

IN SHORT

Settled in Minnesota

The Minnesota Nurses Association ratified a new contract by an overwhelming 3,014 to 37 vote on July 9, ending their 39-day strike against 16 Twin Cities hospitals, reports Mordecai Spektor. The largest strike of nurses in U.S. history resulted in a contract providing protection against layoffs and hours reductions for senior nurses. The hospitals agreed that new nurses would not be hired until nurses on layoff were recalled. The nurses obtained an 8 percent wage increase over the next two years, with a pay increase to be negotiated in the third year. A few nurses were recalled immediately, but it is expected to take weeks before most of them are recalled, and hospital administrators said that lost business from the strike could result in no callbacks for many nurses.

BRAC branches out

The Amtrak System Division No. 250 of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) was born July 9 in Rockville, Md. The new Amtrak Division is a landmark victory for 3,500 reservations and station agents, redcaps, commissary workers, office clerks, porters and waiters formerly represented by BRAC's Allied Services Division.

A two-year petition campaign for the more autonomous Amtrak Division succeeded this spring when the BRAC executive board acted on survey results that showed by a 17-1 margin that Amtrak workers were ready for their own division. New general chairman is Mike Young of Florence, S.C., and Joel Parker of Oakland is general secretary-treasurer. Parker and Bill Danby of Chicago are vice general chairmen. But as the union surges, Amtrak management reels. A House subcommittee will hold a hearing July 30 in Chicago on mass charges of irregularities in discipline as well as race and age discrimination. The next issue of *In These Times* will report on these hearings.

Red squad rebuff

Late last month a federal court jury in Chicago found unconstitutional a successful plan by the Chicago Police Intelligence Unit to cripple a Puerto Rican civil rights group, reports Chip Berlet. The jury awarded \$60,000 to the Spanish Action Committee of Chicago (SACC) after hearing evidence that in 1966, Chicago Police "Red Squad" agents had infiltrated SACC, manipulated a split, convinced members to resign and then set up a competing organization in Chicago's Puerto Rican community. The new group, called the American Spanish Speaking Peoples Association (ASSPA), was then provided with a press release that denounced SACC as Communist-infiltrated. The resulting media coverage virtually destroyed SACC with red-baiting.

According to original Red Squad documents provided to the jury, the police implemented a plan to "destroy SACC, its leaders and its community influence." SACC attorney Richard Gutman told the jury the city planned to destroy SACC because it disagreed with its political views, not because it was engaged in illegal activity. City attorney Peter Fitzpatrick argued the police were merely trying to prevent violence in the Puerto Rican community, which had experienced several civil disturbances in the mid-'60s. Fitzpatrick asked the jury if they would rather have police facing rioters running through streets lit by the "glimmer of burning cars," or use the more subtle tactics employed against SACC. But Gutman argued that if the police had evidence of wrongdoing they should have made arrests, not covertly disrupted the group. Gutman added that, in any case, there was no evidence of illegal activity on the part of SACC or its members. The jury agreed and found the city liable for damages, but didn't fine the police officers involved.

Sidewalk intimidation

While the Democrats were inside San Francisco's Moscone Center hammering away at a platform last week, hundreds of people were half a mile away protesting the party's connections to military buildup. Said Kate Raphael of the Livermore Action Group: "We want people to know that Mondale is on the board of directors for Control Data, which makes parts for the cruise missile. And also that banks like the Bank of America—which gives hundreds of thousands of dollars to repressive regimes around the world—gave \$100,000 to the Democrats for the convention." Ninety-five protesters were arrested for blocking a sidewalk, the usual misdemeanor charge for an action of this kind, and for conspiracy to block a sidewalk, which is a felony. Said Raphael, "I guess they could slap us in jail for five years, but somehow I doubt it. It's just one more form of intimidation to keep us off the streets."

Lesson in incomprehensibility

Last month New York Judge Jack Weinstein ordered the U.S. government to remove the difficult language from Medicare forms so the elderly can better understand why their claims were turned down. Weinstein castigated the language used in the claims as "bureaucratic gobbledygook, jargon, double-talk, a form of officialese, federalese and insurance double-speak. It does not qualify as English." Later in the decision he noted that the writing was "on the level of a college senior."

—Beth Maschinot

New nominee divides IAF

WASHINGTON—There they go again. The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) used to be a development agency with a difference, a little bit of idealism in the knout-and-knuckles world of foreign aid. Its premise was simple: since poverty is an undeniable source of Latin American unrest, put small amounts of money directly into the hands of Latin American poor who are organizing to help themselves—co-operatives, mutual aid societies, even things like theater groups and radio stations (see *In These Times*, Feb. 8).

The IAF was insulated from petty power plays by its part-private, part-government board and by its mandate to stay out of local or international politics.

And then came Reagan.

Last December, the Reagan appointees on the IAF board, now a majority, fired Peter Bell, long-time president and an impeccable administrator. Finding nothing specific wrong with Bell, the board said personal differences made them want to choose their own kind of person.

Congress—including Dante Fascell, now head of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and father of the IAF—investigated charges of a coup and ended by asking the IAF board for a unanimous vote for the next president, as has been the precedent.

It's taken until now, but the Reagan-era board members have finally come up with someone they think will fill Bell's shoes.

Her name is Deborah Szekely, founder and president of Golden Door enterprises, dubbed in her resume as "the first fitness resorts since those of the Roman empire." At the Golden Door you can lose unwanted adipose tissue for a mere \$2,500 a week.

The entrepreneur who built a million-dollar empire out of the body fashions of the rich is excited by the challenge. It's time, she believes, to share a little or,



IAF nominee Deborah Szekely runs a fitness resort and has no experience in Latin American affairs.

as she puts it, to give the poor "their dreams."

Szekely claims she's qualified to deal in Latin American affairs because in her indefatigable charity work (which she does, she says, as a "catalyst to her growth") she convinced two foundations to expand their programs "to Mexico and from there to Latin America." She also thinks she'll get along with Latin Americans because "Hispanics are wonderful with older women."

But does she understand the complex world of politics and government, the maelstrom of power through which the IAF's people-to-people projects are threaded? She ought to. In her part-time job at the U.S. Information Agency—one of Reagan's favorite non-military agencies—she heads the private sector programs. And she's a political veteran. Not only did she run (unsuccessfully) for Congress in 1982, she has been a

high-visibility Republican Party activist in every election since 1976. In fact, in 1982 she was regent of the National Federation of Republican Women.

Szekely's candidacy has managed to polarize the board along political lines. Four (of five) Reagan appointees present at a June 15 board meeting enthusiastically supported her. And the two remaining Carter-era appointees thumbed her down.

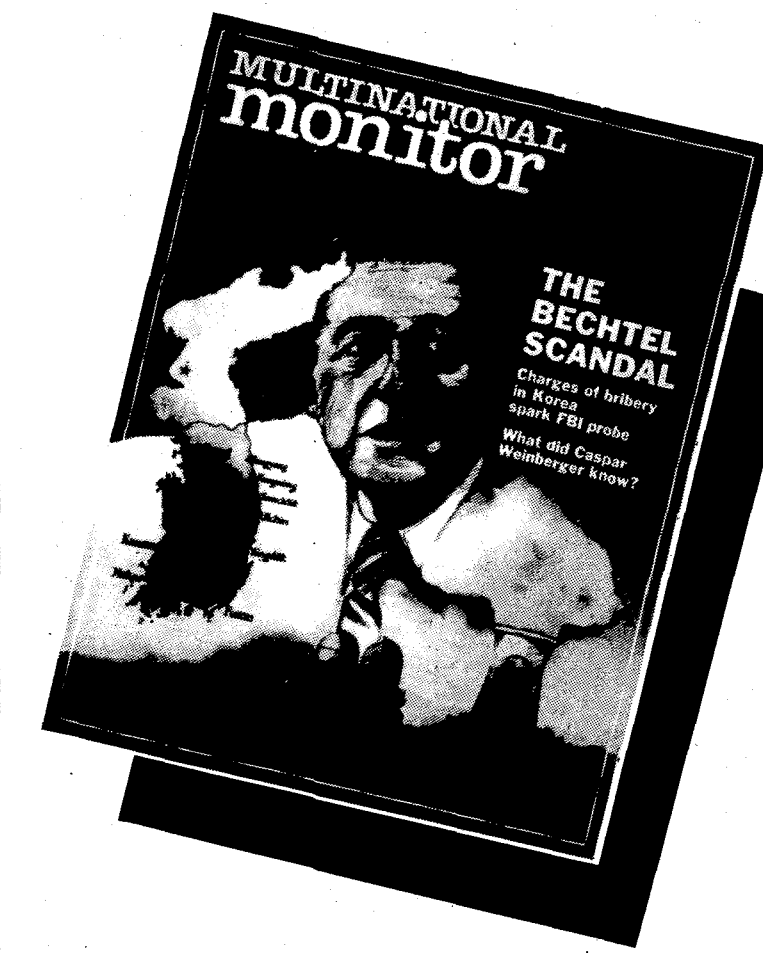
In the days before Reagan, that would have meant going back to the search committee. But in March, the board majority ruled that if one person dissented, the board would negotiate for 30 days and then vote again, accepting a majority vote. Then at the June 15 meeting the board majority decided that rule would apply if two people dissented. The majority will rule on Szekely's nomination this week.

The IAF's alarmed supporters are looking to Dante Fascell to see if the powerful committee chairman will act to save his own creation. And they are also eyeing the House sub-committee on Western Hemisphere affairs, whose chairman Michael Barnes believes that a majority-vote president "will not be credible to Congress, to the Latin American institutions the foundation supports or to the American public." With the incredible about to happen, Fascell and Barnes are on the spot to rescue the one small dream of inter-American aid that actually came true—for a while.

—©Pat Aufderheide

Contract bid rocks Monitor

WASHINGTON—The office of the *Multinational Monitor* (MM)—the Ralph Nader-owned monthly known for solid reporting on the abuses of multinational corporations—has been ringing with charges of abuse closer to home these past few months. Though the immediate battle is between Nader and ex-editor



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Shorrock, the situation has ramifications for workers in a public-interest environment are contemplating the merits of a contract.

The story line—though long and background and colored by the strong personalities and political differences of Nader and Shorrock—came to a head with a fight between Nader and Shorrock over an article in the May issue of *MM*. The article delved into bribery at the Bechtel Corporation from 1978 to 1980, a time when Caspar Weinberger and George Shultz were in positions to have known something about it. But Nader, the sole owner of *MM* who had retained the right to see all articles before they went to press, was not convinced that the article was well substantiated.

Shorrock counters that he had made some of the changes in the article that Nader has asked for, had submitted it to Nader lawyers to go over with a fine-tooth comb for libel, and believed that it was a credible and newsworthy story.

In mid-April, with the status of the story still unclear, Shorrock found out that the *New York Times* was out to "scoop" the story, and he decided to announce the findings and rush the story into print a week before schedule. Shorrock says he attempted to get in touch with Nader at this point, but that Nader refused to talk to him, telling another staffmember to hold the story until the next day.

That's when all hell broke loose. Nader fired Shorrock immediately, then reconsidered and gave him three months to find another job. On May 9, the three-member staff informed Nader that they were starting a collective bargaining unit and asked for his good faith in negotiating with them.

By that time Nader had turned over ownership of *MM* to Essential Information, a non-profit corporation run by three of his friends. They immediately fired Shorrock and left the other staff members in job limbo. The staff continued to try to negotiate with Nader and the new owners, but were met with refusals. They since have filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board.

Now comes the latest Nader-backed attack: a \$1.2 million lawsuit against the staff and a former writer for attempting "destruction of a publication." It seems that Shorrock took the notes for the Bechtel story in order to protect his sources and writer John Cavanagh wrote a letter informing friends of the goings on at *MM*. Cavanagh is part of a support group of *MM* writers that has formed to boycott the monthly.

Throughout the skirmish, Nader's zealous nature seems offended by the contract fight. He prefers to see his workers as dedicated to a larger cause and not mired in a "we-they type situation." Others, though, are beginning to believe that working in public service need not be synonymous with lacking the protection a contract affords. Frank Wallach, a long-time *Monitor* supporter and editor of the *UAW Washington Report*, thinks that maybe the time has come for service contracts

in marriages these days, so I don't think a contract between a movement and the people who work for it is so terribly off the wall." —Beth Maschinot

OSHA revises asbestos count

WASHINGTON—The Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) wrapped up 17 days of public hearings last week on proposed revisions of the asbestos standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Act—revisions strongly opposed by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), which represents many of the 375,000 U.S. employees that work with asbestos.

Current OSHA standards have been in effect since 1976 and provide for a maximum limit of two million airborne asbestos fibers per cubic meter in the workplace, along with the requirement that employees wear a respirator. The one-size-fits-all respirators, which cover the mouth and nose with a thin mask, have been widely attacked as uncomfortable, impractical for an eight-hour shift and ineffective in preventing the inhalation of asbestos dust.

The permissible exposure level (PEL) and the respirators have come under increasing fire in the past decade as asbestos inhalation has been increasingly linked to cancer and lung disease. The ACTWU estimates that asbestos-related cancer deaths, which stood at 8,000 this year, are on the rise. A Labor Department decision on the new standards is expected by mid 1985.

The two revisions that dominated the OSHA hearings regarded a proposal to give employers in the asbestos industry a choice. They can either use engineering controls and ventilation systems to reduce the PEL to 500,000 or 200,000 fibres per cubic meter, or rely on respirators to achieve the same level. The lower PEL would be a substantial reduction from the current two million fibre level, but still unsafe, according to the ACTWU, especially if lower levels are achieved with the ineffective respirators. The ACTWU predicts that most employers will opt for the respirator, which is the less expensive standard.

"Respirators are not that fool-proof," admitted Kenneth Cram, a chemical engineer at OSHA in Washington, D.C. "The worker is not absolutely sure he's got a tight seal."

"This," said one ACTWU official, holding a respirator high, "is the last line of defense as far as OSHA is concerned."

Midway through the hearings, which started June 19 and concluded July 12, the ACTWU charged that the Reagan administration's Office of Management and Budget pushed OSHA to propose the new standard to reduce labor costs in the asbestos industry. OSHA denied that the standards are politically motivated, saying that pressure to reduce the PEL had been building for many years, while hedging on whether a 500,000 or 200,000 fibre limit is safe with or without a respirator. —Barbara Yuill

On July 14, after verdicts of guilty were returned against eight religious peace activists for conspiracy and "depredation" of Pershing II missile components, spectators in the packed federal courtroom broke into song. Despite the possibility of 15 year sentences and \$20,000 fines, the defendants, collectively known as the Pershing Plowshares, joined in the singing.

Each defendant had taken the witness stand and admitted to breaking into the Martin Marietta Corporation in the early morning darkness on Easter and "disarming" a Pershing missile launcher by hammering on the control panel and cutting hydrolic hoses. They splattered their own blood over missile components and left behind peace banners and photographs of friends and family, the potential victims of the nuclear holocaust. An hour later they were discovered singing and praying in an ecumenical Easter sunrise service.

The Pershing Plowshares break-in at Martin Marietta was the eighth in a series of actions by a loosely associated band of activists attempting to achieve both symbolic and physical disarmament of nuclear weapons. The word plowshare refers to Isaiah's Old Testament injunction to "beat swords into plowshares." The latest raid was the third for 57-year-old Sister Anne Montgomery.

What all alumni of Plowshare actions share are deep religious convictions and a history of commitment to justice causes. Many have taken vows of poverty and work at soup kitchens and shelters for the homeless. All of the disarmament attempts are preceded by months of community prayer, reflection and role-playing designed to form a cohesive community of faith that members feel is required to cope with the possibility of prison sentences of up to 35 years.

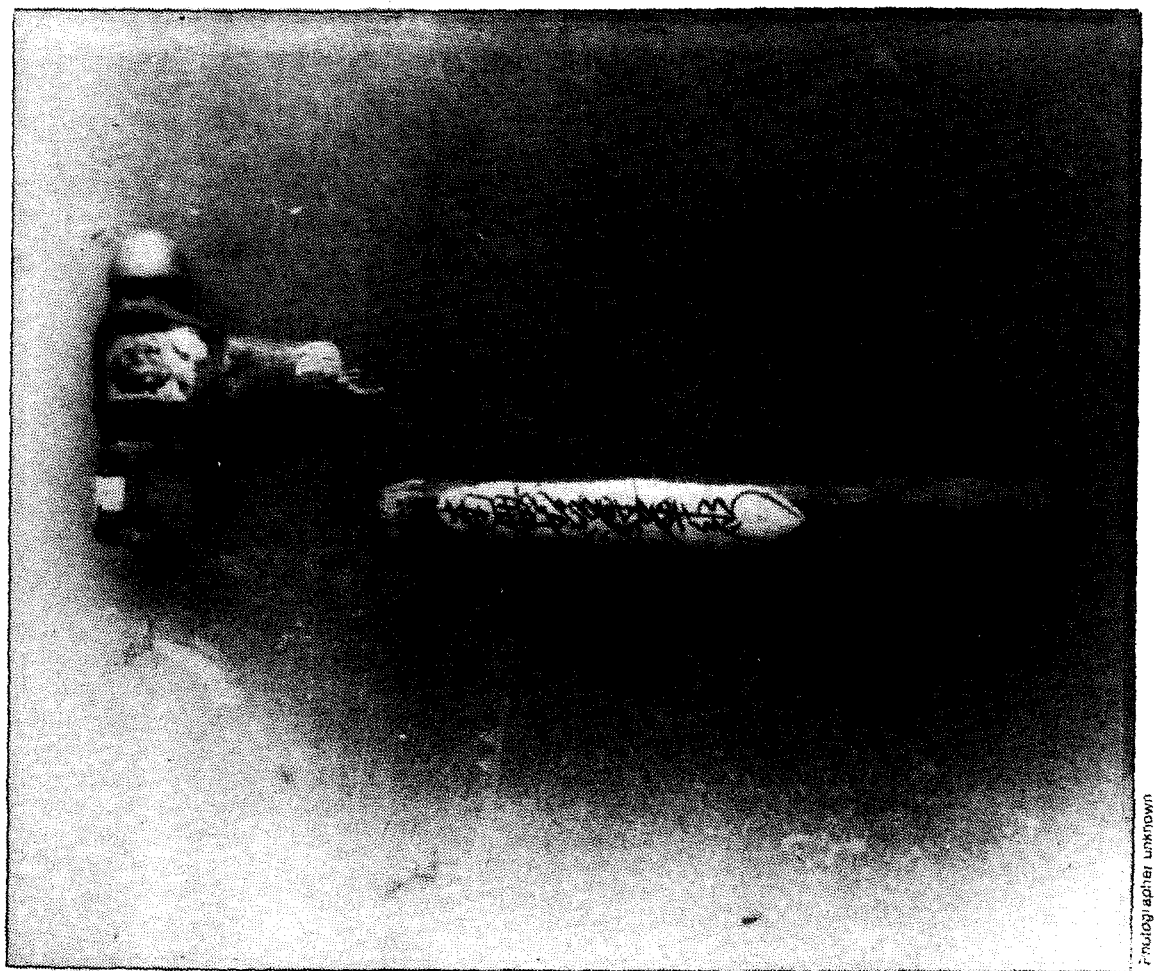
Elmer Maas, participant in two of the actions, stated that while no Plowshare defendant

Defendant Paul Magno



Photographer unknown

Briefing: Plowshares conspire for peace



Photographer unknown

The Plowshare Movement began on September 9, 1980, when eight persons entered the General Electric plant in King of Prussia, Pa., and hammered on two Mark 12-A nuclear warheads. Subsequent raids have damaged the Trident Submarines U.S.S. *Florida* and *Georgia*, equipment destined for the cruise, Pershing II and MX missiles, as well as engines of six B-52 bombers.

has been acquitted of criminal charges, the juries have been visibly moved. After one of the trials, a jury member slipped the defendants a note apologizing for convicting them. In another case, jurors told the press that they were angered that the court's instructions were so narrowly drawn that the law did not allow them to acquit the defendants.

The verdict in the Pershing Plowshares case was no surprise since many of the jurors had ties to the military or to defense contractors. The prosecutor described the defendants as a gang of vandals telling jurors

that "the law protects property as it protects lives," even though this property happened to be nuclear weaponry. While the defense tried to argue that they had no intent to destroy property, only to convert it to a new, non-threatening form, the jury followed the judges' narrowly drawn instructions which did not allow the motivations of the eight to be considered.

Juror Margaret Lee, a Roman Catholic whose son was about to leave for a stint in the Navy, confronted defendant Sister Anne Montgomery after the trial, scolded her for conduct unbecoming of a nun and said—"You did an Un-American thing"...you should "render unto Caesar." Defendant Patrick O'Neill saw things differently as he looked back on the judge's refusal to allow defenses based upon "God's law" or upon the necessity of avoiding the imminent danger of nuclear war. "It's strange, God is irrelevant and [U.S.] nuclear policy can't be considered," quipped O'Neill. A sentencing hearing has been set for July 25.

It is not likely that the government will stand by as peace-makers continue to damage the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Fr. Daniel Berrigan, one of the "Plow-

Above: James Perkins' hammer with Buddhist peace message.

shares Eight" who put a nuclear missile nosecone out of commission in 1980, as well as other former "Plowshare" defendants present at the trial, state their opinion that the government might be readying for a grand jury investigation into Plowshare movement which could result in a large-scale round-up of conspirators for peace.

—Alex C