

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

Taking AIM at Mexico

The PAN seems to be losing electoral ground; will U.S. journalists cover for a PAN turn toward violence?

The National Action Party (PAN), which a month ago had thought that it might be able to take the governorship of Baja California Norte from the ruling PRI party in elections Sept. 4, is now struggling to maintain its chances of winning the state capital of Mexicali.

The PAN had moved onto the offensive in other recent state-level elections with charges of government corruption and misdeeds. In Baja it was thrown on the defensive when statements of avowedly pro-Hitler PAN leader José Angel Conchello became a leading campaign issue.

The party which made Conchello's Nazi leanings household knowledge was the Mexican Labor Party (PLM), and PLM activity in the elections is termed by observers the decisive element undercutting the PAN.

"The PRI has had an unexpected ally in the PLM," wrote the political gossip column of the leading Mexico City daily, *Excelsior*, Aug. 31. "Throughout Baja California [the PLM] has stated by all means at its disposal, 'A vote for the PAN is a vote for fascism.'"

A cartoon appearing a week before in *El Sentinela* of Tijuana depicted a tattered hobo on the ground with the letters "PAN" across his chest. A big lump on his head bore the label "PLM." The bum, rubbing the lump, was muttering "And now they send me Conchello." A cartoon in the Tijuana paper *Baja California*, showed Conchello dressed as Hitler, right hand holding a whip, the left raised in a Heil Hitler salute. The caption: "If they call

me a Nazi again, I'll kill them." As is known to most readers of the paper, Conchello had thrown some punches at a PLM official when confronted on the Nazi issue earlier.

Issues of Mexican history are much more live to people in Mexico than parallel historical questions in the United States and many other countries. One example in Baja was the effort of the PAN to counteract the damaging call a year ago of PAN congressional candidate, Alfredo Arenas, for Mexico to sell Baja to the U.S. to pay Mexico's foreign debt. Not denying that Arenas had made such a call, the PAN issued leaflets with a fraudulent quote suggesting that mid-19th century hero and President Benito Juárez had similarly called for dismemberment of the Mexican republic. The PRI was able to polemicize that the PAN was desecrating the memory of one of Mexico's greatest heroes.

Across the border, Will Wertz, a spokesman for the National Democratic Policy Committee of *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche, held press conferences charging that the PAN in the north of Mexico was receiving covert aid from the State Department and the FBI. His call that the U.S. government cease any such intervention into Mexican internal affairs was rebroadcast and reprinted by several outlets in Baja and subsequently, in Mexico City.

The PAN, nervous that its momentum from earlier elections could be broken in Baja, is now preparing the ground for violence. The argu-

ment: "We attempted to bring about change through democratic means, but the PRI frustrated our efforts. Violence is our only recourse." PAN operatives have already begun to make threats against the physical safety of PLM organizers, according to PLM officials.

A U.S. group called Accuracy in Media (AIM) may be helping the PAN along in this transition. AIM's Daniel James, in the group's August newsletter, argues that "a communist infrastructure already exists in Mexico" through a PRI-communist alliance, and that "to preserve its power monopoly in the long term the PRI must cripple or destroy the right politically as it has economically."

James told an interviewer that he was watching the Baja elections very closely, and that indeed things were going badly for the PAN. He tried to put a better face on the situation by saying that "as long as the PAN gets over 20 percent, it will keep up the momentum" going into other regional elections in the fall; but he suggested that a defeat for the PAN would be proof that the "communist takeover" was not going to be shaken by democratic means, and warned, "Mexico may be close to a catastrophic civil conflict."

James has a 25-year career as one of Washington and Mexico City's least-camouflaged spooks, though whether he reports to the FBI, the CIA, or the State Department, has never been established. He was a featured speaker at the June 2-3 Houston conference on Mexico sponsored by Henry Kissinger and the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, and will be so again at an Oct. 13-14 AIM seminar in Houston. He is reportedly close to the "right-wing social democrat" circles of Jeane Kirkpatrick and Michael Novak.