BUREAUCRATS BACK BETHLEHEM BOSSES

WORKERS SQUASH JOB CUTS

Los Angeles— "No more job cuts. No negotiations!" This was the message that angered workers at Bethlehem Steel here sent to both the company and Local 1845 USWA officials on March 8. On that day, they voted three to one against a "memorandum" that would have eliminated 44 jobs in the mill—with the workers' "permission."

The vote upset repeated maneuvers by the company and the union to cut back jobs. Bethlehem, fresh from having thrown thousands of steelworkers onto the streets this year, decided on a new tactic in L.A. In order to appear "democratic," they tried to get the workers themselves to agree to give up some jobs in order to save the rest.

The company started out by saying they would have to reopen the contract and eliminate jobs in the plant altogether. They sent out letters asking workers to suggest which jobs could be cut out.

The workers refused to be bullied by these smear tactics. But the union was working hand in hand with the bosses. The executive board had already negotiated with the company and together they had drawn up a memorandum to eliminate jobs through job combination and outside contracting. Anderson, the local president, was ready to sign it.

Three times the usual number of workers showed up at the next union meeting. Fiercely opposing these unauthorized negotiations, the rank and file passed a motion that the memorandum had to be voted on by the membership.

The union officials made their next move and turned the whole voting procedure over to the company. For the first time in the local's history, voting was to take place on company property, with the bosses handing out ballots at the pay line. The ballots read: "I approve of union-management negotiations to save my job."

At the same time the company stepped up their propaganda efforts. One supervisor took workers from the machine shop and maintenance crews over to the 12" mill while some of the mill workers were on break, and claimed that they were always sitting around. Another boss went around telling workers who spoke out militantly against the job cuts that the communists had given them "red pills."

Over 60 workers signed a petition calling for an emergency union meeting. Anderson set up this meeting the day before the voting, "between 12 and 5," so that no one would be sure when it was. In spite of this, 200 workers arrived at the union hall at 12:30, and hundreds more came before Anderson could adjourn the meeting at 4:00.

Anderson began this meeting with his shopworn line about how he had to negotiate "because the EWA, which I oppose, keeps us from striking." But when rank and file called for a strike he showed that what he really opposed was strikes.

Seeing the militancy of the workers, who were almost unanimous in their opposition to the agreement, he tried to change his tune, claiming that he was going to vote no. But this "change of heart" did not fool anyone. Anderson was forced to change the wording of the ballots and to make several rank and file's poll watchers and counters.

Workers left the meeting vowing to go back into the plant and build for a no vote that would force the union to fight for every job. When the tally was in, Anderson and Bethlehem had their "democracy" and the rank and file had a victory.

MAY DAY FOCUS—MILITANT ACTIONS, MARXIST UNITY

May First, the International Workers Day, is approaching. In over 25 cities, plans are already underway to celebrate this holiday as a day of militant struggle against the capitalist system and its unemployment, national oppression and war preparations.

May Day celebrations this year will include both educational forums and militant actions. Four cities will hold communist-sponsored forums highlighting the efforts to unite the Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. into a single united Party. The forums will be held in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York and Dallas. They will feature speakers from the CPML and other Marxist-Leninist organizations, including I. Wor Kuen and August 29th Movement. Cultural presentations reflecting the struggles of workers, oppressed minorities and third world peoples will also be included.

Throughout the rest of the country, rallies and demonstrations initiated by the National Fight Back Organization, rank-and-file workers' caucuses, welfare and tenants' groups and the CPML.

This year's May Day continues in the militant tradition of the workers' struggle. We call on all our readers to take part in the preparations and activities in their cities and make May Day 1978 a focus for their organizing activities.

ON THE LINE

Pineapple workers get sour deal

Honolulu—ILWU bureaucrats in Hawaii have recently pushed through a two-year sellout contract covering three pineapple companies which employ several thousand regular and intermittent workers and about 10,000 seasonals.