

TABLE 1

The primary types of maquiladora assembly for export

Process	Number of plants or firms	Number of employees
Selecting, preparing, packaging, and tinning food	79	12,411
Assembling clothing, textiles, and other materials	797	188,630
Shoe production and leather industry	59	8,739
Assembly of furniture, accessories, and other wood and metal products	337	45,635
Chemical products	121	18,441
Construction, reconstruction, and assembly of transportation equipment and accessories	205	199,406
Assembly and repair of tools, equipment, and non-electric parts	43	10,015
Assembly of machinery and electric and electronic articles	139	90,781
Electric and electronic materials and accessories	459	240,343
Assembly of toys and sports equipment	57	13,762
Other manufacturing industries	431	109,661
Services	158	37,566

Source: Inegi. The Maquiladora Export Industry, through February 1992.

villos dam. Such a project, however, would take away water needed for irrigating 60,000 hectares in the fertile Yaqui Valley.

Tamaulipas also has no water, and is currently in a brawl with the neighboring state of Nuevo Leon, which has its own incipient *maquiladora* plantation, for use of the El Cuchillo dam, vital for supplying water to the capital cities of both states.

Chihuahua and Baja California, the two leading states in *maquiladora* production, have already reached the limits of urban "lumpen" concentration, where the characteristic "social life" of *maquiladora* employees has become prostitution, crime, and drug trafficking. Both states are competing for the highest crime rate in the country.

The abundance of labor available for the *maquiladoras* is the direct result of the systematic looting to which the Mexican economy has been subjected since 1982, by IMF "conditionalities" designed for paying the foreign debt.

Thus, it is this fascist looting of the national productive plant that has led to the cannibalization of the Mexican labor force. If this free-trade orgy is not stopped, it can only lead to further exploitation under police-state methods comparable to the Nazi concentration camps. In some *maquiladoras*, these conditions already exist.

Mexico's Mr. NAFTA and the drug trade

by Gretchen Small

Before there was Colombia's narco-President Ernesto Samper Pizano, there was Carlos Salinas de Gotari in Mexico. A trilateral taskforce from the United States, Switzerland, and Mexico has been assembling court-quality evidence that the cocaine cartels bought up Salinas *before* he assumed the Presidency in December 1988. The \$6 million which the cartel paid to secure Samper's election as President of Colombia, looks like chicken-feed, compared to the \$80 million the cartels are said to have paid Salinas, his family, and his retinue, during Salinas's six years in office.

It is not surprising that Salinas was owned by the drug cartels; after all, he negotiated NAFTA, which sold his countrymen into slavery, with George Bush. As *EIR* documented in its September 1996 *Special Report*, "Would a President Bob Dole Prosecute Drug Super-Kingpin George Bush?," Bush oversaw the operation which created the crack cocaine epidemic in the United States.

NAFTA was in every way a Bush-Salinas baby. The two Presidents personally oversaw its drafting during their Presidencies, and, despite enormous opposition in both countries, initialled a final text of the treaty on April 12, 1992. When it became clear that Bush might not be reelected, Salinas announced that his government would accept no changes in the treaty as it had been negotiated with Bush, by the next U.S. administration.

The dope cartels, busy buying up or creating dozens of cross-border transport companies to go into action once NAFTA went through, moved for institutional control over Mexico under Salinas. President Ernesto Zedillo found, when he took office on Dec. 1, 1994, that Mexico, under Salinas, had become the primary transshipment point for cocaine to the United States; cultivation of opium and its processing into heroin had zoomed; the police forces were corrupted almost beyond repair; and the banking system, privatized under Salinas, had become a major money-laundering center for the dope trade.

EIR detailed this Salinas drug story in its *Special Report*. At that time, law enforcement authorities in the United States, Switzerland, and Mexico were already on the trail of the Salinas team, a case centered around Raúl Salinas, Carlos's brother and close confidant. Raúl had been arrested in Mexico in February 1995 on charges that he was the intellectual author

of the Sept. 24, 1994 murder of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, secretary general of the ruling PRI party. In November 1995, international investigations into his money-laundering became public, when Swiss authorities seized \$130 million in his Swiss bank accounts.

Closing in

The taskforce now appears to be closing in. On April 24, 1998, the Swiss Supreme Court ruled that the dossiers assembled by Swiss prosecutors on Raúl Salinas's Swiss bank accounts could be released to the U.S. government, because sufficient evidence had been presented to the court, including on drug-trafficking, bribery, and money-laundering, that Raúl's money was dirty.

At least three narcos jailed in the United States, including the Cali Cartel's former accountant, Guillermo Pallomari, testified to Swiss prosecutors, in the presence of U.S. officials, that the drug cartels made payments totalling some \$80 million to Raúl and company, in return for protection for their operations in Mexico, the *Miami Herald* reported on July 14. According to transcripts made available to the *Miami Herald*, Colombian trafficker José Manuel Ramos testified that when he negotiated the protection deal with Raúl in 1987, Raúl told him that his brother Carlos needed the money for his Presidential campaign. (The deal included a \$300,000 payment to Raúl for every drug plane which landed safely in Mexico.)

In June, the Zedillo government allowed a former Salinas official, now in prison in Mexico, Adrián Carrera, to testify before a U.S. grand jury in Houston, as to how he had

channeled \$2 million in payoffs from the cartels to Mario Ruiz Massieu, the Assistant Attorney General under Salinas, and others. Ruiz Massieu, brother of the murdered PRI secretary general, is believed to be in so deep with the drug trade, that he covered up for the role of Raúl in his own brother's murder.

Arrested in March 1998, Carrera pled guilty to using his posts in the Salinas administration, including warden of Mexico City's prison and commander of the Federal Judicial Police, to protect the drug trade.

As police commander, Carrera worked closely with Carlos Salinas's personal secretary, Justo Ceja. Carrera and Ceja, for example, were responsible for appointing 70% of the state police chiefs. Just who they appointed came to light in August 1996, when President Zedillo ordered a purge of state police forces. Twenty-two of the 32 state commanders, largely appointees of the Salinas duo, were arrested and charged with working for the cartels.

Ceja has roamed free, but on July 16, Mexican papers reported that the Attorney General's office has requested an arrest warrant be issued for Ceja, on charges of illicit enrichment. Prosecutors discovered that Ceja had stashed away nearly \$3 million in bank accounts, a sum inexplicable given his government salary.

The same day, *El Universal* published a picture of Ceja, in which Ceja is sitting around drinking with a group of men, including Francisco Arellano Félix, one of the leading members of the Tijuana Cartel. And, also on July 16, Mexican authorities arrested Juan Manuel Gómez Gutiérrez, the former personal accountant to Raúl Salinas.

Maquiladoras are a cancer

Excerpt from an EIR study, "The Debt Bomb Is Going to Explode In Mexico—Again," Feb. 28, 1997.

The International Monetary Fund forced Mexico to stop producing for domestic consumption, and to export like mad in order to earn foreign exchange with which to pay the foreign debt. Thus, production of market-basket items for the domestic economy shrivelled, and national employment fell with it, while the *maquiladora* sector geared up significant manufacturing production—all of it for export. Thus, while Mexico proper was losing 700,000 manufacturing jobs after 1981, employment in the *maquiladora* assembly plants grew from only 131,000 to 707,000 in 1996 [to 1,050,000 in June 1998].

It would be a mistake to consider the *maquiladoras* part of the Mexican economy, however. They may be located on Mexican soil; they may employ Mexican workers,

but they are in fact foreign enclaves on Mexican territory, which assemble goods out of imported parts and export largely semi-finished and finished products, mainly to the United States. Even the miserable slave wages that the workers are paid scarcely have an impact on Mexico: It is well documented that a large share is used by the workers for purchases across the border in the United States.

The only thing the *maquiladoras* leave Mexico, is a monstrous social and political bill for the "privilege" of providing slave labor to facilitate debt repayment. Gigantic urban ghettos of *maquila* workers and their families have spread along the border, with little or no infrastructure available. The squalor and health hazards are matched only by the slave labor working conditions that the assembly workers (in their majority, young women and girls) are forced to endure.

In short, the *maquiladoras* are far worse than a foreign enclave on Mexican soil. By all rights, they must be considered an economic *cancer*, which has grown prodigiously on the body of the Mexican economy.