

## ENERGY

# Sun Day promotes solar power

By David Moberg

**S**UN WORSHIP IS COMING BACK. On a scale unknown to the ancient Incas, 20 to 25 million people are expected to acknowledge the power of the sun on May 3, Sun Day.

There will be a few sunrise religious services, but otherwise the day will be primarily scientific, educational, political and celebratory. Sun Day—on a Wednesday—is being organized by some of the same people who planned the vastly successful Earth Day in 1971, to demonstrate the immediate availability of solar technologies to meet much of America's energy needs.

Over 1,000 events in 400 different towns, cities and rural areas have been scheduled, some spread out over the whole week. By May 3 organizers expect the number to double. There will be numerous fairs and exhibits, open houses at solar homes, film showings, practical workshops in build-your-own solar technology, solar greenhouse demonstrations, teach-ins, solar cookouts, concerts (featuring "sun songs"), and special programs on the way solar technology can meet the needs of the urban poor.

In addition to cultural and consumer-oriented events, there will be petition drives, job rallies, lobbying for solar legislation, town meetings and other political action aimed at reducing existing barriers to solar technology, such as some tax and zoning ordinances.

Although there are plans for substantial actions throughout the country, the greatest interest so far has been shown in sun-rich California and the Southwest and in New England, where the ravages of high oil prices, soaring electric utility rates and nuclear power construction have created a constituency for an alternative energy future.

The coalition promoting Sun Day has carefully avoided controversies that may otherwise detract from its primary aim of showing people "why it's worth their while to think solar," in the words of coordinator, Peter Harnik.

At first some union leaders were worried that the environmentalists who initiated the project, such as Sun Day's chairman Denis Hayes, would sneak in an anti-nuclear agenda, but the coalition agreed to take no position on nuclear power, coal or even any specific solar technology. As a result, the United Auto Workers, the Machinists, the Steelworkers, and the Sheet Metal Workers have been vigorously involved, with participation to a lesser degree by other unions, such as the Communications Workers and the State, County and Municipal Employees. Various environmental, church, appropriate technology, consumer and academic groups or individual leaders have also been major promoters of Sun Day.

Sun Day has such a relatively unthreatening aim that the coalition can draw the support of strongly pro-nuclear Energy Secretary James Schlesinger, who recently cut the Department of Energy's proposed solar development budget below last year's appropriation. Nonetheless, there are obviously serious conflicts just below the surface of the unified enthusiasm.

Sun Day will give exposure both to decentralized, easily constructed devices for solar heating, water heating and even production of electricity and to exotic technologies that go in a much different, more centralized direction, such as solar satellites and "power towers" that attempt to duplicate the capacity of present central power stations. It will provide a platform for both solar advocates who argue for keeping fossil fuel prices as low as possible during a transition period and to those who want to push up oil and gas prices fast to speed conversion to solar

power, despite the hardship to many poor people in the interim.

Even many big corporations—including electric utilities, some aerospace companies and probably Mobil Oil, owner of Tyco, a large solar company—are expected to get into the act, even if their message is that solar power is nice—some time in the distant future.

However, "the message of Sun Day is that solar energy is here now," Harnik says. "The solar age starts May 3." He hopes that the massive publicity will convince people that solar energy is not science fiction. Afterwards, those who want to keep solar technology democratically controlled will continue their fight.

"I feel that solar technology by its very nature tends more toward decentralization, appropriateness in scale and community control than other technologies," Harnik says. "I can imagine scenarios where it is misused or simply absorbed into the existing utilities and energy companies, but that will depend on whether the national will to implement it in a socialist, left-leaning or community control way is there. The political edge won't be there on May 3. I think there will be several months when it's a motherhood issue—when maybe Barry Commoner and James Schlesinger are even on the same platform—but by September the divisions will show."



Sun Day will push everything from elementary solar cells such as that above to massive, capital-intensive solar power towers that attempt to duplicate the power of conventional power plants.

## CITIES

## Cleveland mayor fires Hongisto

By Dan Marschall

**D**ENNIS KUCINICH, THE youthful "reform" mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, has gone to war with Richard Hongisto, the progressive police chief he imported from San Francisco to clean up the local police department. The conflict is the latest in a series of political crises that have shaken the four-month-old Kucinich administration. This one, however, may be the most serious, since it places the administration's abrasive, "anti-humanistic" tone under public scrutiny and may thwart Kucinich's ambition to become a nationally recognized "opposition" political figure.

The seesaw battle, which both local reporters and political observers have had a difficult time following, has gone something like this:

In mid-March rumors began to circulate that Hongisto's three-month tenure as Cleveland police chief was in jeopardy. Hongisto had apparently engaged in several shouting matches with Bob Weissman, Kucinich's administrative assistant and closest confidante, and was balking at political pressures from administration officials to perform what he considered "unethical" acts.

On Wednesday, March 22, the conflict burst into the limelight through front-page newspaper stories. The next day, after Kucinich and Hongisto had met for several hours, they engaged in an impromptu news conference. Kucinich demanded that Hongisto immediately substantiate his allegations of "unethical" political pressures. Hongisto refused, requesting 24 hours to collect his thoughts and write a comprehensive statement. With TV cameras whirring, Hongisto was suspended.

Kucinich scheduled another press conference for the next day and demanded that Hongisto appear if he wanted to keep his job. Hongisto, apparently realizing that he was already on the way out, failed to show up and was summarily fired.

Hongisto's statement, published in full



Although immediate public reaction was heavily behind Chief Hongisto (above), Mayor Kucinich has regained support.

by the *Plain Dealer*, charges the administration with six examples of "unethical conduct" that entail political favoritism, a "sort of enemies list," and efforts to subvert the police chief's authority as outlined by the City Charter. At a speech in front of the City Club, Hongisto accused Kucinich of behaving like a Tammany Hall politician who surrounds himself with political cronies and tries to bring about reform through incompetence.

In a counter-statement categorically denied all of Hongisto's charges, calling them fabrications and untruths. "The former police chief has not been telling the truth," declares Andy Junewicz, Kucinich's press secretary. "His [Kucinich's] political enemies will seize at anything, no matter how flimsy and unsubstantiated it might be. And the allegations made by Hongisto are about as flimsy and unsubstantiated as anyone can come up with."

The press and public opinion, however, initially swung to Hongisto's side. Policemen, local politicians and Cleveland residents quickly came to his defense. "When Hongisto came here, there were a lot of questions. Now everyone's united behind him," commented one cop.

Since Hongisto took over, police response time has improved 23 percent, according to department figures, and 110 policemen have been taken off desk jobs and placed on the street. Crime dropped 5 percent in February, according to police statistics. Hongisto's style and community relations efforts have also attracted a high amount of favorable publicity.

After Kucinich's defense public opinion apparently moved in his direction. Recent phone calls to City Hall have been 12-1 in favor of the mayor, according to Junewicz. His popularity will soon be tested by a recall attempt that has been mounted against him. Recall proponents must collect 37,000 signatures in 30 days to call a special election. Observers see the Cleveland establishment and Democratic party regulars, who hate the independent-minded mayor, as the primary leaders of the drive.

The handling of the Hongisto affair has raised questions about whether the Kucinich administration can effectively govern the city. Weissman has the reputation as a tough, abrasive, vindictive political operator who handles staff members and Kucinich opponents very roughly. Kucinich has also been criticized for giving several young, inexperienced political supporters positions of heavy responsibility in governing the city.

"They have set the tone for this kind of thing to happen by all their mau-mauing of people, pushing people around, and taking a hard line on all the issues. They created a stereotype of the administration so that reporters are willing to believe the worst," says a veteran political observer.

The Hongisto affair also may sever connections between Kucinich and left-liberal forces around the country. It was mainly because of the Hongisto appointment, for example, that Kucinich was invited to address the California Democratic Council in early March.

"The problem," concludes Junewicz, "is going to be how to recover from the damage Hongisto has been able to inflict."

LABOR

# Corporate ties to Stevens under fire

By Bob McMahon

**J**.P. STEVENS, THE ANTI-UNION textile giant, is threatened with isolation from the normal interlocks and mutual ties of the corporate world. The threat comes as a result of a campaign by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) that has already led to decisions by Avon Products, Inc., and the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Co. to cut interlocking directorships with J.P. Stevens.

On March 21 David Mitchell, president and chief executive officer of Avon Products, resigned from the J.P. Stevens board of directors.

Two weeks before Mitchell and J.P. Stevens board chairman James Finley revealed that they would not seek re-election to the board of Manufacturers Hanover because of pressures resulting from the textile company's battle with the union.

The Avon decision came in the wake of thousands of inquiries from Avon customers and from Avon sales representatives across the country. "A customer would raise it with the representative, and the representative would raise it with us," a company spokesman said.

The pressure was organized by unions and women's groups. A postcard campaign protesting Avon's interlocks with J.P. Stevens was initiated at the National Women's Conference in Houston last November.

In the case of Manufacturers Hanover, a number of unions threatened to remove pension funds and other accounts from the bank if the tie to Stevens was not cut.

The Beltmakers, Novelty, and Allied

Workers union, a New York affiliate of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, closed out a \$6.4 million health and welfare fund account at Manufacturers Hanover. United Auto Workers Local 259 closed out a \$50,000 checking account at the bank.

Behind these two defections more important losses were openly threatened.

William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists, had suggested that his union might remove a \$160 million pension fund from Manufacturers Hanover. Other unions had also suggested they might withdraw their funds because of the Stevens link.

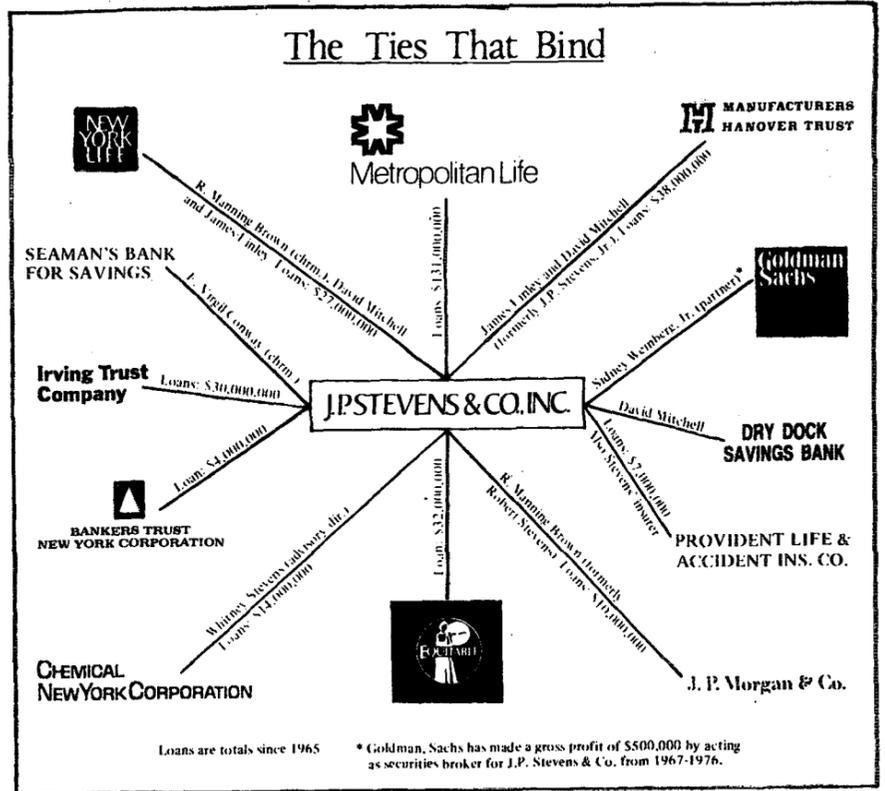
Altogether, Manufacturers Hanover holds nearly \$1 billion in pension funds, 14 percent of the bank's total pension fund business.

According to Ray Rogers, corporate campaign director for ACTWU, the goal of the campaign is to "isolate" Stevens, "to cut them off from their normal links and support on Wall Street."

Victories such as the Manufacturers Hanover decision have more than symbolic value, according to Rogers. The union's belief is that cutting such interlocking ties will result in increasing financial difficulties for Stevens. "Banks want these interlocks when they loan a lot of money, so they can see what happens to it," Rogers explains.

Both Rogers and union opponents, such as Avon's David Mitchell, describe the union tactic as more "sophisticated" than anything that has been attempted before.

At the same time, Rogers notes, the union is careful to avoid falling into the legal pitfall of appearing to organize secondary boycotts against banks or other compan-



The campaign against Stevens' corporate ties is intended to isolate the company and to cut them off from their normal links and support on Wall Street. Victories have much more than symbolic value.

ies linked to J.P. Stevens. "All we are trying to do," he explains, "is inform the public about certain links that exist between Stevens and others so that public opinion will force Stevens to come to the bargaining table in good faith."

The union's next target is New York Life Insurance Co. Stevens chairman James Finley is on the New York Life board, while New York Life chairman and chief executive officer, R. Manning Brown, holds a seat on the Stevens board. New York Life also has outstanding loans to J.P. Stevens of \$27-32 million.

Among other companies tied to J.P. Stevens by interlocking boards of directors are Seaman's Bank for Savings, Goldman, Sachs & Co., and Morgan Guaranty Trust.

Corporate isolation of J.P. Stevens also appears in other ways. Gallagher's President's Report, an investment guide, rated

Stevens chairman and chief executive officer James Finley among the ten worst chief executives of major corporations in 1977 because of the company's labor policies.

And in North Carolina the state's Industrial Commission attempted to set up a meeting between the Carolina Brown Lung Association and representatives of major textile companies to discuss compensation for brown lung disease.

Burlington Industries, the world's largest textile manufacturer, replied that they would be glad to meet with the Brown Lung Association but would not take part in any meeting at which J.P. Stevens was represented.

Burlington, explained a company spokesman, "does not want to be tarred with the same brush as J.P. Stevens." ■ Bob McMahon is a reporter in North Carolina.

POLITICS

# White House interfered with grant

By Barry M. Hager

WASHINGTON

**T**HE CARTER WHITE HOUSE IS being charged in a lawsuit with political interference—dating back to the first days of the administration—in federal funding for a Texas Chicano group.

The suit alleges that the White House responded to political pressure from Texas Democratic Gov. Dolph Briscoe and from the Texas congressional delegation in attempting to cut off federal funds going to the Zavala County Economic Development Corporation of Crystal City.

Slated for trial in federal court in Washington in May, the suit already has placed the Carter team in a difficult position: To avoid handing over copies of memoranda that would describe White House activity touching the group, the administration is claiming executive privilege—the controversial claim frequently used by the Nixon administration to prevent access to White House documents, including the Watergate tapes.

The claim of executive privilege—based on the assertion that a president must be able to receive confidential advice from his aides—arose March 8 during formal questioning of presidential assistants about their role in the case.

Three White House aides were questioned by the Chicano group's lawyers March 8-10: Frank Moore, assistant to the President for congressional relations; Joseph Aragon, special assistant to the President; and Margaret McKenna, deputy counsel to the President.

The documents that the administration refuses to disclose, 18 in all, include mem-

oranda written to Carter himself and date back to as early as Jan. 28, 1977—barely a week after Carter's inauguration. The existence of the documents, which the White House admits, shows that there was extensive high-level administration interest in the relatively small grant for the Zavala County group throughout 1977.

The suit charges that the White House exerted repeated pressure on the Community Services Administration, the successor to the old anti-poverty Office of Economic Opportunity, to cut off funding to the group. As a result, the suit claims, CSA in fall 1977 blocked the release of \$855,000 that the group wanted to use to buy land for vegetable farming.

Jesus Salas, the Zavala County group's executive director, said in a March 9 interview that "there is no doubt in my mind that the pressure came from Gov. Briscoe." Salas repeated his statement, made in an affidavit filed with the suit, that CSA officials had admitted to him White House pressure was behind the denial of funds.

Briscoe was away from Austin and could not be reached for comment. But his opposition to the group is well-documented. Crystal City, where the group is headquartered, has been a controversial center of Chicano political organizing for years. La Raza Unida, the Mexican-American political party, is strong in the area. Texas Democrats have viewed La Raza as a threat to the party, since La Raza's radical-progressive image siphons away leftist Democrats.

Moreover, allegations have been made in the past that Republican administrations have favored giving federal grant money to the county in an effort to forge

political links to the Hispanic community. Briscoe and other critics of the group raised questions about the unusually hasty procedures used under the Ford administration to obligate program funds for the group during the 1976 election year.

Briscoe temporarily succeeded in blocking release of the money during 1976 by objecting that he had not been given the chance—as required by law—to comment on the planned grant.

The present suit in effect charges that Briscoe's efforts continued and were successful thanks to a responsive White House. Carter's victory in Texas, a state he needed to win in 1976, is one reason suggested for his apparent interest in the South Texas group immediately after assuming office.

CSA officials deny that they succumbed to political pressure in blocking release of the money. They claim instead that the group has had a background of questionable use of federal money, and the grant was blocked because the request was not adequately documented.

Their criticism of the group's past use of federal funds has been backed up by the General Accounting Office, Congress' watchdog arm, and by investigations conducted by a House oversight committee.

Nevertheless, documents filed in the court case show that the White House did involve itself in decisions concerning the Zavala County project. Shortly before the CSA denial of funding, on Sept. 14, the director of the CSA was summoned to the White House for a meeting with Moore, Aragon and McKenna to discuss the project.

Sources familiar with the litigation



Texas Gov. Dolph Briscoe reportedly intervened to get the White House to hold back on the grant for Zavala County.

have concluded that while there may have been sound reasons to deny the money to the group, the White House efforts to intervene were nevertheless politically motivated and questionable.

Thus Carter may be embarrassed by the suit. The refusal to give up the 18 documents embroils his administration in a sticky fight over executive privilege, despite his pledges to run an open government. On the other hand, release of the documents could discredit the administration's claims to have moved away from political considerations in the exercise of government power.

The facts alleged in the suit also undermine Carter's claims to believe in "Cabinet government," rather than the highly centralized decision-making of the Nixon, and to a lesser extent, Ford administrations.

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