

## Editorial

### *Bolivia: the dope mafia's revenge*

The situation in Bolivia poses a clear-cut moral choice for the United States. Either Washington will make good on its commitment to a "war on drugs," and remove all support from the Henry Kissinger-International Monetary Fund coup being enacted there, or the heroic efforts of the Colombian and Peruvian democracies to defeat the drug traffickers who are poisoning the world's youth, will be nullified.

As we go to press, two leaders of the Schiller Institute Trade Union Commission are still being held in detention camps in Bolivia, following mass arrests in the early morning of Sept. 19, in a sweep of the leadership of a national hunger strike against the starvation policies of the International Monetary Fund.

Under the aegis of Kissinger's "Marshall Plan" for Ibero-America, Bolivia is being turned into one vast cocaine concentration camp. A state of siege has been imposed to crush national opposition to the harshest IMF austerity program yet seen in Ibero-America. Just before his arrest, the head of the Bolivian Labor Federation, Juan Lechín Oquendo, charged that Bolivian President Victor Paz Estenssoro is carrying out the policies of "the International Monetary Fund and Henry Kissinger." He cited Kissinger's "Marshall Plan, to privatize state-sector companies," as the center of the government's policies.

The two arrested Schiller Institute members, Gumersindo Bueno, a leader of the Bolivian National Railroad Workers Union, and Victor Villaruel from the La Paz Railroad Workers Union, had been present last July in Mexico City at the first continental conference of the Schiller Institute labor group, which resolved to unify the continent against IMF looting and for economic development, and called for a war of extermination against the international drug traffickers, under the banner of "Neither Kissinger, nor Castro!" A third Schiller Institute member, Max Ibañez of the Power and Light Union, was in Lima meeting with Peruvian President Alan García at the time of the mass arrests, and can no longer safely return to his country, or his family.

The Nazi-like tactics being used in Bolivia are dictated by Henry Kissinger and the IMF, whose fear is that the growing influence of the Schiller Institute could lead to the end of their profitable looting of the Ibero-American continent. President García, who met with a 20-person Schiller labor delegation on July 15, has adopted an anti-IMF, anti-drug program parallel to that put forward at the Mexico City Schiller conference, and is working closely with the President of Colombia in the war on drugs.

Since Peru and Colombia are no longer the safe haven for the drug mafia and its international banking protectors they once were, the drug mafia is taking revenge in Bolivia. When he took office on Aug. 6, the new President of Bolivia, Paz Estenssoro, promised to reach an immediate deal with the IMF. He put in his cabinet leading figures from the regime of General García Meza, whose early-1980s government was so openly a protection racket for the dope mob that it became known worldwide as the "cocaine coup."

On Aug. 29, Paz Estenssoro announced an "economic shock" program. He pegged the Bolivian currency to the black market rate, which is set by cocaine revenues, and raised gasoline prices by 667%, while lifting price controls on transportation and food and eliminating state-subsidized food stores. Union rights were abolished. Companies were given the right to fire workers who refused to "relocate." "Agro-power" became the government's positive program, promising "infrastructure" in the countryside for "export crops"—80% of Bolivia's rural population works on coca plantations.

President García has stressed the cruel irony that the drug mafia is the only international "business" that has achieved the integration of the Andean region. Unless we do something to stop it, Bolivia will become the headquarters of that evil trade. A leader of the Bolivian Labor Federation declared that their national strike is a "war of life and death, not just for wages, but for the salvation of our fatherland." It is our war, too.