

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

A tale of two *municipios*

PRI losses of two state capitals in "Cristero country" have special political importance.

Local elections in Mexico, at the level of *municipio* (roughly the equivalent to election districts for mayors), have always been a more disorderly affair than elections for higher levels of government. It is here that local anomalies of personalities and political machines (*cacicazgos*) most readily trigger confrontation and violence.

The municipal elections of early December, however, held two special surprises.

In San Luis Potosí, capital of the state of the same name, and a semi-industrialized city of over half a million inhabitants, the joint candidate of the right-wing opposition PDM and PAN parties wrested the municipal presidency (equivalent of mayor) from the ruling PRI party.

The municipal presidency of the capital of the neighboring state of Guanajuato was taken by a PDM candidate.

These results bring to three the number of local governments in capital cities not controlled by the PRI. In elections last summer, the PAN party won control of the capital city of Sonora, Hermosillo, through the connivance of a local faction of the PRI unhappy with the pro-industrial policies of Sonora governor Samuel Ocaña.

Much of the coverage here of the *municipio* elections has focused on the situation of San Luis Potosí governor Carlos Jonguitud Barrios, whose already threatened hold on the state was further weakened with the victory of PDP/PAN candidate Salvador Nava Martínez.

This is indeed an important aspect of the matter. Jonguitud Barrios, who has three years left in his term, is the "power behind the throne" of the national teachers' union, the SNTE. The SNTE, the largest single union in Mexico and one of the most powerful due to its influence in rural and most urban areas, has been under attack from a Jesuit-directed "reform" movement for the past two years. The dissidents have seen their hand enormously strengthened with the accession of Jesús Reyes Heróles as education minister, a man committed to wrecking the centralized power of the SNTE and erecting his own power base in what remains.

Less noted but of perhaps greater significance to insiders, is the fact that both San Luis Potosí and Guanajuato form part of the "Cristero belt" in the central heartland of the country, and that the PDM party, which played a role in both opposition victories, is the direct descendent of the Cristeros of the 1920s and their successors, the Nazi-allied Sinarquistas of the late 1930s.

The Cristeros were the "warriors for Christ the King," backward peasants set in motion against the Mexican revolutionary state by 20 years of special Jesuit organizing projects, to stop the nation-building efforts of the great Alvaro Obregón. The Cristeros received the financial support of William Buckley, Sr. and other U.S. oilmen; Walter Lippmann and the Council on Foreign Relations in New York served as "case officers" for molding

international opinion to weaken the Mexican state.

Cubilete mountain, where the Cristero movement was formally launched, lies just a few miles southwest of the city of Guanajuato. . . .

Though the PDM contributed only 6,000 of the 53,000 votes won by Salvador Nava in San Luis Potosí, it laid claim to five other *municipios* in this eastern edge of Cristero country, and 50 people were injured when its militants were ejected from the town hall of nearby Ciudad Fernández on Dec. 29.

The neo-Cristero party similarly showed its muscle in rural areas of Jalisco state bordering Guanajuato, where it claimed victories in three *municipios* and is standing guard round the clock in one which it has physically occupied.

All of this takes on special importance in light of two mass mobilizations in the fall in the largest city of the Cristero region, León. Candlelight marches there, promoted by networks of the international Tradition, Family and Property feudalism cult, brought many thousands of Mexican citizens into the streets.

In the view of concerned observers, the region is being consolidated as a base for a national "Catholic" neo-fascist movement. (See *EIR*, Nov. 2, 1982) This movement flaunted its existence in a full-page manifesto published in *El Heraldo* newspaper of Mexico City Dec. 22. Signed by the "National Mexican Civic Coordinating Council" and a half dozen other front groups, the 44-point manifesto highlighted principles of "improving the race," the inviolability of the Catholic faith as the basis of action, the sacred right to private property, and the need to establish the *municipios* as autarchic units free from central government interference.