

Corporate Strategy by Leif Johnson

An evil experiment in steel

When U.S. Steel workers in Pennsylvania, organizing...

How do you reverse the growing internationalization of the economy, and restore to local communities control over their own productivity—that's the issue that's on trial here."

These are not the words of an Iranian "militant," but of Reverend Chuck Rawlings of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio. Rev. Rawlings is a leading organizer in the Mahoning Valley Ecumenical Coalition, a group formed in 1977 in response to the accelerating wave of steel layoffs that hit Ohio's Mahoning Valley harder than anywhere else in the United States.

The trial he speaks of is coming up in the depressed steel town of Youngstown, Ohio on March 17. On that date the chairman and president of U.S. Steel Corp. will be put in the docks ostensibly to answer for their decision to shut down its 3,600 McDonald works in Youngstown, after last year promising to keep the plant open if the employees upped their productivity (the workers made major concessions on work rules and gave up substantial benefits).

The familiar ring of the rhetoric, similar to that of the "student radicals" in Iran is no coincidence, however. The prosecuting attorneys in the trial are Staughton Lynd, the veteran labor disorganizer, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. Clark, who was seen in January of last year marching through the streets of Teheran waving anti-Shah and

anti-U.S. placards, subsequently became a leading agitator for forming an international tribunal to try the Shah and expose the crime of "ethnocide"—the crime of "imposing" advanced technology, such as nuclear power, on backward populations.

"The legal precedent I am looking to is the medieval morality play," says Lynd. "We're going to force the men to come out of their offices and bring them into the local communities that they are damaging."

Clark and other promoters of the "Dark Ages" model for the world economy have now targeted Youngstown, Ohio as the testing ground to try out their Iran model. Their plan is to convince the soon-to-be laid off steelworkers at U.S. Steel's McDonald works to buy the decrepit plant from the company and then operate it as a worker-owned and "controlled" operation. U.S. Steel, which is indeed guilty of the crime of disinvestment, is the made-to-order foil for Clark's assault on industrial progress. Upwards of 50 percent of U.S. Steel's sales are now in nonsteel operations.

Initial investigations show that the personnel running the labor-management confrontation and local control experiment in Youngstown are identical with the orchestrators of the Iran crisis—beginning with former Attorney General Clark. The self-professed admirer of Khomeini and the Iranian "rev-

olution" has a long history as a terrorist controller. As Attorney General, Clark established the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration which funded riot-prone and arson-prone ghetto youth gangs. Clark was subsequently the defense attorney for assorted Weathermen and Baader Meinhof terrorists. The modus operandi Clark is using in Youngstown is his usual one: stir up confrontation and social chaos to seed the ground for union busting and austerity.

Also connected to Youngstown and Iran is Richard Fernandez of Clergy and Laity Concerned. Until recently Fernandez worked with Gar Alperowitz of the Exploratory Project on Economic Alternatives organizing steel workers around a scheme to buy back the defunct Campbell works from Youngstown Sheet and Tube, which was merged into Jones and Laughlin Steel Co. in 1978. Fernandez has also been working with Clark and Richard Falk of Princeton, the leading academic "authority" on "Islamic fundamentalism" on plans to set up a tribunal on Iran.

"Our message had been simple," Fernandez told a reporter last week. "It is very short-sighted to worry about wages when steel is facing a shutdown. We figured ways to cut 20 percent off the cost of labor. The idea is: when you crank up a new mill, and get the community involved, then you can phase out seniority, and you don't have to reflect seniority in the benefits...It was amazing, the willingness to sacrifice, to act smart and cut costs. The idea of sharing the austerity, of working three hours less so that 62 guys don't get unemployed."