

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

The spy that went out of the fold

The arrest in Boston of an East German spy threatens to uncover more than one sensitive East bloc operation in Mexico.

On Nov. 3, 1983, Mexican political circles were surprised to learn of the arrest of East German professor Alfred Zehe in Boston, Massachusetts, while presenting a physics paper on the study of vacuums.

According to FBI accusations, Zehe participated in an attempt by the state security service of the DDR to bribe an employee of the Center of Electronic Systems Engineering of the U.S. Navy, located in Charleston, South Carolina, in an effort to obtain films of technical manuals and secret formulas related to U.S. military research.

The employee involved had first been approached by personnel of the East German embassy in Mexico in October 1982. He reported the contact to the FBI and the Office of Naval Intelligence, who instructed him to play the game to see where it led.

By July 1983, it had led to a drop-off of film materials in East Berlin to Alfred Zehe.

But Zehe, a Ph.D. graduate of Leipzig in natural sciences, was only in Berlin himself on a short tour. His main base of operations for the past seven years has been Mexico. Mexican security investigators believe the case could lead to major revelations of how the KGB and related intelligence services work in Mexico, particularly in terms of control of terrorists and manipulation of political groups.

Zehe was first deployed to Mexico from the DDR under cover of a professorial exchange program between

the Technical Institute of Dresden and the Autonomous University of Puebla (UAP). The initial exchange ran from 1976 until 1980, in which year Zehe moved to the University of Sinaloa in the northwest. At his new post, he founded an Institute of Metallurgical Research. In both places, he directed the thesis work of a number of Mexican graduate students, and came to enjoy great prestige and a wide circle of acquaintances among the Mexican scientific community.

Zehe's assignment to Puebla and Sinaloa was no accident. Both universities are hotbeds of radicalism (with a Jesuit tinge) and terrorism.

The case of the UAP is exemplary, and must now be re-examined in light of the Zehe case. Radical rector Alfonso Vélez Pliego, a product of the Jesuits' Instituto Oriental, assumed control of the university at the same time Zehe first appeared on the scene in the mid-1970s.

In April of 1983, Vélez Pliego popped up at the head of a Mexican delegation to a *Green Book* conference in Libya sponsored by the joint KGB-Nazi thug Qaddafi. Two months later he rushed to the defense of FALN terrorist Willie Morales, apprehended by Mexican authorities on the outskirts of Puebla as Morales prepared a bomb attack on a U.S.-Mexico parliamentarians' meeting. Security sources identified Luis Ernesto Arévalo, a UAP philosophy professor and close collaborator of Vélez, as the main Mexican contact of Morales.

The first week of December, the rector of the Patrice Lumumba University of Moscow, Dr. Valeri Stanis suddenly showed up in Puebla to present Vélez Pliego with the "Great Medal of Friendship among Peoples" from the University, the first of its kind to be presented to a Mexican rector. His work in "facilitating exchange" between the UAP and the universities of the East bloc was stressed in the accompanying citation.

The terrorist support apparatus of both Puebla and Sinaloa swung into action immediately after Zehe's arrest to portray Zehe's work in Mexico as purely that of a worthy academic, and his arrest as part of "U.S. imperialist policies" designed to disorganize the scientific work of Latin American universities. Vélez Pliego charged that a "new McCarthyism" was at hand.

The UAP has now shown up in the forefront of efforts to build a "nuclear freeze" movement in Mexico, under the East bloc marching orders it so fervently defends. The university hosted a special conference of Mexican scientists on peace and disarmament, which concluded its sessions Nov. 25 with a call for the Pershings and other Euromissiles on the Western side—but not the Soviet SS-20s—to be rolled back.

The leftist weekly *Proceso*, much of whose editorial staff is made up of current or "former" Jesuits, subsequently picked up the standard KGB marching order to attack President Reagan's efforts to build beam-weapon technologies, with a lampoon against effective defense measures in the West in its issue the third week of December.

The question now occupying investigators is what the connections may be between the KGB nests in Puebla and the "right" fascist party, the PAN.