

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Not a good day for Labor

Monday is Labor Day — the day set aside to honor the workers and the unions that represent them.

There is not much to celebrate in 1982 — with an official unemployment approaching 10 percent and a union-busting administration in office. Workers are asked to give up rights and benefits and protection that their predecessors fought and died to gain. Hanging over all is the threat that the employer will either close the doors — or in the case of the large corporations — pick up and move to a third world nation where labor is cheap.

At the same time that unemployment is booming and unskilled jobs are disappearing, the administration is eliminating vocational education and job training programs. Reduc-

tion of vocational and adult education funds will result in an estimated 20 percent reduction in high school vocational training and a 40 percent reduction in post-high school programs.

The administration has also proposed the elimination of special programs to train women, minorities and the handicapped.

The result is an under class of people who are unemployed, unemployable and easily exploitable.

The future does not look bright for the worker or for the unemployed as the country's economy continues to sink deeper into depression and the administration continues to blame the victims.

## No DC state in sight

On August 22, 1978, Congress proposed an amendment that would make Washington DC a state. In the three years that have passed only ten states, including Oregon, have ratified the amendment.

It is improbable that the necessary 39 states will ratify this amendment; it will probably die as quickly as ERA did. The state legislatures of our land are not too eager to support civil rights for anyone, let alone the citizens of Washington DC, the vast majority of whom are black.

In the meantime, the people of DC have held a constitutional assembly and have written a constitution that will go before the voters in November. If the constitution is adopted, DC will petition Congress for statehood.

If DC were to become a state, it would be the nation's most progressive, for contained within the draft is the statement that every person within its jurisdiction have "an income sufficient to meet basic human needs." It would protect abortion rights, the civil rights of homosexuals, public employees' right to strike, a system of laws that protects the defendant.

One basis for the inability of DC to achieve statehood is racism; another is the fear of the Republicans that DC would send two Democratic Senators and one Democratic Representative to Congress.

Add to this a constitution that protects rights of the people and it is no wonder that statehood finds rejection.

## A Labor Day Message

by Norman Hill, A. Philip Randolph Institute

For working people, Labor Day is traditionally a moment of celebration. It is a moment when we pay tribute to the working men and women of our country who produce the great wealth of our land. It is a time when we recognize the dignity of work and acknowledge that work is a means by which life is made more meaningful and purposeful. It is a time when, traditionally, we honor America's labor unions, which remain the principal means of economic advancement for blacks and all working Americans.

This Labor Day, however, requires us to depart from tradition. For this Labor Day — the second since the Administration of President Ronald Reagan took office — finds our country confronting a severe economic and social crisis. The unemployment rate of 9.8 percent is the highest since the end of World War II. Black unemployment stands at 18.5 percent.

The country is in the midst of a protracted recession brought about by the fiscal and economic policies of this Administration. In the midst of this economic downturn, the Reagan Administration has mounted the most significant attack on social programs since the Great Depression.

Huge cutbacks in government aid

to education and jobs training mean that poor workers, both black and white, are locked out of an economy in which education is the principal means of advancement.

There can be no question now that the Administration's policies have led to real suffering on the part of the poor and the working poor. Today, there can be no question that the Administration's policies have created a disaster of major proportions for blacks and all workers.

Yet despite the onslaughts of Reaganism we have witnessed the validation of civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph's view that organized labor is the only force under our economic system which unites divergent constituencies of working people. It is the only mass-based institution in which we can find represented blacks, Hispanics, women, and the dispossessed. It is the only institution which seeks to defend the interests of these diverse constituencies. Thus the labor movement is the central instrument for social progress in our time. And, in this election year, its role in setting the economic and political agenda for the forces committed to social justice is the vital task of our time.

In a very real sense, this Labor

Day marks the beginning of the 1982 electoral campaign. The results of this campaign will be a referendum on the policies of Ronald Reagan. Economically these policies have been a tragic disaster. But only if blacks turn out to vote in numbers greater than ever before will we be able to ensure that this economic disaster is translated into a political disaster for its architects.

This Labor Day must be a moment of summoning up strength for the difficult battles that confront us.

This Labor Day must be a moment of reflection in which we recognize that we are one link in the long and difficult struggle of working people to achieve dignity and justice. Above all it must be a moment of renewed commitment to the principles so eloquently formulated by A. Philip Randolph when he stated that, "Salvation for a race, nation or class must come from within. Freedom is never granted; it is won. Justice is never given; it is exacted. Freedom and justice must be struggled for by the oppressed of all lands and races, and the struggle must be continuous, for freedom is never a final act, but a continuing, evolving process to higher and higher levels of human, social, economic, political and religious relationships."



## Washington Hot Line

by Congressman Ron Wyden

Last week, a federal judge gave final approval to a plan to break up the Bell telephone system into eight smaller companies.

Under that plan, the seven local telephone companies (including Pacific Northwest Bell) will be responsible for providing local phone service.

The parent company (AT&T) will provide long-distance service — in competition with other long-distance suppliers — and will be allowed to enter data processing and other communications fields.

In many ways, the judge's decision marks the end of an era. For as long as most of us can remember, the Bell System (or AT&T) has been the phone company — the company that supplied the phones, the equipment and the service for the vast majority of Americans.

In other ways, it marks the beginning — the beginning of a new era in which Americans will shop around for phone equipment, long-distance and other phone services.

In any event, the judge's decision will have serious and far-reaching implications.

The immediate effect will be an increase in rates. Ratepayers can expect their phone rates to go up, al-

though less than they would have under an earlier proposal outlined by the Justice Department and AT&T.

And in some ways, the change may seem inconvenient. Consumers will have to shop around for long-distance services, phone equipment, etc., instead of being able to make the one-stop they do today.

But if it is implemented correctly — and if changes are made as needed along the way — the long-range impact of the judge's decision could be exciting.

Consumers will be able to comparison shop, to look around for the best deal just as they do when buying furniture, a home, or any other necessary item.

And long-distance services should improve as MCI Communications Corporation and other long-distance suppliers move into the field and begin to compete on a better footing with the Bell system.

This is not to say that Judge Greene's decision is the final word in developing communications policy in this country. It is not — neither should it be.

In reaching his decision, the judge was limited to the scope of the anti-trust suit filed by the government against AT&T. Thus, he was pro-

hibited from addressing the many other areas of communications that desperately need consideration.

In addition, many experts feel the judge did not go as far as he could have in promoting competition in the areas which he was permitted to address.

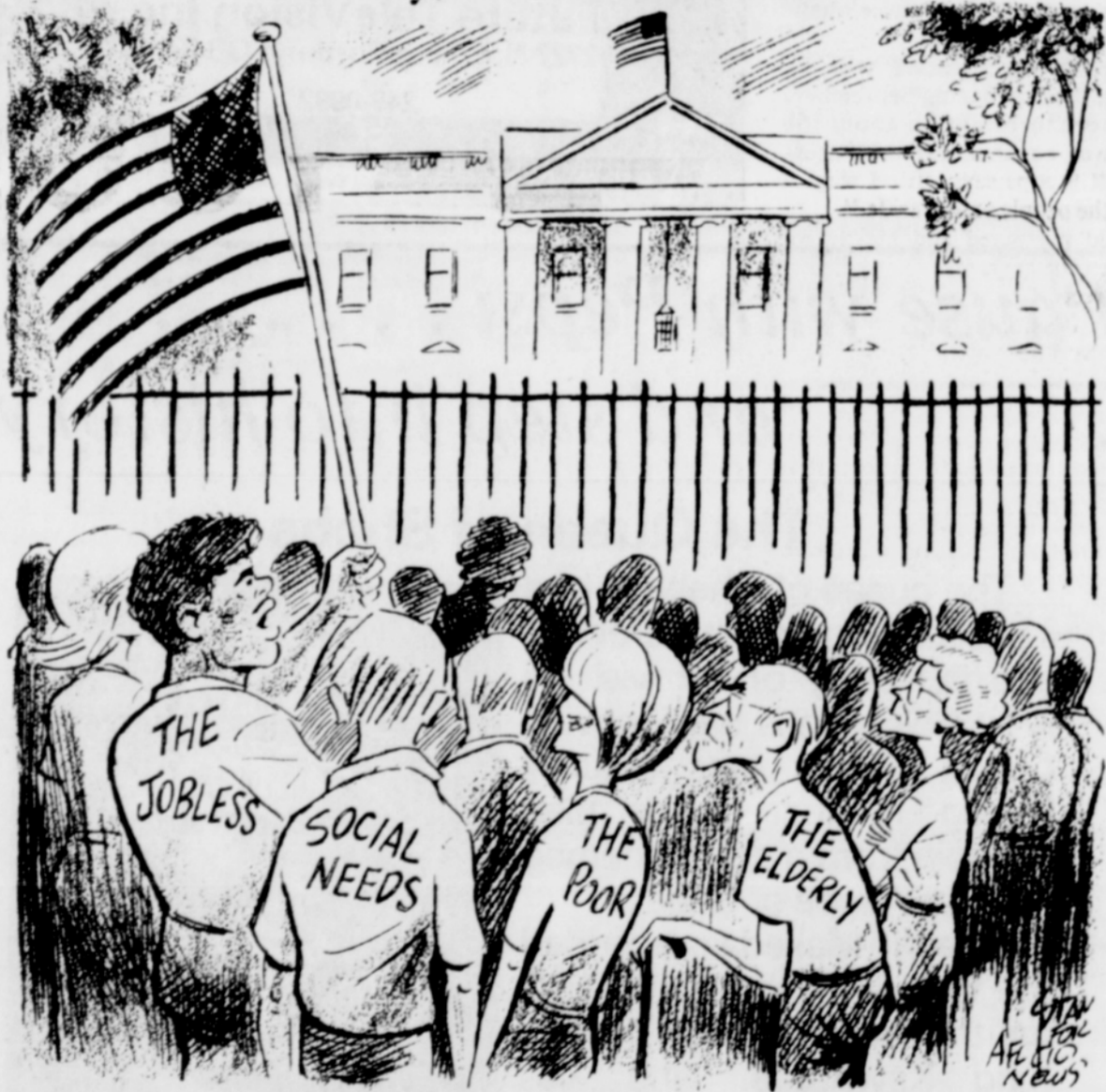
Thus, it is important that Congress turn its attention to developing a comprehensive telecommunications policy for this country — and that it do so soon. It attempted to do so earlier this year, but was thwarted by a massive lobbying campaign financed by AT&T.

Congress also must monitor carefully the impact of Judge Greene's decision on ratepayers, shareholders, local companies and employees. If the interests of these groups are not being adequately protected, Congress must make the necessary changes to see that they are.

In the final analysis, Congress — not the courts or the bureaucracy — should set telecommunications policy in this country.

Members of Congress are elected by the people, and as such, are directly responsible to them for their actions. Unelected bureaucrats and judges are less accountable, and thus less suited for making such far-reaching public policy decisions.

'Oh Say, CAN'T You See?'



## Arabs consider war crimes trial

Dakar, Senegal - UNIT— Participants in the seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine meeting in Dakar the week of August 9th sharply criticized Israel's invasion of Lebanon and recommended that the U.N. Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People "consider the utility and viability of convening a War Crimes Tribunal to assess Israel's conduct of hostilities."

PLO representative Dr. Adnan Abdel Rahim, other Palestinian, SWAPO and African-American panelists also asked that in its final report the Committee recommend that:

- The Secretary General demand that Israel produce immediately a comprehensive list of all persons detained as a result of the war;
- The International Committee of the Red Cross be given full access to the detainees;
- Combatants and civilians be accorded the "full panoply of protections of the IIIrd and IVth Geneva Conventions of 1949 respectively";
- Delegations to be appointed to

investigate the extent of human and infrastructural damage in Lebanon;

- Efforts be intensified to aid the affected population with adequate material and manpower resources;
- Redevelopment and appropriate training programs be undertaken in cooperation with Palestinian national institutions;

• A special fund financed by member states be established to disseminate information about Palestinian rights through Non-Governmental Organizations;

- Ties and similarities between zionism and apartheid be widely publicized in Africa, the Caribbean and African-American communities in the U.S.;
- The General Assembly invest the Committee with powers to issue Palestinian travel documents in lieu of passports.

Delegates from Senegal, Nigeria, Benin and Madagascar fully supported the recommendations, but Egypt's representative expressed some reservations.

At an earlier session, Arab states

were chided for not supporting the Palestinian struggle as actively as African states support their liberation struggles. Arab League delegate Mr. Moncef El May agreed that Arab response to the Lebanon crisis was limited, but he assured that "Arabs will not abandon the Palestinians."

The assemblage, some 300 Arab and African emissaries, African liberation organization representatives, U.N. officials and others, heard panelists throughout the week stress the need for a Palestinian homeland and an end to Israeli aggression supported primarily by the U.S. government.

African-American speakers were international law expert Gay McDougall, Temple University professor Alfred Moleah, Antioch Law School professor Harold McDougall and Black Press Review editor Alice Palmer.

It is expected that the final Seminar report will in large measure incorporate the ideas proposed in the recommendations.

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