

In memory of Larry Moore, 1948-2024

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On November 21, longtime Socialist Equality Party member Larry Moore died in Albuquerque New Mexico, of cancer. He was 76 years old.

Larry was a devoted teacher, a prolific musician and songwriter, a tireless defender of all victims of oppression and injustice, and a principled fighter for socialism. Everyone who knew and worked with Larry waves a fond and sad goodbye to an outstanding representative of the international working class—and an all-around decent and good person.

Larry was born in Los Angeles to a large family of eight siblings. He graduated high school in Whittier, California and went to college in New Mexico, where he would go on to work as a teacher. Radicalized by the Vietnam War like many of his generation, he was a “conscientious objector” who refused to serve in the army, for which he served 15 months in prison. During that time, he avidly began reading political theory, history, and about the struggles then breaking out around the world against colonial oppression.

Larry would later remark that in the course of his lifetime, he had held 30 different jobs. In the 1980s, Larry worked at a steel mill in Wilmington, in the Los Angeles area. Later he was a maritime clerk for Kerr Steamship in Long Beach, California. He took pride in having labored side-by-side with workers with backgrounds from around the world.

Music, in particular, was a lifelong passion for Larry. He began playing saxophone as a teenager, and went on to become proficient in many other instruments, including the flute, accordion, ukulele, guitar, clarinet, quena and percussion. In the early 1980s, he began to write songs, drawing influence from his encyclopedic knowledge of the blues, jazz, folk, rock, Latin and other traditions. He often performed these songs to help promote and raise money for left-wing causes, and some of these songs were played on Southern California’s KPFK radio.

However, as a serious political thinker, the “protest crowd,” as Larry would later call it, left him dissatisfied. “I was self-educated. I read a lot of stuff based on the

New Left. I even read Michael Harrington’s book ‘Socialism.’ The book talked about socialism, but then he said to vote for the Democratic Party. I kept running into this,” he later said.

In the early 2000s, he began reading the *World Socialist Web Site*. In a discussion in September, Larry said, “I kept looking around. I wasn’t satisfied. Then I stumbled across the WSWS and started reading it carefully. I began to read its analysis. I couldn’t get away from it. It almost became a mission for me to understand its analysis. I had to do a lot of reading. But it became very clear to me the analysis was absolutely correct.”

He joined the Los Angeles branch of the Socialist Equality Party in 2003 after meeting members at a protest. He remained an active member until his death. “I’m a Trotskyist, I have no regrets in my politics,” Larry said.

Between 2007 and 2023, Larry wrote a total of 96 articles for the *World Socialist Web Site* under the pseudonym D. Lencho. His articles covered topics ranging from social conditions in California to music and the arts. As a fluent Spanish speaker, he also regularly contributed to the WSWS labor briefs feature, concentrating on Central and South America. In addition, Larry helped proofread articles that were posted on the site—a task that often involves working late into the night, but which he performed carefully and diligently for many years.

In an obituary article on singers Miriam Makeba and Odetta in 2008, Mercedes Sosa in 2009, and again in his 2021 appreciation of Mexican Singer Amparo Ochoa, Larry sympathetically wrote about their limitations within their historical context, the hardships of their time, and the enduring significance of their contributions. He also introduced younger readers around the world to these artists.

“Notwithstanding these historical limitations,” Larry wrote, “the songs of Miriam Makeba and Odetta—songs of suffering and struggle, but also of joy and the vision of a world of genuine equality—are a legacy that will continue to move future generations who take up the battle to

finally achieve the goals that inspired their predecessors.”

Larry was a regular presence in the SEP’s work on the ground in the working class communities of Los Angeles, petitioning for SEP electoral candidates and leafleting and reporting on the picket lines among striking teachers, Hollywood writers, health workers, and others. When he spoke or wrote about workers’ struggles, he did so from decades of concrete personal experience.

Larry would occasionally talk about how he witnessed first-hand the treacherous role of the bureaucracy of the West Coast dock workers union, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Following a strike vote, he recalled, “there was a conspiracy behind our backs,” and the president of the local “was working with the company and agreeing to major concessions. In fact, whenever somebody left the plant or retired, they didn’t fill the position. They just increased the work.”

“Then they began to pit people against each other, especially on the basis of ethnicity,” he said. “They would pit white workers against black and brown workers. This was absolutely horrific. They did this in order to divide the workers and keep them from uniting against the policies of the company. Some people got decent jobs but a lot of them got really bad jobs and bad pay. That was a big lesson for me.”

Larry taught English as a second language (ESL) while he lived in Long Beach and continued this line of work after his return to New Mexico in 2013, at which time he joined the SEP’s Southwest Group. As an ESL teacher, he would go on to have a significant impact on the lives of hundreds of recent immigrants to the United States.

Larry used his language and musical skills to compose songs that helped students remember English pronunciation, idioms, and greetings. He enjoyed this work immensely and appeared to get as much out of the experience as his working class students, who would often work during the day before attending his classes at night. They would sometimes bring him homemade dishes as a way of showing their thanks and appreciation.

In 2020, the Encuentro social justice center in Albuquerque recognized Larry in its “teacher spotlight” as a teacher who is “loved by his students for using music and song to make learning fun, engaging and interactive.” After his retirement from teaching in 2021, Encuentro recognized him at a special honoree dinner for his “commitment to social justice and the Latino immigrant community.” Encuentro went on to establish “The Larry Moore ESL Classroom” in his honor.

It goes without saying that Larry steadfastly upheld the

rights and dignity of refugees and immigrants against all the relentless scapegoating by the Republicans, Democrats, trade unions and mass media.

A couple of months before his death, Larry’s family and friends helped organize an event in his honor at Encuentro, which was widely attended by former students as well as fellow musicians. Around 50 people participated, singing Larry’s songs with him, which they all remembered. Much moved, Larry called it his “swan song.”

As the news on the medical front worsened, Larry remained in strong spirits until the end. Even in the final weeks, when his fellow SEP members would call him, Larry would talk to them about his efforts to organize jam sessions among his old band-mates, about how he would like to continue working despite his deteriorating condition, and about the latest articles on the WSWS.

“The party is doing a hell of a job. It’s the only organization fighting for working people,” he said during one call. “I try to read as much as I can but it’s difficult sometimes. I will read a page or sometimes only a few paragraphs. But I want you to know that I’m with you.”

Larry’s kind and generous personality will be fondly remembered by everyone who knew him. But beneath that humble exterior was a well-read and serious thinker, a great deal of experience and competence, a person with profound sympathy for every victim of injustice and oppression, and someone capable of courageous personal sacrifice—as demonstrated by the time he spent behind bars for resisting the draft as well as by the decades he steadfastly upheld the historical tradition of Marxism against all of the headwinds of the period in which he lived.

Larry leaves behind comrades, students, co-workers, bandmates, friends and family who will miss him very much.



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