

## Dateline Mexico by Lucía L. de Méndez

### Harvard gives Yale a hand

*With a little help from his friend Salinas, George Bush is pushing Congress to "fast track" free trade.*

On April 7, Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari began a trip to Canada and the United States to help President Bush lobby the American public on behalf of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Both Presidents are on an all-out mobilization to pressure the U.S. Congress to approve "fast track" negotiations of the free trade pact. Bush needs congressional approval by June 1.

In Houston, where Salinas was received by Bush before the Mexican President went on to Canada, Bush emphasized that "a vote against fast track is a vote against things that we all hold dear: prosperity at home and growth in other lands. It ignores the dramatic and wonderful changes in the world economy."

Throughout his trip, Salinas defended NAFTA, answering the criticisms of different opposition groups in Canada and the United States. Salinas, as well as Bush, said over and over again that the agreement will not create more unemployment in these countries, but on the contrary, will help to create more jobs.

On April 10, Salinas returned to his alma mater, Harvard University, where he made his strongest argument, consisting of a veiled racist threat: Either you approve NAFTA, or you will be swamped by a flood of illegal Mexicans who will steal your jobs. In front of more than 500 American newspapers editors, Salinas explained in his best Harvard-ese: "If you do not establish a free trade agreement with Central Europe, their citizens will not swim across the ocean

looking for jobs in the United States. If we do not get freer trade as a way to stimulate growth in Mexico, those who fear that jobs may be lost in the U.S. with a free trade agreement should be very worried about the loss of jobs in the U.S. without a free trade agreement with Mexico. The prospect of hundreds of thousands or millions of Mexicans crossing the border looking for jobs because they cannot find any in Mexico worries me and makes me work harder to make the Mexican economy grow."

Before going to Harvard, Salinas visited Canada to convince them that the trilateral NAFTA is good for them, too. He held meetings with labor leaders, business leaders, and the governors of Quebec and Ontario, many of whom oppose the free trade agreement. Salinas insisted on the same point: If the United States and Canada fail to create a trilateral trade zone, Mexico will export millions of workers rather than goods. He added, "We have nothing to fear but barriers and obstacles that are intended to protect some parties from competition and, in doing so, end up destroying creativity and well-being."

Salinas is apparently unconcerned by the fact that, under NAFTA, millions of Mexicans will work south of the border, in American-owned assembly plants known as *maquiladoras*, receiving among the lowest salaries in the world and no other labor benefits. Nor did he bother to report that U.S. companies operating in Mexico already get to keep up to 63% annual profits. Nor did he tell his audience that his administration is plan-

ning to turn over effective control of Pemex, the Mexican national oil company, to the oil multitis, in direct violation of the Mexican Constitution.

For the Mexican President and the members of his cabinet, the Constitution and the sovereignty of Mexico are things of the past. "Mexico has decided to become part of the new world order, rather than wait in isolation, watching the years go by, deprived of benefits and opportunities," Salinas explained.

But an *EIR* reporter reminded Salinas and his Harvard audience of the truth about this new world order and asked the Mexican President if it weren't true that he was following Henry Kissinger's orders to nullify the Mexican Constitution in order to facilitate a U.S. oil grab. Salinas stopped singing his own praises and became defensive: "No, the oil is off limits according to the Constitution," he blustered. "It is like your aerospace and nuclear energy programs."

Salinas's Harvard visit was also spoiled for him by the distribution of a leaflet there by the Schiller Institute, which denounced him for wanting to "bring the conditions of Peru to Mexico," a reference to the cholera epidemic now sweeping Peru because of the squalor and poverty of most of its people as a result of the policies of the International Monetary Fund.

The NAFTA accord, the leaflet argued, will similarly impoverish Mexico. It will "unleash an orgy of resource grabs, collapses in the wage scales on both sides of the border, and an explosion of virtual slave-labor U.S.-owned assembly plants below the U.S. border." President Bush, adds the leaflet, "is looking to bring the devastation he wrought in Iraq to 'our little brown brothers next door.' He may not need the U.S. Armed Forces: President Salinas is a very obedient man."