

# The PAN's march to terror and violence

by Valerie Rush

The PAN combines three years of escalating mob violence, arson, and storm-trooper assaults with more specialized, hard-core terrorist connections. This is the record of the party which is now boasting that it has put 60,000 men into paramilitary training and is completing a first round of armament:

**July-August 1982:** PAN activists blocked roads throughout Sonora, and burned the election office of Caborca, to intimidate election boards meeting to certify results of July balloting.

**Feb. 24, 1983:** 150 PAN thugs were deployed into Ciudad Obregón, Sonora, to prepare a campaign entrance for PAN gubernatorial candidate, Adalberto Rosas. The squadristi busted up a 3,000-person meeting of the Mexican Labor Party (PLM) in the central market. The attack was directed by **Leonardo Reichel Urroz**, a self-proclaimed homosexual, who participated in left terrorist activity as a member of the People's Armed Revolutionary Forces (FRAP) in the 1970s; and by PAN women's leader **Concepción Retamoza de Figueroa**.

**March 11, 1983:** The same PAN figure, Concepción Retamoza, showed up at the El Quinto school outside Ciudad Obregón with three others and incited students to support a group inside the city, headed by **Ramiro García Godoy**, who had just taken over several building sites. García Godoy was, with Reichel Urroz, a member of the FRAP in the 1970s. Eight vehicles supplied by the PAN, including the personal car of **Claudio Dabdoub**, Rosas's campaign manager, carried the students into town, where they looted and stoned several stores and attempted to storm the municipal building. The governor was forced to dispatch 600 anti-riot police to contain the violence.

**Aug. 27, 1983:** Two thugs who had served as bodyguards for U.S. consul Terry Hansen and PAN mayor Casimiro Navarro, were arrested by state police for armed threats against the lives of Mexican Labor Party organizers in Hermosillo, Sonora. Papers found on the gunmen showed they were involved in the formation of a Central America-styled death squad, called "Death to the Corrupt Ones."

**September 1983:** PAN rioters in Nuevo Laredo stormed the offices of a local paper linked to the Mexican Workers' Confederation (CTM) and destroyed the presses. The mob moved on and burned the home of the editor.

**Nov. 27, 1983:** The PAN sent squadristi linked to hard-core Nazi groups such as the MURO into the streets during

municipal elections, where they seized and burned ballot boxes throughout the day. Only the presence of the army in some polling places prevented more serious disorders. **Alejandro Cañedo**, head of the PAN in Puebla, acknowledged that the thugs had been armed. Asked about reports that PAN thugs had been seen on election day carrying high-powered weapons, Cañedo replied calmly: "This just means that in our country there are lots of arms."

**Dec. 31, 1983:** A Mexican Labor Party leader in Sonora, Professor Juan Pérez Gil, was savagely and repeatedly knifed in the abdomen by an agent of the PAN, linked to drug-traffickers, in the Sonora town of Navojoa.

**Dec. 29, 1984:** In its most highly publicized riot, dress rehearsal for what is planned in Sonora this summer, a PAN mob of nearly 2,000 attacked and burned down the mayor's office of the city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila, on the U.S.-Mexico border. Over the preceding days, PAN agents had blocked off the bridges going across the border to Eagle Pass, Texas. The mob also set fire to the city's newspaper and freed all prisoners in the local jail. On Dec. 31, police in Eagle Pass announced they had found 28 empty gun and ammunition boxes on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande. Calm was restored only when the army was called in. Casualties: one dead.

**Jan. 1, 1985:** The PAN continued its rampages in Coahuila state. PAN mobs occupied municipal buildings in Escobedo, Parras, and Monclova, and in one town, kidnaped the municipal president, a member of the PRI party, stripping him and tying him to a tree for several hours.

Where is the PAN now getting its guns and training? Investigators have enough leads into direct, hard-core terrorist capabilities to send out a red alert all along the border. Starting in October 1982, security sources on both sides of the border confirmed that the PAN was in contact with Alpha 66 cadre, who had established training camps in southern California and were training Mexicans for terrorist activity.

In the summer of 1983, a large flow of guns into Sonora, running through PAN-controlled border points such as San Luis Río Colorado, was traced to agents of the FALN and American Indian Movement, exploiting contacts among the border-straddling Papago tribe of Indians.

In January 1985, PAN spokesmen in Agua Prieta, on the Arizona-Sonora border, revealed that "American mercenary groups" had gotten in touch with the party and offered their services for training, in the wake of the Piedras Negras incidents of late December.

gubernatorial aspirant Adalberto Rosas, said that the PAN had turned down the overtures. Sources indicate that the PAN knew the contacts were about to be blown, and went public to pre-empt a scandal.

In addition to contacts with "right-wing" terrorists, the PAN has a history of relations with two left terrorist groups which cause nightmares for U.S. border officials: the Comité de Defensa Popular (CDP) in Ciudad Juárez, and the Tierra y Libertad squatters' settlement in Monterrey.