

Dateline Mexico by Hugo López Ochoa

Pro-drug cabal in legalization drive

A power broker in the ruling PRI, Hank González, joins with the drug-trafficking National Action Party to push legalization.

An unprecedented campaign to legalize drugs in Mexico was begun June 1 with a long article in the magazine *Siempre!* entitled "Drug Trafficking: Legalization or Capital Punishment?"

The article was written by Antonio Haas, an oligarchist from the drug-saturated northern state of Sinaloa. Haas endorses the recent statement of the U.S. "guru of conservative intellectuals" William F. Buckley, on ABC-TV's "Nightline," that "our neighbors finally realize . . . that the war against drug trafficking has not even touched the surface," and claiming that with the legalization of the drug trade, "the black markets in drugs would disappear."

Siempre! is owned by multi-millionaire Carlos Hank González, the former mayor of Mexico City (1976-82) and currently a top power broker within the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The *Siempre!* article now appears to be but one flank of a rapidly spreading campaign by political and financial networks, to push the legalization of drugs.

Hank González's personal empire is right in the middle of it all.

On June 12, the Mexican press announced with great fanfare that Hank González was heading a group of "businessmen" and "public figures" bearing the name Columbus Group. According to the press reports, the group is collaborating with Oxford Analytics, "an organization headquartered in Great Britain in which experts of Oxford and Cambridge universities participate."

Some of the most prominent members of the Columbus Group, including Hank González, breakfasted the next morning with Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid, to present the results of a study, entitled "The Latin American Perspective," which purports to express their "faith, optimism, and confidence" in Latin America.

Shortly after the meeting with de la Madrid, the Columbus Group had lunch with the presidential candidate of the ruling PRI, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who is expected to win in the July elections.

A review of the list of "businessmen" who accompanied Hank González in his meetings with the Mexican President and his intended successor, leads one to the conclusion that the Columbus Group should rather call itself "Dope, Inc.," in view of the number of prominent names that also appear in the pages of *EIR's* best-selling book *Dope, Inc., Boston Bankers and Soviet Commissars*, published in 1985 in Spanish and in 1986 in English.

One can begin with Oswaldo Cisneros, of the Cisneros empire in Venezuela, whose unsavory history occupies 16 pages in that book. It was the Cisneros family that had the circulation of the book *banned* in Venezuela.

Then there was Manuel Ulloa, former prime minister of Peru, who sued the authors of *Dope, Inc.* for libeling him—and lost. Also part of the Columbus Group is Gilberto Arias, of the infamous clan of Nazi Arnulfo Arias

in Panama. Gilberto Arias is editor of the opposition daily *Extra*, and partner in a law firm involved in the Iran-Contra arms-trafficking scandal.

And that is without mentioning that Oxford and Cambridge themselves play a leading role in the revelations that appear in the best-selling exposé on the dirty role of the United Kingdom in the drug trade. And the list goes on.

In Mexico itself, Manuel Clouthier, the presidential candidate of the "conservative" National Action Party, the PAN, has his main business holdings in the food industry, of which Hank González is the acknowledged boss in Mexico. They both are among the 300 top business figures who rule Mexico, according to Clouthier's good friend Agustín Legorreta, who, as a member of the Inter-American Dialogue, is another proponent of drug legalization.

In 1985, the Mexican Labor Party published a book on the PAN, which revealed the party's links to the Dope, Inc. mafia. The book also revealed the historic links of the PAN to the oil interests of the Buckley family, and to William F. Buckley, to whom drug legalization proponent Antonio Haas refers so admiringly. Buckley, in turn, is a regular writer for the PAN magazine *La Nación*, as is Haas.

This crowd would have plenty to worry about if Mexico geared up the war on drugs. In his pro-legalization article in Hank's magazine, Haas argues that the threat of capital punishment against drug traffickers could be directed as a "political weapon" against "any political enemy."

Haas then cites, attempting to dismiss it as a slander, a case the PAN usually hates to mention: Clouthier was caught years ago renting some of his warehouses in Sinaloa to a "businessman" storing 30 tons of marijuana.