

## Dateline Mexico by Carlos Cota Meza

### The corruption of Pemex

*Real corruption in Mexico has a name: Pemex general director Mario Ramón Beteta.*

**O**n Jan. 7, just hours before the Oil Workers Union of Mexico presented their traditional New Year's greeting to the President of the Republic, a national leader of the union, Joaquín Hernández Galicia, opened up a can of worms which threatens to expose the extensive corruption that permeates the state oil company, Pemex.

Before a general assembly of the union, Hernández denounced the existence of a suspicious shipping firm which rents ships to Pemex for the transportation of petroleum. The company, Flota Petrolera Mexicana (FPM), is owned by one Isidoro Rodríguez Ruiz, president of the National Transport Council. Hernández questioned how it is that Isidoro Rodríguez "has no experience in the management of boats, and is now in charge of Pemex's shipping?" In the past, insisted Hernández, Pemex "always made six-month or one-year contracts for ship rentals, but with the Rodríguez company has signed a ten-year contract."

The union leader explained that his denunciations were intended to motivate the outright purchase of oil tankers by Pemex, thereby creating a nationalized oil fleet while at the same time avoiding the huge foreign-exchange losses incurred by renting ships from other companies.

Hernández further charged that Isidoro Rodríguez's FPM was started with initial capital of just 2,500,000 pesos. Then, with financing by Banpesca, the company purchased two ships, "it is said, for \$19 million apiece." Another union leader, Sal-

vador Barragán Camacho, added that the same kind of boats bought by FPM had been offered him, during a union-sponsored trip to visit Yugoslavian shipyards, for only \$14.5 million.

EIR investigations in Mexico have shed yet more light on the shady business deals being carried out with Mexico's black gold. One of the threads this news service began to unravel started at the Planning and Budget Ministry headed by Carlos Salinas de Gortari. It was that ministry which gave the Pemex shipping contract to the newly founded company of Isidoro and Jorge Rodríguez Ruiz, bypassing the holding of a public bidding for the Pemex oil tanker concession.

Based on the promise of that concession, Isidoro sought a \$4.9 million credit from Banpesca, which served as the down payment for the purchase of the two oil tankers. The state credit agency Nafinsa, at that time run by the current Finance Minister Gustavo Petricioli, rounded out the operation by granting credit to the Rodríguez brothers enabling them to make full payment on the ships! Thus, federal funds were used to privately purchase overpriced ships, which were then rented to Pemex, a state company.

Isidoro Rodríguez Ruiz offered as collateral for all the loans 100% of FPM's stocks; 65% of **Holding Fiasa**, a stock brokerage owned by Isidoro; and 100% of the stocks of the **Casa de Bolsa Mexicana de Inversiones y Valores**, one of the smallest stock houses registered on the Mexi-

can stock exchange.

Among the partners of Isidoro's companies, apart from his brothers and other relatives, is one Hugo García Blake, the current advisory coordinator to Finance Minister Petricioli. García Blake was an executive of FPM and a former president of Isidoro's stock brokerage. Before the 1982 bank nationalization, he was a director of **Comermex**. As an official at the Finance Ministry, he is in charge of "rationalizing" the system and returning 34% of the private bank stocks to the former bankers.

Another partner of Isidoro is congressman from the state of Mexico Jesús Alcantara Miranda, who rules over the Chamber of Deputies' Commission on Distribution of Consumer Goods and Services, Federal Roads and Transport. Alcantara is the Grand Master of one of the masonic lodges grouped in the Grand Lodge of the Valley of Mexico.

But there is more. Isidoro Rodríguez Ruiz became the "czar" of Mexican transport by serving as the frontman for Carlos Hank González, a controller of most of Mexican masonry who himself dominated the transport of most basic agricultural goods in the country through his control of the auto industry and his links to such international grain companies as Continental Grain. Grand Master Alcantara Miranda is known as "Hank González's deputy" and was elected in the electoral district where Hank keeps his general headquarters in Mexico state.

This morass of masonic corruption and dirty machinations, presented by Pemex general director Mario Ramón Beteta and Isidoro Rodríguez as a program for the "Mexicanization" of Pemex, is part of the efforts of Salinas de Gortari, Petricioli, and Beteta to privatize the Mexican state sector, precisely as per the demands of the International Monetary Fund.