

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

Pressure is turned up on Hank

The powers behind the main presidential candidates are squaring off; Mexico City's mayor is not ahead.

The fight for the presidential succession has shifted its ground, and whereas in June and July the contenders to replace López Portillo were moving relatively openly in their own names, now it is the behind-the-scenes powers who are squaring off. There are no bigger such powers—or more mutually antagonistic ones—than the mayor of Mexico City, Carlos Hank González, and PRI labor leader Fidel Velásquez.

Velásquez took after Carlos Hank in an Aug. 12 speech which upset apple carts in political circles across the country. Speaking in the State of Mexico, Hank's home turf since his stint as governor there in the early 1970s, Velásquez charged that the state labor authorities were "worse than Monterrey" in terms of abetting the establishment of company unions. This was saying a lot for anyone who knows the Mexican labor situation; Monterrey has black fame indeed in the labor movement for its tame "sindicatos blancos."

Don Fidel then blasted the Hank-controlled police forces of the state. These forces "assault workers on the weekends and take away their pay," he charged.

Hank's enemies are attacking him in other areas as well. One of the biggest subterranean topics of conversation here in years is the novel by Mauricio González de la Garza, *Last Call*, which defames President López Portillo and bra-

zenly ridicules the institution of the presidency itself. González de la Garza happens to be one of Hank González's most widely known press whores, and it is universally recognized that González de la Garza wrote the book in the service of Hank's political ambitions.

González de la Garza rapidly found it too hot to stay in the country, and has recently made his home in Texas. My sources tell me the case is hardly one of "forgive and forget," however. Police are questioning a congressman from the state of Chihuahua, Miguel Lerma Candelaria, for his involvement in arranging González de la Garza's escape, and authorities have suddenly discovered apparent irregularities in Lerma's dealing with the state agricultural bank, Banrural. No one is saying whether the case will lead up the ladder to Hank González himself.

Perhaps the most publicly embarrassing moments for Hank have been inflicted by the Mexican Labor Party (PLM). The PLM recently issued a devastating pamphlet for broad circulation entitled, "Hank González: Psychopathology of a Myth." My sources tell me that a PLM squad a few weeks back hand-delivered copies of their pamphlet to the entire Mexican cabinet, including President López Portillo, as they were boarding an official bus in Puebla, Mexico, after a public gathering there. Hank did not fail to notice that his colleagues all

opened their personal copies for perusal on the ride back to Mexico City.

To make matters worse for the mayor, one of Mexico's most notorious, self-avowed fascists, José Luis Ontiveros, came to his defense against the PLM. In an article for the daily *El Sol* on Aug. 14, Ontiveros proclaimed that it was true, as the PLM charged, that Hank hates machines. "The fact that Hank González is conscious of the sickness of machines," Ontiveros wrote, "which have uniformed men and made them a mere reflection of levers and buttons, is a meritorious act. Nobody in his right mind can look without suspicion at those cold monsters."

Hank, Ontiveros continued, is indeed a "Dionysian politician," as the PLM claimed, because "he is a festive politician," as the PLM claimed, because "he is a festive power, who rejoices in life, vital and healthy, as do all things which are not languid, prostrate and decadent." In the Nietzschean sense, Hank is a "superior man," trumpeted Ontiveros for his finale.

Ontiveros is reported to be the head of the Mexico City chapter of "Los Tecos," one of Mexico's best known corps of paramilitary shocktroops. His fascist proclivities were recently exposed in *El Periódico*, a Mexico City daily. In a letter to the editor, Ontiveros, far from denying those accusations, asserted that he sees "fascism . . . as one of the purest movements that has fought materialist subversion in contemporary history." He then proclaimed himself a follower of Luis Evola, Mussolini's personal philosopher-mentor. Did some enemy of Hank's secretly persuade Ontiveros to deliver this blow?