

# Heritage Foundation out to revive Mexico's fascist PAN, end 'Cardenism'

by D.E. Pettingell

"There is still an alliance between the left wing of the PRI [ruling party in Mexico] and the LaRouchists," complained David Asman, a member of the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal*, while waving a copy of the U.S. twice-weekly newspaper, *The New Federalist*. It is published by the political movement of Lyndon LaRouche. The newspaper he was holding bore the title, "Banks Order Raid against Mexican Trade Unionism." Asman was addressing a well-attended audience gathered in the auditorium of the Heritage Foundation, sponsors of a two-day conference on U.S.-Mexican relations Jan. 26 and 27 in Washington, D.C.

Asman, who participated in the session on "Perspectives for Democracy in Mexico," said he had received the copy of *The New Federalist* one week earlier, during a support demonstration for Mexican oil workers leader Joaquín Hernández Galicia ("La Quina"), held in front of the *Journal's* New York offices. "La Quina" was arrested by the illegitimate government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, for posing a major obstacle to the plan to privatize the state oil company, *Petróleos Mexicanos* (Pemex).

In his presentation, Asman "documented" what, according to him, is an alliance between LaRouche supporters and the "PRI left" to "discredit" the National Action Party (PAN). Asman exhibited to the audience an English-language version of a book published by the Mexican Labor Party (PLM), a Mexican organization guided by the philosophy of Lyndon H. LaRouche, entitled *The PAN: Moscow's Terrorists in Mexico*. Asman explained that the photo appearing on the cover of the book was of none other than José Angel Conchello, the PAN leader and admirer of Nazi Economics Minister Hjalmar Schacht; Conchello was sharing the podium with Asman at that very moment.

The PLM book extensively documents the founding of the PAN by Nazi-sympathizer, anti-U.S. circles in Mexico in the 1940s, and the PAN's witting collaboration with Soviet-linked elements for destabilization today. The book labels the PAN a "Nazi-Communist" threat under direct supervision of a task force at the Eastern Establishment's Council on Foreign Relations and the Heritage Foundation.

In his presentation, Asman later complained that the tactics used by the PRI and "the LaRouchists" against the PAN had successfully sabotaged every effort by official and pri-

vate U.S. circles to collaborate with the PAN, a strong advocate of paying the Mexican debt with the national patrimony and the leading mouthpiece of "free enterprise." Asman acknowledged that, since then, any effort to support the PAN from the outside was "giving it the kiss of death."

In effect, Asman was asserting that LaRouche and his movement's denunciation of the treasonous nature of the PAN makes them responsible for the elimination of the PAN as a viable political alternative in Mexico. The discrediting of the PAN, in the opinion of such mouthpieces of U.S. financial power as Asman, gave rise to the resurgence of the populist nationalist movement in Mexico, centered around Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. During the Reagan government, Washington had premised its hope of turning Mexico into one large sweatshop appended to the U.S. economy, on bringing the PAN to power. It wasn't until last year when, given the irrepressible rise of the Cardenista movement, Washington opted to "freeze" the PAN, supporting instead the monetarist technocratic faction of the PRI which imposed Salinas de Gortari as its presidential candidate.

## Reviving the PAN

Asman's presentation made it clear that the intention of the Heritage Foundation conference, from the beginning, was to try to resuscitate the PAN. The Heritage Foundation, a bulwark of free-enterprise worshippers, is also considered the epitome of imperialist interventionism à la Teddy Roosevelt. The great fear expressed by one Foundation speaker after another was that the PRI, or the faction of the PRI which imposed Salinas, might lose political control over the country, allowing Cardenism to take power. Six months after the July 1988 presidential elections, these circles still tremble at the thought that neo-Cardenism, in less than one year of existence, has not only displaced the PAN, founded back in 1939, but the PRI itself.

It was no accident, therefore, that participating in the Heritage-sponsored autopsy were leaders of the PAN itself, who have not been seen publicly in Washington since the outbreak of Irangate in 1986, a scandal in which the PAN played a role. In addition to Conchello, the following also showed up for the occasion: Ricardo Villa Escalera, a friend of the avowed homosexual Carl "Spitz" Channell, who gath-

ered funds for Oliver North's illegal operations; Luis Pazos, a compulsive pro-drug defender of monetarism; and Javier Livas, "former PAN member" and "former PRI member" who now claims that his only party is "democracy." In addition, various PANista businessmen attended, including Jorge Ocejo, president of Mexico's business council, Coparmex; Juan Cintrón; and *El Financiero* journalist Sergio Sarmiento.

Delal Baer, an academic from the Eastern Establishment's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), sought to offer an answer to the "why" of the "Cardenista upsurge." In her analysis, Baer explained that the PRI had functioned for decades as "one big family," in which all factions had political maneuvering room. But, she suggested, with the 1982 presidency of Miguel de la Madrid and the attempt to impose a pro-free enterprise philosophy on the party, the "delicate consensus" that had maintained that political "balance" was broken. The result was a schism in the PRI. "From the entrails of the party emerged the son of Lázaro Cárdenas, availing himself of the image and methods of his father," added Baer.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's success, according to Baer, was due to two factors: 1) his name, which awakens "magical and mystical" powers, and 2) the fact that six consecutive years of "adjustments" had concretized widespread discontent against the government. In this context, insisted Baer, Cárdenas was nothing more than a "catalytic element."

Baer knew her job: She repeated all the spurious charges that Cárdenas is a communist; she claimed that the main groups backing him are the Communists, controlled by Moscow, and the Trotskyists. She conveniently omitted any mention of the moderate tendencies around Cárdenas, such as the Democratic Current of former PRI Secretary General Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and such traditional Mexican parties as the PARM and the PPS. Her intention was to smear Cárdenas's followers as communists, instead of nationalists, before an ignorant and prejudiced public.

On Cárdenas himself, Baer said ingenuously that she was not absolutely certain "who he is" and what he "proposes," and that the most one could say about him is that, "like his father, he is an expression of a peculiar indigenist branch of the Mexican revolution which has gathered the worst elements of the PRI in the past."

Baer expressed her "concern" over Cárdenas's stated position in favor of a negotiated suspension of foreign debt payments until the real amount owed is determined, and concluded with the hope that Salinas de Gortari's "modernization" program is "successful."

Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, a Mexican academic based in Washington, questioned the honesty of the "democratic" commitment of Baer and others of her ilk who, "suddenly, in 1988, became frightened of democracy in Mexico" when faced with the victories of Cardenism. Baer, feeling unmasked, rebutted that it was not the path that democracy was taking in Mexico which worried her, but the uncertainty over

whether the "Cardenista movement is truly democratic"! She added, "The democratic nature of Cárdenas is still in doubt. The jury is still out."

## **Pemex the target**

The campaign to discredit Cardenism and put an end to trade union nationalism has become an unavoidable necessity if the plans of the multinational financial oligarchy to sell Pemex to the creditor banks is to be carried out. This plan, denounced repeatedly by the international LaRouche movement and by nationalist forces inside Mexico, was succinctly presented at the Heritage Foundation symposium by Republican Sen. Phil Gramm (Texas).

"The debt-for-equity deals in Mexico have been timid" and are not what "we had hoped," said Gramm, who demanded that the Salinas de Gortari administration accelerate the exchange of state-sector companies for debt. Among those companies, said Gramm, "Pemex occupies first place." Gramm proposed that further aid to Mexico be conditioned on reforming the foreign investment law to permit foreign interests to become majority stockholders in Mexican companies. Mexico's current foreign investment law prohibits foreigners from acquiring more than 49% of any company. With this law, Mexico has managed to prevent the denationalization of its economy for decades.

Gramm demanded that Mexico join a North American Common Market, an old scheme to loot Mexican natural resources in exchange for turning the country into a massive sweatshop, and rejected as "a ridiculous excuse" the argument that the Mexican economy is too weak to participate, along with the United States and Canada, in a free market arrangement. Former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico John Gaviness seconded Gramm's call.

The political level of those attending the Heritage symposium demonstrates that for the Bush government, Mexico is key to the "restructuring of our geopolitical priorities," as one of the participants commented. Both U.S. administrations, outgoing and incoming, were represented. Among the latter were Rockefeller lawyer Robert Helander, who was under consideration for the post of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs; DEA chief John Lawn; and Robert Pastorini, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Latin America.

There were also various former government officials with bad reputations in Mexico, such as Norman Bailey, linked to the CIA network of William Colby; Constantine Menges, former CIA agent who collaborated with Oliver North in Irangate activities; Daniel James, another CIA agent; and Sol Sanders, apocalyptic "analyst" of Project Democracy.

From the congressional side were Deborah De Moss and Christian Manion, Sen. Jesse Helms's (R-N.C.) two principal advisers who are known to be preparing a new round of hearings like the notorious Mexico-bashing sessions chaired by Helms in 1986.