

## Dateline Mexico by Héctor Apolinar

### Who's behind the casino plot?

*Not only the drug traffickers, but the old, hard-core Nazis are in league to impose casino gambling.*

**M**exican business sources have revealed to *EIR* that a project is taking shape under the auspices of a minority sector of businessmen, to set up casinos on Mexican territory. The casino plan has met with strong objections, but the Mexican authorities have not issued a definitive opinion on the matter. Foes of the plan point out that the casinos would be controlled by the international drug trafficking mafia—for whom the casinos are an excellent laundry for dirty money—and would bring with them crime, prostitution, and the corruption of public morals. The project's defenders argue that the negative aspects must be set aside, because Mexico has to earn hard currency "wherever it may come from."

The casinos' public spokesmen are Roberto Zapata Hill, president of the National Hotel and Motel Association of the Mexican Republic, and Rafael Suárez, president of the Mexico City hotel keepers. According to Zapata, Undersecretary of the Interior Fernando Elias Calles has not said no to the project and is studying its feasibility. This particular official is a scion of the family of Mexican ex-President Plutarco Elias Calles, who was tied, with his family, to the management of various casinos in the 1920s, when they were legal. The casinos were outlawed by President Lázaro Cárdenas in 1938. The Elias Calles family held stock in the Hotel Casino de la Selva in the resort town of Cuernavaca, today owned by Manuel Suárez.

On Feb. 15, the president of the Chamber of Commerce of Acapulco, Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo, stated

that next May, during the national assembly of the National Federation of Chambers of Commerce, President Miguel de la Madrid will be asked to authorize gambling casinos. Torreblanca stated that he and a group of businessmen are doing a study which shows that "casinos would bring great economic benefits to the country because they would capture hard currency," and he warned, "we will not allow speculations or absurd theories" about the setting up of casinos.

Torreblanca's threat is due to the broad opposition to casinos not just in the government but also in the national business community. According to sources, the businessmen have discussed several projects for establishing casinos, and they all agree that they would be hotbeds for crime. One group is proposing to select isolated places for setting up casinos, specifically suggesting the Island of Cozumel, in the Caribbean, and Cape San Lucas, in Baja California South.

On Feb. 14, the mayor of Acapulco, Adm. (ret.) Alfonso Argudin Arcaraz, came out in favor of casinos stating: "I think that Acapulco casinos would be beneficial." The mayoralty of Acapulco is an asset of the political-economic group of the recently deceased ex-President of Mexico Miguel Alemán Véldez, who was considered the owner of Acapulco.

Both Plutarco Elias Calles and Miguel Alemán are considered as the "founders" of modern Acapulco because of the big investments they made there. In the 1940s, Acapulco was turned into the capital of the mafia of

Meyer Lansky, who poured money into tourist facilities in the port via the legendary gangsters Benjamin Siegel, Virginia Hill, and Alfred Cleveland Blumenthal. The personal fortune of former President Alemán flourished as he helped ease the investments of the U.S.-based mafia in Mexico, investments which had the objective of "laundering" drug dollars.

Miguel Alemán had other connections. He was reported by the U.S. intelligence service as a collaborator of Nazi espionage in Mexico during World War II. On Sept. 15, 1941, the official of the Intelligence Division of the Office of Naval Operations of the Navy Department in the U.S. embassy in Mexico, informed his superiors that "the Minister of Government, Miguel Alemán, who was Avila Camachos's campaign manager, and who was always been friendly with the Germans and Japanese, is reported to be now more strongly under Nazi influence, due to his infatuation with Hilda Krueger, German movie actress" (declassified document NN 730032).

All the mayors of Acapulco have been handpicked by Miguel Alemán Véldez, with the sole exception of Jorge Joseph (1960), who only lasted 10 months in the job, when he was ousted by a movement financed by the Aleman crew.

Torreblanca's and Argudin's statements are part of a propaganda campaign to convince the citizenry about how good casinos are. Also part of this strategy are the long reports which started running on Feb. 11 in the country's main newspaper, *Excelsior*, by reporter Victor Payan. Payan used to be chief of "public relations" for drug trafficker Arturo Durazo Moreno, ex-director of the Mexico City police (who is in jail in Los Angeles, California). It seems he still is.