

Mexico's Cárdenas vows to 'rescue nation' with 'exemplary' movement

by Hugo López Ochoa

Before some 350,000 sympathizers chanting "the people voted, and Cárdenas won," amid a festive atmosphere of mariachi bands and fireworks, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the presidential candidate of the National Democratic Front, held his first mass rally after Mexico's Chamber of Deputies imposed the official candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, as "President-elect" on Sept. 10.

The "automatic majority" of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Cárdenas charged, "refused to comply with the precondition that would have given validity to the results of this election," i.e., refused to release the figures of the "more than 24,000 polling places" which were sequestered on Election Day, July 7, by Interior Secretary Manuel Bartlett—after early returns arriving at the Federal Electoral Commission had showed Cárdenas winning by a landslide.

Cárdenas shared a feeling of confidence and victory with his supporters. "A year ago, no one would have believed that the people of Mexico would go as far as it has in so little time," he said, adding, "Those who today mock the people because despite all of this they are imposing . . . fraud, cannot understand our feelings . . . profound rage at the mockery of our rights as citizens, and at the same time, profound joy to see what we have achieved and because we have confidence—something unknown to them—in what we shall achieve in the immediate future."

Peaceful victory

"We are the majority, we have shown it. . . . Now we are going to make of this majority a powerful force which by its discipline and capacity for action will force the enemy to retreat before the evidence of the people's determination. . . . We are going to rescue the nation and we will do it peacefully.

"Our people has defeated all attempts to subjugate it, and this will not be the exception. More years of the same [economic] policy of surrender and insensitivity to the people's suffering would be an unacceptable sacrifice. . . . Popular organization will become so exemplary and so powerful that,

in time, it will be clear that it makes no sense to go against it."

Cárdenas admitted that "there is no way to oppose by legal means" the final decision of the Chamber of Deputies, constituted as the Electoral College, but he stressed that "the government has put itself outside legality" with this decision.

He warned: "The harsh experience of 1910-17 is alive in all Mexicans' minds. They would like us to call for confrontation, to get them out of power, as it were, in a disorganized and unprepared manner, so they can respond with a bloodbath and a devastating wave of repression. . . . We shall fight, but at the right time, under conditions and by procedures we choose. Not when and how they want."

Cárdenas: 'Call new elections'

Cárdenas also mentioned the offers of "concord and dialogue" of the President-elect, and said that the National Democratic Front (FDN) would set up a "constructive dialogue" on the proposals of Salinas: ways of alleviating the foreign debt burden, simplification of the electoral framework, strengthening of citizens' security, and creating effective programs to deal with poverty.

But he also called on Salinas to join him "publicly" in a dialogue "on the procedures which could permit the legitimacy lost through the arbitrary decision of the majority of deputies, to devolve on the presidential institution." Without ruling out other options, he said he would propose to Salinas that he "renounce the office of President-elect, which would open the way to restoring legality and constitutional legitimacy through an interregnum and the calling of new presidential elections." This would be a decision of "deep patriotism," which could save the people "great sacrifices." However, he made it clear that "possibly the imposition will be consummated on Dec. 1." "Possibly not," he said, "it is neither possible nor useful to impose rigid time frameworks on ourselves."

"The fight may be long, but we cannot and we must not wait six years, or three," he said, referring to the next presi-

dential election in 1994 and the congressional ones in 1991.

"We are going to oppose all and each of the economic policy measures which are making life impossible for millions of Mexicans and are alienating the country," within the law, "because we are not going to renounce rights and freedoms for which our people have paid a very high price of blood and sacrifice.

"We are the majority, and the majority today has the responsibility of organizing the party which was born on July 6, when it won the election and defined the direction the country has to take." He stressed that the signs of the decadence of the regime lie, among other things, in "social and economic inequality, in the continual ceding of sovereignty" to foreign interests, and in the internal division of the PRI, which make up "the greatest risks of ungovernability."

Time of struggle and hope

"Let us look together at the project to attain victory," he said, and the "cultural change which the collective consciousness is undergoing *in these times of struggle and hope*. We do not propose that it be merely the instrument for winning elections and constituting government. We want that, but also much more: We want to open the channels for society to be able to reorganize itself and its institutions in freedom, with tolerance and justice.

"We shall recover the historical ideals of the Mexican Revolution, the full rule of the Constitution and the legitimacy of our government and those who govern us. We shall restore the Republic by founding new institutions in a political culture of freedom, rationality, and tolerance. . . . We have the best weapons for achieving victory: reason and trust."

These words were greeted with a thundering ovation. People did not want to leave. They demanded that he deliver "El Grito," referring to the ceremonial "Cry of Independence," celebrated every Sept. 15—the day after this rally—when the President of Mexico goes out on the balcony of the National Palace and before a huge crowd, with the Mexican flag in his hand and ringing the "Independence Bell," shouts, "Mexicans! Long live national independence!" "Long live the heroes who gave us our country!"

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas did not accede to this. But 350,000 voices began to sing the national anthem, "Mexicans to the Battle Cry."

The following day, the national press printed the regime's answer: PRI chairman Jorge de la Vega Domínguez accused Cárdenas of wanting to provoke a "civil war," and Miguel de la Madrid, the lame-duck President, said to a group of industrialists that the nationalist program of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas "looks toward a past which never existed. [He wants] to apply formulas which maybe were valid in other days, but are totally obsolete in the present day."

The press also printed photos of a standard of the Virgin of Guadalupe, carried by some of the Cardenistas, which was also the standard of the Founding Fathers of Mexico.

Documentation

The following are excerpts from a statement released by the Mexican Labor Party (PLM) on Sept. 14.

The certification of Carlos Salinas de Gortari as Mexico's President . . . is an ephemeral victory for Mexico's financial oligarchy. . . . The Mexican vote on July 6 was against the genocidal economic policy of the International Monetary Fund and the surrender of the nation to international creditors. The citizenry that voted for Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas proved that it is possible to defeat the domestic allies of international usury. . . . Attempts to prolong the IMF's program are only accelerating the disintegration of the PRI, and isolating still further the corrupt group of politicians in that party who have served as the henchmen of the creditors against the Mexican people. These influentials are those who made the decisions during the past six years of misgovernment by Miguel de la Madrid. . . .

The objective of Mexico's creditors is to turn Mexico into a colonial satrapy of the U.S. and Swiss creditor banks, and to draw it into a North American Common Market, in opposition to a union with our Ibero-American brothers. Thanks to the pressures of those oligarchs, wages have been reduced by 60% in the past six years, and thousands of agricultural and industrial companies have been bankrupted, reducing the food consumption of millions of Mexican families while increasing the terrible plague of un- and underemployment that oppresses the nation.

Ironically, the primary instrument of manipulation of the landed and financial oligarchy over Salinas de Gortari is a team of social democratic advisers . . . linked to the European and U.S. social democracy, which operates as the cooperative link between imperialist banking circles of the West and the imperialist *nomenklatura* that rules the Soviet Union, to establish a new colonial distribution of the world—a New Yalta. . . .

This is the reason why it was the social democrats Carlos Andrés Pérez and Felipe González who were the first to recognize Salinas's "victory," along with immediate recognition by Moscow and Havana and the countries of the socialist bloc in general. . . .

Many members of the PRI—primarily at the middle, regional leadership levels—have not yet gone over to Cárdenas's FDN, because Salinas managed to convince them . . . that "the era of austerity has ended." . . . What will these PRI members do, in the unions, peasant organizations, even the Army, when they face the terrible reality in the first months of Salinas's administration? . . .