

## Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

### Alemán moves to legalize casinos

*The drug lobby is trying to get a toehold in Mexico through a restoration of legalized gambling.*

Mexico's Tourism Minister, Dr. Rosa Luz Alegría, announced in a Dec. 10 interview that her ministry was "studying the possibility of installing legal gambling games on our borders [with the United States] . . . as a means of attracting more tourists."

Mexican politician circles responded with shock and outrage. "She can't be thinking seriously about the possibility of establishing casinos in Mexico," the Mexico City daily *El Periódico* wrote. "She must recall that . . . none other than General Lázaro Cárdenas himself, the pinnacle of our Revolution, once and for all dismissed that risky option for attracting tourism."

*El Periódico* was referring to the fact, known to every Mexican schoolchild, that gambling and casinos have been banned in Mexico since the country's most popular president of the century, Gen. Lázaro Cárdenas, threw the drug-linked international financial interests behind casinos out of the country in the late 1930s. President Miguel Alemán tried to institute these mob activities during his 1946-52 term, as a favor to his drug-linked backers, but he had to back down in the face of a nationalist outcry.

Rosa Luz is making the strongest pitch for gambling since the days of Alemán. Mexico's political commentators are amazed at the fact that a woman so closely identified with President José López Portillo should be articulating pro-

grams associated with Alemán and against López Portillo's policies. López Portillo has repeatedly proclaimed his total opposition to legalized gambling as an anathema to his administration's commitment to capital-intensive industrial growth. But Dope, Inc. has hopes of bullying and blackmailing his assured successor, PRI party presidential candidate Miguel de la Madrid, into granting them a foothold in the Mexican economy. They are making particular use of a group of Alemán-linked advisers to de la Madrid who are grouped in the PRI party think tank IEPES, and who openly favor Malthusian policies styled after Jimmy Carter's *Global 2000 Report*.

Besides pushing economic policies divergent from López Portillo's, the Alemán crowd is doing everything possible to weaken the PRI party structure so that there will be no institutional opposition to their pro-drug line. This has impelled the PRI's octogenarian labor fox, Fidel Velásquez, to remind PRI congressmen of the primacy of the labor sector within the party apparatus, and warn them to push labor's legislative initiatives. Velásquez issued untempered threats to politically destroy any anti-worker congressmen. "There are enemies within the PRI, and we will not slacken in the face of traitors," Velásquez pronounced. "We will destroy the political career of PRI members who oppose our initiatives. . . . We will point them out

as enemies of the revolution."

Likewise, the top leader of the oil workers of Mexico, Joaquín Hernández Galicia, surprised Mexico's politicians by reading the riot act to Miguel de la Madrid when he brought his campaign to Mexico's oil fields in Tampico last week. While looking directly at de la Madrid, Galicia denounced those former Mexican presidents who had been mortal enemies of organized labor—and Miguel Alemán, of course, was at the head of the list. "Alemán instituted corruption in the industry, through which a handful got rich overnight," Galicia intoned. "He put in phony union leaders; he denied us opportunities for training."

Galicia ended with a warning: "I am loyal to my friends, and I will bare my chest for them. And my friends will bare their chest for you."

On the scene observers report that de la Madrid put aside his prepared speech in the face of this strong labor pressure, and expressed his "thanks to my friend Galicia, who spoke the way a friend should speak—frankly, honestly."

Galicia's explicit accusation against an ex-president who is still alive stirred up a hornets' nest of speculation in Mexico. Most have interpreted it as a signal that the Mexican labor movement will not stand by while the Alemán crowd continues to take up positions of power in the de la Madrid camp.

López Portillo himself signaled a similar outlook in a speech a few weeks ago. "There are those who want internecine warfare to destroy Mexico," the President charged, "since they object to the peace which reigns in our national life in the midst of a world in crisis."