

NUCLEAR POWER

Clamshell opens anti-nuke campaign

Lionel Delevingne

PUTNEY, VT.—Over 300 “Clams”—members of the Clamshell Alliance—met here Nov. 4-6 in their first full-scale Congress. The organizers of the largest recent civil disobedience action, at the Seabrook, N.H., nuclear plant site in May, spent the three days considering future actions, philosophy and organizational structure.

The Congress involved all local anti-nuclear groups linked to the Clamshell Alliance in New England, and came just a few days before the start of appeal trials in Rockingham County Superior Court. (Three defendants were found guilty and sentenced to 15 days in jail and given \$100 fines the next week.)

The Congress began with the Clamshell Coordinating Committee reporting that plant construction at Seabrook is very much in doubt. The Town of Seabrook has refused the Public Service Company (PSC), builder of the plant, access to needed water. The utility also says a \$30 million rate hike is needed to finish the plant and that without its approval PSC's bond rating will plummet and banks will continue to withdraw support.

The plant also faces opposition from Gov. Michael Dukakis of neighboring Massachusetts, who has announced his intention to fight the Seabrook plant before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on economic grounds.

Local caucuses and six working groups were the dual bases of discussion when the process of consensus decision-making got underway Saturday. “Clams” moved back and forth between the two groups, focusing on proposals and resolutions that had been submitted in advance—along with a few developed during the weekend.

The “principles and resolutions” working group spent several hours revising the Clamshell “Declaration of Nuclear Resistance.” Changes were minor, but opposition to nuclear weapons was more directly linked to the “peaceful” use of nuclear power.

During the debate over principles a minority also criticized the limitations of “pacifism.”

Divisions surfaced in other groups about the forms of representation and the pros and cons of centralization. Despite the coordinating committee's desire to strengthen committee processes, local autonomy continued to hold sway and many disagreements remained unresolved as the Plenary Session for all “Clams” began Sunday afternoon.

By 3:30 p.m. the auditorium was packed. The Congress Steering Commit-



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tee, composed of representatives from each working and local group, finished organizing the resolutions just as speakers from Environmentalists For Full Employment were edged off the stage.

After the first order of business, reaffirmation of Clamshell's Founding Statement and Declaration of Resistance, was handled, spirited debate emerged over a variety of practical issues.

Agreement was eventually reached on a future occupation—scheduled for June 24, 1978—as well as a plan for blockade of the reactor vessel when it is shipped to the site. There were also proposals for public education and canvassing, working ties with other groups, such as the Granite State Alliance, which are fighting the PSC rate hike, and an organizational structure to be used for one year.

Structure prompted a three-hour debate, during which consensus was blocked on grounds of elitism and disenfranchise-

ment of Clam groups from New York and New Jersey. A decentralized structure was finally accepted, providing for local autonomy, formation of regional or state coordinating groups, and a formula for representation on the New England Coordinating Committee.

Tactics will be further developed and refined through local group study. The next occupation may either be a mass action or a wave approach. The waves could be small—perhaps 200 people a day for weeks, or, as one participant suggested, large waves of several thousand each.

Because of limited time, some proposals did not reach the floor during the plenary session. A proposal from the labor committee to strengthen ties with unions and support boycott and strike actions is still in the works, along with a resolution to support the goals of the Mobilization For Survival.

A group as vigorous and democratic

as Clamshell defies easy definition. The limitations of a single-issue focus are readily admitted, and many “Clams” argue that the Alliance is an organizational model for a new society. As such, it must promote not only an end to nukes but many basic changes in social values.

Disagreements over strategy and tactics aside, the participants at the Congress solidly supported the Alliance's basic principles. The hundreds who convened in Vermont and thousands throughout the Northeast continue to demand “an immediate and permanent halt to the construction and export of nuclear power plants, weapons and technology.”

At their Congress the “Clams” demonstrated their commitment to democratic process and a readiness to lead the fight against nuclear power in New England in the years ahead.

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High noon for Indiana Dunes

CHESTERTON, IND.—For the residents of Chicago and northern Indiana the Dunes State Park is the closest thing they have to a wilderness area—over 2,000 acres of oak trees, witch hazel, bracken fern and other vegetation cushioned by pillows of sand dunes and laced with dozens of hiking trails. Located 30 miles from Chicago on the shore of Lake Michigan, the Dunes were used by almost 1.5 million visitors last year, making it the most heavily-used park in the area.

If a local utility company has its way, the Dunes may earn the additional distinction of being the most dangerous park in the state.

Since 1967 the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) has wanted to build a nuclear power plant adjacent to the park. After years of back and forth court battles, construction recently began on the plant. The final barrier to its continuation may be the activities of the three-month-old Bailly Alliance, a regional anti-nuclear group which sponsored a march and rally of about 100 people against the plant on Nov. 19.

The main points of controversy are the impact of the plant on the Dunes and the potential danger to nearby urban areas. Russ Bohn, NIPSCO nuclear staff member, argues that the plant is essential to meeting increased electricity consumption and that nuclear reactors “have the best safety record of any industry in the country, and probably in the world.”

On the other hand, Ed Gogol, Illinois spokesman for the Bailly Alliance, says, “If the Bailly nuclear plant is built, it will generate every year an immense amount of radioactive poisons. A catastrophic accident could cause release of a deadly cloud of radioactive gases and particles. Many thousands of people could be killed or injured and rates of cancer and genetic disease would increase. Property damage could run to the tens of billions of dollars and the entire southern Lake Michigan region would be contaminated for hundreds of years.”

“The Dunes is the only place in the area where steelworkers can see some natural beauty, to get away from the environment in the mills,” adds Joe France of United Steel Workers' Local 1010. Their local,

which represents workers at Inland Steel, has come out against the plant.

Also opposed are Illinois Senators Charles Percy and Adlai Stevenson III, who have requested the Interior department to block construction. Illinois Rep. Sidney Yates has also asked President Carter to intervene on behalf of Bailly opponents. And Nathaniel Reed, an Interior department official under Nixon, has termed approval of the site a “colossal error,” since an accident would occur near almost 20 percent of the country's steel-making capacity.

Opponents point to alternatives, like conservation, solar and wind power, that would provide ample energy at lower cost with greater reliability. They also point out that in the last four years the estimated cost for building the “Bailly nuke” has increased from \$180 million to \$705 million, and that this increase, in addition to the soaring cost of uranium, will make nuclear-produced electricity exceedingly expensive. NIPSCO has already asked for a 17 percent rate hike to pay for the plant.

The project would also add to the 1 mil-

lion gallons of polluted water that an already existing fossil fuel plant, which would continue to operate alongside the nuclear plant, is feeding each day into the Dunes through ash pond seepage. NIPSCO has thus far been unable to satisfy the Interior department that it has found an adequate solution to the seepage problem.

Opponents also fear that the plant's 450-foot-high cooling towers would add moisture and heat to the air which would react with the sulfur dioxide and trioxide emitted by nearby steel mills to produce sulfuric acid. This acid, they say, would rain down on the Dunes as a mist and harm plant life in the park.

These factors have led to the Bailly Alliance, whose purpose and organizational structure are patterned after New Hampshire's Clamshell Alliance, to declare “unequivocal and peaceful opposition to the Bailly nuke.” While the recent demonstration was relatively small, it included people from three states, some with experience in East Coast anti-nuclear efforts.

ELECTIONS

Beantown busing runs out of gas

By Sidney Blumenthal

BOSTON—The defeat of three prominent anti-busing politicians has effectively ended busing as an issue in Boston. The vote was a direct repudiation of the politics practiced by Louise Day Hicks, John Kerrigan and Pixie Palladino, all of whom built their careers on the racial question.

For more than a decade the tone of local affairs in Boston, nationally reputed to be a bastion of liberal enlightenment, has been dominated by these politicians and the anti-busing organization they founded—ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights).

Mayor Kevin White, a moderate liberal with strong national ambitions, tried to ride out the busing crisis by waffling and reaching an accommodation with Hicks and company to temper their excesses. He hoped that by giving the anti-busing leaders, especially Hicks and her entourage, some patronage he could eventually master the situation. In the end, however, he simply outlasted the anti-busers, whose movement is now in shambles.

"You know where I stand."

Louise Day Hicks, an imposing presence, is the grande dame of South Boston, an all-white, largely Irish enclave, which has long had an identity apart from the city. Its residents regard themselves more as being from Southie than from Boston. Their insular attitude did not serve them well in the busing crisis, since they often failed to understand the larger workings of law and politics.

Hicks shared that provincialism. She was the dutiful daughter of a local judge and lived her whole life in Southie. She was elected to the Boston School Committee in the early 1960s without any clear political platform. Who she was—a middle-aged mother born into a political family—was enough for her constituents.

Her reputation was made when the civil rights movement in Boston blossomed. In 1964 blacks staged a boycott of schools. The following year the NAACP appealed to the School Committee, whose employees are typically more concerned with patronage than pedagogy, to desegregate the school system. Hicks answered the charges by claiming that blacks sought to destroy "neighborhood schools," a term she coined. Her position was implicitly understood by her supporters and she began to campaign under the slogan: "You know where I stand."

Thought she could stop busing.

Hicks contended that busing was an impossibility in Boston because of her popularity. She naively believed that she could thwart the intent of federal law. For a while she was successful, as the NAACP's law suit against the School Committee dragged slowly through the courts. But in 1974, Federal District Judge W. Arthur Garrity issued a lengthy ruling in which he detailed the segregation patterns maintained by the School Committee and ordered the system integrated, a process to be achieved by busing.

Hicks' rhetoric scared, inspiring her followers in Southie violently to resist the judge's decree. There were numerous incidents: buses stoned, individual blacks assaulted, the pro-busing *Boston Globe's* delivery trucks hijacked.

Hicks publicly deplored the violence, although she was perhaps the one most responsible for creating a climate in which it thrived. Over the years she had done things such as releasing a fabricated study that supposedly demonstrated that murder was a common form of activity in Roxbury, the black ghetto. Her figures were unfortunately all untrue.

She did appear to be genuinely upset when the anti-busing movement seemed to spin out of her control and adopt more of a direct action approach. Hicks believed that lobbying and legislative work,



Louise Day Hicks (above), John Kerrigan and Pixie Palladino were repudiated by Boston voters as the busing issue faded and a black, John O'Bryant, was elected to the School Committee.

buttressed by mass pressure, could override Judge Garrity's decision.

An overt racist.

The lack of results brought by Hicks' strategy led to temporary enhancement of the power of John Kerrigan, by turns a city councilman and school committeeman. Kerrigan is an overt racist—unlike Hicks, who expresses her opinions in a peculiarly dainty manner.

Kerrigan is unafraid to use the word "nigger" in public and tells racist jokes that would embarrass Earl Butz to anyone who will listen. When Lem Tucker, an ABC reporter, was covering the busing story for the network Kerrigan taunted him by imitating an ape. "Want a banana?" Kerrigan shouted at Tucker. Kerrigan referred to all journalists as "mag-gots."

Kerrigan favored a militant policy against integration, refusing to disavow violence. Eventually the *Boston Globe* returned his compliments by exposing the fact that a city employee on his staff spent her time at home addressing his Christmas cards. His star dimmed when the errant no-show freeloader confessed her slothful habits. The incident made Kerrigan's character suddenly evident to voters who had apparently never before been bothered by it.

An ideological racist.

Kerrigan's chief ally in the anti-busing movement was Pixie Palladino, elected to the School Committee on the basis of her reputation of making race an issue in

her community, largely Italian East Boston. She was the most consistently militant anti-busing politician and seemed to have more ideological direction than Kerrigan.

Under Palladino's influence, ROAR split into two distinct factions, one backing her and another backing Hicks, as the anti-busing movement became more frustrated by its failure to triumph over Judge Garrity.

Palladino's faction was infiltrated by members of the John Birch Society, who had little personal power in ROAR. The Birchers were too middle-class for ROAR's hard-liners, although their political line seemed to find many adherents.

Palladino was outside the mainstream of Boston politics, which Hicks was not. The Hicks deal with Mayor White was an indication of who the Mayor thought he could do business with, and Palladino reacted by accusing Hicks of selling out the cause. They became bitter rivals, a competition that hurt them both with the voters.

Busing becoming accepted.

By the beginning of the 1977 school year, Bostonians had begun to accept busing as a reality. All but the most rigid anti-busers recognized that there was no way to stop it. The shrewder politicians from Southie shifted gears, taking up issues like abortion.

But Hicks kept telling the electorate: "You know where I stand." She couldn't let go of the racial issue. Neither could Kerrigan, trying to fight off the corrup-

tion charge, and Palladino, who had no instinct other than for the jugular.

When the votes were counted all three went down in defeat. It was a last hurrah without dignity. There is very little nostalgic feeling, even among their former supporters.

Dramatically highlighting the change in Boston politics was the election of a black, John O'Bryant, to the School Committee, only the second black to be voted into the job in the 20th century.

O'Bryant won because he developed an effective organization, which managed to pull out more voters in the black wards percentage-wise than in the white wards for the first time. He was also quietly aided by Mayor White's machine.

O'Bryant is a career teacher who insists that the real education issue in Boston is its generally poor quality. He says that he will defend black interest, a novelty in Boston. "The Boston School Committee will never be the same," he told his victory rally after his election.

More than that, Boston politics will never be the same. The defeat of Hicks and the others who exploited race for their own gain over the past decade marks a definite end to their power and influence. The anti-busing movement has disintegrated; integration is proceeding peacefully; and blacks have acquired a political knack that hasn't been seen before in Boston. The city may begin trying to live up to its national image now. ■

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