

Dateline Mexico by Hugo López Ochoa

Mexican gestapo tactics escalate

The case against the oil union leader has more holes than Swiss cheese, but that hasn't stopped the government.

It is an injustice" and based on a "pack of lies," said leader of the oil workers union Joaquín Hernández Galicia, upon reading the formal writ for his jailing submitted to him by eighth district criminal judge José Luis García Vasco. Hernández, who was arrested Jan. 10 in a spectacular police raid by elements of the presidential (military) Chief of Staff, refused to sign the writ, a document amounting to a confession, reported Hernández's defense lawyer Ricardo Franco Guzmán in a Jan. 19 press conference.

Hernández Galicia is formally accused of stockpiling, possession, and clandestine introduction of arms into the country, as well as first-degree murder and resisting arrest. Despite its control of the media, the Salinas de Gortari government has been unable to silence a growing number of witnesses who are revealing the scandalous human rights violations in the Hernández Galicia arrest.

On Jan. 17, lawyer Franco Guzmán announced that he would present documentary proof to refute the official version of "first-degree murder," according to which the union leader shot and killed federal agent Antonio Zamora Arrijoja. Franco Guzmán noted that neither of the first two dispatches from the official news agency Notimex—issued at 9:19 and 9:32 a.m.—made any reference to the death of Zamora. Further, the first dispatch only spoke of a "military detail" arresting Hernández Galicia, which was later "corrected" to include the partic-

ipation of federal police agents, of which the alleged murder victim Zamora Arrijoja was one.

Also, numerous witnesses have testified that only military personnel arrested Hernández, and that not one person ever saw the body of Zamora Arrijoja. A fair question to ask, in view of the proclivity for yellow journalism surrounding the case, is, why has not one national or international press organ published a photo of the much-celebrated cadaver?

Indeed, why was the alleged corpse hurriedly cremated (an uncommon practice in Mexico), preventing the defense lawyers from seeking its exhumation in an attempt to prove what they assert to be the truth—namely, that federal agent Zamora Arrijoja did not die at the oil union leader's home. There is at least one written claim (*Proceso* magazine of Jan. 23), that Zamora died days earlier, during the arrest of drug trafficker Gilberto Ontiveros, in the state of Chihuahua.

Various columnists have also been quick to note that Zamora Arrijoja possessed valuable information stemming from a fraud probe at Mexico's stock exchange houses, especially on the involvement of Eduardo Legorreta, president of *Operadora de Bolsa*, and there has been widespread clamor for his imprisonment. This would tend to give the coloring of a classic Scottish Freemasonic ritual to the whole Hernández Galicia affair.

In his press conference, defense lawyer Franco Guzmán revealed the

testimony of a local notary from Hernández Galicia's home town who attempted to present evidence proving that the charge of "weapons stockpiling" in the Hernández Galicia case is also false. The lawyer mentioned that notary #182, one José Guadalupe González Galván living in Ciudad Madero, declared in notary certificate 5734 that at 9:20 a.m. (20 minutes after the Hernández Galicia arrest), he arrived at Hernández Galicia's domicile at the request of a neighbor and took note "of the contents of 20 closed boxes . . . in each of the boxes there were 10 machine-guns with 45 cartridge clips; there were also several boxes of ammunition. . . . Various persons whom I interrogated insisted that these boxes that I am mentioning were unloaded from one of the vehicles in which the soldiers arrived, among those witnesses Francisco Vargas Malagón, Lazaro Mata López and Gaspar Rodríguez."

On Jan. 18, the government of Tamaulipas state canceled the notary license of José Guadalupe González Galván. The date of the cancellation was retroactive to Jan. 9, one day before the Hernández Galicia arrest!

The shameless lack of credibility of the government's official version of the Hernández Galicia case has even garnered coverage in the international press. The *Baltimore Sun* of Jan. 23 noted that "transfer [of the agent's body] was accomplished illegally, without any of the necessary paperwork. . . . A week after the arrests, the federal attorney general's office has refused to give reporters access to autopsy and ballistics reports, or the registration numbers of the Uzis."

Its weak case notwithstanding, on Jan. 25 the Mexican government added another charge to Hernández's indictment, that of "intellectual authorship" of the 1983 assassination of oil union leader Oscar Torres Pancardo.