

Andean Report by Valerie Rush

Venezuela's CAP, 'State Dept. agent'

Under the three most recent governments, the country has been looted dry, says Venezuelan Labor Party candidate.

With national elections but four months away, denunciations of ruling party presidential candidate Carlos Andrés Pérez as an agent of the U.S. State Department are causing shock waves in Venezuela. Few Venezuelans are unaware of former President (1974-79) CAP's long years of service at the feet of the U.S. financial establishment and its representatives in Washington, and yet the opposition COPEI party has been too busy squabbling internally to effectively organize against the Democratic Action (AD) candidate.

A declaration issued Sept. 1 by presidential candidate Alejandro Peña Esclusa of the newly registered Venezuelan Labor Party (PLV), has received widespread coverage throughout the national media, with at least two respected dailies, *El Mundo* and *El Nacional*, devoting their headline coverage to the accusation that CAP is a State Department pawn.

The declaration, which also contains Peña's programmatic proposals for reversing Venezuela's severe economic crisis, was submitted to the media after Peña's registration as a candidate before the Supreme Electoral Council, which had denied the PLV its legal status as a national political party for more than a year before being forced to reverse its decision in late August. Significantly, the only vote in the Council against the PLV's legalization was CAP's AD party.

The Peña declaration, entitled "Venezuela Needs a Truly Nationalist Government," describes how Venezuela "has been the object of the great-

est looting in Ibero-American history" under the consecutive governments of Carlos Andrés Pérez, Luis Herrera Campins, and currently Jaime Lusinchi. By heavily and unnecessarily indebting the nation while permitting flight capital of up to \$40 billion, charges Peña, these three Venezuelan rulers effectively prevented industrialization, while enabling the creditor banks—and their puppets inside Venezuela—to steal the oil revenues blind. "Today, Venezuela is more indebted than ever, and the great majority of Venezuelans lives in the most abject misery.

"As if that weren't enough, now that the coffers are bare and they can no longer loot at their pleasure, the banks and their puppets want to exchange the debt for the national patrimony. They want to use the debt as a mechanism for seizing the oil, the iron, the aluminum, and national territory itself. This practice of colonial domination is part of the 'structures of sin' which Pope John Paul II denounced in his encyclical 'On the Social Concerns of the Church' . . .

"A Carlos Andrés Pérez government would be no different, although CAP offers a nationalist and Third-Worldist facade. In fact, CAP has repeatedly functioned as an essential pawn of the U.S. State Department in dirty U.S. operations.

"It is no accident that each time the State Department organizes a destabilization in Latin America, the name of CAP is immediately offered up as a mediator. Such was the case for Haiti, and again for Panama where,

coordinating with Elliott Abrams and following the recommendations of the financial oligarchy that runs Washington, he has done everything possible to force out General Noriega, of course, in disguised form so as to not to let it appear as a Yankee strategy.

"On repeated occasions, CAP has gone in search of approval for his candidacy from the Americas Society presided over by David Rockefeller, the same Rockefeller who boasts of being the owner of Venezuela (*little Venice*), and who also controls the bank that coordinates the Venezuelan foreign debt, Chase Manhattan Bank.

"CAP's position and that of his advisers regarding the foreign debt and the International Monetary Fund is well known, namely to negotiate, or rather beg, for better conditions, without declaring a debt moratorium or taking sovereign unilateral positions. It is precisely this attitude which has permitted the looting of Venezuela, and it is the attitude the Socialist International expects of its favorite.

"That CAP is conducting a presidential campaign designed to convince Wall Street and Washington—more than Venezuelans themselves—does not mean that he defends the Christian values of Western civilization; for CAP, there is no difference between supporting euthanasia and abortion champion Michael Dukakis, and receiving the support of Fidel Castro."

Peña's declaration concludes by identifying the inability of both CAP and his "opponent" in the COPEI Eduardo Fernández to defend Venezuelan national sovereignty. Further, both lack the credibility, charges Peña, to conduct a genuine war against the narco-terrorism plaguing the continent. Therefore, concludes the PLV candidate, a government by either of them will pose a serious threat to the security and defense of the nation.