

PAN's Rosas urges debt moratorium for Mexico

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In a May 1 speech given in Hermosillo, Sonora before leaders and activists of the National Action Party (PAN), Sonora gubernatorial pre-candidate Adalberto Rosas López urged an immediate declaration of "moratorium on the foreign debt, and on certain categories of internal debt" in Mexico. He emphasized that "we must have the courage and moral conviction of statesmen, to recognize that the evil of usury has put the entire national credit structure into bankruptcy."

Rosas insisted that the priority of all government policies should be "to rescue the productive plant" of the nation, which necessitates that "said moratorium be kept in force until conditions of just payments, that will not endanger national development, can be defined." Rosas's speech, published in full by the daily *El Imparcial* of Sonora, and the subject of detailed commentary by *Excelsior* economic columnist José Neme Salum, fell like a bombshell.

In fact, Rosas's statement shook not only the highest levels of the PAN national leadership, but the entire political party structure in Mexico, in particular, the ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), at a moment when all the parties are internally split over economic policy. Some factions are proposing to intensify the neo-liberal, i.e., free trade, economic model that led Mexico to disaster under the Presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-94); others are proposing to abandon it, but, like Hamlet, without risking a step into the "unknown." Rosas, however, was explicit on the path to be taken: "Enough half-heartedness! We must say what we think of the foreign debt. . . . The people are demanding that our party take a stand. . . . We must build a new nation, an economy custom-made for Mexicans. It will have to be protectionist. . . . We cannot open up our borders so that they can rip us up and make us slaves to the greed of the big speculators."

Rosas is more than a regional PAN leader. In 1994, he sought his party's nomination for President of Mexico. He is recognized for his opposition to neo-liberal economic policies and to the North American Free Trade Agreement. And, as a coordinator of the Permanent Forum of Rural Producers, of which he is a founding member, Rosas has endorsed the Bill to Reactivate the National Economy, ap-

proved by the second national forum "Yes, There Is Life After the Death of the IMF," held in Mexico City in August 1995. His May 1 proposals are derived from that legislative proposal.

Signed by several Mexican producer and debtor organizations, and by the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement, the bill has been presented to the Permanent Commission of the Mexican Congress, and before various commissions, both of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies, concerned with the problem of the financial system's ballooning non-performing debt. None of the congressional blocs of the PAN, PRI, PRD, or PT have thus far dared to endorse the bill.

In his May 1 speech, Rosas proudly stated that he forms "part of a minority of citizens who, in the midst of the Salinas euphoria, had the vision and the civic courage to warn that the economic policies derived from the neo-liberal model would lead us to national disaster. . . . On Aug. 19, 1993, accompanied by a group of producers at a private meeting held in Guaymas port . . . we made [President Carlos] Salinas see" that his economic model "promoted speculation through high interest rates." This dynamic, Rosas warned Salinas, "would lead us to the bankruptcy of the national credit system." And yet, said Rosas, Salinas "ignored our forecast, and today we occupy a prominent place in the dustbin of history."

No to the privatization of Pemex

Just a few weeks ago, the national leadership of the three principal Mexican political parties presented their proposals for resolving the pressing problem of the non-performing debt of producers, homeowners, businessmen, and debtors in general. They limited themselves to proposing forgiveness of some of the onerous interest accrued, and "securitization" of the overdue debts—that is, packaging them for sale on the derivatives market! The PAN congressional bloc, in particular, proposed legislation that would back the securitization of non-performing debt with the income from "pending privatization" of state companies, such as petrochemicals, railroads, ports, and airports.

Rosas, who in his May 1 speech had condemned such partial "solutions" to the problem of non-performing debt, addressed the issue directly in a recent document entitled "Who Is Attacking Me, and Why?" Rosas wrote: "Recent proposals based on partial forgiveness and securitization of the debt, such as handing over assets like oil to pay the debt, will fail; we will be left with the debt, but without our assets, which must serve for national development. . . . We must eliminate the original evil, the structural evil, which is the practice of usury that has destroyed our productive plant."

Thus, Rosas directly opposes the policies not only of the congressional bloc of his own party, but of the current PAN governor of Guanajuato, the free-trader Vicente Fox, whom the liberal Anglo-American press and its Mexican

counterparts have been presenting as “presidential.” There is already every expectation that the party which has ruled Mexico since 1927, the PRI, will lose power in Mexico’s turn-of-the-millennium Presidential elections—or even before that, given how severely discredited it is for having servilely submitted to the neo-liberal mafia which has ravaged the country since 1982.

Fox proposes the same program of “domestic savings,” that is, stealing the last ounce of flesh to pay the foreign debt, that current President Ernesto Zedillo is adhering to, but he assures the Wall Street and London financial oligarchy that he can do it “better.” In a statement given out to the New York press, Fox, who once said that Carlos Salinas stole his neo-liberal economic program from the PAN, came out in favor of privatizing the state oil company Pemex.

The scandal he triggered, both nationwide and even inside his own party, was such that he was forced to “clarify” his statements, which only sank him further. While it is true that everything contained within the subsoil belongs to the nation, Fox said, the exploitation of those resources “is a concession by the nation” to Pemex. “I think that there could be circumstances under which privatization [of the concession], not the natural resources, would be favorable.”

In other words, while the oil is underground, it belongs to the nation, but its exploitation and refinement should be privatized!

This is not just Fox. Other prominent PANistas have unmasked themselves as well, like former Presidential candidate Diego Fernández de Ceballos, who craftily stated that “if privatization means ending the government’s factious manipulation of oil for the benefit of a few, we cannot be against privatization.”

Efraín González Morfín, another former Presidential candidate, said, “Fox’s proposal to privatize Pemex, is positive.”

Juan Manuel Gómez Morín, son of PAN founder Manuel Gómez Morín, said that the fact that Pemex should be used “for the benefit of the country . . . doesn’t mean that the state has to manage it.”

Salinismo is still alive

Rosas dedicated a part of his May 1 speech to this whole group: “During the years of Salinas euphoria, there were those who insisted that Salinas’s liberal program was the programmatic platform of our party, and that Salinas was implementing the PAN program; I always maintained that this was false. . . . There is an absolute incompatibility between the philosophy that inspires neo-liberalism and the principles of our party, which draw their inspiration from the common good. This incompatibility stems from the idea that the common good follows a Christian vision of the existence of man, and that therefore economics cannot be separate from morality, since its objective is the happiness and the ennoblement of man as the living image of God.”

On the other hand, neo-liberalism, says Rosas, “asserts that economics has no moral purpose, because man’s existence is based on the search for pleasure and the flight from pain. Thus, it argues that the market or the forces of the marketplace are the motor of the economy, and thus man is reduced to the condition of a beast.” To mix the principles of the common good with those of neo-liberalism, Rosas concludes, “is like trying to mix oil with water.” He adds, “this model requires evil individuals for its implementation, and the Salinistas met this requirement. Therefore, it is a fraud and perverse to want to continue defending economic liberalism while separating it from the corruption of the Salinases.”

Fox, who has told various debtor and producer organizations that “I do not agree with a foreign debt moratorium, because that would discourage foreign investment,” is a former employee of Coca Cola, with strong ties to the “Atlanta mafia” of Jimmy Carter, and to the “Texas mafia” of Fidel Castro’s friend George Bush. Both of them, Bush and Castro, are protectors of Carlos Salinas. This also explains Fox’s friendship with various prominent members of the São Paulo Forum, such as Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, president of the PRD; one-worldist agent Manuel Camacho Solís; and the godfather of them all, former Mexican President Luis Echeverría Álvarez—all members of the San Angel Group.

A friend to Castro

Rosas’s explosive intervention triggered an immediate response. On May 17, *El Independiente* published a document prepared, according to the newspaper, by the national executive committee of the PAN, which smears the Rosas campaign as “premature,” “destabilizing,” and with “suspicious” financing. The document proposes to “immediately halt” the Rosas campaign because it is too “risky” for “our 1997 global project.” The document curiously argues that the principal “risk” would be in confronting the current PRI governor of Sonora, Manlio Fabio Beltrones, who has made “economic and social strides.”

Beltrones is the political creature of Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios, former Secretary of Government and intimate friend of Fidel Castro. Rosas has directly identified Beltrones as the author of the cited document, “for the clear purpose of splitting our party in the state, and entangling my campaign in an artificial factional brawl inside our political organization.” Regarding Beltrones’s supposed economic successes, Rosas stated that “Sonora, like the country as a whole, is experiencing an economic and financial crisis” without precedent. “With this policy, and with the shameless apologies that his advisers are making for Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera has placed himself within the bloc of Salinista governors who seek to perpetuate the liberal economic model. . . . They have decided to politically eliminate any proposal for government that is opposed to neo-liberalism, and that is why they are attacking me.”