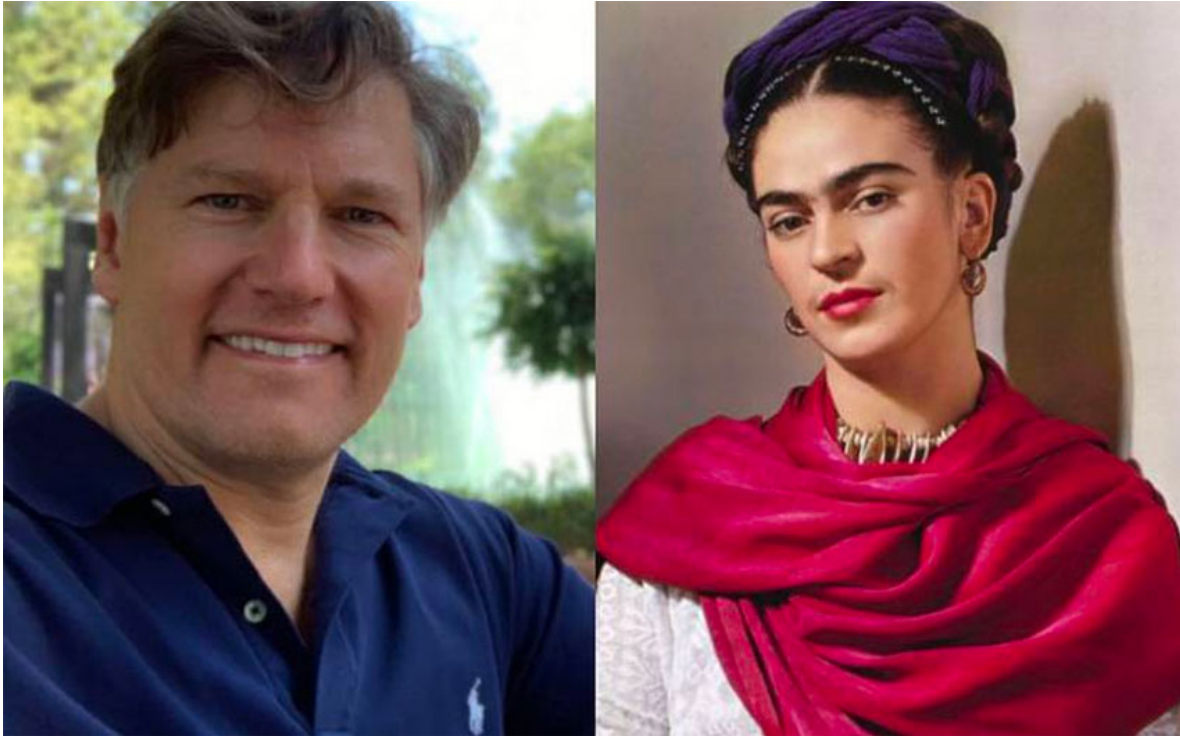


US ambassador creates a stir with criticism of Frida Kahlo for her politics

Mexico News Daily, September 3, 2019

Christopher Landau praised her bohemian spirit but questioned her 'passion for communism'



The new United States ambassador to Mexico has triggered a heated debate on Twitter after criticizing painter and cultural icon Frida Kahlo for her support of communism.

In a post featuring a photo of himself at the Frida Kahlo Museum in the Mexico City borough of Coyoacán, Christopher Landau wrote on Twitter on Sunday that he admired the “free and bohemian spirit” of the artist, adding that “she rightly became an icon of Mexico around the whole world.”

However, the ambassador stirred controversy with the second half of his tweet.

“What I do not understand is her obvious passion for Marxism / Leninism / Stalinism. Didn’t she know about the horrors committed in the name of that ideology?” Landau wrote in Spanish.

Kahlo, a 20th-century artist best known for her vibrant self-portraits, and her husband, acclaimed muralist Diego Rivera, were strong supporters of Marxism and supported Soviet leader Joseph Stalin after initially backing his rival, the revolutionary Leon Trotsky.

Stalin is held responsible for deaths of millions of people in the Soviet Union, many of whom perished in the Gulag network of labor camps.

During his exile in Mexico, Trotsky initially lived with Kahlo and Rivera at their Coyoacán home, which is now a museum commonly known as La Casa Azul (The Blue House). Kahlo, who attained international fame after her death in 1954, had an affair with the revolutionary, who was assassinated in Mexico City in August 1940.

Landau's tweet, which now has some 1,900 comments, attracted a mixed response.

Some Twitter users pointed out that the United States has a long history of intervention in the affairs of Latin American nations and other countries around the world, often to counter the rise of socialist governments.

"In the name of fighting that ideology, the U.S. killed children in Vietnam by bombing entire villages and supported dictatorships throughout Latin America," wrote user @Quetzalcoat1.

The Mexican Communist Party (PCM) responded to the ambassador by saying that "Comrade Frida was consistent with humanism, the search for democracy and freedom of Mexico's workers and people, and therefore she was a Marxist-Leninist, and of course Stalin's admirer.

"Don't show your ignorance anymore, imitating [U.S. President Donald] Trump," the PCM advised Landau.

Other Twitter users expressed support for the ambassador's comments, and some even accused the Mexican government itself of being an adherent of Marxist ideology.

Landau, who [arrived in Mexico in the middle of August](#) to take up the ambassadorial role, has posted several photos of himself visiting Mexico City attractions such as the Basilica of Guadalupe, the Museum of Popular Art and the neighborhood of Roma.

But the ambassador was unhappy with the size of the audience he was reaching and consequently – just hours before he fulminated against Frida – appealed to the Mexican Twitter community to follow his account.

"Dear Mexican Twitter friends: This is an outrage! Greece has a population of 10 million, while Mexico has 130 million. But the United States ambassador in Greece . . . has almost 150,000 followers but I [have] barely 40,000. How are we going to change it? Mexico has to be #1! #challenge," he wrote.

The tweet seemingly worked – as of 12:00pm on Tuesday, the ambassador had almost doubled his follower numbers to 78,600.

However, like his jab at Frida Kahlo, the post triggered a mixed response.

Well-known photographer Santiago Arau retorted that “the only outrage here is that your president wants to build a wall on our border,” while Twitter user @_VicenteSerrano told Landau that if he asked President Donald Trump to “offer papers to our undocumented brothers” in the United States, he would have a guaranteed one million followers in 24 hours.

Source: [Reuters](#) (en), [Expansión Política](#) (sp)