enough, the full ensemble was due in New York on Monday.

It was only at this point of desperation that someone thought to ask Margaret Hillis, renowned director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, who was "up on the score," if she would take over for the ailing maestro in New York.

The Carnegie Hall audience rose to its feet at the end of her performance and gave her a 10-minute ovation. The *New York Times* carries a page three story headlined "Woman Substitutes for Solti."

By the time the performers were back at home there was editorial comment on the fact that it took a catastrophe to call attention to the existence of an unused talent like Hillis'.

Meanwhile, those who had lost out on the Saturday concert were asking why the great brains hadn't thought of her a day earlier. Now they are asking whether Hillis will be asked to conduct again—with or without an emergency. (J.S., Chicago)