

MORENA Established As a New Party on the Mexican Left

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The Movement of National Regeneration (MORENA), which served as the campaign organization of Andrés Manuel López Obrador for president of Mexico in the election held this past summer, has transformed itself into a new political party on the Mexican left. López Obrador has now brought into existence a new party that will compete with the Party of the Democratic Revolution that put him forward for president in 2006 and 2012. The party has adopted a nationalist, democratic, and neoliberal program emphasizing market competition; little distinguishes it from the Party of the Democratic Revolution of which it is an off-spring.

López Obrador told the assembly that this would be a new kind of party, "Without individualism, opportunism, nepotism, cronyism, favoritism, sectarianism, clientelism, or any of those political scars." The new party would avoid factionalism and cliques, said the former presidential candidate. Members of the new party he said, would not be required to follow a leader's line, but could freely exercise their consciences and their votes.

Delegates Adopt Programs, Elect President

At the new party's founding convention held in the Six Year Plan Sports Center in Mexico City, 1,676 party activists elected a 204 member National Council that adopted the party's statutes, a declaration of principles and an action program. Altogether the National Council is made up of 300 members, the 204 elected at the Congress and the presidents, general secretaries and organizational secretaries of the 32 states. Also attending the founding Congress were representatives of other left parties and of the governments of Cuba and the United States. The Congress elected Martí Bartres Guadarrama president of MORENA. Bartres began his career as a student activist in the Communist Party of Mexico (PCM) in 1981 and later in the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM), a fusion of the Communists with other left parties. Together with PSUM he became part of the Party of the Democratic Revolution playing a leadership role in the Federal District and in the administration of its mayor López Obrador.

The party members present included labor union and peasant activists, prominent intellectuals, human rights activists, and professional politicians who had given up their memberships in other parties to join MORENA. Many of those present had been members of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD).

A Neoliberal Program

The new party's program has a fundamentally neoliberal, or at best social liberal character, as can be seen in some of its position on the economy. MORENA calls for "A new economic model in which the state assumes responsibility for guiding development without extreme interference. Pushing [the development of] productive chains among the private and social sectors, maximizing employment and value added, pushing support for education science and technology. Strengthening the internal economy with just wages and compensation for workers, while promoting union democracy and workers right to choose their own unions, without state intervention. A model which in its entirety promotes a strong national economy with greater internal and external competitiveness, where the state promotes the national economy and at the same time balanced and reciprocal foreign commercial relations."

While MORENA defines itself as a left party and many of its leaders come out of various socialist organizations, the new party defines itself fundamentally as nationalist and democratic, modernizing and developmental, but nowhere mentions socialism or even social democracy. (See the MORENA program.)

The Political Organization of the People and the Workers (OPT), a coalition made up of the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) and a variety of social movements and left parties that had supported López Obrador in the presidential election, decided not to work in the new MORENA political party, but rather to continue to build its own organization. (For the OPT's position. see here. For a discussion of the OPT by a leader of a Mexican socialist party, see here.)

While López Obrador has proclaimed the noble and high ideals of MORENA and its leaders and activists, it is not clear why Mexico needs another center-left, multi-class party.