

# کارگر امروز

نشریه انترناسیونالیستی کارگری

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## تظاهرات ۲۰۰ هزار نفر علیه بستن معادن در بریتانیا

## سعید ساعدی از زندان آزاد شد



مرکز خبری کارگر امروز:  
روز ۲۵ اکتبر، حدود ۲۰۰ هزار نفر در تظاهرات شهر لندن علیه بستن معادن بریتانیا شرکت کردند. این تظاهرات به فراخوان کنگره اتحادیه های کارگری بریتانیا و در اعتراض به دولت برگزار شد.

به گزارش روزنامه "ایونینگ استاندارد"، این راهپیمایی شهر لندن را فلج کرد. مردم از نقاط مختلف بریتانیا با اتوبوس و قطار برای شرکت در راهپیمایی به پایتخت آمدند. این بزرگترین تظاهرات در بریتانیا پس از تظاهرات اعتراضی دو سال قبل به سیاست مالیاتی دولت بود. حدود ۱۵۰۰ پلیس برای کنترل مردم در صحنه بود.

به گزارش پلیس، حدود ۱۶ هزار نفر از مردم پشت سر "آرتور اسکارگیل"، رهبر اتحادیه معدنیان، "تونی بن"، "دنيس اسکینر" و "بیل موريس" دبیر اتحادیه شدند.

مرکز خبری کارگر امروز:  
سعید ساعدی فعال جنبش کارگری در کردستان از زندان آزاد شد.

سعید ساعدی کارگر جوشکار، از فعالین اتحادیه صنعتگر و چهلین سال از سخنران مراسم روز کارگر سنندج بود. سعید ساعدی در تابستان سال ۷۰ دستگیر شد و مدتها ممنوع الملاقات بود. طی مدتی که سعید ساعدی در زندان بود بسیاری از تشکلهای کارگری در اروپا و آمریکا و کانادا با تصویب قطعنامه و ارسال نامه به سفارتخانه های ایران به دستگیری او و زاهد منوچهری که هنوز در زندان است اعتراض کردند و خواهان آزادی آنها شدند.

## اخراجهای دسته جمعی کارگران نساجی را تهدید میکند

این اظهارات دبیر سندیکای کارفرماها تهدید اخراجهای جمعی را که مدتی است زمره آن اینجا و آنجا شنیده می شود، صراحت بیشتری می بخشد.

دبیر سندیکای مذکور در توضیح تعطیل کارخانجات نساجی، تکنولوژی عقب مانده و فرسودگی ماشین آلات این صنعت را که

مرکز خبری کارگر امروز:  
در هفته اول آبانماه دبیر سندیکای کارفرماهای صنعت نساجی طی گفتگویی با روزنامه رسالت اعلام کرد که بسیاری از کارفرماها به این نتیجه رسیده اند که اگر در چهارچوب قانون کار جدید کلیه کارگران خود را بازخرید کنند، به صرفشان خواهد بود.

## اعتصاب ۶ میلیون کارگر علیه ریاضت کشی اقتصادی در ایتالیا

فراخوان ۳ اتحادیه کارگری بزرگ ایتالیا و بدنبال اعتصابات ۴ ساعته محلی در ماه گذشته صورت گرفت. کارگران در اعتراض به کاهش بودجه در بخش خدمات، کمک های اجتماعی و عدم تعادل بین نرخ تورم و دستمزدها به خیابانها ریختند و دست به تظاهرات زدند. در اثر اعتصاب کارگران دولت ناچار به عقب نشینی شد.

مرکز خبری کارگر امروز:  
روز ۱۳ اکتبر، حداقل ۶ میلیون کارگر در دهمین اعتصاب عمومی در ایتالیا طی ۱۲ سال گذشته شرکت کردند. اعتصاب بمدت ۴ ساعت صنایع و ترانسپورت این کشور را تعطیل کرد. به گزارش تایمزمالی، این اعتصاب سراسری علیه برنامه بودجه سال ۱۹۹۳ دولت و به

## کمیته همبستگی کارگری در آلمان تشکیل شد

آن را با اهداف خود یکی دانستیم. کمیته همبستگی کارگری در آلمان پیوسته است. در بخشی از این اطلاعیه آمده است "ما که بعنوان ناشرین نشریه "پیک کارگری" در جلسه بنیان گذاری این کمیته شرکت داشتیم، از آنجایی که اهداف اعلام شده

میشد با انتشار يك اطلاعیه توسط مسعود رازی هماهنگ کننده این نشریه اعلام داشت که به کمیته همبستگی کارگری در آلمان پیوسته است. در بخشی از این اطلاعیه آمده است "ما که بعنوان ناشرین نشریه "پیک کارگری" در جلسه بنیان گذاری این کمیته شرکت داشتیم، از آنجایی که اهداف اعلام شده

مرکز خبری کارگر امروز:  
"کمیته همبستگی کارگری" در آلمان با انتشار يك اطلاعیه اعلام موجودیت کرد و ناصر پایدار بعنوان هماهنگ کننده آن انتخاب شد. همچنین نشریه آلمانی زبان "پیک کارگری" که با هدف جلب پشتیبانی کارگران آلمان از جنبش کارگری ایران بمدت بیش از دو سال منتشر

## معدنچیان بریتانیا علیه دولت

امان کفا

در اواسط ماه اکتبر وسائل ارتباطات جمعی یکبارگی گزارش از بسته شدن ۳۱ معدن و بیکاری بالفور ۳۰ هزار کارگر معدن را منتشر کردند. این تصمیم که از طرف دولت تحت عنوان زیادی تولید و عدم نیاز خریداران زغال سنگ معرفی شد، کل جامعه بریتانیا را تکان داد.

اعتراضات که از همه مراکز و بویژه از جانب مطبوعات به سمت دولت سرازیر شد همگی نشانگر دوره بحرانی برای دولت بود. روز سه شنبه اعلام شد که در روز جمعه همان هفته حداقل ۶ معدن بسته خواهد شد. این تصمیم کل روابط و قراردادهای کار را زیر پا گذاشته بود. طبق قرارداد کار

## کمیته همبستگی کارگران ایران و فنلاند تشکیل شد

صفحه ۲

## کمیته همبستگی کارگران ایران و اتریش تشکیل شد

صفحه ۲

## کمیته کارگری ایران در آمریکا به کمیته بین المللی همبستگی با کارگران ایران پیوست

صفحه ۲

## سام گیندین دستیار رهبر اتحادیه کارگران اتومبیل ساز کانادا جنبش کارگری آمریکای شمالی در کجا ایستاده است؟

صفحه ۱۱

## کارگران ژاپنی دوستان کارگران آمریکایی هستند یا دشمنانشان؟

صفحه ۱۰

به گزارش آژانس خبرگزاری آلمان، "دپا"، رئیس هیئت مدیره اتحادیه فلزکاران آلمان، اکتاین کولر" دفاع از دموکراسی در برابر راست افراطی و همچنین حفظ استقلال در انعقاد قراردادهای دستمزد را وظایف مرکزی و اساسی سازمانش می داند.

صفحه ۵

گفتگو با احمد معین از فعالین جنبش کارگری و کمونیستی عراق

## گرایش کمونیستی جریان زنده در جنبش کارگری عراق است

صفحه ۹

درباره ماجرای ساکو و ونزی

## داستان زندگی من

صفحه ۸



























## WORKER TODAY

### From p.15 Struggles in Isfahan Steel Mill

and of the nearby towns came to the support of the strikers with food and other supplies.

The political aspect of this strike was also reflected in the demands that were raised. The strike was essentially against a kind of contracting-out of work and the resulting job losses. But to this demand was also added the removal of the then managing director of the plant and the minister for mining and metal.

The government tried everything in its armoury to fight the strike. The workers had reacted to the arrests in a well-planned way, and the authorities were forced to release the arrested workers. Workers ridiculed the pleas of the powerful Imam of Isfahan who said that 'as the Prophet had kissed the hand of workers, I kiss your feet'. The government was forced to retreat and to postpone the plans for the "contracting out", which were a preamble to the 1985 layoffs.

In May 1985 the Islamic (national) Assembly quizzed the minister for mining: "Why did you abandon the Resolution on the contracting out of work at the Steel Mill, which had been approved by four ministers? Why did you surrender, considering that it was a blow to the clergy who had been involved in the process?" The minister replied: "The most important question for us then was to make sure that the workers' trust is not shaken. Our conclusion after a strike by several thousand workers was to set up a committee consisting of the deputies to the minister for home affairs, the information minister, and the minister for mining and metal, supervised by the Isfahan governor. This committee would take up the workers' demands, namely, permanent employment and health insurance, on the condition that this concession is not made when workers assemble."

### Tradition of organising at the Steel Mill

Of course any strike and collective action requires some degree of organisation. But this is even more true in the case of a large workplace like the Isfahan steel complex, with its various sections and a four-shift operation. Here too the Steel Mill is a case in point with regard to the state of organisation among the industrial workers in Iran.

The form of organisation which the Isfahan steel workers have experienced and known for themselves is the workers' councils (*shora*) and general assemblies. The councils were set up in the Steel Mill from March 1979, when workers returned to work after the strikes and stoppages during the Revolution. They were formed in the various sections and departments of the plant, and their very diversity - from the radical ones, led by communist workers, down to those which reflected workers' initial illusions and credulity - mirrored, more or less precisely, the workers' council movement generally. The daily conflict of the councils at the Steel Mill with the powerful and well-organised *Islamic Society* in place at that time - itself directly tied to the new government's armed-guard forces (*Komiteh*) - as well

as the occasionally remarkable successes by some of the councils in forcing through the demands of the workforce and winning the right to political activity on the shopfloor, all these were typified the dilemma facing the council movement nationally: leaving political power at the hands of the stranglers of the revolution, on the one hand, and continuing the revolution at the workplace, on the other. Nevertheless, the councils at the Steel Mill continued to survive, and, like the council movement as a whole, only the bloody suppression by the Islamic Republic in 1981 and the total establishment of bourgeois Islamic despotism could put an end to a period of their life.

Even with respect to their form and organisation, the councils at the Steel Mill suffered from the general problems facing the council movement. The councils here could not fully secure themselves without organising and uniting at level of the whole complex. Continuing as sectional and departmental councils would not do, any longer. It was necessary to build upon these base councils a representative system, the general assemblies of the representatives organising and uniting all the workers of the steel complex. The communist and radical workers were conscious of this and even made some efforts in this respect in order to form the assembly of the representatives of the councils from the various sections and to set up a council at the level of the whole complex, which, due to reasons mentioned above, failed. But this was the same situation which prevailed in the council movement as a whole.

As with the working class movement generally, the repression of 1981 did not mean an elimination of the council tradition. Workers openly defended the councils and called for their restoration. In the summer of 1981, when in the gathering of several thousand workers of the steel complex the managing director, Nily, refused to pledge that the workers would be permanently employed, and uttered abuses, the workers' anger boiled over, precipitating a revolt in which Khomeini's portraits were torn up and the manager fled the scene by the skin of his teeth. On this day thousands of workers were shouting: Bring the council back!

Also, the council tradition in

the Steel Mill has survived in the form of holding general assemblies, especially during strikes.

### General assemblies at the Steel Mill

The steel workers' strike in 1984 provided an almost complete example of the role that the general assemblies have played in some of the strikes under Islamic repression. Especially as the active section of the strike was by the construction workers, the only way of overcoming their dispersion and having an all-inclusive and effective organisation during the strike, could be the general assembly form. The call for strike action was issued at the workers' huge general assembly on 10 November 84. The workers declared that the general assembly was the only instance that they recognised, and forced the managing director to give explanations before the assembly which was now being held regularly. It was the assembly that resolved to give a two-week time to the authorities, and when, one day before the deadline, the Judiciary issued a threatening order, it was the assembly that decided to resist and continue with the strike. In all the later decisions during the arrest of the speakers, the takeover of the factory, the releasing of the arrested, and the threat to totally block goods going out of the factory, the workers relied on the general assembly. Even when the government's communique was distributed in the factory - despite the stated condition that there would be no concession while the protest was on - the strike continued. The general assembly met again the following day to decide to end the action and return to work!

In addition to general assembly, representative delegations, elected by the assembly, are a known, and even tried, form of organising for the workers at the Steel Mill, particularly in the production section. Many of the section councils at the Steel Mill could not have developed without the representative delegations and the representatives' general assemblies. Also, it seems, in the sit-in protest in September this year groups of workers representing the various sections took part.

[The author was closely in contact with the Isfahan steel workers from 1979 to 1982]

## Islamic Councils out of ILO! Call by solidarity committees

### WT News Service:

In a joint communique entitled "Join the Campaign of Solidarity with Iranian Workers", a number of committees of solidarity with Iranian workers in Europe and North America call for a coordinated campaign to exert pressure on the Islamic Republic government, for its violation of workers' rights in Iran, in the 1993 annual conference of the ILO - the International Labour Organisation.

The communique, which is signed by the labour solidarity committees in Canada, the USA, Sweden, Finland, France and Britain, and by the paper *Arbeiterkurier* in Germany, called on the solidarity committee activists to urge the main trade unions in

Europe, the USA and Canada, to pass resolutions for proposal to the ILO conference, around the following three key demands:  
1- to condemn the Islamic Republic government for its denial of the Iranian workers' rights, its arrest and execution of labour activists, and for its reactionary and anti-labour law;  
2- to call for the recognition of organisation and strike right for Iranian workers;  
3- to demand the expulsion from the ILO of the representatives of the "Islamic Councils" - the oppressive, non-representative organisations the government has been trying to set up in the workplaces in Iran.

### From p.16 Battle against pit closures

revenge on the miners for their 1984-5 strike.

The closure of the mines threatens a large number of jobs in a series of subsidiary industries and whole mining towns. For example, 5,000 jobs will go just in the rail coal transport. The total number of job losses as a result of the closures is estimated to be nearly 100,000. This was one of the reasons that prompted some Tory MPs, from the affected constituencies, to object to the government's closure plans. With the Conservatives' holding only a narrow majority in the Parliament, the Labour Party too put a motion to the Commons, calling for a review of the plans.

After an emergency meeting of the Cabinet on 19 October, the government retreated and announced a review of the plan. Thus, the closure of 21 of the mines was suspended, pending a review; the remaining ten may be closed, after a 90-day period. This would still result in the loss of around 7,000 jobs. These ten mines are to be repaired during the three-month period, so that if the decision for their closure is reversed, they may resume operations.

One of these mines is a mine in Nottinghamshire, whose performance was praised during deal between the government and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers - formed during the 1984-85 strike as a strike-breaking break away union. The announcement that this mine was also to be closed was gravely damaging to the UDM which until now had cooperated with the government.

The UDM leader staged a one-man sit-in protest down in the mine and said that he would resign in the next election round. Some UDM members said that if they had listened to Scargill they might not have ended up in the mess they are in now.

The NUM knew that the coal storages are already full and that the government was planning to close the pits. So a production stoppage by strike action would not be effective. Consequently, the union executive quickly met with the leaders of the other unions, including the TUC, to decide on taking wider actions to force the government to back down. One outcome of the meeting was the holding of two huge demonstrations on 21st and 25th October.

The NUM is contemplating its future actions in the light of the results of these pressures. Whether a strike call would win majority support from the miners, is still uncertain and depends entirely on the degree of support from the other sections and unions. As a financial source and having one of the highest productivities in whole Europe, British coal industry holds a special place in the British economy. The prospect of its destruction by the government's policies and its replacement by gas or imported coal, therefore alarmed the other sections of British society. The rising unemployment, the failure of the Tories' election promises to materialise, and the current grave economic difficulties all combined with the abrupt slashing of 100,000 jobs to turn the mine-closures into a general show of protest against the government. If the government is forced to retreat, this will be a big victory for the workers and would inject a fresh mood into the society.

### In the Persian Section

In addition to the articles in the English section, the Persian section of this issue includes:

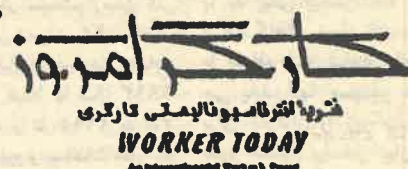
- Finnish economic crisis deepens - article
- First All-German congress of the IG Metall union - translation
- Iran National Gas Company - workplace report
- Criticism of the Left in the '79 Revolution in Iran: One step forward, two steps back - letter to the editor
- The Story of My Life: about Sacco and Vanzetti
- A look back at the British miners' strike (84-85) - article
- Communist tendency is a living trend in the Iraqi labour

movement - interview with Ahmad Moeen, activist of Iraqi communist and labour movement

- Against economic boycott of Iraq and Kurdistan - interview with Ribwar Ahmadi, activist of Iraqi communist and labour movement
- Japanese workers - friends or foes for US workers? - translation
- Where does N American labour movement stand? - interview with Sam Gindin, assistant to president of Canadian Auto Workers Union
- Struggle for 35-hour week in Germany - translation.

The news of workers' struggle around the world is published in more detail in the Persian section.

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# Significance of struggles in Isfahan Steel Mill

By Mostafa Saaber

The sit-in in September by the Isfahan steel workers over the issue of wages (see WT no.29), which followed a series of strikes in the oil industry and the strike by Tehran water workers, is a notable event in the Iranian labour movement in the current year. In all the three cases it was the sheer scale and force of the strikes that prevented the government from suppressing the news of them. This goes to show that other strikes and labour actions are in fact in progress which never manage to break through the state censorship. Some occasional admissions by the Islamic Republic officials concerning the labour protests, like the statement by Kamali, the labour minister, that 2,000 strikes had taken place in the year ending March 92, and statistics showing the lodging of 90,000 labour complaints in the space of one year, indicate the situation in the workplaces.

This picture of the workplaces, which in its degree is unprecedented since the coming of the Rafsanjani government to power,

is completed by such general indications as the outbreak of revolts in a number of cities - mainly in working-class districts - people's grave economic situation and the prospect of further protests, which, alarming the ayatollahs, has thrown them at each other's throats. Apart from these general elements of the political situation and the state of the labour movement, the protest in the Isfahan steel works, in itself, precisely due to the features of this industry, can serve as a barometer of the battles going on in the workplaces.

In connection with this recent sit-in action by the steel workers, and to emphasize its import, it is appropriate to take a closer look at the particular features of the Isfahan Steel Mill and the workforce occupies in the Iranian labour movement.

## The Steel Mill and the industrial workers in Iran

Isfahan Steel Mill is one of those industrial workplaces in Iran which in several respects empito-

mises the present industrial working class in Iran. If the workers in the oil industry have - for economic and social reasons and because of their long tradition of struggle and organising - played a vanguard and decisive role in the labour movement, and if the workers of sectors such as printing and, to some extent, textile and certain other trades, received their traditions directly from the workforce in the same sectors, the Isfahan steel workers typify the young industrial working class in Iran which came into being with the establishment of industries in the '60s and the '70s - a section of the working class having decisive role, and on whose struggle and efforts any significant development in the situation of the labour movement as a whole depends.

The workforce in the Steel Mill consists, firstly, of those who have been industrial workers for several generations, such as the second and third-generation oil workers or workers from other older industries who joined the Steel Mill; secondly, those who in the '60s [during the land reforms] lost their small plots of land and took up work in industry; and, finally, those who have a small secondary income from work outside the plant. These last two groups - particularly the second - make up the majority of the workers. This workforce composition coincides with the overall composition of the new industrial working class in Iran.

The tradition of struggle in the

Steel Mill is, like the other sectors, mainly based on the traditions of the 1979 Revolution and after - though elements of the previous experiences, those prevalent for instance among the oil workers, the textiles or some old worker circles, were transmitted to labour activists in the Steel Mill through those who joined the industry. Wage levels and employment terms in the Steel Mill, such as insurance, pension, etc, are more or less the same as those for the industrial workers generally. Therefore the labour protests here take place over issues which target national norms and legislation.

To these typical features of the industry must, finally, be added the fact that the Steel Mill, a state-owned concern, is an industry with 20,000 to 30,000 workers, having all the complexities and specificities of a huge industrial complex. As a result, the changes in the mood, consciousness and organisation of the workers take place gradually, but with deeper and long-lasting effects. Any significant development among the steel workers is usually a reflection of more long-term and established changes. To a large extent, this can provide a measure of the class balance and situation of the industrial workers as a whole.

## The political aspect of steel workers' struggle

Every labour struggle in the Steel Mill is immediately also a political struggle. So also in this respect the Steel Mill typifies the overall

conditions of labour struggles in Iran, i.e. the direct merging of the economic and the political aspects of the protests.

Apart from the factors mentioned above, this is due to the fact that the news of every significant action by the steel workers quickly spreads, not only in the city of Isfahan, but also in a large geographic area constituting a population of several million. The over 20,000 workers of the Steel Mill are the first-hand reporters of the events in the mill, and this news is carefully followed - and in turn passed on - by the people of the region.

A strike in December 1984, lasting for a whole month, had a large impact in Isfahan and the neighbouring towns. It became a subject of people's discussions everywhere - in buses, in taxis, in different gatherings, etc. It clearly boosted people's morale in the popular protests - especially once the striking workers showed that they were determined to carry the fight through to the end. On a number of occasions the people of the city lined up to greet the returning striking workers with flowers. And when, in the early days of the strike, the security forces arrested the speakers of the general assembly, among them a woman, and the workers immediately took over the factory and shut the gates to stop the exit of goods, taking a number of the managers hostage, the workers' families and the people of Isfahan

Continued on p.14

## DISK leadership deserting the working class

Interview with Chetin Oygoi, leader of Turkish mineworkers' union

Chetin Oygoi was in 1975 one of the founders of Turkey's mineworkers' union, affiliated to the Revolutionary Workers Union (DISK). He led the union until the September 1980 military Coup, at which time he was arrested for his labour activities and sentenced to death by a military court. Spending four years in jail under the permanent threat of execution, Chetin Oygoi was re-tried in 1991, found not guilty, and released. With the legalization of DISK, he was re-elected president of the miners' union. Ali Farhang, *Worker Today* co-worker in Turkey, talked to Chetin Oygoi on a number of issues of the Turkish labour movement. The translation is, indirectly, from the Persian (translated) text of the interview. Excerpts:

### How are the First of May Day events held in Turkey?

May Day is workers' international day of struggle and solidarity. First of May has been banned in Turkey for many years. They have re-named May Day "Spring Festivity". In 1977 the organisers of the rallies were attacked by guns and bombs, as a result of which 37 workers were killed. By this action the bourgeoisie wanted to create a climate of terror and fear. Today, many years after that criminal act, the perpetrators remain unidentified.

A big rally was held in 1978. In 79 and 80 holding May Day programmes was banned, and on the day itself the streets were declared no-go areas. The staging of the rallies resumed after 1985-86. The working people were interested in the events, but the government's repression and the terrorizing prevented them from participating in large numbers. In 1992 the demand to hold First of

May celebrations was not limited to the vanguards, revolutionaries and progressives. This time a different movement began to take shape. The events were staged both in the halls and outdoors, in the squares. Those who wanted to organise them in the halls distanced themselves from the working class; in a sense, they paved the way for the government to resolve its economic and political difficulties. In the final analysis, they aimed to silence the working people. The holders of this non-worker line, who, together with the authorities, had all along driven the celebration of workers' international day into the confines of the halls, showed that they were forced to commemorate this day.

We are living in a day and age when the nationalist and religious tendencies are at each other's throats and shedding blood. In the Soviet Union workers had no participation in the trade unions, the Party or the state. After the

collapse [of this system] the nationalist movements stormed the scene, slaughtering people in pursuit of land and in the name of the New World Order, and attacking workers and socialism.

To safeguard the ideas of equality and brotherhood of the people and workers, we must oppose the notion of the New World Order; the First of May should be celebrated in the spirit of class brotherhood and solidarity. In Turkey this also applies in the case of Turks and Kurds. The New World Order was in fact put forward by imperialism to resolve its crisis. As against this, it is necessary that the working people on the First of May loudly and clearly call for solidarity and equality. The raising of workers' democratic political and economic demands has also a special place.

All these have been widely echoed in the workplaces and working-class districts. It is necessary that workers and other employees and the youth widely take part in the First of May celebrations, protest against the bloodshed and crimes of the imperialist capitalist system and defend people's equal rights. Demands such as: From unemployment to jobs, from illiteracy to education, from dispersion to organisation, and a healthy democratic climate, should be put on the agenda in the May Day rallies.

### Why, despite these differences, do DISK, Turk-Ish and Hak-Ish unions stage joint May Day events?

Due to lengthy court cases and having been under ban, DISK has only just started its work on labour issues. So, it first has to wipe the dust off such terms as 'trade union' and 'struggle'. The world political situation and the policies of the Turkish state are rapidly

changing. Therefore DISK has to very quickly clarify its policies.

At the international level a contagious disease called "class conciliation" is trying to bring the working class to its knees. Turk-Ish and Hak-Ish have long since yielded to this doctrine. Instead of solving the workers' problems, these unions are within the imperialist capitalist system. Furthermore, the DISK leadership is, in an incredible way, deserting the working class and opting for bureaucratic leadership. For the above reasons, our rallies took place jointly with Turk-Ish and Hak-Ish. But the workers' struggle in the squares, and no doubt our struggles, will lead DISK into a revolutionary path. This year we will see the differentiation of the tendencies from each other.

### What is the status of the trade unions in Turkey? Are there any other alternative forms which have been proposed?

The laws on organising in unions are now under review. The 1980 Coup generals changed the trade union laws. A centre has been placed at the head of the trade unions which is beyond the workers' control and check. To be in the union leadership you have to agree with the existing laws and move within their framework. The organisations whose political activity has been banned have constantly been driven under the flag of the government. So the unionist movement has made such changes in the trade union laws that have resulted in the complete destruction of trade union democracy. Today the workers' struggle puts pressure on the union officials to take steps to democratize the trade union laws. But such changes have not gone beyond words. In future, the workers' pressure, just as it will persist in the workplaces, will

also target the union leaders.

Workers have waged their struggle as far as possible against both the employers and the union leaders. They have also focused their fight, in much more difficult conditions, against the laws laid down by the organisers of the 1980 Coup. Their struggle, unity and solidarity have deepened so much as to sweep the daily problems of the struggle out of their way.

Since 1985-86, the workers' united and collective fight has taken on a more lasting character, and a lot of work has begun on continuing the struggle. The proposal for factory committees and workers' councils, and activity and organisation in this form, have now proved their effectiveness and feasibility. Workers regard the councils the head, and the committees the heart of their class organisation, and gather in the workplace in large numbers as in an assembly. It is on this real basis that the corner stone of the unions is being built, with the unions taking form upon that. In this way in the workplace, workers get their class education to build the unions, and the experience necessary for basic organising. The militant labour leaders, too, will emerge from within such workplaces. Such an organisation will survive even under the toughest conditions, and unions will not collapse in the face of fascist coups and such developments. The unions which go along with the status quo will split up, and will be replaced by militant, working-class unions or other labour organisations. The working-class power and influence created now in the workplaces will be transmitted to the union leaderships, in which workers will have power and a say. Labour activists would be elected to union posts by the workers' own votes. ■

## IN BRIEF

### Italy

Six million workers took part in a general strike in Italy on 13 October - the tenth such strike in the last 12 years - protesting the government's proposed social services' cuts. The strike, called by the three main Italian unions, disrupted production and transport for four hours.

### Germany

On 16 September 2,000 workers of Freital iron ore plant occupied the main hall at Dresden Airport for three hours. The workers were protesting the plans by Treuhand (the organisation conducting the east German privatisations) to close down the plant.

### Sweden

Over 60,000 workers, members of the trade union confederation, LO, staged protests in Swedish cities against the government's policies. In many areas the demonstrations also targeted the opposition Social Democrats who cooperated with the government to draw up the recent austerity packages.

### Iraq

The five arrested workers of a textile factory in the town of Kerkouk, whose detention was reported in previous issues of *WT*, were released following a general amnesty by the Iraqi government.

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## Britain:

# Battle against pit closures

By Aman Kafa

IN mid-October British Coal suddenly announced the closure of 31 coal mines across the country with the immediate loss of 30,000 miners' jobs. The decision, presented by the government as being due to a coal surplus and lack of buyers, shook the whole nation.

The scale of the protests against the government from all sides, particularly by the media, showed that the government was facing a real crisis. On Tuesday 13 October it was announced that on the same Friday at least six of the collieries were to be shut. The decision was in violation of the existing labour codes and agreements.

By the terms of the contract, the Coal Board has to negotiate with the miners' union, and a 90-day respite should be given. Referring to this clause, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) took legal action, and succeeded in suspending the closure plans.

In the mean time, the NUM leadership called for a representatives' conference. Prior to the Conference, the government had said that if the miners took strike action they might lose their right to redundancy payments. At the conference, representatives expressed their outrage at the planned closures and job losses, and voted unanimously to ballot the members on industrial action, the date of which was to be fixed later by the union executive.

The NUM and a number of independent sources also showed that, economically, the government's reasons for the mines' shut down and substitution of coal fuel by gas or nuclear power, were nonsense, questioning the government's economic and energy policy.

The government then went on the defensive, and the NUM went on to say that the only reason for the closure of the pits was the government's intention to take

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Arthur Scargill leading the huge march in London on 21st October

## Saeed Saedi released!

WT News Service:

Saeed Saedi, the labour activist from Iranian Kurdistan who had been jailed by the Islamic Republic government for labour activity, has been released.

An activist of the San'atgar union, and for several years a speaker of the May Day rallies in the city of Sanandaj, Saeed Saedi

was arrested in the summer of 1991 and held incommunicado for a period of time. Over this period a large number of labour organisations in Europe, the USA and Canada in resolutions and letters protested against Saedi's arrest, and also against the jailing of **Zahed Manouchehri**, who is still being held.

## Arastou Sha'bani still in jail

WT News Service:

Arastou Sha'bani, a labour activist from the city of Sanandaj, Western Iran, was arrested in the morning of 4th April 1990. The authorities, who had information on his activities in the Sanandaj May Day rally of the year before, tortured him for nearly two weeks and prevented him from sleeping.

Kept in solitary confinement for six months, Sha'bani was then

tried in a five-hour hearing and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. A year later, the authorities began once again to interrogate and torture him and, drawing up a new case, retried him and kept him in solitary confinement for a further seven months. After that point, there is no information available about his retrial or conditions.

## Solidarity committees formed in Finland and Austria

WT News Service:

Through a communique issued on 1st October 92, the **Iranian-Finnish Labour Solidarity Committee** announced its formation. The Committee aims to draw the solidarity of the Finnish labour movement with the struggle of the workers in Iran and to support the struggle and demands of the workers in Finland.

In Austria, the **Iranian-Austrian Labour Solidarity Committee** also announced its formation. The Committee's aims are: - solidarity

with the Austrian workers and their struggles; - informing about the conditions of Iranian workers; - drawing the solidarity of the Austrian labour movement with the Iranian workers' struggle.

Both solidarity committees are affiliating to the International Committee of Solidarity with Iranian Workers which was formed recently (see *WT* no.28). In the US, the **Labor Committee on Iran** also announced its affiliation to the International Solidarity Committee.

## IG Metall congress urges fight against extreme right

WT News Service:

IG Metall, the German engineering workers' union, called for a "social pact" to defend democracy and counter the rise of fascism and the extreme Right in Germany - according to a report by D.P.A news agency.

Speaking at the 17th triennial Congress of IG Metall, held in Hamburg from 10 to 17 October, IG Metall leader, Franz Steinkühler, said that he regards defence of democracy against the

extreme right and the safeguarding of the union's autonomy in collective bargaining, as among the union's priorities.

Steinkühler also stressed the agreement to create wage parity between the eastern and western Germany by 1994. On the issue of immigration, differing from the Social Democratic Party's new policy, he rejected any changes in the German Constitution on asylum rights.

## Solidarity committee formed in Germany

WT News Service:

A communique issued in October announced the formation of the **Labour Solidarity Committee** in Germany. The aims of the Committee have been defined as: "1- introducing to the labour organisations and activists in Germany the working and living condition of the workers in Iran; 2- informing about the Iranian workers' lack of rights and campaigning to force [the Islamic Republic] to recognise international labour rights in Iran; 3- drawing the solidarity of the German labour movement with the struggle and demands of the workers in Iran; 4- exerting pressure on the Islamic

Republic, through labour organisations at international bodies, to recognise organisation and strike rights for the Iranian workers; 5- participating in the struggles, and supporting the demands, of workers in Germany."

Also in Germany, the paper *Arbeiterkurier*, published for over two years to draw the German workers' solidarity with the labour movement in Iran, announced that, with the formation of the Labour Solidarity Committee in Germany and as the goals of this committee coincided with its own, it was joining the committee and would in future be published as the paper of the Labour Solidarity Committee.

## Significance of struggles in Isfahan Steel Mill

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## DISK leadership deserting the working class

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