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Mexico: Dissident Teachers' Union Confederation Organizes Strike, Demonstrations

by John Neagle
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On Oct. 11, the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE) organized a strike in five states and in Mexico City. The CNTE a spinoff of the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE), is comprised of teachers who oppose the SNTE's "authoritarian" practices and alleged widespread corruption. When CNTE demonstrators marched to the SNTE headquarters in downtown Mexico City on Oct. 11, they were overwhelmed with tear gas. Six demonstrators required hospitalization. In response, CNTE activists surrounded the building, and refused to permit persons trapped inside to vacate the premises. As of Oct. 14, 78 teachers and administrators remained inside the headquarters building. CNTE leader Teodoro Palomino said that confrontations and strike actions could escalate as long as the Public Education Secretariat refuses to permit dialogue on teachers' demands. In January and February this year, dissident teachers organized numerous strikes and demonstrations throughout Mexico in an effort to obtain salary hikes, and democratization of the SNTE. Police in the capital are attempting to identify the perpetrators of the tear gas attack against the CNTE demonstrators. Witnesses told Notimex that the tear gas bombs were thrown from the SNTE building. (Basic data from Notimex, 10/13/89, 10/14/89)

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