

Exiled Socialist claims persecution

Dave McKinnon
News Editor

Hector Marroquin Manriquez is a 24-year-old socialist who faces deportation to his native Mexico and—he claims—certain imprisonment, torture, and probably death unless he can mobilize public sentiment in the United States behind his request for political asylum here.

Speaking at the Carolina Union Thursday night near the end of a 65-city tour, Marroquin termed the charges awaiting him in Mexico "absolutely false," and a "complete frame-up to justify the Mexican government's political persecution."

Marroquin said that he is now accused of conspiracy to overthrow the Mexican government, subversion and guerilla activity in connection with two gun battles between Monterrey police and Mexican guerillas in 1974.

But, said Marroquin, he was in fact in the United States in April of 1974, when it was claimed by Mexican police that he had been wounded in the first shoot-out. Marroquin also said that he was actually lying in a hospital bed in Galveston, Texas, recovering from a serious automobile accident in August, 1974, when according to police he was taking part in a gun battle at a bakery in Monterrey.

In an interview, Marroquin offered the circumstances of his own flight from Mexico as an example of its policy of ruthless repression of political dissenters.

Marroquin originally fled Mexico in April, 1974, as a result of another charge of politically-motivated violence stemming from the assassination of a librarian who, said Marroquin, was also a police informer at the University of Nuevo Leon, where Marroquin was then a student.

Marroquin emphatically denied the charge, which was eventually dropped, but pointed to the fates of three fellow students and political organizers who were also accused of the murder as examples of his own probable end if he is returned to Mexico. According to Marroquin, two were killed during alleged shoot-outs, and the third was arrested and has disappeared.

Marroquin termed the Mexican

government "thoroughly illegal. They violate the constitutional rights of the Mexican people all the time, constantly." He added that Amnesty International's estimate that some 200 to 300 political prisoners are being held in Mexican prisons does not include an equal number of dissidents who have simply "disappeared."

And, said Marroquin, the political situation in Mexico has if anything grown more repressive in recent years. He cited cutbacks in government spending, the country's worsening economic situation, and an increase in student, labor, and peasant unrest as contributing factors.

But, said Marroquin, his struggle to remain in this country is being waged not only for himself, but for thousands of victims of repressive regimes all over the world. Marroquin pointed out that the U.S. almost invariably denies political asylum to political enemies of regimes—like those of Chile, Argentina, Haiti, and Iran—which it considers friendly, but which practice brutal repression of dissidents. Marroquin said that his own case for political asylum, if successful, could set an important precedent for the U.S. campaign for human rights all over the world.

With the McCarron Act Congress made it possible for avowed socialists to become naturalized citizens, so that Marroquin, who has lived and been employed in Houston since 1974, has been forced to seek the alternative of political asylum. Yet it is the U.S.'s discriminatory policy of granting asylum which has caused him the most trouble. Marroquin pointed to the ease with which socialists such as Aleksander Solzhenitsyn received asylum as clear evidence of this discrimination.

Marroquin was arrested as an illegal alien at Eagle Pass, Texas, in September, 1977, as he was returning from a brief trip to Mexico to confer with a lawyer, under circumstances which, according to Marroquin, gave every evidence of collusion in his case between Mexican and American law enforcement agents. He remained in jail for three months before being released on a \$10,000 bond, and now faces a deportation hearing which could be called at any moment. His case has been taken over from the Immigration and Naturalization Service by the State Department for reasons of national security.



Staff photo by Allen Jernigan

Hector Marroquin: will he simply "disappear" like hundreds of his fellow activists in Mexico?

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