

IN THE NATION

NUCLEAR POWER

Radiation victims come together in a public forum



Widow Betty Fronterhouse with her son Gordon.

By Mike Jendrzeczyk and Pam Solo

WASHINGTON

"THE CONSPIRACY OF silence must be broken," said a woman who delivered deformed children as a result of exposure to X-rays during pregnancy. She expressed the frustration and rage of nearly 100 radiation victims from 40 states who gathered in Washington, D.C., on April 11 for the Citizens' Hearings for Radiation Victims. The hearings were convened by national organizations and concerned individuals to dramatize the human costs of nuclear technology over the past 35 years. Those attending represented but a small fraction of the estimated hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens who have suffered radiation exposure. Two people scheduled to testify died before the hearings took place.

An entire day of testimony on Saturday punctuated by outbursts of anger, quiet pleas of desperation, and accounts of deep personal suffering—amounted to an indictment of government nuclear policies, past and present.

Preston Truman, a resident of southern Utah suffering from lymph node cancer, explained how those living in the path of weapons testing fallout feel they were used as "guinea pigs." "What feeling of betrayal was echoed by nearly every person who testified—the residents living downwind of nuclear facilities, the veterans of atomic testing, Navajo uranium miners and their widows, and Micronesian Islanders (who sent a team from the South Pacific). Truman captured the sense of outrage at the government's indifference toward their plight: "We bury the dead—they don't."

Betty Fronterhouse's husband was involved in nuclear weapons tests and subsequently died of cancer. Three of her children have suffered severe genetic damage. She now fears that her grandchildren will soon begin to show symptoms of ill health effects. As the pain she has experienced came to the surface and caught in her voice, she was unable to finish her testimony. Her loss of words spoke more eloquently than any words she might have chosen.

Clara Harding and her daughter, Martha Harding Allis, came from Padukah, Ky., to fulfill the final wish of Joseph Harding, who worked for 18 and a half

years at the uranium enrichment plant there. Joe participated in a press conference announcing the hearings last fall; he died on March 1. Union Carbide, which manages the Department of Energy facility, continues to withhold medical files from Joe's family. Clara Harding, his widow, and Miriam Karkanen, widow of a Rocky Flats worker, detailed their common frustrations, having struggled for months to gain access to exposure records and tissue samples.

A delegation of workers from the Nevada Test Site—exposed by both the early atmospheric tests and continuing underground bomb detonations—was led by Benny Levy, who worked at NTS for 25 years. Waving death certificates for over 90 fellow workers in the air, he declared, "We've just started to identify these people, and we've just started to organize. We won't stop until we get justice."

The final witness, Susan Shetrom, articulated the feelings expressed by many of those who spoke before her. She described her transformation from a "typically conservative" school teacher living near Three Mile Island to an unwilling activist who opposes the government's and the nuclear industry's "random murder."

"I know people who have great, almost uncontrollable anger. Some have sought psychiatric help. And others have required medical attention because of the physical effects of trauma," she said. "Our children are unhappy and afraid. They have nightmares, cry frequently, and want to be held constantly. Their sense of security has been shattered."

The panel hearing the testimony was chaired by Everett Mendelsohn, professor of the history of science at Harvard University, and included Karl Z. Morgan, Robert J. Lifton, and citizens representing the range of people placed at



Clara Harding and her daughter Martha Harding Allis, with photos of Joe Harding, who helped organize the Citizens Hearings before his death on March 1.

risk by radiation exposure. A report prepared by the panel was delivered by a delegation to the White House on Monday. During a 90-minute meeting with Frank White of President Carter's Domestic Policy Council, recommendations were presented for just and uniform compensation systems and independent research on radiation effects. There was a call for a reexamination of the trade-offs between "national security" interests and human health.

The White House meeting erupted into an emotional confrontation. "We are dying," said Elizabeth Catalon of Salt Lake City. "It's immoral what the government is doing, spending \$3.6 million to drain rainwater out of bomb craters, while mothers in Utah are having children born deaf, with no eyes. Yet no

money has been allocated for medical clinics to help them."

Participants in the hearings overcame their feelings of loneliness and alienation, realizing that their personal tragedies contain the seeds of a potent political movement. The hearings concluded with a call to labor, religious groups, scientists, legal and medical professionals to lend their support and assistance to the ongoing effort. Others suffering from radiation-induced problems were encouraged to come forward, now that the silence has been broken.

Mike Jendrzeczyk and Pam Solo, who coordinate the Nuclear Weapons Facilities Project of the American Friends Service Committee and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, were among the initiators of the Citizens Hearings.

UNIONS

Union wins modest gains in Steel talks

By David Moberg

PITTSBURGH

THERE WAS "SOMETHING FOR everyone" in the new steel contract covering the nine major steel companies and setting the pattern for the industry. Judicious distribution of benefits substantially improved pensions for current retirees and gave an average steelworker an 8.8 percent wage increase, not counting cost-of-living adjustments, over the three-year contract.

This "best political contract ever made," as one union officer called it, also stopped short potential disgruntlement over the failure of the union to make serious progress on its stated intentions to insure job security and protect workers against plant shutdowns, to shorten the work week, or to strengthen workers' rights under the grievance procedures and in safety disputes.

Delegates to the basic steel industry conference representing 286,000 workers approved the contract 333 to 42 on April 15, shortly after the deadline for sending unresolved national issues to arbitration.

A strike was ruled out by the terms of the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA), which guaranteed annual wage increases of 3 percent and a \$150 bonus. The continuation of the ENA, first employed in 1974, was left open as the contract was ratified. There was considerable speculation that the traditional joint union-industry press conference after the contract ratification was abruptly cancelled this year because of lingering disputes between the union and the coordinated steel companies over the ENA.

The steel corporations have recently complained that the ENA was too expensive, since productivity in the steel industry has not increased rapidly in the past decade. Leaders of the union want very much to continue ENA, although a strong bloc of rank and file steelworkers have criticized it over the years. In the past few months industry representatives have hinted that they might not continue the ENA if the union didn't make some concessions. Such concessions, some union officials speculated, could involve active union support for the political aims of the industry, especially tax breaks through accelerated depreciation that would give the companies several billions

of dollars of investment funds.

The top priority for the Steelworkers union was pension improvement, especially for current retirees, and the demand was widely supported even by young workers. Like the United Auto Workers, who also stressed cost-of-living improvements for pensioners last fall, the Steelworkers financed the increased benefits by diverting the cost-of-living payment due active workers on May 1 of this year to boost existing pensions by amounts ranging from 10 percent (for recent retirees) to as much as 70 percent (for those who retired before mid-1966).

Active workers are guaranteed 60 cents in pay increases spread over the three years, but they will also receive increases in the differentials between job categories that will benefit skilled workers most. This was designed to placate senior workers in the higher classifications who were thought to be unhappy with the gradual compression of pay differences brought about by contracts figured across the board in cents per hour. For a worker in an average job class, the pay increase over the contract would be 84

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Barry

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which comes about because we have a well-deserved reputation as being the defender and supporter of despotic monarchs. I think the key thing is to publish the record of our intervention in Iran. That is absolutely essential, and it is what the Iranian people want.

In other words, you favor making a sort of apology?

I'll tell you, to get them out, I would even settle for Carter not making an apology, for him saying, "Well, I didn't do it, somebody else did," although it may be that he has got a lot to apologize for.

But do you approve of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan?

I think it is totally unjustified, and I think it should have reminded us that we ought to change our foreign policy forthwith so that the Soviet Union doesn't have the political excuse to do that sort of thing.

Do you favor any steps to dislodge them?

I would do it by setting an example. I would do it by saying that we recognize the error of our ways and we're going to back out of support for the Saudi Arabian despotic monarchy.

Looking at the world picture, do you see a Soviet military threat that might justify a defense buildup?

I think one of the really sad things that has happened is that we have allowed people to forget the facts about nuclear war. In the '50s, we were really getting across to people that nuclear war was not a way of addressing conflicts. I think we need a big revival of that.

Do you think there is a military imbalance?

I think the question is how to avoid anybody shooting off nuclear weapons. I think the first thing to do is to start openly discussing the facts about the consequences of nuclear war, then I think we have to take some dramatic step on a world scale. For example, the U.S. is holding all these conferences. I think there ought to be an extraordinary UN conference that would lay out all the horrors, and then say, "What are you going to do about it?"

Do you favor unilateral disarmament measures by the U.S.?

I don't think that would be as effective as a very heavy exposure to the facts, and then a dramatic world appeal to ourselves, so to speak.

Simultaneously, I would cut the military budget. For example, I would stop production of nuclear weapons.

You wouldn't build the Trident or Cruise missiles or MX?

Absolutely not. I think we have to kill

this idea.

So you wouldn't pledge American forces in defense of West Germany or, let's say, Israel?

I don't think we ought to make the commitment. What that does is put the most powerful military force into play. What it says to the world is, "This is the way we do it." Well, if we do it, somebody else will do it.

There needs to be a policy of decreasing the military force, beginning by decreasing to use or deploy it on paper, by not offering to engage our military force in foreign situations. I think we should stop it.

Much of the present membership of the Citizens Party could be described as white middle class. In the election, do you think you will be able to attract blue-collar workers and minorities?

I think it is clear that the people who suffer most from the failure of American social and economic policy have to be represented by the Citizens Party. I think we have to become a party that blacks recognize is able and prepared to represent their interests. I also think the same is true of labor, and of women and of anti-nuclear people.

Now clearly in the case of blacks and women, we start off at a disadvantage. There isn't any question about that. When white middle-class males engage in this kind of activity, there is at least suspicion.

What do you do? I say you have to

win their allegiance.

In comparing you to John Anderson, one Citizen Party member remarked that while Anderson is strong on social issues, but weak on economic issues, you'd be strong on economic issues, but would mute the social issues—you wouldn't get involved in debates over abortion or gun control. Is that true?

I have already been involved. I got a call from a guy who is writing an article for the magazine of the Cleveland archdiocese, and he wanted to know where I stood, and I said, "I'm pro-choice."

That's a canard. You know why it comes about: I talk about these relations, and I don't put my heart on my sleeve and say oppression of minorities is terrible and weep for them and say nothing else. What the Citizens Party can do for blacks most of all is to show the source of oppression and to fight it.

Won't Anderson take away much of your base if he runs as a third-party candidate?

Anderson is going to run as an independent in order to rehabilitate the Republican Party, and I think there are some independents who don't want to rehabilitate the Republican Party. The other thing is, I don't think he is going to stand up well under competition with us.

If Anderson does decide to run, there will emerge something that will be called the battle of the independents, and it will be something the media will be interested in. We'll be debating each other, and I think the Citizens Party position will

show up the superficiality of Anderson's positions.

Who is Anderson? His positions are almost point-by-point like Carter before he was elected. That's who he is—he's an unelected Carter.

If Anderson doesn't run, and it is you, Carter, and Reagan, how are you going to avoid being cast by the Carter people into a spoiler role?

Let's say I am a voter interested in peace, and I am confronted by the choice of Carter and Reagan. What's my attitude? I think the only fair thing to say is that both of these guys are risky as proponents of peace. So what do I do? How do I use my vote effectively to promote peace? If I cast it for Carter or Reagan, that vote is not a vote for peace. I'm throwing it away. And there is only one way not to throw my vote away, and that is to vote for the peace candidate, which I hope will be me.

Take an anti-nuclear vote. Again, the same story. They are both untrustworthy on that. I can choose which one is less untrustworthy, but then my vote is lost. The only way to make it known is to vote for the Citizens Party.

Since we are a party and not a one-shot candidacy, whoever is elected will know that in the next congressional elections these people are going to come back to haunt them. I think that is the way to stay the hand of whoever is elected: to create a constituency that exists. If there is no alternative, then the constituency disappears politically.

Steel

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cents or 8.8 percent. The package falls within the range of recent major union contracts and will probably be safely under the revised pay guidelines.

The Steelworkers did not succeed, as the auto workers did, in revising the formula for calculating cost-of-living adjustments so that workers would be more fully protected from inflation's erosion of their real income. Nevertheless, assuming 11 percent inflation, the basic wage rate of an average steelworker would increase \$3.44 over the contract, or 36 percent, from \$9.41 to \$12.85. Workers will also enjoy higher shift payments for night work, improved supplementary unemployment benefits and sickness and accident pay, and higher pensions when they retire.

Holding the line.

The union managed to hold the line against two major company take-away demands: lopping off some 12,000 workers who are covered by the basic steel contract but are not directly in the industry and eliminating traditional craft categories of work in favor of more versatile "supercrafts." But in exchange for a pilot program to examine the sub-contracting of maintenance work that the union opposes, the Steelworkers agreed to consider "any restrictive practices or seniority restraints at the pilot plant which limit effective utilization of bargaining unit employees." Local unions may be persuaded to revise traditional crafts in exchange for higher incentive pay or under threat of plant closings.

A new experiment with "labor-management participation teams" at the option of local unions and plant managers could lead to improved work conditions and more union involvement in shop floor issues to beef up discipline. An earlier experiment with local productivity committees along similar lines foundered alternately because of union and management opposition.

Following a disaster at the Indiana Harbor Jones and Laughlin steel mill last year, when six workers died of carbon monoxide poisoning, there was renewed urgency to deal with the long-standing dangers of the poisonous byproduct of blast furnaces and basic oxygen furnaces, especially since the problems may be on the rise as a result of technological changes in the industry. The contract calls for comprehensive engineering surveys for CO leaks and provision of corrections.

Despite equally pressing worries about

plant shutdowns, the union did not win any of its strong proposals, such as prohibiting closings during the life of a contract. The sole improvement was a requirement of a 90-day notice of the company's intention to close a factory.

There were also dollops of grease for some "squeaking wheels"—an hourly bonus and some income protection for office and technical workers and an incentive pay plan equal to basic steel for the iron ore miners who were on strike in 1977 for 138 days over local, incentive issues. Although many local issues remain unresolved this year, especially in some Chicago and northern Indiana mills and among ore miners, local strikes seem unlikely.

A few delegates criticized the contract presented by vice-president Joseph Odorich, who filled in for ailing president Lloyd McBride. U.S. Steel Homestead local president Ron Weisen was upset that delegates didn't have a full 24 hours, as promised, to review the contract and consult with local members. Chicago South Works president Alice Peurla thought good pensions were the responsibility of the companies and shouldn't be won at the expense of active workers' cost-of-living protection. And there were numerous complaints that there was still no progress on establishing penalties for management when it violates the contract or on making workers innocent of disciplinary charges until proven guilty. "It's a mixed bag," iron ore local president

Joe Samargia said. Although the pension improvements were good, he said, a few weeks later "you look back and say, 'What kind of language do we have on safety or contracting out?' And then you're disappointed."

"I voted for the agreement," said Jim Balanoff, director of the Chicago-Gary district that has produced many union dissidents. "It addresses what annoyed us. Could we have done better? I don't know. Here you have only two choices—take this or arbitration. Would I take this instead of a strike? I don't know."

Considering the pressures on the union, the economic package is likely to satisfy most members. The lingering dissatisfactions are likely to come from the inability to constrain management powers on the shop floor and in determining whether to invest, or disinvest, in the steel industry. Samargia, for example, commented, "My guess is that in order to get the ENA again the union will have to go after Congress to get 10-5-3 [a rapid depreciation proposal in Congress: ITT, Apr. 15]. If the companies get that, this is a terrible contract, because with 10-5-3 they'll make so much money we could get twice as much." But in light of the precarious economic circumstances and the laments from the industry, even many of the union militants were saying of their negotiators, as Rudy Schneider of the big Inland Steel local did, "They got a better agreement than I figured they would."

Citizens

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The party's long-run success depends on its winning over the Democratic Party's blue-collar and minority base, but its initial chances for success in 1980 will probably lie with what Don Rose calls the "new class." In 1980, these middle-income Democrats have supported Anderson, Brown and Kennedy. Their concerns are with the waste and irrationality of American capitalism and with the dishonesty and corruption of politics. They are more concerned about energy conservation and the solar transition than about jobs and welfare spending. They can be won over either by a clean economic conservative/social liberal like Anderson or by a genuine radical like Commoner.

It will be more difficult for the party to score initial gains among blue-collar workers and minorities. Commoner is not sufficiently well-known, nor is his image right, to reach either constituency over the opposition or indifference of their elected leaders. "Blacks and major

labor unions feel they have something now [with the Democratic Party], while we offer just a lick and a promise," Rose said.

Commoner's only chance to attract such voters would be to establish sufficient electoral credibility with his potential "new class" base to begin winning some endorsements from labor and minority leaders.

Kinoy, Clement and Walker have already indicated their disagreement with such a strategy. They are not as concerned about electoral credibility as about the party's links with certain causes and organizations in minority communities. If they have their way in determining the party's strategy, it will more resemble traditional left-wing efforts at community organizing than an attempt to become the "second party."

Commoner and his allies are presently undecided about their campaign strategy, but they are committed to achieving electoral credibility for the Citizens Party and can be expected to adjust their tactics accordingly. If so, and if Anderson doesn't enter the race, the Citizens Party could surprise everyone, including the delegates who left its founding convention disgruntled and bewildered.

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