

Dateline Mexico by Carlos Méndez

Anti-IMF candidate challenges 'the system'

The PRI, the PRD, and factions of the PAN are desperate to stop Adalberto Rosas from becoming governor of Sonora.

Your recurring nightmare, if you are one of Mexico's banker creditors, or an official of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is that a nationally prominent politician might win a major popular election on a clear anti-IMF program designed to save Mexico from national disintegration. Such a precedent could threaten your entire political control over that country, at a most delicate moment of economic and political upheaval.

That bankers' nightmare is close to reality in the Mexican state of Sonora, which borders on Arizona, and which will hold gubernatorial elections in July 1997. The candidate in question is Adalberto Rosas of the National Action, or PAN party, who is vociferously opposed to the neo-liberal (i.e., free trade) economic policies which the IMF has imposed on Mexico; he also has put forward specific proposals for reactivating Mexico's physical economy. On Jan. 31, Rosas said his campaign will "offer an economic program to free the country from the disasters of neo-liberalism, which have ravaged our productive apparatus and generated millions of poor." He vowed to build "a political movement to break the chains of the partyocracy, to make way for the changes people are demanding."

Rosas is a well-known wheat farmer in Sonora, a former state legislator, former mayor of Ciudad Obregón, and a founding member of the Permanent Forum of Rural Producers (FPPR), as well as a key supporter of the "Bill for the Bankruptcy Reorganization of the National Economy." This proposed legislation, which has been formally submitted to

the Mexican Congress for consideration, calls for urgent steps (including exchange controls and debt moratoria) to stop the IMF's bloodletting, and to establish a new national monetary system designed to foster industrial growth and infrastructure projects.

The bill is widely known in Mexico as "the LaRouche Plan," because it is inspired by the programmatic outlook of American statesman Lyndon LaRouche. In fact, well-informed sources in Mexico have told *EIR* that the real reason that Rosas's candidacy has been vetoed by the bankers and their political front men, is because of Rosas's affinity with LaRouche's economic ideas.

In May 1996, in a speech in Hermosillo, Sonora, Rosas demanded "moratoria on the foreign debt, and on certain categories of internal debt," emphasizing that the government's priority should be "saving our productive plant." The moratoria should remain in effect, Rosas said, "until more just terms of payment are defined which do not jeopardize our national development."

Rosas also recalled that he belonged "to a minority . . . which in the midst of the Salinista euphoria [a reference to former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari], had the vision and civic courage to warn that the neo-liberal economic model would lead us to national disaster." And, Rosas continued, "on Aug. 19, 1993 . . . in a private meeting . . . we showed President [Salinas]" that his model "encouraged speculation with high interest rates, while destroying our sovereignty over credit." That dynamic, he warned then, "would lead our national credit system

to bankruptcy." Salinas "ignored our predictions," Rosas said, "and today he occupies a prominent place in the dustbin of history."

Of course, neither the ruling PRI, the opposition PRD, nor the Salinistas inside the PAN have publicly attacked Rosas's economic proposals. Rather, they have resorted to their typical thuggery. The visible leader of the dirty alliance operating against Rosas is Sonora's current PRI governor, Manlio Fabio Beltrones, who has recently gained notoriety in the U.S. and Mexican press for his ties to the drug-trafficking apparatus of brothers Carlos and Raúl Salinas, the Mexican allies of former U.S. President George Bush.

Since Rosas's popularity pretty much guarantees his victory in any fair election, Beltrones's first move, according to Mexican press accounts, was to work out a deal with the PAN national leadership for them to deny Rosas the candidacy, and to then "throw" the Sonora elections, in exchange for a gubernatorial "win" in the state of Nuevo León.

To do this, the PAN's executive committee showed up in Sonora at the end of January, to announce that it had suspended the primary election scheduled for Feb. 23, in which the PAN's gubernatorial candidate was to have been elected. Instead, the PAN leaders said they would simply appoint the candidate.

The PRD then joined in the operation, suggesting that Rosas leave the PAN and run as the PRD's gubernatorial candidate. The trap was obvious: With the PRD, Rosas would lose, but would create the margin needed for a PRI victory. Rosas made clear, however, he would neither leave the PAN nor ally with the PRD. As of this writing, dirty maneuvers continue to try to remove him from the electoral arena.