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## Bolivia

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# IMF, World Bank back mass repression

by Valerie Rush

The determination of Bolivia's tin miners to hold out in their strike against the murderous International Monetary Fund austerity regimen imposed in September has won an apparent concession from the Paz Estenssoro government. For the moment, a Pinochet-style bloodbath has been averted in that debt- and drug-ravaged country, but the IMF and World Bank intend it to be a temporary respite, at best.

Under Bolivian Church auspices, a government/labor commission was set up to negotiate three points: 1) an end to the hunger strike by some 3,000 miners and month-long occupation of the country's major mine shafts by 27,000 more, 2) release of the 75 trade-union leaders held in jungle detention centers following their arrest in a Sept. 19 police sweep, and 3) creation of a second government/labor commission to "analyze" labor-related aspects of the austerity.

To show its "good faith," the government released some 56 rank-and-file trade unionists arrested along with the labor leaders. On Oct. 3, the tin miners agreed to the deal and ended their strike. Latest reports are that the government has begun the release of the union leaders from the disease-ridden jungle prison camps of Puerto Rico and Ramon Dario.

Nonetheless, the austerity program which triggered the Sept. 3 nationwide general strike remains in place: elimination of food subsidies, an end to price controls on food and transport, a wage freeze, eradication of trade-union rights, massive devaluation of the peso, dismantling and privatization of state-sector mining and oil companies, and so on. For it to remain in place, the International Monetary Fund intends to use open and, if necessary, bloody repression to prevent the labor movement from re-mobilizing. The Nazi/drug networks in Bolivia will serve as the IMF's shock troops for just that purpose.

Right after the Sept. 19 early-morning police raids and the brutal police repression which broke the back of all but the miners' strike nationwide, the head of a World Bank mission in La Paz enthusiastically endorsed the austerity program. Said mission chief Peter Sherer, "It is undoubtedly ingenious and simultaneously audacious. It is one of the best programs I have ever seen, the very best." The World Bank

mission has been joined in Bolivia by a delegation from its twin, the IMF, to negotiate the next phase of its genocidal "adjustment" program.

To deal with the crisis provoked by labor's opposition to the IMF program, President Paz Estenssoro has offered to share his government with former President Hugo Banzer, whose 1971-78 administration put Bolivia into the hands of the Nazi International and the international dope mob. Fearful of possible congressional opposition to the state of siege under which the anti-IMF opposition has been effectively muzzled, Paz Estenssoro wooed Banzer's support with promises of co-government. On Oct. 1, their two parties joined forces in the Congress to approve the state of siege decree and extend it for a full 90 days.

The two forces announced that they have established a "Great National Agreement," which they claim is modeled on the National Front arrangement in Colombia. Under the National Front, Colombia alternated the presidency between Liberal and Conservative leaders for almost 20 years. The implication in Bolivia is that Banzer is already the next president.

Banzer, who had been Paz Estenssoro's rival in the July presidential elections, magnanimously declared that he would join forces with the President "if democracy requires it," and told the press that their collaboration "should not surprise anyone," since the political parties of both were "nationalist, one revolutionary and the other democratic."

Paz Estenssoro, the "revolutionary," was a founder of Bolivia's pro-Nazi Bolivian Socialist Falange Party and has stocked his cabinet with drug-linked elements, including former members and supporters of the 1980 Garcia Meza coup, which was better known as "the cocaine coup."

The head of the President's Military Escort is Rear Admiral Vamo, one of Garcia Meza's supporters and later notorious as one of the officials caught selling imported rice laced with rat poison for a profit. Defense Minister Luis Fernando Valle was also an adviser to the "cocaine coup," and Paz Estenssoro's secretary to the presidency, Guillermo Riveros Tejada, was Garcia Meza's Information Minister. Minister of Peasant Affairs under Paz Estenssoro is anthropologist Mauricio Mamani Pocoata, who specializes in the "biological effects of coca."

Indeed, Paz Estenssoro should have little trouble "collaborating" with the "democrat" Banzer, given their history of collaboration over the years. It was Paz Estenssoro who helped Banzer take power in a coup in 1971.

The international Schiller Institute, several of whose Labor Commission members were jailed in the police raids of Sept. 18, has been conducting a worldwide protest campaign against the violation of human and labor rights in Bolivia. Telegrams and phone calls have flooded Bolivian embassies around the world to demand release of the imprisoned labor leaders and calling on Bolivian President Paz Estenssoro to break with the IMF and "stand with [Peruvian President] Alan Garcia" in defense of his nation's sovereignty.