

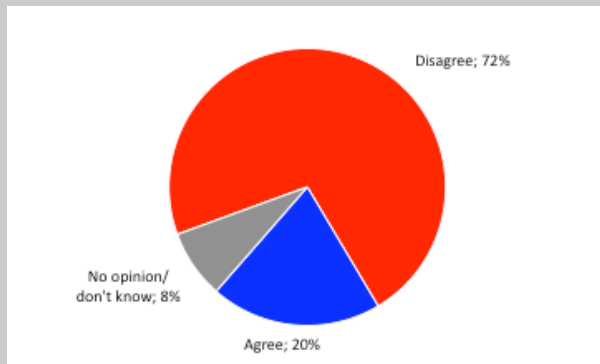
Alan Stoga, President
Daniel Wilson, Managing Director and Editor

Polls

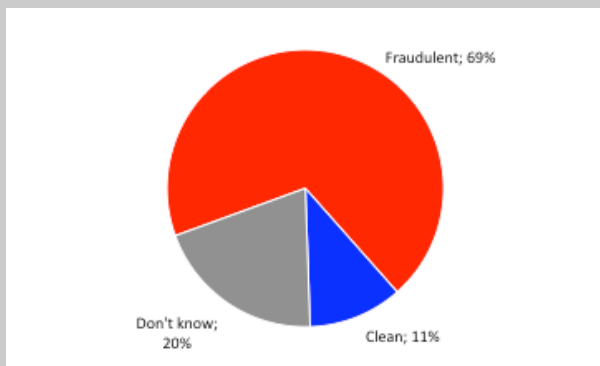
No public backing for SME union

As the government heads for a showdown with the SME electrical workers union in Mexico City, a *Reforma* poll showed little public support for the union. By 72% to 20% they believe that the SME should not get higher benefits than other workers, and by better than 6 to 1 they believe that last July's union elections were fraudulent. (*Reforma* 10/5)

Do you think that SME members should get more benefits than other workers?



Do you think the elections for president of the union were ...



Key Dates

10/18: Tabasco and Coahuila local elections
11/15: Deadline for budget approval

by 12/31: Terms end for President of Banco de México, CNDH, and two Supreme Court ministers

Confrontation looms with electrical workers union

Secretary of Labor **Javier Lozano** is expected today to refuse to recognize the re-election last July of **Martín Esparza** as president of the SME electrical workers union. The notoriously corrupt SME represents 40,000 active workers and 20,000 retirees of **Luz y Fuerza**, the state owned electrical utility that serves Mexico City and surrounding areas. Luz y Fuerza is one of the biggest black holes in the federal budget, requiring massive subsidies to cover losses. Esparza claims he won re-election vote by a margin of 352 votes, but there were more votes than voters in many districts, and no official election return was filed. Columnist **Héctor Aguilar Camín** notes, "Few unions in the world have been able to get as much for their members as the SME, and it would be a cause for celebration if it weren't for the fact that it's a completely broken company that the rest of society supports and pays for." The government appears ready to liquidate Luz y Fuerza and have CFE, the other government power company, take over its operations, and to shut down the union. The SME, which has already staged several disruptive demonstrations, has threatened to strike if the elections are declared invalid. (*Reforma* 10/5, *Milenio* 10/5)

Juanito steps aside

Rafael Acosta, aka **Juanito**, took a leave of absence for 59 days immediately after being sworn in as borough president of Iztapalapa on October 1st. The decision to step aside was made after a meeting with Mexico City mayor **Marcelo Ebrard**. Juanito said he was acting for reasons of health and so that "Iztapalapa could live in tranquility." Juanito nominated **Clara Brugada** as his minister of government, which cleared the way for her to take control of the borough government after he steps down. His supporters will get a few posts in the borough government. Noted columnist **Salvador García Soto**: "Juanito, the comic parody created by **Andrés Manuel López Obrador**, is finished; politics destroyed him. The popular personality who ridiculed [AMLO] and put the entire Mexican Left in check was finally broken. In exchange for a few public offices and startled by the machinery of power that had raised him up, he wound up ridiculed and humiliated. Thus ends one of the most folkloric and embarrassing episodes of modern Mexican politics." (*Universal* 9/29)

Federal Electoral Tribunal backs Sodi and Orvañanos victories

The Federal Electoral Tribunal unanimously ruled in favor of the two PAN candidates who won elections for borough presidencies in Mexico City on July 5th, overruling the Federal District's electoral tribunal (TEDF). The decision allowed **Demetrio Sodi** and **Carlos Orvañanos** to take office on October 1st as presidents of Miguel Hidalgo and Cuajimalpa delegations, respectively. The TEDF had ruled that the candidates had surpassed the spending limits and that new elections should be called, from which the PAN would be disqualified. The Federal Tribunal ruled that the imputed value of a Sodi televised interview during the half time of a soccer game should not be charged against his spending limits. It also ruled that the TEDF had erred in calculating the total amount of spending of the Orvañanos campaign. (*Reforma* 9/28)

PRI gets lion share of congressional commissions

After intense negotiations, the PRI emerged with 20 of the 44 commissions in the Chamber of Deputies. The PAN got 12 commissions, the PRD 6, the PVEM 3, and PT, PANAL, and Convergencia one each. The PAN kept control of key commissions including Finance, Government, and the Federal District, while the PRI got most of the other important commissions. The PRD kept Constitutional Affairs. The PVEM, which is dominated by persons with ties to the TV broadcasters, got the Radio and TV commission. (*Excelsior* 9/28)