

## Dateline Mexico by Héctor Apolinar

### Kissinger in Mexico

*Taking a closer look at Henry Kissinger's supranational 'State Department' network in Acapulco.*

**D**uring Feb. 20-25, Henry Kissinger was definitely in his element. As the sponsor of the annual meeting of the Young Presidents Organization—a State Department-linked collection of up-and-coming American corporate execs—held in that Sodom and Gomorrah of Mexico known as Acapulco, Kissinger had an ideal forum for driving forward the New Yalta accords between Washington and Moscow. The guest speakers were Genadi Gerasimov, official spokesman of the Soviet Union's Foreign Ministry, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and of course Kissinger himself.

The theme of both Gerasimov's and Kissinger's speeches was Gorbachov and *perestroika*. Kissinger was especially fulsome in his praise of the Soviet leader, and argued the necessity for the nations and governments of the West to support and finance him.

Salinas's participation was designed to convince the audience of the advantages of the "transnationalization" of national economies—i.e., the privatization of state enterprises—in hope of convincing Mexico's creditors to assemble a financial package to "rescue" the illegitimate Salinas government.

The daily *Novedades* reported on its social page on the party given the members of the Young Presidents Organization by Kissinger and his hosts in Acapulco, Enrico and Sandra di Portanova, from Houston. It took place at the Portanovas' luxurious marble palace, with its inside lakes, jungles,

discotheques, etc. The name of the villa is Arabesque, and is the place where Henry Kissinger is regularly put up during his annual visits to Acapulco's golden beaches.

Not unexpectedly, such places as Arabesque are the regular sites for high-level gatherings of intelligence agents, international drug traffickers, jet-set playboys, Soviet agents, and so forth. Exemplary was the attendance at this latest party of two top agents of the old Anglo-American intelligence networks, Col. Frank Brandstetter and Gen. Chester Johnson.

Brandstetter is not new to the Portanova circles. He is an old friend, and part of the "establishment," whose service for British intelligence dates back to World War II. His Canadian origin explains his intimacy with William Stephenson, chief of Britain's Special Operations Executive during the war, and the main organizer of U.S. intelligence networks in Ibero-America.

Brandstetter is highly esteemed by Edgar Bronfman and family, for whose Seagrams liquor empire he works. Brandstetter has lived in Mexico for many years and acts as a sort of Seagram's ambassador-at-large in Europe, making contacts with corporate executives, government officials, etc. During the 1950s and 1960s Brandstetter worked for Canadian Pacific Hotels, a company for which he served as director and administrator of the Las Brisas hotel complex, the plushiest in Acapulco. Later, he worked as Seagram's director in Mexico.

Through these networks, Brandstetter became an intimate of the most influential and wealthiest families in the country, who have their center of operations in Acapulco. Among them is Melchor Perrusquia, an individual who lent his name to investors like Brandstetter and Portanova for the purchase of vast land tracts surrounding the port of Acapulco. For his second wedding, held in Acapulco, Brandstetter brought his friends Stanley Weintraub, Serge Semenenko, the Marquis de Zeka, the Trouyet family, and others, to the Portanovas' villa. On New Year's Eve 1987, Brandstetter could be found in the company of the Portanovas and Adella Koenig—friend of the owners of the *Los Angeles Times*, and of Nancy Reagan. At the same gathering was the most important financier of Mexico: the shady Manuel Espinoza Iglesias.

Included in this same circle is Sir Kennedy James, former British ambassador in Mexico, and Lionel Guinness, a British magnate who is a close friend of the Portanovas, Kissinger, and Espinoza Iglesias.

Kissinger's links are not only of friendship but also of business. Espinoza Iglesias was the chairman of the board of the Banco de Comercio, Mexico's largest private bank, until it was nationalized by President José López Portillo in 1982. That bank joined in an international bank to form Libra Bank Limited, which included Orion Bank, and Chase Manhattan, among others. At that time, Kissinger worked for Chase.

Another of the Portanovas' great friends in Acapulco is the Romulo O'Farril family, who control the main television chain in Mexico, Televisa. Two years ago, Televisa hired as president of its U.S. affiliate Galavision none other than the former U.S. ambassador to Mexico John Gavin, also of Mexican-Irish origin.