

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menendez

Revolution in the making?

British intelligence circles want to see violent uprisings sweep throughout Mexico by no later than early summer.

My personal view is that it would be no surprise if a series of popular uprisings began all over the country. These could lead to government repression, and then to a state of virtual anarchy culminating in a military takeover."

These are the words of an unnamed Western banker cited by the *London Times* Jan. 25. Titled "Mexican Powder Keg—But Will There Be a Match?", the article engages in speculation of whether "right-wing" peasants or "left-wing" students will ignite the coming revolution. With 100 percent inflation and popular anger rising, "soon the army will have to take to the streets," the *Times* concludes.

This type of so-called prediction has indeed become the order of the day in British intelligence mouthpieces around the world. The same outlets which last year loudly demanded that Mexico submit to the austerity dictates of the International Monetary Fund are now measuring the "revolutionary" effects of such austerity. The failure of the last OPEC meeting to stabilize world oil prices is being hailed by the same sources as coming at an opportune time for the expected disintegration of this country (see Special Report).

A British Empire propaganda sheet in the United States, the *New York Post*, noted on Jan. 26 that the new collapse of oil prices "could plunge Mexico on our border into bloody revolutions." The daily further commented that there is no reason to fear that Mexico could liberate itself from such price manipulations because the coun-

try "is largely shielded now by curbs imposed by its new *de facto* government, the International Monetary Fund [emphasis added]."

A national fascist movement is now emerging, based on middle-class sectors and backward peasants. At the end of January, a thousand businessmen gathered in the city of Toluca to hear rabble-rousing speeches against the de la Madrid government's supposed attempts to take the country to "socialism."

Organized by the Friedmanite National Confederation of Chambers of Commerce (Concanaco) and addressed by extreme "free enterprise" ideologues of the Coparmex and CCE business associations, the meeting was in the vein of the "Mexico in Liberty" forums last year which vilified the López Portillo government for its "pro-socialist" tendencies. CCE leaders charged that the new government wants to destroy merchants as López Portillo expropriated bankers. Panicked by 100 percent inflation and steep taxes on gasoline and consumer purchases, the audience gave clear signals that it is rapidly moving to the right.

That a fascist popular movement is in the making was further evidenced by the high profile which José Angel Conchello, former president of the PAN right-wing party, played in the meeting. Conchello's presence signaled that oligarchically oriented business groups are rapidly becoming militant. During his 1976 presidential campaign, Conchello, a fervent defender of the IMF, publicly proposed

that the policies of Hitler's Finance Minister Hjalmar Schacht be carried out in Mexico.

Although sectarian leftist groups are striving to take advantage of the population's anger, right-wing groups such as the PAN are gaining more adherents. As I previously reported, the PAN and the PDM party, the descendant of the 1930s fascist Cristero movement, made substantial gains in municipal elections last month.

Most recently, these two parties have gone to the population to denounce former President López Portillo and his closest associates for all of Mexico's ills and demand a judicial investigation of former officials' personal finances. On Jan. 26, PAN congressman Carlos Chavira took to the front pages of the press to demand an investigation of labor boss Fidel Vélezquez and other labor leaders' "corruption".

This campaign is having a drastic effect in the most backward rural areas of the country. Sources here report that members of the PRI in the states of Jalisco and Morelos are deserting the party en masse to join the PDM. Explaining the difficulties in rallying his district for an anti-IMF campaign, a PRI congressman told me that "In the district where I was elected last summer, there's no one left with the PRI. I'm alone."

The *New York Journal of Commerce* emphasized Jan. 28 that "Virtually everybody has been disappointed by Mr. de la Madrid's timidity about public investigations of corruption in the administration of predecessor José López Portillo."

Highly reliable sources report that some London and New York bankers may be blackmailing President de la Madrid to order a witch-hunt against the former President in exchange for further international credit.