
Mexico

The 'real President' addresses EIR event

by D.E. Pettingell

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solorzano, the real winner of Mexico's July 6 presidential elections, was the guest speaker at an *EIR* breakfast in Mexico City Nov. 8. Before a group of industrialists, businessmen, and professionals, Cárdenas reiterated his urgent call for a postponement of payments on Mexico's \$100 billion debt and use of those resources for economic growth.

The nationalist Cárdenas was robbed of his election victory after a bitter confrontation between the opposition parties backing his presidential bid and the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Massive vote fraud imposed Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the Harvard-trained technocrat whom the PRI chose

a PRI-controlled House of Representatives "certified" the Salinas victory, the majority of Mexicans regard Cárdenas as the legitimate President.

At the breakfast Cárdenas was introduced by Hugo López Ochoa, *EIR*'s Mexico City bureau chief, who reminded participants that *EIR* was founded by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., the initiator of a proposal, "Operation Juárez," to create an Ibero-American common market. He decried Cárdenas as the only presidential candidate in this year's Mexican elections to campaign on a platform in accord with *EIR*'s editorial position in favor of a debt moratorium.

Cárdenas's presentation was warmly welcomed by the audience, which included 68 subscribers to *EIR* and *EIR*'s Spanish edition, *Resúmen Ejecutivo*. Many of the businessmen attended the event to "confront" Cárdenas, the target of an international propaganda campaign that has tried to present him as a Moscow-controlled "communist" who favors "change through violence." But after an hour-and-a-half dialogue, most of them had changed their idea about Cárdenas; many said they were surprised by his moderation and well-thought-out ideas.

"First of all, I want to thank *EIR* for its invitation to be here with you," Cárdenas said. "From the beginning [of the presidential campaign], we stressed the need to suspend payments on the foreign debt in the way in which they have been made up to now, for several reasons. First, we believe that the debt was incurred on terms that were not convenient for the country, and that there is a shared responsibility between the borrowers and the lenders, which until now has not been

recognized.

"In order to recover our growth," Cárdenas proposed that "the resources that are now used to pay foreign debt" be used instead to "strengthen our domestic markets . . . by opening and encouraging new opportunities through the granting of credits, new programs, through the creation of infrastructure, for medium-sized enterprises, small businesses, micro-businesses, for our industry, in such a way that they can again have the support, the backing that normally would be given to them."

The longest recession ever

Cárdenas described the brutal economic crisis into which Mexico has sunk after six years of drastic budget cuts, high interest rates, and capital flight.

Real wages have dropped 50-70%, unemployment ranges from 6 to 8 million people (10% of all Mexicans) whereas in 1982 there were only 1 million unemployed; thousands of industrial plants have closed down; every development project has been suspended. Cárdenas blamed President Miguel de la Madrid's policies for the disaster of making "debt payment the backbone of the country's economic and political" agenda. He reminded the audience that in the past six years, Mexico has already paid \$70 billion in debt service, while in the same period, \$50 billion has left the country as flight capital.

Cárdenas emphasized that the last year Mexico experienced real growth was 1982, the last year of the José López Portillo administration. "Never before in this century have we experienced such a prolonged economic recession as the one we now have," he said, calling the De la Madrid administration's lies that Mexico grew in 1988 between 6-7% "fictitious growth," since "we do not understand a type of economic growth that does not translate into social improvement."

Contrary to the anti-Cárdenas propaganda in the U.S. media, Cárdenas does favor expanding trade with the United States and other developed nations. What he opposes, as he told the *EIR* breakfast, is the de la Madrid policies of completely open markets, permitting dumping of foreign-made consumer products and looting of Mexico's natural resources. "The opening of our markets has been done without taking into consideration the effects on our own industry."

Cárdenas concluded by insisting that a change in economic policies must be accompanied by changes in the political institutions, changes that allow "democratic participation" of all Mexicans. Cárdenas warned that continuing a policy that has taken such a heavy toll on the Mexican standard of living could "increase tensions" and lead to the "loss of social peace." People have shown their willingness to fight within a legal framework by going to vote in national and statewide elections, but, Cárdenas warned, the government is playing with fire by "trampling on" the right to vote and imposing illegitimate rulers through fraud at the polls.