

Letters

War Criminal

Doug Ireland, in his review of Christopher Hitchens' *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, hit the nail on the head when he cites Cyprus to illustrate "episodes that have received little or no attention" ("Take Him Away," August 20). Most in this country don't want to know, or want to forget, the U.S. role in the events of 1974 that led to the death of some 5,000 to 10,000 people and the violent uprooting of 200,000 on that small island.

Hitchens, however, missed stronger evidence in the House hearings on U.S. foreknowledge of the Greek junta's plans to eliminate Cypriot President Makarios. The summary provided in the declassified portion of the CIA *post mortem* states: "Intelligence provides explicit warning of growing confrontation. ... Ioannides threatens action against Makarios."

Committee staff gave June 20, 1974 as the date of the warning. On June 27, the head of CIA operations in Greece met with Ioannides, who described his plans, according to an August 1 report in the *New York Times*. What the U.S. response was to the junta's plans has never been made public.

Anne M. Rice
Great Falls, Virginia

British Riots

I would endorse much of David Bacon's article about the riots in Britain ("Divided Kingdom," August 20)—especially arguments that immigration controls are racist and the conclusion that we need more immigration. But there are two ways in which the article doesn't really get to grips with the issues.

First, these riots are not really "race riots"—they are overwhelmingly anti-police riots. The usual story is that small numbers of neo-Nazis, associated with either the National Front or British National Party, deliberately provoke clashes with members of Asian communities in a series of rundown towns and cities, which are marked by high levels of unemployment and poverty. The response by young members of these communities—usually born here in Britain rather than being immigrants—is militant self-defense, which comes into conflict with heavy-handed and often rather stupid policing.

It is true that the Nazis have worked hard to get electoral support from the poor white communities and received

significant votes (but nowhere near the scale of the National Front vote in the '70s) in places like Oldham and Burnley. Their fallacious arguments about crime and relative levels of privilege—often helped by the role of the media—have achieved a resonance. However, to give the impression that riots are fundamentally black youths versus white youths is far from accurate.

Second, the disgusting and racist asylum laws and policies that both Labour and Conservative governments have implemented are connected to the level of racism in the country. Both parties seem to unite in denouncing "bogus" asylum seekers and outdo each other in ever more draconian and inhumane measures to deal with the issue. This is a perfect backdrop for the hardline racists and neo-Nazis to spread their poison. But this isn't just an issue about black and white. Many of the targets of this racism are white Europeans—Albanian Kosovars (so recently the victims whose treatment was used to justify the humanitarian bombing of Serbia) in particular.

Matthew Caygill
Leeds, England

Stop Star Wars

Bruce Gagnon of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space is wrong when he tells Geov

Parrish that Peace Action, the country's largest peace and disarmament organization with more than 76,000 members nationwide, has refused to take a position against Theater Missile Defense (TMD) because of our love of the Democrats ("The Pentagon's Trojan Horse," July 23).

We are opposed to Star Wars missile defense in all its incarnations. We oppose TMD for precisely the reasons stated in the article. Furthermore, as a grassroots citizens movement dedicated to building real, effective opposition to Star Wars, we certainly aren't going to take our cues from Sen. Joe Biden and the Democratic Leadership Council.

With the Bush administration on a crash course to deploy Star Wars, break the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and start a new nuclear arms race, it is crucial that these reckless initiatives be met with our unified opposition. Peace Action's National Congress, to be held in Austin, Texas from November 9 to 11, is titled "The Race to Space: The Renewed Risk of Nuclear War," and has opposition to Star Wars and weapons in space as its major themes. Contact us at (202) 862-9740 or www.peace-action.org if you would like to be part of an effective opposition to Star Wars, weapons in space and a new nuclear arms race.

Scott Lynch
Peace Action
Washington

Terry LaBan



Trouble on the Home Front

Vicente Fox's popularity is soaring—in the United States

By Martin Espinoza

For months, Mexican President Vicente Fox has managed to stay one step ahead of the growing reality that little has changed in Mexico since his election last year, which toppled the autocratic regime that had controlled Mexican politics for 71 years. His critics charge that, after nine months in office, Fox has failed to make good on his pre-election promise to spur economic growth, end government corruption and negotiate a peaceful solution to armed uprisings in Mexico's poorest regions.

On July 2, the anniversary of his democratic triumph, Fox stole headlines from his detractors by marrying his spokeswoman and ending his controversial status as Mexico's most eligible bachelor. More recently, in early September—only days after the Mexican public coldly received his first state of the union address—Fox traveled to Washington for a high-profile state dinner at the White House and a speech before a joint session of Congress, in which he spoke boldly in defense of millions of Mexican immigrants. By focusing on the plight of immigrants in the United States, Fox shrewdly tapped into Mexican nationalism and the bitter resentment of a country that for centuries has been a doormat for the United States.

Not only was Fox able to regain his hero's status, but his visit helps President Bush make further inroads into a growing constituency. Media analyst and pollster Sergio Bendixen told *La Jornada*, a left-leaning Mexican daily, that Bush is trying to "exorcise" anti-

immigrant dogma from the Republican Party, and "Vicente Fox is the exorcist."

Hispanics represent a powerful voting bloc that Bush and other Republicans can no longer ignore. The number of registered Hispanic voters grew last year to more than 8 million, up from 5 million in 1994. The Hispanic vote was 7 percent last year and is expected to be 10 percent in the next presidential election. What's more, Hispanics are centered in the most important electoral states: California, New York, Texas, Illinois and Florida. In the 2000 election, most Hispanics remained loyal Democrats, though pre-election polls showed that many maintained a favorable opinion of Bush. Bendixen said that in recent months



Fox has said he is president of 118 million people, 18 million of whom are living in the United States.

Bush's popularity among Hispanics shot up from 42 percent to 70 percent.

While Bush is seeking votes, Fox is seeking dollars. Fox has made no secret of Mexico's growing dependence on immigrant dollars—Mexicans in the United States sent some \$7 billion back to their families last year. Fox has encouraged Mexicans abroad to help fund public works projects in Mexico. He has said he would match the amount of money immigrants send back dollar for dollar.

There's a degree of desperation in Fox's asking America's worst paid residents for help—as if there were little he could do to improve Mexico's ailing economy. But that may indeed be the case. Since the economic crisis of 1994, most Mexicans have been struggling to

get back on their feet. The current economic slowdown has had a devastating effect on Mexico, which sells 85 percent of its exports to the United States. The low-wage *maquiladoras* that now dominate Mexico's industrial landscape offer no incentive for Mexicans to stay in their country. NAFTA has done little in the past seven years to reduce the country's poverty rates; up to 60 percent of Mexico's population lives in some degree of poverty.

During Fox's visit, Bush told reporters that only by strengthening its middle class can Mexico control its borders. That's easier said than done. Significantly raising salaries and thus Mexico's standard of living is unlikely, given the country's role as a low-wage haven for multinationals in the new global economy. Instead, as a way of generating much needed revenue, Fox has been pushing a fiscal reform package that includes a 15 percent tax on food and medicine. The revenue proposal, soundly rejected by the Mexican Congress and the public, represents Fox's biggest political failure yet. Add to that his inability to create new jobs, reduce crime or negotiate peace with armed rebels in poor states such as Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca.

In the face of so many defeats at home, Fox has turned to foreign policy in the way one might expect a lame duck American president to do. The problem is, Fox has more than five years to go. Fox has said that he is president of 118 million people, 18 million of whom are living in the United States. Being a bold leader for these people may help get Bush votes and even encourage Mexican immigrants to wire home more money, but it won't solve the problems the other 100 million are suffering. ■

Martin Espinoza has written for Pacific News Service, the San Francisco Bay Guardian and CorpWatch. He spent the last three years in Guanajuato, Mexico, writing about Mexican politics and culture.