

## Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

### Unity of the left

*Five left-wing parties are joining in one electoral force; who's stirring the alphabet soup?*

The leaders of five leftist opposition groupings took Mexican political circles by surprise by announcing that they would form a single party of the left to run against the governing PRI party in 1982.

The surprise was less in the planned fusion of the groups—something of the sort had been in the cards for some time—as in the almost indecent haste of the affair. According to Heberto Castillo, head of the Mexican Workers Party (PMT), the idea “just occurred” to him a few days before the event, and he was “gratified” over how quickly the memberships went along.

It was obvious to any veteran political observer here that some strong orders “from the top” had come down. With a record of internecine squabbling rivaling any in the world, it was otherwise inconceivable that the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), the Mexican People's Party (PPM), the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), the Movement of Solidary Action and Unity (MAUS), and Castillo's PMT, had come together before protracted debate within each group.

Some important details remain to be worked out. But the Jesuit-run left newspaper *Uno más Uno* was ecstatic—“undoubtedly the most important step since the [1977] political reform,” it editorialized.

No one is saying that the left can win in 1982. But in the wake of the Mitterrand victory in France, any

“unity of the left” movement will have a propaganda boost of considerable magnitude. Furthermore, there will be significant “playback” impetus derived from the intensifying Central American conflict—the left parties involved are all vocal supporters of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan guerrillas.

The role of Heberto Castillo is key. It was Castillo who made the Aug. 15 announcement on behalf of the five groupings. And Castillo's name is surfacing repeatedly as the most likely presidential candidate of the new party.

Castillo gained greatest notoriety since 1977 as the man who insisted that Mexican oil was much better left in the ground than exploited, and if exploited, should under no conditions be used to finance in-depth industrial development. “Ayatollah” Castillo became overnight the darling of both the anti-development left press here in Mexico and the *New York Times*.

But his background represents a deeper phenomenon. Almost all the leaders of his PMT party came out of “solidarist” Christian Democratic circles of Monterrey in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This is the same milieu that hatched the famed “red bishop” of Cuernavaca, Sergio Méndez Arceo; the 23rd of September League terrorists; and the newly metamorphosed Social Democratic Party (PSD).

These connections begin to point toward the “controller” levels

of the affair. It is notable, for instance, that just before the mass political marriage ceremony last month, precisely the same list of left political operatives met with the high command of the “Theology of Liberation” forces for a summit of the “Christian-Marxist dialogue.” Méndez Arceo presided over the planning session. A few weeks later, a long letter from Pedro Arrupe, father-general of the Jesuit order, suddenly appeared in a Mexican Church newsletter urging cooperation between Christians and Marxists “in projects for the common good.”

There may in fact be another “Society of Jesus” involved, that of Jesús Reyes Heróles, the former interior minister who designed and executed the Political Reform during his 1976-79 tenure in office.

Reyes Heróles has come under increasing suspicion as his “reforms” have played into the hands of a damaging “pluralism” rather than a strengthening of republican institutions. It is widely suspected that the PCM's recent swing to self-proclaimed vanguard for homosexuals, marijuana smokers, abortion advocates, and Christian-Marxist liberationists, is in keeping with “counsel” from Don Jesús.

Several principals in the new fusion party stated that there really should have been no surprise in the sudden get-together—the idea actually dated back to the formation of the Political Reform in 1977. It is also noteworthy that Reyes Heróles was the only former PRI party president (he served from 1973-75) not to show up at the big PRI party unity banquet held at the beginning of August to bolster the López Portillo government.