

Dateline Mexico by Héctor Apolinar

The PRI becomes bankers' prisoner

The overt takeover of the ruling party by its bankers' faction has made it even more difficult for its candidate.

Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) continues traveling down the road to political suicide.

During the late March swing PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari, made through the state of Chihuahua, it became apparent that a political deal had been made to give control over his candidacy and probable future presidency to a conglomerate of Mexico's most powerful financiers.

These robber barons and their political front men include Antonio Ortiz Mena, ex-president of the Inter-American Development Bank; Miguel Alemán Velasco, president of Televisa TV network; Agustín Legorreta Chauvet; Manuel Espinoza Yglesias's so-called Puebla Group, and a major faction of the Monterrey Group.

The deal extends over the border. According to several sources, it also locks Mexico into a "North American Common Market," in which the once-proud republic will be reduced to a slave-labor camp churning out cheap exports for the United States and Canada. Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, promoted this kind of integration, while making it clear that Mexico would never develop into a technologically advanced industrial power.

Salinas de Gortari accepts Mexico's destiny as a sweat shop. His ideaman, Héctor Aguilar Camín, declared, in a speech reprinted in the April issue of *Nexus* magazine, "Opening up to the outside implies a new era of commercial, financial, and technological dependency on the United States."

Salinas's submission to the financial oligarchy was proven in Chihuahua. That state is dominated by the National Action Party (PAN), favored and aided by the Reagan-Bush administration. It had been expected that the PAN would mobilize in Chihuahua in protests against Salinas. This would have seriously damaged his presidential credibility.

Salinas's ability to hold the country together had just been severely challenged in the La Laguna region of the neighboring state of Coahuila. There, the majority of the farmers booed and repudiated him, due to the criminal economic policy he has imposed during the past five years as secretary of planning and budget. These farmers, traditionally solid supporters of the official PRI, rallied by the tens of thousands in support of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a former PRI leader making his own presidential bid.

The PAN let Salinas off the hook. Neither the party nor its presidential candidate Manuel J. Clouthier made any show of force. The reason: The Chihuahua Business Group, commanded by banker Eloy S. Vallina, is the real power behind the PAN in Chihuahua. The Chihuahua Group financed the "PAN insurrections" of 1983 and 1985, to "punish" the government for having nationalized the private banks in 1982.

The Chihuahua Group owes its economic fortune to the political favoritism given it by Antonio Ortiz Mena since his first term as Mexico's finance secretary in the 1950s. Thus, when it became known that Ortiz Mena had gained control over Salinas's can-

didacy, the Chihuahua Group simply ordered its PAN employees not to do anything that could weaken Salinas.

In exchange, Salinas certified his full political support for Chihuahua Gov. Fernando Baeza. Baeza is a Chihuahua Group asset inside the PRI, who had been blacklisted by the Salinas camp for having supported a competing candidate (government secretary Manuel Bartlett) during the battle for the PRI presidential nomination.

Salinas agreed to fix the elections so that the PAN would win a lot of seats in the senate and chamber, as the "political guarantee" Wall Street wanted for a few investments it could make in Mexican hotels and sweat shops. Salinas promised the key seats in his cabinet, including planning, finance, and government to peons of Ortiz Mena and the late President Miguel Alemán.

The House of Deputies will be in the hands of Guillermo Jiménez Morales, ex-governor of Puebla and political tool of the Espinoza Yglesias group; while the Senate will fall to Alfonso Martínez Domínguez, who will act in the name of the Monterrey Group. Government secretary Bartlett will be allowed to survive as Salinas's foreign minister in return for making sure the election results come out right. He will also be protected from being exposed in ongoing criminal investigations of his former aide, Antonio Zorrilla Pérez, once head of the Federal Security Directorate.

The rehabilitation of the Ortiz Mena-Alemán group puts to rest, at least for now, Salinas's promise of a "Mexican perestroika" to clean out the PRI "old guard." Political relics got many posts which early Salinas backers had expected to get. The real purge was against all identified with ex-President Luis Echeverría, that is, PRI leaders who refuse to commit genocide or surrender Mexico's future.