

May the Empire He Served Be Buried With Him

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On July 11, at age 94, former Colombian President Alfonso López Michelsen (1974–78), renowned for having made himself Godfather of the drug trade, finally died.

The corpse of Colombia's courageous Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, murdered on orders of the drug cartel on April 30, 1984, was not yet cold, when López Michelsen met in Panama with the kingpins of the Colombian drug trade on May 6, and returned with an ultimatum for then-President Belisario Betancur: In return for their bringing 3 billion narco-dollars into the country, the traffickers should be granted amnesty, and welcomed in as members of Colombia's business elites and political parties. Extradition to foreign countries to face drug-trafficking charges, in particular, must be eliminated. Otherwise, the country would be plunged into ever worsening narco-terrorist acts.

The Andean Labor Party and the National Anti-Drug Coalition, associated politically and philosophically with U.S. statesman Lyndon LaRouche, launched a worldwide campaign exposing the stratagem of López Michelsen and his narcos as a transparent attempt to formally install a narco-regime in Colombia. Already in the 1982 elections, the Andean Labor Party, with its campaign against "the chicken who lays coca eggs," had played a catalytic role in defeating López's bid to win a second term as President. In his last two books, *Parábola del Retorno* [Parable of the Return] and *Palabras Pendientes* [Pending Words], López Michelsen virulently attacked LaRouche's associates in Colombia, especially the author of this article.

On July 26, 1984, after several months of threats, harassment and robberies, Patricia Paredes de Londoño, a leader of the Anti-Drug Coalition, and wife of Londoño Penilla, was kidnapped in Bogota. She was freed after LaRouche mobilized his associates internationally to expose and document, far and wide, that López Michelsen was not simply a messenger for the drug mafia, but its actual Godfather.



A Benthamite Free Trader

Throughout his life, López Michelsen was an agent of Anglo-Dutch imperialism, a direct result of his being a follower of the radical Manchester Liberalism of Jeremy Bentham, better known as free trade, neoliberalism, or simply, globalization. Not only was he an undying defender of usury and domination by every kind of financial speculation, but in coherence with this doctrine, as President, he was the architect of Colombia's first marijuana "bonanza." His Finance Minister, Rodrigo Botero Montoya, carried out the first economic "opening," and thereby bankrupted Colombian agriculture. That created the conditions in which "emerging businessmen" supplied marijuana seeds and abundant credit to bankrupted farmers, particularly those who, until then, had been growing cotton in many regions of the Atlantic Coast.

López built up his fortune serving as a lawyer to large foreign corporations, to the detriment of national companies. For example, López fired Mario Galán—father of Luis Carlos Galán, a hard-line anti-drug Presidential candidate assassinated by the cartels in 1989—as head of Colombia's national oil company, ECOPETROL, because Galán senior insisted that Colombia should increase its refining of oil, which was not to the liking of the big foreign oil companies. At the same time that he destroyed the nation's physical economy (industry, agriculture, and infrastructure), López Michelsen legalized financial flows from illegal activities, establishing the "sinister window" at the Bank of the Republic (the central bank), where money could be deposited "no questions asked," thus creating the country's first great drug-money laundromat.

López's adopted "political son" was also imposed by the drug mafia as President: Ernesto Samper Pizano. Samper was a propagandist for López's drug legalization proposals, and he continued López's tradition of giving ever greater economic and political power to the drug traffickers.

López was a demagogue and sophist, whom the oligarchy in Colombia held up as a man who made the country think—that is, to think of things unthinkable for the general welfare of the human race, such as the legalization of drugs, and surrender to the demands of the narco-terrorists. In his book *Palabras Pendientes*, López insisted: There is no other solution to the drug trade problem; either drugs are legalized, or we go to Hell. And, indeed, under what López Michelsen represented until now for Colombia, we have gone to Hell.

The good news is that LaRouche's battle against the Anglo-Dutch empire is yielding fruit, in the midst of the systemic and terminal crisis of the international monetary and financial system associated with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. It is time to bury, once and for all, worldwide, the system which López Michelsen embodied in Colombia.