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Political Exiles Plan Return To Guatemala; President Threatens Arrest Without First Accepting "amnesty"

by Deborah Tyroler

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In late March, three political exiles Rolando Castillo, former dean of the medical school, University of San Carlos; Rigoberta Menchu, international spokesperson for the Committee for Peasant Unity (CUC), and Frank LaRue, former attorney for the now defunct CNT labor confederation announced plans to return to Guatemala. (See CAU, 04/08/88.) Since then, Marta Gloria Torres (former attorney for CNT), and Raul Molina (former dean, School of Engineering, University of San Carlos) have announced they will also return to their native country. Both currently reside in Canada. All five pertain to the Representacion Unitaria de la Oposicion Guatemalteca (United Representation of the Guatemalan Opposition-RUOG). For RUOG, sending a delegation to Guatemala City at this time is important because the Cerezo government "has made an issue of its commitment to the Central American peace process...RUOG plans to participate in the process of national dialogue and reconciliation. The first step is to meet with the National Reconciliation Committee, and then with organizations that represent the broadest sectors of Guatemalan society." President Cerezo was quoted as saying in the April 10 edition of El Grafico that he will arrest any members of such delegation who have not signed an amnesty agreement prior to entering the country. Signatories to this "agreement" admit to have been subversives in the past, and pledge to refuse all involvement in "subversive activity" in the future. (04/14/88 newsbrief from Guatemala Health Rights Support Project, Washington DC)

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