

# THE MILITANT

## 80,000 demand Puerto Rican independence



Photo by Miguel Rivera, Claridad

Sept. 12 march in Puerto Rico

By C. M. TAVEREZ

SAN JUAN, P. R. — The largest and most militant demonstration in the history of Puerto Rico's independence movement took place here Sunday, Sept. 12, to protest the sixty-third annual U.S. governors' conference. The demonstration also commemorated the eightieth anniversary of the birth of Don Pedro Albizu Campos, leading Puerto Rican nationalist, who died in 1965 after spending most of his active life in prison for his activities on behalf of independence.

Called and organized by the Movimiento Pro Independencia [MPI—Movement for Independence] and the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño [PIP—Puerto Rican Independence party], the march was so well organized that even the capitalist press recognized its importance. For example, the Puerto Rican daily *El Imparcial* calculated that between 50,000 and 60,000 participated in the march and rally. *El Mundo*, another capitalist daily, put the number at 40,000 to 50,000.

In their speeches at the rally, MPI and PIP leaders estimated that 80,000 to 100,000 participated in the demonstration and that many thousands more were unable to attend because of lack of transportation, although everything possible had been done to

bring people to the march from the farthest places on the island. The MPI and PIP tried to provide free transportation for people who could not afford to pay, but the organizations' resources were very limited compared to those of the government.

The Ferré government, for example, rented 100 limousines in the U.S. at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars for the use of the governors and special conference guests. Shipping the limousines from New York cost the government \$20,013.11, according to a bill of lading of Trans-American Trailer Transport, Inc.

For two weeks prior to the demonstration, the government had conducted a violent campaign of red-baiting against the MPI and PIP, trying to frighten the Puerto Rican people away from the demonstration. In addition to utilizing the press, radio, and television in its campaign of intimidation, one week before the demonstration the government arrested hundreds of *independentistas* for pasting up leaflets inviting people to the march.

When even this failed to stop the *independentistas*, the government organized brigades of government-party youth who, with police backing, covered the demonstration leaflets with paint and pasted up their own "Governors, Welcome to Puerto Rico" signs. This was done mostly around the campuses of the universities and in the commercial districts, where the tourists and guests of the governors might see them.

Support for the march was so widespread that Ferré himself, as a last resort, pleaded with the leaders not to carry slogans or shout "Yanqui Go Home!" According to the governor, such behavior would injure the Puerto Rican tradition of hospitality.

To the surprise of no one, "Yanqui Go Home!" became the main theme of the demonstration. Other popular slogans were "Governors Go Home!" and "Jibaro [peasant] Si! Yanqui No!"

PIP President Rubén Berrios and MPI General Secretary Juan Mari Bras represented their respective organizations on the speakers' platform. Mari Bras pointed out that Puerto Rico was being used once more by the U.S. as the "showcase" of Latin America.

He said that the main reason for holding the governors' conference in Puerto Rico was to plan the optimum use of the island as a political, economic, and military base of counter-revolution in Latin America. As evidence of this, Mari Bras pointed to conference guests such as Galo Plaza, general secretary of the Organization of American States (OAS); Alberto Lleras Camargo, ex-president of Colombia; and Eduardo Frei, Christian-Democrat ex-president of Chile. Mari Bras went on to discuss the continuing battle waged by the MPI to have the United Nations take up the case of Puerto Rico, not because the United Nations is an organization to be trusted but because it could be used as a forum to expose U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. The MPI also tries to force countries represented at the United Nations to take a stand in favor of Puerto Rico's independence.

Mari Bras made very clear what he meant when he said, "Either they are with us or against us; this way we will know who are our friends and who are our enemies."

This MPI-PIP united-front demonstration was organized as a peaceful

and orderly action, and the tremendous success it achieved showed how deep and widespread the proindependence movement is.

Among the supporters of the demonstration was a contingent of about 200 Dominicans whose message of solidarity said, in part: "We Dominicans living in Puerto Rico for many different reasons are with you today in your struggle for Puerto Rican independence. Puerto Rico's destiny is linked with ours, since we are oppressed by the same imperialist monster, the United States of America. . . . Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo together will win!"

Support also came from a group of Cuban youth, Juventud Cubana Socialista [Cuban Socialist Youth], which put out a special bulletin for the march called "Manifiesto al Pueblo de Puerto Rico" [Manifesto to the People of Puerto Rico].

This group is composed of Cuban young people whose parents took them to the United States in the early 1960s. Today, as a result of their own experiences in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, and from seeing how the Cuban exiles behave—their racism, their desire to make Puerto Rico the Cuba of "old times," their "anticommunism"—these youth now identify with the Cuban revolution, the Latin American revolution, and with the Puerto Rican people in their struggle for self-determination.

"We are Cubans," the manifesto begins, "and we completely reject the arrogant attitude of the Cuban exiles in Puerto Rico. . . . We are Cubans who believe that now, as ever, the destiny of Cuba and Puerto Rico is closely linked. We identify unconditionally with your struggle for national liberation of the Puerto Rican people. . . . We are not Cuban exiles; we are in Puerto Rico for reasons beyond our control. While we are here, we ask you not to consider us as exiles from Cuba, and we ask you to defend us against the attacks we expect from them."

The unity in action of the proindependence forces had a tremendous impact on the Puerto Rican population. This reporter talked to about 200 people after the march, all of whom were optimistic about the struggle for independence. As one said, "This is the best way for the Puerto Rican people to show its dignity."

## Soledad Brothers harassed in prison

By NORTON SANDLER

SAN FRANCISCO—The trial of the remaining Soledad Brothers, John Cluchette and Fleeta Drumgo, will be delayed indefinitely while the California Supreme Court reviews a habeas corpus petition filed by defense attorneys Richard Silver and Floyd Silliman. The petition asks for a hearing before the court on the grounds that since the murder of George Jackson Aug. 21 the defendants have been subject to cruel and unusual punishment by the prison guards, not being allowed sufficient time to consult with their attorneys, and that San Quentin authorities denied them access to the courts for a pretrial hearing Aug. 23.

On Sept. 16, John Thorne, who was Jackson's attorney, released a handwritten affidavit signed by the inmates of the Adjustment Center, who now refer to themselves as the "George Jackson Brigade," demanding that they be

transferred to federal prisons in order to avoid the persistent beatings that have placed their lives in jeopardy in the California prison system. The affidavit reiterated the prisoners' claims that California prison authorities conspired to execute George Jackson. Additionally, Thorne released a deposition taken from white inmate Allan Mancino in which Mancino maintains that while Jackson and he were in the "O" wing of the Soledad State prison in late January 1970, captain of the guards Charles Moody "asked me directly if I would kill George Jackson. He said he did not want another Eldridge Cleaver."

Mancino "refused to join in this plot" and was summarily transferred from Soledad. Ironically, Mancino was in the adjustment center on Aug. 21 and was allegedly shot during the "fracas." However, Mancino disappeared in the week following the Aug. 21 massacre

and prison authorities hinted that since Mancino was ready to testify for the state about the events of Aug. 21, it was necessary to take him into "protective custody" to ensure his safety from other inmates. Now it appears that Mancino was removed to a Nevada state prison in Carson City, where he waits, incognito, for his wounds to heal.

Relentless efforts by prison authorities to place the blame for the Aug. 21 shoot-out on a nefarious conspiracy were given a boost by Marin County Superior Judge Joseph G. Wilson. He refused to halt grand jury hearings directed at Adjustment Center inmates Hugo Pinnel, Larry Spain, and attorney Steven Bingham, whom the authorities accuse of having brought Jackson an eight-and-a-half inch gun inside a portable tape recorder just prior to Jackson's murder.