

The next meeting of the

CLASS STRUGGLE ANARCHIST NETWORK

will be held on

SATURDAY, MARCH 10th

at

FIRST FLOOR, CVS BUILDING

95 FISHERGATE

PRESTON

(Apparently, Fishergate is the main street in Preston and the CVS building is next door to the sports centre. . If you get seriously lost, phone Preston [redacted] r directions. Please aim to arrive at 12.30pm for a 1pm start. Advance agenda items can be sent to CSAN, P.O. Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY, though items can be added on the day).

• C.S.A.N.

BULLETIN 3.

DONCASTER DAM
P.O. Box 122
Doncaster
South Yorks

2/2/90.

Dear Comrades,

As requested at the Sheffield CSAN meeting I have been in contact with the organisers of the Haymarket Martyrs Commemoration March/Committee regarding what is planned for this year. They are having an organising meeting and all class struggle anarchists are welcome.

DATE : Saturday 24th of February,

TIME : 1pm,

PLACE: The 'Duke of York' pub,
York Way,
Kings Cross,
London.

They particularly ask for representatives of the CSAN to attend and may have a whip-round for delegates travelling a long way.

They would like people planning on going to discuss things like numbers they could get to attend an event, where an event might be most successful, and what might be the best form of event (march, rally, meetings, etc).

In Solidarity,

Paul,

Doncaster DAM.

At the last CSAN meeting we agreed to send a letter to 'Blast', a distribution catalogue linked to 'Insurrection' magazine, criticising their elitist attitude. Here it is.....

Dear Blast,

We are writing to you after reading the editorial to your last catalogue. To put it bluntly, we think much of what you say is rubbish. You state that "the time to act is now..there can be no waiting for tomorrow or for the masses to gain revolutionary awareness". We agree with you on the need for action. But revolutions are made by the mass of people, not a few isolated individuals. Our job as revolutionaries/anarchists is to promote working class self-activity. Romanticising two Italian anarchists only encourages even more spectatorship.

Lets be clear about this. We support Bonanno and Stasi just as much as we support the woman down the road nicking cat food from Safeways. Of course we accept that they were not acting for personal gain. But is funding inaccessible rubbish like 'Insurrection' really more worthwhile than feeding your cats ?

If you've an honest desire for revolution, you look for a realistic way to achieve it. Are spectacular actions by an elite really the way forward ? That's what you imply by writing that 'we' can't afford to wait for 'the masses'. Your editorial says nothing about class struggle - as if an insurrection by a handful of anarchists will magically turn into a revolution. Yet anarchism has always been based on class struggle. Revolutions are only possible when anarchist/revolutionary ideas make sense to the mass of working class people. For too long anarchism has been an obscure and inaccessible idea. Your catalogue has done nothing to change that.

We look forward to hearing from you.

In Solidarity and anger,

Leeds CSAN.

With the 70th anniversary of the Kronstadt Uprising on the horizon, anarchists are already planning for commemorations etc. Below we reprint an article on this important chapter in our history.

THE KRONSTADT UPRISING

'Cornerstone of the Third Revolution'

By early 1921 long years of war, revolution and civil war had bled Russia to exhaustion. But as the civil war drew to an end the people looked forward to the abolition of wartime restrictions and the beginning of reconstruction. However, the same policies continued and the militarisation of labour increased. The conviction grew that the Communist Party was more interested in retaining political power than in saving the revolution.

By February 1921, the workers of four Petrograd factories went on strike. It had been an exceptionally hard winter and they and their families suffered from cold, hunger and exhaustion. They demanded an increase in food rations, fuel and clothing. Amongst the calls for freedom of the soviets there were some demands for a constituent assembly and free trade. Some economic concessions were made to the strikers, but at the same time they were met with brutal repression.

The sailors of the nearby Kronstadt base were extremely concerned with what was going on in Petrograd. On Feb 28th the sailors of the ship 'Petropavlosk' passed a resolution which was supported by the crew of the 'Sevastopol'. They demanded, amongst other things, free re-elections to the Kronstadt soviet, as its tenure was about to expire. At the same time a committee of sailors was sent to Petrograd to learn the situation there.

On March 1st a mass meeting was held in Kronstadt which was officially called by the crews of the first and second squadrons of the Baltic Fleet. 16,000 sailors, Red Army soldiers and workers attended. It was presided over by the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet, the Communist Vassiliev. The chairman of the All Russian Central Executive Committee, Kalinin, and the Commisar of the Baltic Fleet, Kuzmin, were present and addressed the meeting. It was held with the knowledge and permission of the Executive Committee of the Kronstadt Soviet.

At this meeting the Petrograd comm-

ittee made its report. The Petropavlosk resolution was put to the audience. Despite being attacked by both Kalinin and Kuzmin, it was passed unanimously. The main points were free speech and free press for revolutionary organisations, amnesty for imprisoned revolutionaries and re-election to the soviets.

After the meeting, Kalinin was permitted to return to Petrograd. A committee of 30 delegates was also sent to request that a delegation from there return with them to see what was going on in Kronstadt. The 30 were arrested by the Bolsheviks and never seen again.

A meeting was called on March 2nd to prepare for the election. 300 delegates from various workers organisations attended. An executive committee of 5 was elected.

Kuzmin addressed the conference in an extremely provocative manner, stating that, "If you want open warfare, you shall have it, for the Communists will not give up the reins of government. We will fight to the bitter end". Kuzmin and Vassiliev were put under arrest. A motion to detain the other Communists present was voted down overwhelmingly. The Communists were considered on an equal footing with the representatives of other organisations and accorded the same rights. The March 1st resolutions were passed.

Amid rumours of a Bolshevik advance on Kronstadt, and in view of the threats from Kuzmin and Kalinin, the conference enlarged the executive committee and turned it into a Provisional Revolutionary Committee, which was charged with preserving the order and safety of the city. It was to make the necessary preparations for holding the elections to the Kronstadt soviet.

On March 2nd the government issued an order signed by Lenin and Trotsky, which denounced Kronstadt as a mutiny against the Communists and charged the sailors with being "the tools of former Tsarist generals who together with S.R. traitors staged a counter revolutionary conspiracy".

against the proletarian republic". Kronstadt was the "work of Entente interventionists and French spies". All this was supposed to be headed by the dreaded General Kozlovsky.

Petrograd and the surrounding provinces were put under martial law. Supreme power over the area was put in the hands of a Petrograd Defence Committee, headed by Zinoviev.

Meanwhile, Moscow Radio was making statements in support of international capitalism: "Just at this moment, when in America a new Republican regime is assuming the reins of government and showing inclination to take up business relations with Soviet Russia, the spreading of lying rumours and the organisation of disturbances in Kronstadt have the sole purpose of influencing the new U.S. president and changing his policy towards Russia". They went on: "At the same time the London Conference is holding its sessions, and the spreading of similar rumours must influence also the Turkish delegation and make it more submissive to the demands of the Entente. The rebellion of the Petropavlovsk crew is undoubtedly part of a great conspiracy to create trouble within Soviet Russia and to injure our international position".

In Petrograd, numerous workers, soldiers and sailors, suspected of being sympathetic to Kronstadt, were placed under arrest. All Petrograd sailors and several army regiments thought to be 'politically untrustworthy' were ordered to distant points, while the families of Kronstadt sailors living in Petrograd were taken hostage. In Kronstadt however, Communists joined in with the preparatory work for the elections.

Number 1 of the Kronstadt daily, 'Izvestia', put out by the Provisional Revolutionary Committee, declared that it was, "most concerned that no blood be shed. It has exerted its best efforts to organise revolutionary order in the city, the fortress and the forts. Comrades and citizens, do not suspend work! Workers remain at your machines; sailors and soldiers, be at your posts. All Soviet employees and institutions should continue their labours. The Provisional Revolutionary Committee calls upon you all, to give it your support and aid. Its mission is to organise, in fraternal co-operation with you, the conditions necessary for honest and just elections to the new Soviet".

The Revolutionary Committee was exclusively proletarian, consisting of the most part of workers of known revolutionary record. It adhered to the principle of 'equal rights for all, privileges to none'. The food ration was equalised. Sailors, who had received rations far in excess of those allotted to the ordinary worker, themselves voted to accept no more than the average. Special rations and delicacies were given only to hospitals and childrens homes.

Few Communists were arrested, in spite of the holding of sailors families hostage. The pages of Izvestia contain numerous communications from Communist organisations condemning the attitude of the central government. Many publicly announced their withdrawal from the party as a protest. After the Uprising, the executive committee of the Communist Party considered its Kronstadt section so 'demoralised' that it ordered the complete de-registration of all Communists there. Trotsky estimated that 30% of the party members in Kronstadt actively participated in the revolt while 40% took a 'neutral position'.

The Bolshevik refusal to let the election go ahead created a process of polarisation. In reply to their allegations, Izvestia wrote "All power to the Soviets! Having gained power (the Communist Party) is now fearful only of losing it, and therefore it considers all means permissible: defamation, deceit, violence, murder, and vengeance on the families of the rebels. Here in Kronstadt, has been laid the cornerstone of the Third Revolution which is to break the last chains of the worker and open the new, broad road to socialist creativeness...Without firing a single shot, without shedding a drop of blood, the first step has been taken. Those who labour need no blood, they will shed it only in self-defence...The workers and peasants march on: they are leaving behind the Constituent Assembly with its bourgeois regime and the Communist Party dictatorship, with its Cheka and state capitalism".

The Kronstadt sailors never took the offensive. They aimed to convince the workers of Petrograd and the rest of Russia to stand with them. Even when all communication with Petrograd was severed they refused to take the insistant advice of military experts to make a landing in Oranienbaum, a fort of great strategic value. There was a refusal to believe that the government would actually attack

them. The ice around their island was not broken and fortified barrages were not set up along the probable line of attack.

On March 4th the Petrograd Soviet met. On the basis of the March 1st resolution and an almost hysterical denunciation of the sailors by Kalinin, Kronstadt was found guilty of a counter revolutionary uprising and an immediate surrender was demanded of it.

That night Trotsky arrived in Petrograd and the following morning he issued an ultimatum which stated that; "Only those surrendering unconditionally may count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic...Responsibility for the harm that may be suffered by the peaceful population will fall entirely on the heads of the counter revolutionary mutineers. This warning is final".

This prompted a group of anarchists in Petrograd to send a document to the Committee of Defence urging them to resolve the crisis through peaceful negotiation. This plea was ignored.

On the evening of March 7th the first shot was fired against Kronstadt. The artillery bombardment was followed by an attempt to take the fortress by storm. However, a vicious snowstorm and widespread desertion meant that government forces had to retreat. On March 16th the Bolsheviks made a concentrated attack from the north, south and east, with reorganised regiments.

'Sympathetic' troops were removed and punished, and the assault troops went into battle with machine guns at their rear. By the morning of the 17th a number of forts had been taken. Fighting continued in the streets, with each house being defended. However, the rebels were overwhelmed and the 'Petropavlovsk' and the 'Sevastopol' surrendered. Many thousands fled to Finland.

On March 18th, whilst the Kronstadt rebels were being executed by the Cheka, the Bolshevik government and the Communist Party celebrated the anniversary of the Paris Commune of 1871.

CONCLUSIONS

It is necessary to examine the Bolshevik arguments relating to Kronstadt as they insisted it was necessary to crush the rising to prevent the counter revolution gaining a foothold, a very serious assertion.

The charge that the rebellion was controlled by either General Kozlovsky or the right S.R.'s is easily dismissed.

The 'proof' normally put forward to show that it was all a pre-planned 'white' plot is that the French paper Le Monde had reported the uprising before it had happened. However, this sort of thing has happened many times before and after Kronstadt. This particular story probably relates to the fact that the second Communist Conference of the Baltic Fleet had just voted a resolution which was very critical of its political leadership. Trotsky actually dropped the charge that Kronstadt was a white plot in 1938.

But could the uprising unwittingly have let in the counter revolution? The truth is that although a great threat remained, the civil war had all but ended. In fact, half the Red Army had already been disbanded.

If we examine the Kronstadt programme, we see that it never called for a constituent assembly or free trade, or even a legalisation of the bourgeois parties.

We are told that the social composition of the sailors had changed, and that they were no longer the workers that Lenin had called "the flower of the revolution" in 1917. However, even in 1917 the sailors had derived from the peasantry. It is often these 'transitory' classes that are most revolutionary. The Kronstadt programmes' overriding thrust was for the re-introduction of workers democracy. It has already been said that the composition of the Provisional Revolutionary Committee was a proletarian one.

Why was Kronstadt attacked without any attempt at negotiation? Trotsky threatened that the rebels would be "shot down like partridges" if they didn't surrender unconditionally. The real answer lies in Lenin's frank statement that; "the sailors did not want the counter revolutionaries but they did not want us either".

Those rebels who were captured were shot without trial, so that the Bolsheviks didn't have to justify their actions in public. Yet why did the Bolsheviks see fit to invent the story of the white plot if their argument that Kronstadt would have opened the doors to the counter revolutionaries was founded? The answer is that party rule was threatened.

The idea of a centralised vanguard party inevitably leads to substitution; the party is substituted for the class, the central committee is substituted for the party, and the leader for the central committee. Delegates end up taking orders from the party central committee, not the workers assemblies that have mandated them.

This substitution is summed up by the following confused and contradictory quote from Trotsky: "It has been said more than once that we have substituted the dictatorship of the party for the dictatorship of the soviets. However, we can claim without contradiction that the dictatorship soviets was only made possible by the dictatorship of the party... In fact there has been no substitution at all, since the Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class... (In a revolutionary period) the Communists become the representatives of the working class as a whole".

Trotsky himself was eventually forced out of the USSR by Stalin, yet the revolution had degenerated long before his seizure of power. Kronstadt was the test of this. The reaction of the Stalin era did not take place because Stalin was a bad leader, but because the ideology and organisation of Bolshevism has an inevitable tendency towards substitution. There is a straight line between Leninism and Stalinism. If Trotsky had won the power struggle we might well have seen him in Stalin's position. The legend of the Kronstadt sailors being in league with the whites may well have opened the path to that of the Wrangel officer conspiring with Trotsky in 1928. The development of Stalinism which the crushing of Kronstadt permitted let the world Communist movement be turned into an instrument of international counter revolution.

Soon after Kronstadt the New Economic Policy was introduced by Lenin, with the assertion that "we must satisfy the middle peasantry economically and go over to free exchange". Why crush Kronstadt by force and then bring in what the rebels had been accused of demanding? Party rule was threatened by Kronstadt but not by capitalistic relations. Economic concessions were made to the would-be middle classes rather than political concessions to the workers.

Anarchists do not underestimate the adverse conditions in which the Russian Revolution was trying to survive. But it is essential to realise that the Bolshevik model of organisation is most open to external pressures of this sort, and leads ultimately to party rule. Any organisation has the right to put its politics to the working class, but never to threaten the independence of that class.

"Kronstadt is of great historical significance. It sounded the death knell of Bolshevism with its party dictatorship, mad centralisation, Cheka terrorism and bureaucratic castes. It struck into the very heart of communist autocracy. At the same time it shocked the intelligent and honest minds of Europe and America into a critical examination of Bolshevik theories and practises. It exploded the Bolshevik myth of the Communist State being the "workers and peasants' government". It proved that the Communist Party dictatorship and the Russian Revolution are opposites, contradictory and mutually exclusive. It demonstrated that the Bolshevik regime is unmitigated tyranny and reaction, and that the communist state is itself the most potent and dangerous counter revolution.

Kronstadt fell. But it fell victorious in its idealism and moral purity, its generosity and higher humanity. Kronstadt was superb. It justly prided itself on not having shed the blood of its enemies, the communists within its midst. It had no executions. The untutored, unpolished sailors, rough in manner and speech, were too noble to follow the Bolshevik example of vengeance, they would not even shoot the hated commissars. Kronstadt personified the century old emancipation movement of Russia.

Kronstadt was the first popular and entirely independent attempt at liberation from the yoke of state socialism - an attempt made directly by the people, by the workers, soldiers and sailors themselves. It was the first step towards the Third Revolution which is inevitable and which, let us hope, may bring to long-suffering Russia lasting freedom and peace".

(Quote by Alexander Berkman.)

COMMUNITY RESISTANCE TO THE POLL TAX

As time goes on, and the campaign grows, there will be obstacles to overcome, and not just the Tory government (They welcome our resistance to a certain extent, as it makes Labour councils unpopular), but the Labour Party leadership as well. They hope to ride to power on the crest of a wave of anti-Tory feeling fuelled by the Poll Tax. We are going to be hearing more and more that we should be putting our energies into getting the Labour Party elected, and that non-payment will not work.

WHICH SIDE ARE THEY ON?

Does this mean that the Labour Party will drastically change the Poll Tax? Reimburse those who have been robbed by the Poll Tax? Set free those people imprisoned for not paying either the Poll Tax or fines imposed because of the Poll Tax? Stop sending council employed thieves and burglars to steal our possessions? OF COURSE NOT!!

CAN'T PAY - WON'T PAY

Those of us who cannot afford to pay cannot afford to wait for the next Labour government. They never have and never will keep their promises, always seeking to halt the tide of real change with petty reforms. It's the majority of us who cannot afford to pay that will make up the core of resistance.

ROBBING THE POOR

The Poll Tax is simply a blatant way of taking money off the poor and giving to the rich. That includes taking money off us indirectly e.g. *privatisation of services* caused by councils trying to get the Poll Tax down to remain electable, means we are paying more for our services. *If you lose out because of the Poll Tax, there is no reason why you should pay it!* Remember, you are definitely not alone, millions of people are refusing to pay - already official figures quoted in Scotland estimate that those not paying total well over a million people. (These figures are rising almost daily as more and more people join the non-payment campaign). That's 25% of the population! It is us who are losing out and it is us who need to defend ourselves, and decide what action to take.

As time goes on and councils accuse non-payers of being responsible for council services suffering, just remember who it was who volunteered to implement the Poll Tax, NOT US!! It was the council and their belief that the Poll Tax is a political godsend for their careers that meant that the Poll Tax did not even have to be forced on them.

MASS RESISTANCE

As the campaign gets stronger, some councillors will seize the opportunity to boost their credibility. e.g. Setting themselves up as martyrs "Don't refuse to pay yourself, leave it to me!", and committees of 100 as a symbolic protest moving away from mass resistance where OUR clout lies. It's a good career move! WE must be aware of bandwagon jumpers, these people are only interested as long as it serves their political ends.

SERVICES & SELF-ORGANISATION

It's important that we, working class people, do not suffer from lack of services. The community should be supporting those living in it. If, for example, the bins were left unemptied as the council tries to break the non-payment campaign, the community would have to sort it out. Through the Poll Tax groups we could co-ordinate collection ourselves with those dustbin men and women who refuse to go along with the council when they are holding us to ransom. If this is backed up with effective industrial action (which we should be encouraging and supporting), the council will lose that battle against non-payment.

EFFECTIVE WORKING CLASS SELF-ORGANISATION with strong workplace/community links plus effective mutual aid, means grass roots resistance to the Poll Tax can become a reality. We'll be able to stop the divisions that will be created by the council and the labour leadership..

COMMUNITY & WORKPLACE

Local community based anti-Poll Tax groups are vital to the fight against the Poll Tax, and can also make our lives brighter in many ways, through the re-creating of *the community spirit e.g. street parties etc.* The possibilities are enormous, DO IT!!

Local community groups must organise at street level, aiming for a rep. on every street to build mass local opposition. Local Poll Tax groups must build links directly with workers, especially council workers and D.H.S.S. staff. To keep pushing for unions to pass policies against the Poll Tax and call strike action means NOTHING! Opposition to the Poll Tax must be built among ordinary rank and file workers.

WORKPLACE SELF ORGANISATIONS

It will become more and more obvious that the limited, compromising union structures are not enough. We need to build our own workplace self-organisations capable of fighting the Poll Tax. Not just in the council depts., but in all workplaces. We must be able to resist having the Poll Tax taken directly from our wage packets and our benefits.

WE STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTROL OF THESE GROUPS REMAINING IN THE HANDS OF THEIR MEMBERS. Everyone must have a chance to participate in the day to day running of the groups, and all elected positions should be rotated throughout the membership, and post-holders subject to immediate 'recall' by the group if they're not doing their job properly.

GRASS ROOTS RESISTANCE

Community and workplace groups must remain independent and promote self-activity i.e. people getting involved. We don't need anyone from outside telling us what to do. Decisions must be made together, collectively. This way we won't be limited in our activities by being dictated to by this or that political party. We will be able to develop the grass roots resistance, in our communities and workplaces, necessary to make the Poll Tax unworkable.

DIRECT ACTION

Practically we will need to develop as an independent movement in open confrontation with the bosses laws, the councils and the state e.g. mass non-payment, widespread physical defence of our homes against the bailiffs, mass occupations of council buildings, harassment of Poll Tax snoopers, fighting deductions from wages in our workplaces, from benefits, and refusal to work on, and sabotage of the whole Poll Tax system. eg Poll Tax Computer viruses!!

OUR FUTURE, OUR LIVES & OUR FIGHT

Each individual area is different and it's up to the people in that area to work out how best to organise. Attempts by left wing parties to dominate should be resisted. They are there for one reason only, to build the party by recruiting new members.

The S.W.P. wants to be SEEN TO BE organising in the trade unions and to be THE trade union activists on all issues, not just the Poll Tax. Pressuring the trade union leaders and bureaucrats to call industrial action against the Tax is USELESS!!

Militant, and their juvenile section Y.T.U.R.C., emphasise convincing (begging) the Labour councils not to implement the Poll Tax and encouraging all anti-Poll Tax activists to join the Labour party - and thus boost their power within it (they hope one day to take it over).

OPPORTUNISTS

These opportunists will drop the campaign when it suits them. They are seeking to be the "new bosses". History has shown us that these bosses, no matter how "new" they claim to be, will be no better than the last ones.

THERE IS A REAL CHANCE OF VICTORY HERE

The Poll Tax is an attempt to squeeze more out of us, the fight against it goes much deeper. We must form links against everything the ruling classes use to divide us e.g. racism, sexism etc.. Coming as it does at a time when **Thatcherism is struggling to maintain its credibility** even among the middle classes and the Tory back-benchers, political strikes are happening again and solidarity is the new byword. **There is a real chance of victory here.** We can gain the confidence to go further than just the Poll Tax, with a raising of community spirit and working class solidarity and the realisation that Labour controlled councils are no better at running "local democracy" than the Tories, nor are they capable of defending us from attacks, and neither is anyone else.

Finally, the realisation that the only people capable of defending and running our lives is ourselves through our own organisations. The time will come when communities will support themselves and provide their own services, without parasites to exploit or oppress us. Only then will there be true socialism. We work towards and look forward to that day.