

Dateline Mexico by Hugo López Ochoa

Project Democracy's new party

The Nazi-Communist insurgents have received a new boost, courtesy of Interior Secretary Bartlett.

On June 26, 1987, barely in time to permit its participation in the 1988 elections, the Mexican Federal Election Commission (CFE) gave official registration status to the new Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), an umbrella organization unifying the principal leftist organizations: the former Communist Party of Mexico, later called the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM); the Mexican Workers Party (PMT) of Heberto Castillo; and the Union of the Socialist Left.

Manuel Bartlett, interior secretary, chairman of the CFE, and himself a presidential aspirant, declared that "the government of the Republic is pleased with this fusion." In fact, the CFE burned the midnight oil to push through the paperwork on the new party's registration, since otherwise it would have been prohibited from campaigning in 1988. Why?

For presidential hopeful Bartlett, the PMS's entrance onto the electoral scene is essential. The ostensible pretext for the leftist unification was to "displace" the "rightist" National Action Party (PAN) as the second-ranking political force in the country; the PAN has greatly capitalized in recent years on discontent with government austerity measures, dictated by the International Monetary Fund. Actually, the leftist unification sets the stage for improved coordination among the Nazi-Communist (PAN-PMS) oppositions, to force the creation of a parliamentary system to replace the Mexican presidential system, in place since the 1910 revolution. Bartlett fully

shares this goal.

Under the slogan of "Integral Democracy" as the official policy of the interior ministry, Bartlett helped a series of PAN victories in several towns of Chihuahua state, in mid-1983. That same year, in the November elections in Sinaloa state, the Nazi-Communist alliance between the PAN and the PSUM was formally sealed, an alliance that became famous under the initials "PANSUM."

The PANSUM's activities peaked in the local Chihuahua elections in mid-1986, during which the Nazi-Communist opposition had propaganda back-up from U.S. networks around Sen. Jesse Helms and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Elliott Abrams—networks later identified as the illegal "Project Democracy" running the Iran-Contra deals.

With the creation of the PMS, a faction is now consolidated among the left—headed by the former PMT's Heberto Castillo—which has a perfect "understanding" with the PAN. In fact, in August 1986, Castillo made a public pact with PAN national chairman Luis H. Alvarez, then mayor of Chihuahua city, to launch a joint "national crusade for democracy." That pact ended a hunger strike that Alvarez had begun, to protest alleged electoral fraud in local elections.

Castillo jumped to fame several years ago thanks to his rabid opposition to Mexico's developing its oil reserves to boost the process of industrialization—and thanks to the reso-

nance of the *New York Times* and other media. To this very day, he insists that every economic woe the country suffers is a result of President López Portillo's decision to develop the oil reserves.

Castillo is the probable presidential candidate of the PMS. On June 22, the Nazi-Communist magazine *Proceso* published an interview with Castillo, in which he announced his willingness to accept a PMS candidacy, but only if the base were willing to follow him even unto death. Because, he said, "I am going to risk my life . . . they are going to have to kill me if there is any fraud . . . because I am really crazy, I believe that we can win."

Alvarez, the PAN's president, suffers the same insanity as his "leftist" colleague. He was actually on the verge of starvation when Castillo convinced him to drop the hunger strike, and unify their campaigns. In early July, Alvarez told media that the PAN presidential candidate "would not necessarily have to come out of PAN ranks."

Castillo and Alvarez clearly share the same fundamentalist fanaticism required to lead their troops into bloody civil war against the Mexican state.

But all is not smooth sailing for the protégés of Interior Minister Bartlett. On July 4, the national press widely published the denunciations of the Mexican Labor Party (PLM), distributed in the form of 250,000 leaflets nationwide, against the illegitimate PANSUM offspring of Bartlett and "Project Democracy." The daily *El Universal* reported that the PLM is demanding that Bartlett resign, and an investigation be launched into "Bartlett's links to Project Democracy, which seeks to destabilize, blackmail, corrupt, and overthrow governments that disagree with the arbitrary and imperialist policies of the U.S. State Department."