

DAY OF UNITY

May Day: Centenary of Internationalist Tradition

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Preparations for the centenary of the Statue of Liberty are now gaining momentum in the United States. But the US mass media are displaying strange forgetfulness when the matter concerns another signal event -- the centenary of the May Day demonstration in Chicago. This is not mere chance. It so happened that the execution of the four leaders of workers on the basis of a framed-up charge bared the class essence of the symbols of American democracy which served to camouflage the interests of capital. That is why official America would like to raze from its history the Chicago developments which marked the beginning of the internationalist tradition running counter to the policy of social revanche and to the imperial ambitions of the present Administration.

The Chicago developments expressed the working class movement's acute need for class solidarity. That is why they roused a keen response all across the world. The Constituent Congress of the 2nd International, held in Paris in 1889, adopted a decision on simultaneously holding May Day demonstrations in all countries in 1890. The international working-class movement badly needed an open manifestation of international solidarity on a clearly expressed class basis.

The very first international demonstration graphically showed that it was a natural and logical phenomenon. On May 1, 1890, a wave of mass demonstrations and actions of the working class swept the world. In 1891 it reached Russia where, despite the strict prohibition by the police, the Petersburg workers held the first May Day rally of a marked political

character.

The emergence of the internationalist May Day tradition showed that the international working class movement had turned into a powerful factor for social progress which needed a systematic review of its forces, an exchange of militant messages between the workers' organisations of different countries. The 1st of May is a day when the slogan "Workers of all countries, unite!" finds an actual expression in the political demonstration of the unity of the working people's class interests, the demonstration which imbues them with the faith in the justice of their struggle and in the inevitability of their future triumph.

Essentially, proletarian internationalism incorporates the idea and the goal of achieving peace between nations. From the early days this has been manifest in an anti-war bid of the May Day tradition.

The peace mission of proletarian internationalism has been manifest at all stages of the history of the workers' and communist movement. A substantial, qualitative shift has been accomplished here to give this mission an independent tenet-making and strategic meaning. Proletarian internationalism has sort of acquired a second dimension: the world historic mission of the working class is not only to rid society of social and national oppression but also to save mankind from a nuclear destruction.

Admittedly, the principles and traditions of proletarian internationalism are destined to play a crucial and constructive role in moulding and developing this solidarity between people, in revealing its anti-imperialist and anti-militarist potential.

Human desire to safeguard life on Earth blends with the historical interest of the working class in ensuring conditions for social progress. The unity of class interests

and those of all people is an indication of the lofty humanism of proletarian internationalism. This humanism underlies the concept of an all-embracing system of international security spelled out by the 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. As a matter of fact, the Party Congress charted a program which is a perfect blend of the philosophy of achieving stable peace in a nuclear era with a plan of action, including proposals for a complete, stage-by-stage liquidation of nuclear weapons by the end of the century. While seeking to promote the interests of the entire mankind, the program contrasts with the bleak hopelessness of the "Star Wars" strategy, providing an inspiring incentive for international solidarity and fruitful cooperation between all vital forces in today's society.

Yes, so far the United States' foreign-policy course is shaped under the direct and, one can say, determinant influence of the militaristic circles that are closely associated with the military-industrial complex and do not want to reckon with the actualities of the world today. But from this it does not follow that mankind has no hope, that a world without weapons is an utopia. A different conclusion suggests itself: the path to a stable peace is not easy, it runs through a long and hard struggle against the aggressive tendencies of imperialism, and this requires increased activeness, alertness and greater solidarity on the part of peace forces.

For the Soviet people international solidarity in the struggle for peace and social progress is primarily the real achievements in the solution of the constructive tasks of socialism and in its steady advancement towards the communist aims. It is precisely in this direction that the May Day traditions are being developed in the Soviet Union.

The proof of the excellence of socialism, its interna-

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tional prestige and help to other peoples in grasping their perspectives, in the correct choice of their path depend on the accomplishment of the tasks set by the 27th Congress of the CPSU. Success in this cause will fortify socialism as a peace factor and limit the possibilities for imperialist reaction to meddle in the internal affairs of other countries.

The programme for the advancement of socialist society, mapped out by the 27th CPSU Congress for the period till 2000, is a programme of peace and social progress.

There is no historical limit to the May Day tradition, because human society will always need a unification of efforts in climbing the steps of the endless ladder of social progress. This is an earnest of the immortality of the great heritage of international solidarity.

(Pravda, April 29. Abridged.)

Bařlık: Merhaba 1 Mayıs

30 Nisan 1987 Ekr.

Merhaba 1 Mayıs! Sanki ok uzun sren bir ayrılıktan sonra yeniden karřılařan en xx iten dostlar gibi, merhaba! Merhaba btn iřiler, emekiler, analar-bacilar, genler, aydınlar, kardeşler, yoldařlar, dostlar! Merhaba, merhaba 1 Mayıs!

Upuzun bir karakıktan sonra yeniden parlayan 1 Mayıs gneřine merhaba! Merhaba uzt, merhaba iyimserlik... Merhaba Petrol-iřyesi iřiler... Merhaba, Eskiřehir Kılıoęlu Keramik iřileri... Grevlerde hasretimizi baykıran herkese merhaba!

Merhaba Neteř iřileri... Merhaba Derbi iřileri, merhaba Birleřik Alman İle Fabrikası iřileri... Trkiye iři sınıfına merhaba!

Merhaba 71 yařındaki Mahmut Dikerden'e, merhaba! Barıř davasının soylu btn neferlerine merhaba!

Dağlarına bahar gelmiş memleketimin! Ahmed Arif'e merhaba!
Görüşmecim yeşil soğan göndermiş! Yeşil soğan gönderen görüş-
mecime merhaba!

Hasretinden prangalar eskiten bütün dostlara merhaba!
Kürt halkının haklı davasını yıllardır savunan Mehdi Zana'ya
merhaba! İsmail Beşikçi'ye merhaba!

77 yaşındaki aksaklı Behice Boran'a merhaba! Dursun Bebeğe
merhaba!

Kendi gurbet elde, gönlü silâde olan bütün dostlara merhaba!
Mehmet Karaca'ya, Benî Onger'e, Ahmet Muhtar Sökücü'ye, merhaba!

Demokratik hakları için direnen bütün üniversiteli gençlere
merhaba! Yıllar sonra yeniden karşılaştığımız bütün cenlere, bütün
dostlara merhaba!

Alçakgönüllü, gösterişsiz, bütün genç kuşakların hocası, in-
san adam Sadun Aren'e merhaba!

Sadun Aren'e baktıkça Türkiye'nin yerinine inanıyorum, bu inenç için kimi zaman bir tek insanın varlığı yeter diyen İlhan Selçuğa merhaba! Merhaba 1 Mayıs! Merhaba Türkiye! Uzgün yurdum, güzel yurdum, merhaba! Merhaba Atabı Behramoğlu, merhaba!

80 küsur yaşında, başı ve inancı dimdik Mehmet Bozışığı merhaba! 7 yıldır zindanda ve dışarda boyun eğmeyen bütün dostlara, yoldaşlara merhaba!

Barış, demokrasi ve sosyalizm mücadelesinde şehit düşen yoldaşlarımızın, dostlarımızın yakınlarına merhaba! Merhaba Aynur Hayrulloğlu, merhaba Sabahat Türkler, merhaba Muzaffer Yurda-kul merhaba! Hiç kimse unutulmadı! Hiçbir şey unutulmayacak!

Merhaba Ahmet Keçmaz, merhaba Teslim Töre, Serhat Dicle merhaba! Merhaba Kemal Burkey, merhaba! Mevsim Akdeniz olur, gülünse! Merhaba Sol Birliğin bütün üyeleri, merhaba!

Merhaba, 1 Mayıs! Doğan güneş, şen tomurcuk, boyveren umut,
merhaba! Merhaba işçi sınıfının birlik, mücadele ve dayanışma günü
1 Mayıs merhaba! Merhaba Abdullâh Beştürk, merhaba Şevket Yılmaz
merhaba! 26 Nisan günü Türk-İş'in Samsun mitingine katılan bütün
işçilere, emekçilere merhaba!

Çağımızın Nasrettin Hoca'sı, büyük usta Aziz Nesin'e, "70 Ya-
şım Merhaba!"

Merhaba grev bayrakları, merhaba hakkını arayanlar, merhaba
dayanışma! Mutluluğun resmini en iyi çizebilen Orhan Taylan'a mer-
haba!

Ölüm cezasıyla yargılanan, ama boyun eğmeyen zindandaki
şair Nevzat Çelise merhaba!

Merhaba çocuk sevmeyi, çiçek koklamayı unutmayanlara!
Merhaba kavgenin en kızgın anında gökyüzüne bekmayı unut-

mayenlere!

Baskıya, zorbalığa, zulme boyun eğmeyen ülkenizin bütün ay-
dınlarına merhaba! Mülkiyeliler Birliği'ne, Alper Akten'a merhaba!
Behri Savel'ya merhaba!

Merhaba Karapınar köylüleri! Amerikan uçaklarının tâlim
alanı, atış poligonu olmak için direnenlere merhaba!

Pirinçlik'te

İncirlik'te Amerikan üssüne, karşı çıkan herkese merhaba!

Merhaba zulme boyun eğmeyen Kürt köylüsü, Kürt yurttaşlar
merhaba! Merhaba, ~~ıskenceye uğrayan~~ "İnsanlık onuru, ıskenceyi
yenecektir" diye direnen genç kardeşim, merhaba!

Merhaba 12 Eylül zorbalığına teslim olmayan bütün kardeşle-
re, dostlara, yoldaşlara merhaba! Haklarını savunan emekçi kadınla-
rımıza merhaba!

Merhaba, 1 Mayıs merhaba! Merhaba yeniden karşılaştığımız dost, merhaba! Merhaba Taksim Alanı, merhaba! On yıl önceki şehitlerimizi unutmadık, unutmayacağız!

Merhaba DİSK'in sevaşkan geleneğini bugüne taşıyanlar! Merhaba Türk-İş! Merhaba bağımsız sendikaların üyeleri! Merhaba Hak-İş üyesi işçileri! İşçi sınıfımızın sendikal birliği için uğraş veren herkese merhaba!

Merhaba 1 Mayıs! Merhaba bütün dünya işçileri, emekçileri! Merhaba Londra'da, Paris'te, Moskova'da, Berlin'de, Roma'da meydanlarda hasretimizi haykıran sınıf kardeşlerimize, merhaba! Merhaba barış için, nükleer silahların kaldırılması için yürüyen, sesini yükseltenler, merhaba! Merhaba devrimci bir yenilenmeyi yaşayan Sovyet halkı! Merhaba, yurdunun sahibi olmak için mücadele eden

Filistinli kardeşlerimizi! Merhaba Pinoşet diktatörlüğünü yıkmak için direnen Şili halkı!

Merhaba Nâzım! Merhaba Pablo Neruda! Merhaba Yanis Ritsos!

Bu 1 Mayıs'ta işçi sınıfınıza selâm! İşçi sınıfımızın bütün dostlarına selâm ve merhaba! Adını bildiğimiz, bilmediğimiz herkese merhaba! 1 Mayıs gelenliğini yüksekte tutan tunç bileklere ~~xxx~~ merhaba! Yaratıcı akla, hünerli ellere merhaba!

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH TUTAN RIŞTIRMA VAKFI

Karim 82

PASSING ON THE TORCH OF INTERNATIONALISM

Philip S. Foner, May Day. A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday, 1886-1986, International Publishers, New York, 1986, 184 pp.

"I was told somewhere that May Day, as a workers' celebration and demonstration, originated in the United States. However, I can't seem to find out the origin in any encyclopedia. Many Americans look upon May Day as some importation from Russia." This telling admission was made by the editor of a local periodical in a letter he wrote to the Daily Worker, the US communist newspaper, in 1955. Citing this fact on the opening pages of the book under review, the US historian Philip Foner indirectly reminds the reader that an ideological struggle has been going on without let-up over the record of the working class movement and the traditions of international solidarity.

For a full one hundred years, the advocates of capitalism have been trying to make America's working people forget their militant action of May 1886. True, it is now more difficult than in the 1950s for anti-communists and other enemies of the working class movement to trick the masses into accepting an interpretation of history which is silent on the subject of combating exploitation and which presents the socio-economic gains of the working class as benefits "granted" by the employer. But in today's capitalist society, too, truth has to fight its way to reach people. Hence the value of the book published in the country where May Day originated one hundred years ago.

The book is the result of research done in the United States, the USSR, Mexico, Great Britain, the GDR and Hungary. The reader is offered a broad historical picture of the way a remarkable internationalist tradition spread throughout the world. The rare photographs and posters of past years, the excerpts from newspaper reports and the eyewitness accounts not only illustrate the different stages in the development of international solidarity but also expand one's understanding of the diversity of the forms, methods and ways used by the working people in the struggle for their rights, for peace and social progress.

The author draws profiles of the heroic pioneers of the US labour movement, of those who organised the famous demonstration of Chicago workers for an eight-hour workday, held on May 1, 1886-- Albert Parsons, Adolph Fisher, August Spies, George Engel and Louis Lingg. They fell victim to the class revenge of the bourgeoisie. By executing them, the exploiters were warning that they would never tolerate any infringements on their privileges or allow workers of the world to unite. But this did not stop those who were fighting for a just cause. What August Spies said addressing the court has come true: "If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labor movement, ... the movement from which the downtrodden millions, the millions who toil in want and misery expect ^{salvation} --if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread upon a spark, but there and there, behind you and in front of you, and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out" (p. 35).

Neither the brutality of the US court, nor the reprisals of the tsarist government in Russia, nor Hitler's terrorism nor Cold War provocations succeeded in stopping May Day from sweeping triumphantly across countries and continents. Geographically, Foner's book moves from America's shores to India, from Russia to South Africa, from France to Australia. The experience of class battles, demonstrations and strikes is discussed in quotations from Lenin, Karl Liebknecht, Ho Chi Minh and Nelson Mandela.

The author shows how, despite temporary setbacks, May Day promoted the spirit of the workers' class-rooted solidarity no matter what their political affiliation, views or convictions.

May Day demonstrates the strength of the working class and throws into bold relief the growing potential of peace and social progress. This strength is growing when, in the words of Frederick Engels, workers unite into one army, under one banner, for the sake of one goal. Born under the slogan of an eight-hour workday, this holiday is now identified with the struggle against all forms of social and ethnic oppression, against imperialism and for durable universal peace. The torch of internationalism to which Foner's book is dedicated is being passed on.

Serge Dim

Scenes of Class Battles

THIS FLAME WILL NEVER BE PUT OUT:

May Day is a special holiday commemorating the workers who shed their blood defending their vital interests. It embodies the ideals of justice and social equality and the belief in attaining peace, freedom and happiness for all the people. And yet every time we mark the workers' international solidarity day we recall its prime force--the working people's common class interests and the importance of their international cohesion.

On May 1, 1890, that is, 98 years ago when the world saw the first May Day demonstrations, Engels wrote a new preface to the Communist Manifesto. "Today's spectacle," he said, "will open the eyes of the capitalists and landlords of all countries to the fact that today the working men of all countries are united indeed. If only Marx were still by my side to see this with his own eyes!"

The international working class movement has had its ups and downs; what it has never had is despair and despondency. As long as May Day is with us, the hope for the victory of the workers' just cause will never fade, as is attested by the survey we publish below.

"UNITED WE STAND "

A Survey of Strike Action

We decided to begin our survey of the situation on the class battlefields with Great Britain. The choice was prompted by objective logic rather than by some predilection or whim. Nearly 150 years ago Engels wrote that the working class movement in that country had the most consummate classical form and that everything that had taken or was yet to take place in Great Britain would be of vital importance to the working people in all other countries.

As can be expected, in the past decade Great Britain was cited as a textbook example of the working class movement being swept by a wave of conservatism, the weakening of the trade unions ^{of} and waning/strike action. The picture ^{looked} / quite realistic: it seemed that the working people were yielding the positions gained in the past, that the trade unions were disintegrating and that mass strikes were futile. Developments followed a similar course in some other capitalist countries, too, primarily in the USA, France and West Germany.

But it turned out that storm-clouds were gathering in the sky which the monopolies thought to be clear. In 1986 Great Britain had 2 million strike mandays, in 1987 the figure grew to 3.5 million and in all certainty it will be much higher this year. In the early months of 1988 the entire country was swept by a veritable storm of strikes involving nurses, miners, ferrymen and automobile industry workers.

The Ford Motor Company strike was the biggest and most instructive. More than 30,000 stayed away from work and succeeded in having their demands met--higher wages and some changes in labour contracts. It was the first such victory for British workers in nearly ten years.

The strikers cite three major reasons for their present success--first, a firm stand adopted by the trade unions; second, the strikers' forces were multiplied through cohesion as workers of all the twenty Ford factories in the British Isles formed a single front; third, solidarity strikes at the company's enterprises in other countries were of paramount importance. In Britain

the corporation daily lost about £17 million, plus £8.5 million lost through strikes at its West European factories. Even workers of the Ford Motor Company branch in Taiwan, another island state, gave support to their British fellow workers. Solidarity strikes are banned at the Taiwan factories but nobody could prevent the workers from demanding higher traditional New Year payment. A strike was called on the occasion. When the corporation's Detroit headquarters estimated losses as amounting to £200 million, ways had to be sought quickly to settle the labour conflict, which had been initiated by British automobile workers and spread far beyond the country's borders.

Analysis of the last year's major strikes in other countries, undertaken by the socio-economic department of the World Federation of Trade Unions in connection with the 40th Session of the WFTU General Council, provides figures complementing the picture. Of the 258 strikes summed up in the analysis, 93 took place in the countries of America and the Caribbean (the USA, Canada, El Salvador, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela), 86 in Europe (Greece, Turkey, Belgium, Sweden, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia, Denmark, West Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, Ireland, Cyprus, and France), 46 in the countries of Asia and Oceania (Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Japan, Pakistan, the Pacific island states, India, New Zealand, Australia, and South Korea), and 33 in Africa (Kenya, Liberia, Ghana, Zambia, Sudan, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia,

Morocco, and Egypt). For lack of sufficient information about strike action in the Middle East (only Lebanon and Israel issued relevant data), the situation in the countries of that region has not been analysed.

Strikers' Demands Are Summarised in the Following Table

	Number of strikes:	Wages: :	Jobs: :	Trade :union :Freeds :	Work- :ing :condi- :tions	Auste- :rity :measu- :res	Colle- :ctive :agree- :ments	Work: :ing :hours	Pri- :va- :tisa- :tion
Africa	33	15	13	11	6	1	-	2	-
Asia Oceania	46	26	12	6	2	-	2	2	8
Europe	86	36	29	7	9	6	7	3	-
America the Caribbean	93	41	23	6	5	16	8	4	3
Total	258	118	77	30	22	23	17	11	11
per cent of the total		45.7	29.8	11.6	8.5	8.9	6.6	4.3	4.3

The biggest number of strikes occurred in the following three leading sectors:

America and the Caribbean--1. Metallurgy, 2. Education,
3. Services.

Europe--1. Metallurgy, 2. Services, 3. Transportation.

Asia and Oceania--1. Food industry, 2. Textile industry,
3. Metallurgy, transportation.

Africa--1. Transportation, 2. Coal mining, education,
3. Metallurgy.

From the point of view of whether labour conflicts occurred at enterprises in the state or in the private sector (including transnational corporations) a noticeable distinction was observed between only two regions. Out of the total number of strikes in the countries of America and the Caribbean, 38 took place at state enterprises and 52 at private ones. In the countries of Asia and Oceania the corresponding figures were 14 and 37, in Europe 47 and 50, and in Africa 19 and 17.

The analysis carried out by the WFTU experts also pointed out that the biggest number of successful strikes in all the regions aimed at higher wages and continued employment. Many countries again saw trade unions play a growing role in organising strikes. This was especially true of the United States. In 13 out of the 58 countries covered by the study, specifically in France, Lebanon, Greece, Spain, India, El Salvador, Ecuador, Haiti, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Peru, trade unions urged general strikes and in practice showed their ability to mobilise the working people for such mass action.

In the course of research special interest was evoked by the data on strikes at transnational enterprises. Workers of enterprises belonging to transnational corporations, such as USX, Boise Cascade, General Electric, International Paper, and General Motor, went on strike in the USA / 1987. Industrial action affected Caterpillar, Massey-Ferguson, and General Motors in Britain, Renault, Bata, and Unilever in France, General Motors and Renault in Spain, Packard in Ireland, Coca Cola in Greece, Unilever in Turkey, Volkswagen in West Germany, General Motors,

Renault, Nestlé, Coca Cola, and Unilever in Colombia, Ford in Brazil, and Volkswagen in Mexico, Rhone-Poulenc / Coca Cola in the Dominican Republic, Nestlé in Japan, and Unilever in the Philippines. The WFTU experts pointed out that strikes at transnational enterprises were becoming ever more frequent, acute and prolonged. For instance, the Ford personnel in Mexico and that of Renault and Nestlé in Colombia were on strike for more than three weeks, the Volkswagen works in Colombia stayed idle for 49 days, and those of Coca Cola for 76 days.

Ties of international solidarity and mutual support are taking shape between workers of different countries in the course of strikes at enterprises of transnational corporations. The WFTU commission on transnational corporations took an active part in organising international interaction during strikes at Volkswagen enterprises in Mexico, at those of Renault, Nestle and Coca Cola in Colombia, and those of Coca Cola in the Dominican Republic. The strike at the Caterpillar works in Great Britain was supported by workers at related enterprises in France, Belgium and Greece. Volkswagen workers decided to go on strike in response to the owners' plan to boost output so as to offset the losses incurred by the automobile workers' strike in Mexico. The IG Metal trade union of West Germany and the General Confederation of Labour of France voiced their solidarity with the strikers. The General Confederation of Labour gave similar support to the striking Renault workers in Colombia. Though graphically illustrating the effecti-

veness of concerted actions by workers, the above examples are as yet an exception rather than the rule. The analysis shows that in most cases, even within the framework of one transnational corporation and even when strikes were held simultaneously and similar demands were made, they occurred in isolation from one another, without any coordination of actions or exchange of information. That is why strikes at the transnational corporations have so far had poor results.

This fact pointed out by the WFTU experts brings to mind the Ford Motor Company strike in Great Britain. British automobile workers began their strike under the slogan: "United we stand, divided we fall." They did hold out because they were firm and united and because they got the support of their fellow workers abroad. The country of "classical examples" has again set an example to the working people of how to fight for their rights and interests. Hopefully, this example will be followed by the entire international working class movement. United we stand!

Wiktor Schott

Jagdish Ramayan



LABOUR AND LAW

Mario Ramos

Executive Secretary, International Centre for Trade
Union Rights

A new autonomous organisation, the International Centre for Trade Union Rights, was established on November 16, 1987. The Centre's Executive Secretary kindly agreed to outline its tasks, areas of activity and first results.

Your Centre was opened just a few months ago but has already made its existence felt by concrete actions, such as defence of the trade union activists dismissed by the management of the Renault car-making plants and an effort to have the court ban on a strike by Air-Inter pilots reversed. Will your Centre concentrate on such actions?

In addition, we have taken a series of practical steps over violations of trade union rights in Bolivia, Colombia, Turkey, Portugal, Chile, Venezuela, El Salvador, South Africa, on the occupied Palestinian lands, in Nigeria, and Japan. The Centre's major task is to counter any violation of trade union rights and any act of repression against the trade unions and to give support and legal aid to workers and trade unionists.

It is, of course, just one area of our activities. We also concern ourselves with studying the evolution of methods of restricting trade union rights and with collecting and making public information on all violations of trade union freedoms. The Centre will promote international solidarity, sup-

port actions in defence of those rights and freedoms and seek to have them respected and broadened.

These tasks seem to be as difficult as they are urgent now that there is talk of a crisis in the trade union movement in many capitalist and developing countries.

It would be more correct, I think, to say that the effects of structural changes caused by the present-day economic and social processes are making themselves felt and not that the trade unions have been hit by a crisis. The current economic situation is characterised by production and financial upheavals with all the speculative stock market and currency aspects they involve and by imbalances and inequalities in international relations. The transnational corporations and private entrepreneurs would like to avoid the worst by making their production profitable as soon as possible. They introduce new technologies and the "flexible" organisation of labour and resort to social deregulation and to the privatisation of the public sector.

To carry through its plans at the expense of the working people, Big Business needs new labour legislation, which would allow dismissals and the use of anti-labour measures, deny the workers the right to strike and collective bargaining, and help crush the more militant unions and make the others an obedient tool of the monopolies.

One characteristic example is Britain's anti-labour legislation, which enables the government to take any union to court, to impound its assets or to fine it heavily for a strike. New tough measures are known to be in the making under the Employment

Act. The laws of some countries empower the administration to disband the unions.

There is every reason to state, therefore, that the "crusade" against the unions is an aspect of a broad assault on the social gains that have been won in struggle over the decades. The overall goal is to prevent the working people from finding fair and progressive solutions to socio-economic problems and to deny them any opportunity to state their collective demands and make their voice heard on the shopfloor and in society in general.

That massive onslaught naturally affects the trade unions. Tens of thousands of trade unionists have been dismissed and hundreds of thousands of rank-and-file union members have been laid off and are out of touch with the rest of the workforce. Some centres of the labour movement have shifted and others are about to shift because of the redeployment of industry and the closure of many plants in the traditional industries.

But there appear new enterprises in the microelectronics, telecommunications and microbiological industries and in the services, and the unions have been growing more and more active there. It should be stressed that unions are banned or severely restricted in the public services of many countries, which has provoked mass labour action for the ratification of ILO's Convention 151 on the protection of the right to organise and employment regulation procedure in public service.

The structural changes have contributed also to the growing awareness and education of the working people: they act ever

more resolutely to have a say in the affairs of their enterprises, to protect jobs and social security systems, and to achieve decent living conditions. At least 340 protracted strikes are known to have taken place in 1987; they are forceful proof that union activities are on the rise in most of the capitalist countries.

So I repeat that there is hardly any reason today to speak about a crisis of the trade unions. But what is perfectly clear is that the trade union freedoms are being curtailed. Big Business and the ruling classes in many countries use an array of methods to the point of imprisonment and killing of trade union leaders and activists, and not only under fascist dictatorship but also in many countries which call themselves democratic but in which trade union rights are either fully suppressed or severely restricted, or else subordinated to corporate structures.

The trial of the Billancourt Ten in France is a good example. The Renault management, having sued ten trade union activists, hoped not just to have the ten put behind the bars for a long time but also to preempt workers' action against mass lay-offs that were planned at the company's plants. But the trial fizzled out, thanks in large measure to the actions of solidarity mounted by ^{the} French workers.

More sophisticated techniques are used, too, such as the redeployment of enterprises at which the unions have a strong base, or "flexible" organisation of labour.

Our Centre therefore gears its activities to the present-day situation with freedoms. Recently, for instance, we released in-

formation about violations of trade union rights in the health service, on transport, in the metallurgical, chemical, and textile industries in France, and published a booklet about the ruthless suppression of the trade union freedoms and human rights in Colombia. Studies of relevant problems are under way in other countries.

What possibilities and facilities does the Centre have to do all that work, and how is it organised?

The Centre was set up by eleven international organisations in response to an appeal of the 11th World Congress of Trade Unions. We conduct our work in the spirit of the UN Charter and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in accordance with international treaties and agreements and ILO conventions and recommendations. The Centre is open to all international, regional and national trade union organisations regardless of their orientation or international affiliations. It is likewise open to all other organisations and movements, and also to individuals who would like to contribute to the protection and development of trade union rights.

That answers the question about the possibilities available to the Centre. They are objectively large and may keep growing along with the growth of the working people's awareness of the need to act together and to help one another. It is vitally important for all the working people today, whatever their occupation, nationality, or trade union affiliation, staunchly to defend trade union rights. That is why the fundamental principle

of the Centre is to promote cooperation and dialogue at national and international levels between trade unions, mass movements, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations.

The Centre's representative sponsoring committee includes leaders and activists of trade unions of various orientations and international affiliation, well-known scientists and academics, and prominent lawyers, senators and members of parliament from 26 countries. Among them are Peruvian Senator Rolando Ames Cobian; Joe Nordmann, President of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers; Wajih Taha, Secretary of the General Federation of Workers' Trade Unions of Syria; Prof. Noboru Kataoka of the University of Kyoto (Japan); Manuel Sanhueza Crus, former justice minister in the Allende government (Chile); and Vassil Mratchkov, Dr Sc. (Law), member of the UN Human Rights Commission.

Work is now going ahead to build a network of correspondents and the Centre's structures (branches) in various countries; they have already been opened in Portugal, Egypt and Costa Rica. We are organising a regular publication of surveys of the situation with trade union rights all over the world.

Clearly, when it comes to measures in defence of ^{trade union} rights, they cannot be separated from the broader issue of human rights, can they?

Of course not. It is perfectly obvious that violations or restriction of trade union rights constitute an encroachment upon human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

which, incidentally, will be forty years old next December stresses that political and economic rights are indivisible. The trade union rights, including the right to strike, are written into the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, one of a series of international documents on human rights, and also into the relevant ILO conventions and even into the Social European Charter, approved by the EEC.

We believe that all these international legal documents are instruments of protecting human rights, such as the right, to live in peace, the right to work, the right to decent wages, to cultural activity, to education and occupational training, to housing, to a paid holiday, to rest and leisure, etc. The trade unions, meant to protect the interests of the working people, have proved their ability to work vigorously and independently towards these goals by participating in the socio-economic life of society. What they do therefore is protect human rights.

That is why our International Centre wants cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and joint actions with the ILO, the UN and national and regional organisations of diverse orientation.