

made front-page headlines.

The president of the fire fighters' union stressed the need for adequate information in order to take proper precautions when fighting industrial fires. Health professionals, economists and federal government officials countered industry's arguments with factual evidence.

While industry's hard-line position was predictable and relatively easy to combat, the city administration's vigorous opposition came close to defeating right-to-know. The legislation stalled in committee after the city proposed a watered-down version of DVTC's bill and attempted quietly to confuse council members with its complex counterproposal.

But the coalition responded to stepped-up industry lobbying with its own letter-writing, phone-ins and demonstrations and pulled the few strings available to it. Americans for Democratic Action's inside knowledge of the council was critical. As Moran put it, "Whatever ways you could campaign, I think we did it. We had countless strategy meetings fine-tuning it all."

After the chanting disruption of two council meetings, the committee agreed to reconsider the bill. Enough right-to-know supporters came to the committee meeting to thwart the city administration's attempts carefully to orchestrate defeat of the DVTC bill. Instead, the committee sent DVTC, industry and the city to the negotiating table to hammer out a new proposal. The legislative package recently voted out by council was the result.

"A year ago the city had hardly given a thought to the toxics problem. Now the public has forced the administration and industry into granting legislation regulating the emission and storage of toxics and granting workers and community residents the right to know about hazardous substances. We call that a victory," Balter said.

Caron Chess is a staff member at the Delaware Valley Toxics Coalition.



## Reagan's man thinks silence is best solution

By David Lindorff

NEW YORK

**N**O ONE IS SURPRISED THAT Reagan's choice to head the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Ben C. Rusche, comes to Washington from a very pro-nuclear corner—in this case, the South Carolina Energy Institute, of which he was executive director.

But what is particularly disturbing about Rusche, who as head of the NRC will have all of our health and safety in his hands, is his record as "health and safety" officer for the nation's largest chemical company, E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. of Wilmington, Del.

That might sound like a count in his favor, particularly since—on paper—du Pont is one of the safest companies in the country to work for. But many of its plants in the South—especially in Rusche's own South Carolina—boast safety records that strain credulity. Take, for example, the 700-employee du Pont plant in Florence, S.C., which claims to have gone 3,127 calendar days and nearly 11 million man-hours without a day lost to an on-the-job injury. Or the 3,100-employee textile fibers plant in Kinston, N.C., that claims to have gone 620 calendar days and 10.2 million man-hours without a lost day.

Given that both plants are full of toxic chemicals, hot plastics and resins, heavy

equipment and the like, such statistics look too good to be true—and in fact they are. They exist because Rusche and his successors at the company systematically kept employees from collecting disability benefits or even reporting work-related injuries.

Du Pont is currently the target of a national organizing drive by the Steelworkers Union, which claims to have signed up a majority of workers at half the company's 100 plants. The major organizing issue at most of those plants has been health and safety.

Last year, while covering the Steelworkers' campaign, I met several victims of Du Pont's safety program—people with impaired hearing, mutilated hands, injured backs and other disabilities. All were from the Kinston plant, but none were listed as blemishes on its perfect safety record.

One worker, for example, had had his thumb smashed between two rollers in one accident, and had seriously injured his back lifting heavy equipment in another. In both cases, the company kept him off the injury list by paying him to continue to come to "work"—each day he reported to the company infirmary, where doctors fed him pain killers and tranquilizers. A private doctor later diagnosed the "sprain" in his back as a rup-

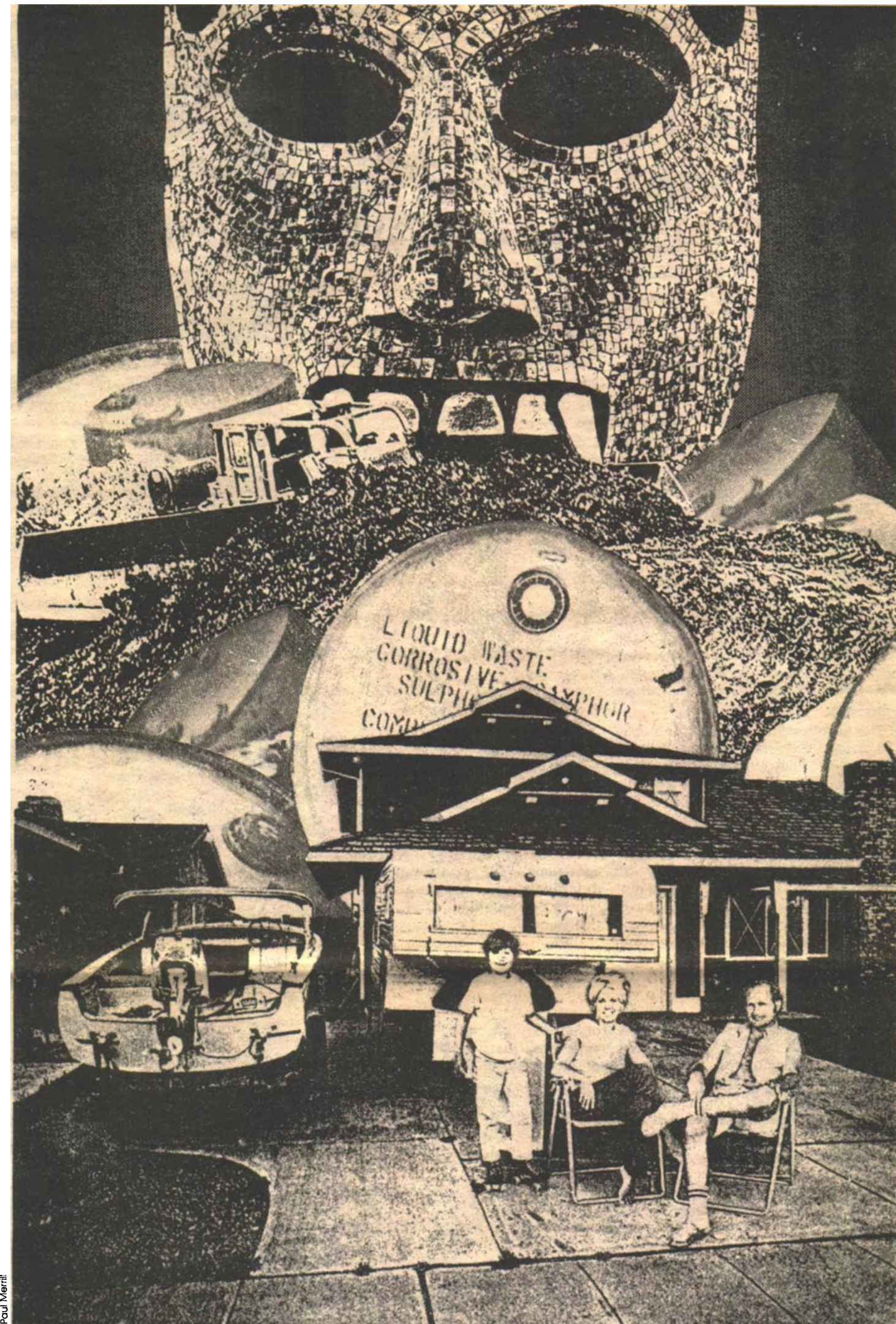
tured disk, and he's now fighting the company in court for compensation. But for the time being, du Pont's Kinston safety record remains spotless.

Similar incidents abound, according to union organizers. They are supported by a 1973 Nader study of du Pont that resulted in a book, *The Company State*. In it the authors wrote, "The company has tried to make a good safety record appear phenomenal by questionable tactics. Injured workers are often transport-

ed from their sickbeds to work so that a statistician can report that no workdays have been lost due to accidents or injuries; blue-collar workers have also been singled out and severely reprimanded for minor injuries."

If this is Rusche's approach to health and safety matters, he will fit right in at the NRC, which already has a history of covering up problems instead of facing them.

David Lindorff is a New York writer.





## LABOR

# Alleged mob ties stall confirmation

By Mark Alan Pinsky

WASHINGTON

**C**ONFIRMATION HEARINGS FOR Secretary of Labor-designate Raymond Donovan were halted abruptly last week by charges that the New Jersey businessman made illegal payoffs to union officials in the late '60s. The hearing committee, made up of members of both the Labor and the Human Resources committees in the Senate, had planned to vote on Donovan's appointment Jan. 15, but that vote has now been delayed indefinitely.

A Federal Bureau of Investigation informant has alleged that Donovan made covert payments to him in 1967 and 1968 to settle labor disputes. As executive vice-president of the Schiavone Construction Company of Secaucus, N.J., one of the nation's largest construction firms, Donovan was responsible for negotiating contracts with the Teamsters Union, which represents workers at the firm.

Donovan's nomination was largely a surprise to observers of the Reagan transition. Little known nationally, the New Jersey businessman admitted in his hearings to ignorance of several Labor Department programs. He also told the committee he would move the Labor Department toward friendlier relations with business, moderating the "adversarial attitudes" evident in previous DOL policy.

Unions generally oppose Donovan's nomination, which has received strong backing from the anti-union National Right to Work Committee. Critics warn

that Donovan is likely to whittle away at Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations and attempt to undercut current minimum-wage requirements. But Teamsters Union national president Frank Fitzsimmons said his group would "look forward to working" with Donovan.

During his hearings, Donovan admitted to paying \$13,000 to a Newark businessman later identified in a court deposition as a middleman who laundered money for organized crime figures. He also told Senate committee members that for approximately three years his company kept a "ghost worker" on payroll—a questionable practice under labor laws. Donovan explained that the no-show worker began receiving payments in 1977 to help ensure labor peace with the Teamsters Union local. Donovan said that he was unaware of the action until several days before his hearings began.



Raymond Donovan's dealings with the Teamsters will be investigated by the FBI.

In response to charges that he might have been paying off organized crime, Donovan said that he had believed the company was buying dumping rights on a tract owned by the Newark man. He also told committee members that he thought the no-show condition was required by the union contract.

Donovan has called the allegation that halted the confirmation process "scurrilous and untrue."

According to FBI officials, the charge

has been made by Ralph M. Picardo, an associate of Anthony (Tony) Provenzano, who was president of Teamsters local 560 in Union City, N.J., at the time of the alleged payoffs. Picardo testified as a government witness in the 1978 trial that convicted Provenzano and Harold (Kazo) Konigsberg of murdering Anthony Castellito in 1961. The government informant was himself convicted of second-degree murder in 1975.

Mark Alan Pinsky works on Capitol Hill.

## BUFFALO

## They gave a rally and nobody came

By Bradshaw Hovey

BUFFALO, N. Y.

**T**HE CALL OF BUFFALO NAZI Party organizer Karl Hand for "100 white men with guts" to rally for "white civil rights" in Niagara Square on Martin Luther King's birthday fell at

least 95 men short. But Hand still claimed success—his "demonstration" drew hundreds of reporters from across the region and the nation, and he said that was good enough.

The Nazi "rally" was opposed by a left-sponsored anti-Nazi rally at the same time in Niagara Square. That, in turn, was countered by an "official" Martin Luther King celebration two hours later and two blocks away in Lafayette Square sponsored by the Black Leadership Forum, which feared a violent confrontation with the Nazis, and by the city's conservative Democratic mayor, James D. Griffin, who denounced the anti-Nazi Coalition as a "bunch of nuts and socialists."

The relatively modest size of all three demonstrations and the absolute lack of any sort of violence left the network correspondents in despair of getting their stories on the evening news, while other reporters regretted that the media had participated in making so much of so little.

Yet the rallies took place against a grim background of tension in the black community here and badly strained black-white relations. Eight Buffalo-area black men have been murdered since last September and police have no suspects. While District Attorney Edward Cosgrove believes the murders are the work of a lone "psychopath" he will not rule out the possibility of a racist conspiracy.

The press and the public generally have been preoccupied with the murders and the search for the ".22 caliber killer." Rumors surfaced recently about black "bounty hunters" working as decoys to catch the killer and collect \$100,000 in reward money. Some whites say they fear retaliation for the killings, though nothing of the sort has been reported so far.

It was in this environment that Hand, a former KKK "titan," announced his rally in a Nazi newsletter that praised the killer as "The Great White Hunter."

An ad hoc "Martin Luther King Day Memorial Rally Coalition" quickly announced plans for a counter-rally and assembled a nationwide list of sponsors including many union and civil rights activists. But as the day of the rally approached, it became clear that the Coalition was a relatively narrow one dominated by members of Workers' World Party. Some local left organizations declined to be official sponsors of the rally, while individuals gave lukewarm support. One local activist complained of being "trapped between two alternatives, neither of

Local activists faced an unhappy choice—the sponsors of one rally wanted to confront the Nazis, the others ignored the issue of organized racist violence.

which is very satisfying." The sponsors of one rally wanted a direct confrontation with the Nazis, while the sponsors of the other ignored the whole subject of organized racist violence.

Mayor Griffin, who was elected in 1977 with negligible black support, worked hard to discredit and stop the anti-Nazi rally. Although he refused to ban the Nazi rally when it was first announced, he later promised arrest for anyone participating in either the Nazi or anti-Nazi demonstrations. Coalition sponsors were heavily red-baited by the mayor and by his police commissioner, who also predicted violence. County Executive Edward Rutkowski warned that the rally would be run by "outsiders" who would "give Buffalo a black eye and then leave." Two local television stations donated air time for a series of commercials featuring local establishment figures who urged Buffalonians to avoid the "hate rallies." Only a late court ruling prevented Mayor Griffin from carrying out his threat to make arrests first and ask questions later.

One result of the non-rallies is that the ultra-right isn't taken very seriously here. Karl Hand showed up practically alone to wave his swastika poster. But while police say there are no more than three Nazis in Buffalo, an independent Klan-Nazi monitoring group estimates their number at 30. Even more sinister was a recent report that German neo-Nazi terrorist Manfred Roeder used a suburban Buffalo home for nearly two years as a base for organizing efforts in America.

But in the aftermath of the Martin Luther King day events, it also seems uncertain whether either the black community or left groups have any plans for coping with division between black and white in Buffalo or for combatting organized racist violence.

Bradshaw Hovey is a Buffalo writer who has been active in city politics.

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