

Defend Argentinean Leftists!

On 2 October 1995 in the town of Neuquén in southern Argentina, a demonstration of 500 unemployed workers was violently attacked by the police. This was followed by a witchhunt against the left, particularly groups identified as Trotskyist, on the grounds that their activity incited violence. On 24 October 1,000 people demonstrated in Buenos Aires to protest this repression and demand an end to attacks on the left and workers' movement.

A statement by the Campaign against Repression in Argentina, a united-front committee based in London, reported that:

“Horacio Panario, a leading member of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS), was arrested and is being held in prison. Warrants have been issued for the arrest of Alcides Christiansen, Hector Etchebaster, Ruth Zurbruggen and Jorge Toledo, all of them members of the MAS as well as of ATEN, the teachers' union, or other unions. Under similar threat are Hipolito Arameda, Enrique Gomez and Jorge Chiguay of the Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (MST) and Alberto Vidal, Jose Mara and Norberto Calducci of the Partido Obrero (PO).

“In April a worker was killed by the police during protests against the closure of a television factory in Usuahia, Tierra del Fuego. Oscar Martinez and other leaders of the metalworkers' union, UOM, are being prosecuted following the events. While those responsi-

ble for the murder of the worker have been allowed to go free, the left is being persecuted.”

The Campaign includes comrades of the International Bolshevik Tendency, along with those of the Revolutionary Internationalist League, Workers Internationalist League, Workers Power and others. Representatives of Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo (Argentina) and also Poder Obrero (Bolivia) are also participating. The Campaign was formed on the basis of three demands:

- The immediate release of Horacio Panario and other left leaders in prison in Neuquén.
- An end to all legal proceedings against members of MAS, MST and PO, and all class fighters.
- Stop the witchhunt against the left!

On 13 November 1995 the Campaign held a demonstration at the Argentine embassy in London and delivered petitions to the charge d'affaires who said that she would forward them to Buenos Aires. In addition to the sponsoring organizations, Militant Labour attended the demonstration and the Socialist Workers Party sent a message of support. The Spartacist League/Britain, which attended the planning meetings but had refused to endorse or join the Campaign, did send a contingent to the protest and had a speaker at it.

The Campaign plans to hold more activities in the future. It is vitally necessary to build the largest and broadest possible united front solidarity campaign to defend the Argentinean left.