

The 'apostles of hypocrisy' in Chiapas

by Carlos Cota Meza

On July 1, in his fifth visit to Chiapas in recent months, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo denounced those who have turned the so-called Chiapas "conflict" into an instrument for destabilization of the nation's institutions, which is a far cry from the real problems they claim they wish to solve. In answer to the chorus of "Zapatistas" who charge that the government is promoting a "violent solution" in Chiapas, he replied: "We should not allow either messianic leaders or apostles of hypocrisy; the government does not speak out of both sides of its mouth, and it abides by dialogue, but not at the expense of legality."

The President's statement was more than an unmistakable portrait of the apostate Bishop of San Cristóbal, Samuel Ruiz, the real commander of the Zapatistas; it depicted, not unlike Francisco Goya's famous 1800 painting, *The Family of Carlos IV*, the moral vulgarity of Ruiz's entire "family."

President Zedillo was clear: Ruiz will under no circumstances be permitted to return to any mediating role in Chiapas, as some federal Congressmen have been proposing. The President recalled various of his own good-faith actions toward the Zapatistas, including when he reversed his own decisions (such as when he withdrew a February 1995 arrest order against Zapatista leader Sebastián Guillén Vicente, alias "Subcommander Marcos"; and when he reached agreements in 1994 with "certain intermediaries," who then turned around and "betrayed" him). These actions, he pointed out, went to "the limits of my constitutional mandates."

As for those "certain intermediaries": In early June, Ruiz, after being cornered into resigning from his National Mediation Commission—which immediately dissolved, proving that it was merely a product of Ruiz's messianism all along—announced that he would initiate "novel actions" in response.

Immediately, the provincial of the Jesuit Order in Mexico, Mario López Barrio, showed up in Chiapas, pressing for greater foreign intervention in Ruiz's defense. He called for "more mediation," and demanded a greater "international presence or international reaction" in Chiapas. As for Ruiz, the Jesuit said: "The Jesuit community in Mexico offers you its absolute and total support."

Greater "international presence" followed quickly. On June 16, within days of a friendly meeting between Presidents Zedillo and Bill Clinton in New York at the United Nations

Anti-Drug Summit, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told the U.S. Senate that the U.S. government "has put the Mexican government on notice" that it is investigating the "serious developments in Chiapas," and is "pressuring" for problems to be solved "politically."

Briefed by Zapatista supporters

Fifteen days after this official declaration, which provoked tense relations between the governments, two U.S. Congressmen arrived in Mexico for a visit to Chiapas. Upon leaving, Reps. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.) and Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.) recommended that the Clinton administration "cancel all military aid to Mexico and suspend weapons sales." The Congressmen and their teams, composed of members of "Chicano" communities who in many cases don't even know where Chiapas is, were coached during their Mexico visit by militants of Mexico City Gov. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's Party of the Democratic Revolution, which fully supports the Zapatistas.

A subsequent offer by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, that the UN become involved in Chiapas, was quickly retracted, after the Mexican government rejected any such "internationalization" of a domestic matter.

Ruiz's allies in the Society of Jesus are preparing other flanks. Father David Fernández, SJ, who has stood behind Ruiz throughout the Chiapas "conflict," from his post as director of the George Soros-financed Agustín Pro Center for Human Rights, was recently promoted, being named dean of the ITESO, the Jesuit university for Mexico's entire western region.

Fernández is certainly one for "novel actions." During Amnesty International's Gay Culture Week in June, he denounced the Catholic Church for "discrimination and violation of the rights of homosexuals," telling the activists, "we must reject any supposedly Christian justification" for opposing homosexuality. In 1992, Fernández had been expelled from a school in Xalapa, Veracruz, on grounds that he suffered from "deviant homosexual passions," after delivering similar speeches, entitled "The Church Against Sexuality," at various universities.

In the interest of the Republic's good health, the Mexican Bishops Conference (CEM) responded to Fernández, with a statement reiterating that "the homosexual attitude" is not genetic, but produced by a degenerate culture dominated by a search for sexual diversion. Homosexuality, they wrote, is "in itself immoral and constitutes a grave sin" from which afflicted people should be cured. The CEM also distributed a document written by the Bishop Emeritus of Papantla, Genario Alamilla, supporting President Zedillo's recent speech in Chiapas. "We cannot advocate that the rebels be defeated by blood and fire, but it is time for the government to be more energetic and, through means at its disposal, achieve the surrender of the rebels, without accepting their imposition of preconditions on dialogue," he wrote.