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Some Truths about the M.A.R. (Revolutionary Action Movement)

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Summary:

Seeking to correct press coverage of the arrests of Revolutionary Action Movement (MAR) members, the imprisoned members describe their arrests and those of their relatives, highlight tactics of coercion and physical torture used by security forces to extract confessions, and share information on the case that they believe is being misrepresented.

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Some Truths about the M.A.R. (Revolutionary Action Movement)

The imprisoned members of the Revolutionary Action Movement, faced with such lies and calumny from the police and press, with the confusion around our activities and organization has caused both groups, and making the best use of the lack of knowledge of the MAR among the people, we declare the following:

1) THE FACTS: The police and the journalists attempted to lead people to believe that we were arrested one or two days before March 16th, the date on which we were brought before the judge (Lic. Ferrer MacGregor), and that our declarations before the agent of the Federal Public Ministry, affiliated with the Attorney General of the Republic, have been made without physical torture or moral coercion. We were also presented as common criminals, as charlatans, etc.

The truth of the facts is the following:

The first arrests were made after February 16th, when three students and a companion were arrested and immediately torture was begun. Apparently, the Judicial Police, until that day, were ignorant of the real activities and scale of our organization, since when told of those, they "arrived" looking for bank robbers and finding guerrillas. Also, two of those arrested were threatened at the Attorney General's office and taken to the Federal Security Administration.

On February 27, 9 people were arrested and all went, one by one, into a house in Xalapa, Veracruz. It was after that day that the police found out that we had been trained in the Democratic Republic of Korea - since the expropriation of the Commerce Bank of Michoacán, they had learned the list of the real names of our comrades trained in [North] Korea. They accomplished this, we believe, thanks to the forced entry into two homes; the first, in Xalapa, which possibly was a betrayal by the owner of the house, as we probably seemed suspicious to him, and the other, at Orizaba street #32 in Mexico City, which was [an address] taken from a dry cleaning bill found on one of the detained persons at Xalapa.

The police found in these houses - above all in the Orizaba #32 house - evidence such as lists of pseudonyms of the majority of comrades, passports with entry stamps to our country, pamphlets edited in the People's Republic of Korea, a handwritten song in Korean, but in Latin letters, three pistols, several new cars, some 8,000 pesos and 4,500 dollars, a document from the recruitment division (where the name of the Organization was given, the pseudonym of five comrades, the name of our comrade Manuel Arreola Tellez and a critical assessment of our activities), notes on explosives and demolition, guerrilla and anti-guerrilla tactics, Marxist philosophy and economy, the theory of the socialist revolution in Mexico, developed and upheld by our organization; an organizational diagram, a clandestine organization plan, a proposal for the work for the future information section, etc. Besides, the police had already established that five of those arrested had abandoned their studies and disappeared from the state of Michoacán, where they had been active militants in student politics, as well as among the nine arrested, only two could justify their sources of income.

With all these pieces of information, the police developed some hypotheses that were correct enough about our three secrets discussed above. These hypotheses, supported by the apparent evidence, were presented to the comrades who remained totally incommunicado as confessions made by this or that other comrade. One or more comrades possibly fell into this trap, and in this way the police arrived at their hypotheses, not without excessive use of torture, which was prolonged until they obtained the details. In this way, the police went about the work of fabricating confessions where they told every new prisoner the information that had been provided by all those before him. In summary, we were inclined to think that our errors and ineffective measures of security, together with a large dose of police

brutality and some cleverness on their part, which sent us to prison and led to the discovery of important organizational secrets.

To finish the account of the facts, we add the following: once the house at Orizaba Street 32 had been broken into by the police, they apprehended a comrade there, on whom they found a rental contract for a house in Pachuca, Hidalgo state, and a card from a bungalow in Acapulco, Guerrero state.^[1] [illegible] that the police perhaps also found the residence at Oriente Street, 249, #83-3, Eastern Agricultural Colony, Mexico City, there. In these last three places mentioned, six comrades were arrested and more compromising objects were found. Two more young men, brothers of Salvador Castañeda Alvarez, were arrested in their home, and though they do not belong to our organization, they remain under arrest. We know also that the police detained many more people, especially relatives of ours, some of whom remained missing for up to 35 days, and we do not know if more people remain in police custody to date.

a) The reason for the confiscation of the 84,000 dollars carried out by an expropriation group is simple. The revolution is expensive and the people have no way to sustain it, with what has been dispossessed, now the hoarders of money (the bankers) will be dispossessed to be able to defray the costs of the revolution.

b) The comrade Manuel Arreola Téllez, highly esteemed by all of us who know him, died in an unfortunate accident, for which only he was responsible and of which only three of our comrades were witnesses. Thus the assertion that he could have been killed by one of us is untrue.

c) Comrade J. Paredes Ruíz was arrested on the 9th of March, a fact that proves false the claim that he was "the main man" or the snitch, as some daily or weekly news outlets suggested.

d) That the sub-director of the Federal Security Police was the one who pointed out that the traitor had been the ex-militant Camilo Estrada Luviano. We made this version public so that our free comrades would subject him to investigation. To date, after long discussions, we think there are very few possibilities that Camilo Estrada Luviano or another militant or ex-militant has informed on us.

e) Related to the attempted USSR intervention in our country using our organization, it is completely false; we have not declared it, nor is there any proof, for the same reason of it being false. We demand that the government give some rational explanation of its position to the people.

f) The weapons and money shown in the photographs do indeed belong to us, but that is not guerrilla equipment, nor that of soldiers. They show, as such: new clothes, photographic and movie cameras, objects for mechanical or vascular stitching (high-level surgery), recorders, shaving razors, and other goods that we sold, as well as books, a typewriter, cowboy boots, an accordion, a guitar, an old and useless mimeograph machine, judo uniforms, radios, pliers, nails, screwdrivers, a hammer, flashlights, automotive mechanic keys, paint brushes, etc. We repeat that among what was said to be guerrilla and military equipment, the above objects show nothing but two things: one, the ignorance of the "experts" from the police, and two, the falseness and bad faith of the authorities.

m)^[2] The police stated that we had "guerrilla schools," but in reality these were study circles to which we invited some friends, while [the police] did not know the real purpose of these circles, nor about the existence of the organization. At the end of the courses, or afterward, these people were told about the existence of our organization, and it was until then that they were invited to join.^[3]

i) It is false that all of those arrested had studied in Moscow, since only three of us did so; it is equally untrue that all of those detained had trained in [North] Korea (in reality, only twelve of us who were held in custody were trained in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea). It is also false that all who were arrested are members of the M.A.R., given that the six who were studying while under arrest were unaware - for reasons of security^[4] - of even the existence of the organization, as we already mentioned. Another of those held in custody for more than six months had attended a study circle but at that time did not know of the organization's existence. One more had ceased to be a member several months before. Lastly, Juan Raúl Chin only participated in the talks of the five founders of the M.A.R.

j) About the crimes with which we are being charged, there will be an opportunity to respond in political and legal terms, showing that those who violate the law, those who conspire, incite rebellion, steal with violence, commit murder, accumulate weapons, and gather together to engage in criminal acts are the true delinquents, the true traitors against the homeland.

Lastly, we want to leave evidence that we know well what we want and that we know the ways to get it.

With the people to the struggle!

With the people to victory!

--The political prisoners of the Revolutionary Action Movement
Lecumberri, May 1971, Mexico City

^[1] Translator's note: Here, a hole punch at the top of page 2 obscures the first three or four letters of a word; it is probably a verb conjugated in the "nosotros" form, given the 'that' clause afterward, and the ending of the mystery word in 'mos' from the -amos or -emos verb endings for the first person plural.

^[2] Translator's note: Point "m" comes between "f" and "i", despite its distance on the keyboard from both "g" and "h." I have simply transcribed the letter as written.

^[3] Translator's note: It is difficult to know who "these people" refers to as the sentence is written - the friends in the study circles, or other members who joined those friends afterward.

^[4] Translator's note: No further explanation is given for this part of the sentence; the verb I have translated as "were unaware" before the dash is "ignorar," to be unaware, to not know, or to be ignorant of.