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CRISIS IN THE MEXICAN SINARQUISTA MOVEMENT

DESCRIPTION

A history of events in the Sinarquista movement of Mexico since January 1944, and an analysis of the extent to which internal schisms and government restriction have affected its strength.

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SUMMARY

In the first months of 1944 the Sinarquistas, Mexico's mass right-wing movement, appeared to be gaining ground rapidly. Then between April and July, a series of events halted the growth of the movement and plunged it into serious difficulties:

In April, an attempt was made to assassinate President Avila Camacho by a young army lieutenant known to have had Sinarquista affiliations. In May Salvador Abascal, who had been Supreme Leader until Pearl Harbor made advisable the substitution of a less openly anti-United States figure, publicly broke with the present Supreme Leader, Manuel Torres Bueno, over questions of policy; and, with his followers, left the organization. This dispute represented the first break in the rigidly disciplined Sinarquista ranks.

On 22 June a series of violent articles in the Sinarquista weekly organ inciting the army and the public to revolt, finally brought the wrath of the administration upon the movement. The author of the articles and the editor of the paper were indicted, Sinarquista public meetings banned, publication of the newspaper was forbidden, and distribution of propaganda severely restricted.

Already weakened by the May schism and popular anger at the April attempt on the President's life, the movement undoubtedly suffered a severe blow, although it has been able to circumvent the restrictions to

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some extent and the government has not proceeded with the prosecution of the men under indictment. The Sinarquistas hope shortly to secure the lifting of all restrictions, and, should the government not take further measures against them, probably can rapidly regain their former strength.

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Crisis in the Sinarquista Movement

I. Sinarquismo during the First Months of 1944.

During the opening months of 1944 the Sinarquista movement appeared stronger than at any previous time in its seven years of existence as a public organization.<sup>1</sup> Few serious observers would have predicted that the Unión Nacional Sinarquista (UNS) would shortly suffer its first serious schism and that the Mexican Government, after years of patiently avoiding a showdown, would take its first energetic measures against the movement.

Within the Mexican areas where Sinarquismo had taken firm hold-- notably the areas around Mexico City; the rich agricultural region of Guanajuato, Querétaro, and Jalisco; and the cities along the United States-Mexican border--the UNS continued to gain adherents at a rapid pace, and claims of membership, previously ranging toward the half-million mark, now began to move beyond the million mark.<sup>2</sup> For the first time, the National Committee made efforts to implement the Sinarquista paper organization in the state of Chiapas by sending organizers from Mexico City, who began an extensive campaign of propaganda and organization.<sup>3</sup>

1. For a history of the Sinarquista movement up to May 1943, and an analysis of its character and principles, see R&A 843, The Sinarquista Movement in Mexico.
2. In an interview with foreign correspondents at the end of 1943, Torres Bueno claimed a membership of 900,000; El Sinarquista, 23 December 1943. See also Edward Gillin, Jr., "A Note on Mexican Sinarquismo," The Commonwealth, New York, 9 June 1944.
3. See Excelsior, Mexico City, 22 May 1944.

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Although the two official Sinarquista colonies in Lower California and Sonora were obvious failures after two years of continuing expenditure of money on the part of the National Committee, and María Auxiliadora in Lower California was a particularly serious drain upon the resources of the National Committee,<sup>4</sup> the fervor of Sinarquistas for establishing settlements in the north led a group of Sinarquista families from Michoacán to establish a colony in Sinaloa near Culiacán. The new colony was not an official one, but like the successful settlement near Matamoros, represented a local project of Sinarquistas.<sup>5</sup>

During these months the UNS made special efforts to recruit adherents in non-rural spheres of Mexican life, and thus vary its previous concentration upon the peasants. The UNS opened an elaborate campaign aimed at securing converts among the young conscripts serving a year in the army. In many regions, the Sinarquistas were able to secure permission for their speakers to address the conscripts after drill and expound the ideas of Sinarquismo to them. Simultaneously the Sinarquista press carried on a violent campaign demanding that chaplains be provided for the army (since religion is legally a completely private affair in Mexico, chaplains are not attached to the army) and continued previous Sinarquista opposition to the sending

4. R&A 843, pp. 92-99

5. Novedades, Mexico City, 22 May 1944.

of a Mexican expeditionary force overseas to implement the Mexican declaration of war upon the Axis.<sup>6</sup> Although the success of Sinarquista penetration of the army is difficult to gauge, American travellers returning to the United States generally agreed that the UNS was making considerable headway.

Parallel with these efforts to gain army support, the UNS continued the attempt to infiltrate the labor unions and gain labor support, as part of a program announced in April 1942 by Supreme Leader Manuel Torres Bueno.<sup>7</sup> This campaign also appears to have achieved a considerable measure of success, especially in cities like Querétaro located in areas of strong peasant and landowner support for Sinarquismo.<sup>8</sup>

During this period the UNS did not stress as openly as in late 1943 its dislike for the United States. Anti-American agitation took the form of an intensification of the anti-Protestant campaign which was soon to lead to bloody attacks upon Protestant communities in rural areas. In effect, this campaign was anti-American, since Protestantism and the United States are virtually synonymous in Latin America.<sup>9</sup> However, the stress upon anti-Protestantism had the two-fold advantage

6. El Sinarquista, 20 April 1944; El Sinarquista, 13 January 1944; El Sinarquista, 6 January 1944.
7. See R&A 843, appendix III F.
8. El Popular, 4 July 1944.
9. Vide infra.

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of attacking the United States indirectly without forfeiting support from those Catholic groups in the United States who have been inclined to view the UNS with favor as a movement unaffiliated with Axis fascism and fighting for the restoration of the Church position in Mexico.

Relations between the Mexican Government and the UNS during these months continued in an uneasy state of friction, with the government holding to its previous policy of ignoring the organization so long as it refrained from too overt a move against the existing order. The only events which perhaps foreshadowed developing difficulties was the attempt on the life of President Avila Camacho on 10 April by Lieutenant Antonio ~~De la Lama~~ Rojas, a young artillery officer assigned to the presidential guard.

The president was unharmed by the bullet, and the would-be assassin, subsequently shot while attempting to escape, soon died in a hospital. Although the administration, reluctant to open an investigation which might disturb the surface unity of Mexican political groups behind the war, stressed its belief that De la Lama Rojas could not be connected with any political group and dismissed the affair as "an isolated act of a fanatic",<sup>10</sup> investigation by private groups soon uncovered close links between the lieutenant and the UNS. In December 1941 De la Lama Rojas was one of the bodyguard of Salvador Abascal, then national leader of the UNS, in the Sinarquista mass meeting at Guadalajara.

10. Novidades, 10 and 11 April 1944; El Popular, Mexico City, 12 April 1944; Excelsior, 11 and 13 April 1944.

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Immediately after the attempt on the president's life and the death of De la Lama Rojas, according to these revelations, more than 40 Sinarquista chiefs and other militant members of the movement held a secret meeting on 14 April at Morelos 74 in Mexico City, the headquarters of the UNS, in honor of the dead man. The members present at the meeting called for vengeance for the death of De la Lama and declared the lieutenant a Sinarquista martyr.<sup>11</sup> The Sinarquistas hotly denied that such meeting had taken place.<sup>12</sup>

Government action in the affair was limited to dissolving the Sociedad Amigos del Soldado (SAS), a group ostensibly encouraging recreational and social activities among the armed forces, but actually promoting political and religious indoctrination. De la Lama had been an active member of the SAS,<sup>13</sup> and the group was strongly suspected of acting on behalf of the Sinarquistas. The government also expelled eight cadets of the National Military Academy associated with De la Lama in the SAS.<sup>14</sup> Having taken these actions, the administration preferred to let the affair be forgotten.

11. Tiempo, Mexico City, 21 April 1944

12. El Popular, 29 April 1944; El Sinarquista, 27 April 1944.

13. El Popular, 23 April 1944.

14. Novedades, 14 April 1944.

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II. The May Schism.

A. The Withdrawal of Abascal and His Followers.

The first sign that all was not well within the Sinarquista organization and that, despite the rigid requirements of obedience to the national leader, serious differences had arisen among the upper ranks came at the end of April, shortly after the De la Lama affair, when the National Committee removed Salvador Abascal from his posts as member of the National Committee and leader of the María Auxiliadora Colony in Lower California. The announcement did not make it clear whether Abascal had been expelled from the UNS. Although Abascal refused at first to make a public statement, a handbill issued by his followers attacked the present Supreme Leader, Manuel Torres Bueno, and his assistants as "traitors to Sinarquismo", and gave evidence to people outside of the UNS that the removal of Abascal involved more than an ordinary disciplinary action.<sup>15</sup>

In the middle of May, Abascal finally gave his version of the story, explaining that he had kept silent previously because of a gentleman's agreement with Torres Bueno, but because of the spreading of slanderous rumors, no longer considered himself bound by the promise.<sup>16</sup> Abascal completely denied stories that his mismanagement of the María Auxiliadora Colony was the cause of his removal, and blamed Torres Bueno

15. Tiempo, 19 May 1944.

16. In an exclusive interview published in Novedades, 17 May 1944. For a complete translation of this article, see the appendix to this report.

for deliberately withholding necessary supplies and forcing the failure of the colony. He insisted that he had voluntarily withdrawn from the UNS because of his disagreement with Torres Bueno's policies, that he could not accept the whitewashing of the character of Benito Juárez, father of the anti-clerical laws of the Reform, even though made at the insistence of the president; and that he regarded as shameful a statement of Torres Bueno placing Protestantism on the same plane with Catholicism. Abascal admitted that he had thought of deposing Torres Bueno and taking leadership of the UNS again but had found the present leader's control too firm to be shaken.

In the interview, Abascal left no doubt that a division of considerable seriousness had taken place in the UNS over the question of future policy. The Torres Bueno leadership, according to Abascal, planned to convert the movement into a formal political party and banked upon an eventual United States policy of opposition to Russia, involving American support for all right-wing movements in Latin America:

...we are told that the political party which Sinarquismo is going to become will oppose any official government party planning to control elections. It is very easy to say that one is going to oppose the PRM [the present government party]. What is difficult is to stand up against guns in order to insist upon an honest election.

Once Sinarquismo becomes a political party, it is only going to play the game of the well-known 'democracy' and the Revolution. And the people, as always, will be played for suckers.

People should withdraw from this type of Sinarquismo, which is now only one more kind of fraud....

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It is said that Sinarquismo is ready to fight against Communism anywhere. This is a demagogic device of Lic. Torres to keep the poor deceived people under his control. It is also a fantasy, which perhaps Torres and his gang believe. They believe or pretend to believe that when the break between the United States and Russia comes, our cousins [The United States] will demand of the Mexican government that it destroy the Left, and that therefore the president will be obliged to call upon Sinarquismo. Then Sinarquistas will take up arms if necessary....What is really necessary is that Sinarquismo be ready to overthrow the Revolution, which was destroying Mexico a century before the word Communism was heard in our country. The Revolution will continue destroying Mexico even though Communism is annihilated in Asia and Europe and the entire world....

With Abascal, a number of the founding members and figures of the National Committee of the UNS, including the [Trueba/Olivares] brothers, Rubén/Mendoza, Rafael/Deveze, and Silviano/Castellanos, also withdrew from the organization.

After giving this interview, Abascal proceeded to write a series of articles for Mañana, a weekly with strong right-wing Catholic tendencies, explaining the history of the UNS, his role in it, and amplifying his version of his dispute with Torres Bueno. Upon the publication of these articles, Abascal retired to private life in the Mexico City suburb of Tacubaya, where his parents-in-law furnished him enough capital to start a shoe repair shop.<sup>17</sup>

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17. Mañana, Mexico City, (a photostatic copy of article without date), probably late May or early June.

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B. The Reply of Torres Bueno and His Faction

Although pressed by reporters to reply to the charges made by Salvador Abascal, Manuel Torres Bueno refused to grant an interview to the press.<sup>18</sup> However, four days later on 21 May, speaking before the annual mass meeting of thousands of Sinarquistas commemorating the foundation of the UNS, the incumbent national leader gave the official reply to Abascal. He declared that Abascal had no reason to attack the present directors of the destinies of the UNS, apparently hinting that Abascal's charges of personal slander by Torres were false; that the Sinarquistas would not enter into prolonged arguments on the affair since doing so would merely profit the known enemies of the organization; and that "just as we have forgiven the enemies who have persecuted and shot down our comrades, so we should forgive our mistaken friends as Christian charity demands".

In regard to the charge that the UNS would declare itself a political party, Torres entered a complete negative in his speech. "We cannot be a political party because there is no democracy in Mexico. Our enemies want us to enter the electoral contests in order to defeat us by means of frauds and travesties as has always happened. But Sinarquismo will not play the game of the Revolutionaries."<sup>19</sup>

These declarations of policy were reinforced within a week by a further statement of the UNS denouncing the Party of the Mexican

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18. Novedades, 18 May 1944.

19. Novedades, 23 May 1944.

Revolution (PRM), the official government party. "As long as the PRM follows the Nazi methods employed in Germany, the Sinarquistas will not participate directly in Mexican politics....Everyone in Mexico, except possibly the highest authorities, knows that the PRM disregards suffrage and violates all democratic forms."<sup>20</sup>

At the same time Torres Bueno, in his character of Supreme National Leader of the Unión Nacional Sinarquista, attempted to quiet all further discussion of the withdrawal of Abascal and his friends. Instructions were sent to all members of the UNS warning them that a vicious press campaign had been launched against the movement because of a "slight incident which has now been settled", and ordering them not to spread any information which they might glean about the affair in other newspapers. The members of the movement were exhorted to believe only the version published in El Sinarquista, the official organ of the UNS.<sup>21</sup>

C. The Issue at Stake in the Schism.

Judged from Abascal's declarations and the discussion in the Mexico City press, the controversy within the UNS involved a dispute over future policy, with differences of opinion so great and so irreconcilable that the group led by Salvador Abascal withdrew from the organization. More perhaps than any other Sinarquista leader, Salvador Abascal had been distinguished for his open anti-United States

20. Excelsior, 29 May 1944.

21. Novedades, 29 May 1944.

sentiment and his frank partiality for the Axis. During his service as Supreme National Sinarquista Leader one of the leading Nazi agents in Mexico, Anton von Trotter, served as his personal secretary under the name of Antonio Sam López. Toward the end of April, when this fact became established, the early Nazi affiliations of the UNS were further confirmed by publication of photostatic copies of a court petition of September 1938 in which Torres Bueno acted as attorney for the Nazi sympathizer and perhaps agent, Oskar Hellmuth Schreiter, reputed to have aided in the foundation of the movement.<sup>22</sup>

Abascal and his group, despite the obviously approaching defeat of the Axis in the Eastern Hemisphere, apparently opposed any adjustment of Sinarquista policies to changing conditions. They preferred to maintain the doctrinaire position of an uncompromising and declared opposition to the United States, and to continue to fight the present Government of Mexico and work for the New Christian Order in the traditional Sinarquista manner, eschewing direct participation in politics and building up a tightly-knit organization for eventual overthrow of of the present order in Mexico.

Torres Bueno and his group, on the other hand, evidently realizing the certainty of a severe and perhaps final defeat for fascist systems in the Eastern Hemisphere, proposed to revise Sinarquista policies<sup>23</sup> sufficiently to permit cultivation of groups in the United States

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22. Tiempo, 21 April 1944.

23. Catholic opinion in the United States appears to be divided on the subject of Sinarquismo; e.g., Father Coughlin's "Social Justice", "America", and the Brooklyn Tablet have consistently been sympathetic to the movement, while "The Commonweal" has condemned it. (See issue of 9 June, 1944.)

favorable to them, hoping that at the conclusion of the present war, or even earlier, the United States would adopt a violently anti-Russian policy and encourage the destruction of liberal and leftist groups in Mexico. The Sinarquistas, as the only right-wing movement in Mexico with mass support would then be called in to become the mainstay of a reoriented Mexican Government.

Torres Bueno thus represents a more flexible wing of Sinarquista opinion which is prepared to shift its tactics when necessary. It is doubtful that the quarrel between Abascal and Torres Bueno arises from any difference over ultimate aims, but rather concerns a dispute over immediate strategy. On the point of Protestantism, which particularly irritated Abascal, for example, Torres Bueno's full statement to his interviewers, after acknowledging that Protestantism could be considered as Christianity, continued: the Sinarquistas, "of course, consider the Apostolic Roman Catholic Church the enduring tree while the Protestant heresies are the rotten limbs destined eventually to fall off."<sup>24</sup>

Just before Torres Bueno made his León speech, there was virtual unanimity among Mexico City writers, regardless of political persuasion, that he would announce the conversion of the UWS into a political party. Mañana, which is usually well-informed on right-wing politics, in its 20 May issue declared that the official announcement would contain

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24. SF/2246/1.

three points: (1) Sinarquismo becomes a political party. (2) Sinarquismo will fight openly against Communism wherever and however found. (3) Sinarquismo will resist with all its energies any attempt by an official party to impose its candidates.<sup>25</sup> Torres Bueno, according to one version, went to León with a prepared speech, but at the last moment, because of the unwillingness of a large part of the UNS membership to back formal entrance into politics, he abandoned his text and made an impromptu denial that he planned any change in UNS policies.<sup>26</sup>

That the dispute entailed serious consequences for the UNS seems quite clear. In a rigidly authoritarian organization, the loss of a considerable part of the top leadership is likely to have far more effect upon the general membership than a quarrel in a looser and more flexible group. Torres Bueno and his group with their control of the organizational machinery were able to defeat Abascal but apparently were forced to reaffirm adherence to the traditional policies of the UNS. It is impossible to estimate, just how many of the rank-and-file of the movement may have withdrawn with Abascal. One report suggests that by the end of May there was a considerable drop in membership.<sup>27</sup>

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25. SF/2246/1.

26. Allied Labor News, Mexico City, 31 May 1944.

27. Allied Labor News, Mexico City, 31 May 1944.

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The León meeting was notable for the fact that it was the first such celebration which failed to attract a larger audience than the previous one, and that attendance fell off sharply. As against the 90,000 attendance claimed by the National Committee, other sources estimated the total audience present at under 50,000.<sup>28</sup>

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28. Excelsior, 25 May 1944 gives a PRM estimate of only 12,000 but other sources, based on the statements of eyewitnesses give nearly 50,000 as a more accurate estimate.

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III. The Government in Motion.

A. The Rising Violence of the Sinarquista Campaign.

At the beginning of June, Mexico City observers were predicting that to maintain his hold upon the UNS membership, and to revive the enthusiasm and confidence lost through the withdrawal of Abascal and his friends, Torres Bueno would have to unleash a more violent campaign of propaganda and agitation.<sup>29</sup> A partial answer to this need was an intensification of the already violent agitation against Protestants and Protestant missionaries in Mexico. The stepping up of this campaign coincided with anti-Protestant outrages which, unfortunately for the UNS, aroused hostile government and public opinion on the issue. On 21 May Sinarquistas led by the village priest, Father Hermelindo Montealegre, attacked Protestant homes in the town of La Gloria, Veracruz, burning a number of dwellings and killing three children with clubs and machetes.<sup>30</sup> On 18 June a similar attack took place at Tlacotepec, Veracruz.<sup>31</sup> On 3 July peasants at Tuxtepec, Oaxaca, inflamed by anti-Protestant propaganda, attacked the Protestants in their village, damaging a number of houses and wounding several Protestants.<sup>32</sup>

29. SF/2248/1.

30. Tiempo, 16 June 1944.

31. El Popular, 19 June 1944.

32. El Popular, 4 July 1944.

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On 10 July, after the victims of the Veracruz attacks appeared in Mexico City to plead for federal protection, agents of the Federal Judiciary Police were sent to La Gloria and Tuxtepec to investigate and prosecute the people responsible for the outrages.<sup>33</sup> These attacks, even though Sinarquista responsibility was clear only in the first case, forced the government to look with much deeper concern at anti-Protestant campaigns, and the sight of wounded victims of the Veracruz attacks in Mexico City aroused a good deal of public opinion, which, while hardly favorable to Protestantism, was not prepared to countenance such occurrences. The reaction to anti-Protestant outbreaks, furthermore, added to the still existing public indignation aroused by the attempted assassination of President Avila Camacho, produced an atmosphere of opinion distinctly hostile to any intensification of Sinarquista agitation.<sup>34</sup>

At this time, the UNS chose to issue the most provocative anti-government propaganda of its history. The 22 June issue of El Sinarquista virtually issued a call for armed rebellion.<sup>35</sup> One article, entitled "Attention! General Strike!" called upon the army to rise and crush a purported general strike.<sup>36</sup>

33. El Popular, 11 July 1944.

34. SF/2246/1.

35. The quotations from this issue of El Sinarquista are taken from the passages cited in the opinion of the Federal Attorney General's Office; an English translation of this is included in the Appendix.

36. The story of a general strike had some basis in fact. The National Proletarian Federation (CPN), a small, extremist labor group led by expelled members of the Federation of Mexican Workers (CTM), had

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The day of the great betrayal is approaching. It has been set for 5 July.--Remember it, soldiers of Mexico, 5 July.--Soldier of Mexico! The Religion, Union, and the Independence of your brothers--the flag which you serve loyally--are to be wiped off the surface of our country and our consciences.... You will know the difference between your people and the traitors, between your flag and the red-black flag of strikes, between Mexico and Russia...And remember also that wherever you meet a Sinarquista, you are sure of finding a brother, a clean, patriotic Mexican, resolved like you to go to the place of greatest danger, and arrive at last at victory.-- Mexican soldier, attention! Mexican soldier, arms ready!--The password and countersign are: LONG LIVE MEXICO!

Another article declared that the purpose of the general strike would be to install a Communist government in Mexico:

Mexico will be at the mercy of the Communists on 5 July if the government of Avila Camacho holds fast to its attitude of stolid defeat before the challenging insolence of the labor bosses.--Upon the declaration of the GENERAL STRIKE, the Soviet Embassy will become the National Palace of Mexico, and from there measures will be dictated for converting our country into Soviet Republic No. 17 and the headquarters for the Bolshevization of America.

For the first time El Sinarquista also issued a direct, personal, and violent indictment of President Avila Camacho, in a country where the person of the president is treated with far more respect than is

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called a general strike. This strike, however, was denounced by the CTM and all other labor groups. It thus had no chance of involving any considerable number of people. In view of the fact that the Sinarquistas enjoy some prestige within the CPN, strong suspicions have been voiced that the UNS had a part in the call for a general strike. SF/2246/2.

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customary in United States journalistic practice, and criticism of the chief executive is therefore normally handled by indirection. In an editorial, "This is No Government", El Sinarquista flatly charged Avila Camacho with utter incapacity to govern and with allowing the Reds to throw the country into complete chaos:

Can the administration of Sr. Avila Camacho be called a government? He himself does not believe it when he fears to give orders like a man with authority; when the first cry of opposition or threat causes him to show his heels and flee the field.

Can a regime be called a government when it is presided over by a man who prefers to abandon his people to the mercy of vultures in order not to annoy the vultures?

B. The Government's Measures.

The reaction of the Avila Camacho administration to the Sinarquista appeal to the army and attack on the president was immediate, and in view of the previous leniency of the government in dealing with Sinarquista agitation, violent. President Avila Camacho at once instructed the Federal Attorney General, José Aguilar y Maya, to issue orders forbidding Sinarquista meetings in the eight key states of Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán--the principal centers of Sinarquista strength among the

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peasantry.<sup>37</sup> Sinarquista national headquarters were raided by the police<sup>38</sup> and the editor of El Sinarquista, Feliciano Manrique, was brought into the Attorney General's office for questioning. Manrique readily declared that the offensive articles had been written by Juan Ignacio Padilla, one of the members of the National Committee, and Padilla, when questioned, as readily admitted that he was the author. Both Manrique and Padilla defended the articles by stating that "grammatically the expressions of the paper may be offensive, but they are not morally or legally so".<sup>39</sup>

As a result of the investigation by the Attorney General's office, Juan Ignacio Padilla and the other Sinarquistas connected with the publication of the articles were indicted on 5 July 1944 in a long opinion signed by the Federal Attorney General.<sup>40</sup> The opinion is notable for a careful examination of Sinarquista philosophy, tracing its origins in Falange teachings and analyzing the function of the movement in Mexican life. The analysis closes with a summary paragraph:

To sum up: Sinarquismo for seven years has been carrying out intensive political propaganda among our peasantry, through written and oral media. It has spread the ideas, programs, and norms of action of a foreign government--the Spanish--which in its turn

37. Excelsior, 23 June 1944.

38. Allied Labor News, Mexico City, 30 June 1944.

39. Opinion of Attorney General, Mexico City, 5 July 1944.

40. An English translation of the opinion is included in the Appendix.

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derives them from Italian fascism, from Falangismo, from 'Jonsismo', and from the so-called 'traditionalism' of ~~Vázquez~~ Molla. It has impeded the functioning of our institutions and has propagated disrespect among Mexican nationals for the discharge of their civic duties. Finally, Sinarquismo has disturbed the public peace by a thinly disguised appeal to the Army and the people of Mexico to rebel against the Government of the Republic.

As a result of the Attorney General's opinion, the ban on Sinarquista meetings was extended to the entire country and the issuance of Sinarquista publications was prohibited.<sup>41</sup> At this time the government also took measures against Sinarquistas operating within labor unions and inciting the members to disregard the labor pledge of arbitration made when Mexico entered the war. On 29 June 1944 a strike called in the ~~"Hercules"~~ and ~~"Bonetería Queretana"~~ textile factories in Querétaro, after months of agitation by Sinarquistas within the local unions, was declared illegal by the State Arbitration Board and work resumed with the approval of the Mexican Federation of Labor (CTM).<sup>42</sup> In Santa Cruz, Tlaxcala, where a twenty-two months' old strike had been settled but renewed under Sinarquista agitation, the government took over the property and expelled all Sinarquistas working in the factory.<sup>43</sup>

41. El Popular, 6 July 1944.

42. El Popular, 4 July 1944. See also El Nacional, Mexico City, 19 August 1944, for further difficulties with Sinarquistas in the factory.

43. Excelsior, 9 July 1944.

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C. The Public Reaction.

In the prevailing state of Mexican public opinion, the government's measures against the Sinarquista organization met with immediate approval. Excelsior, which had been generally favorable to the UNS in the past, voiced the general opinion in an editorial on 24 June:

The time could not have been worse chosen <sup>for</sup> the Sinarquistas to have made these moves. Mexico is at war and is suffering serious effects from that in various phases of its life. A series of laws have been issued to safeguard internal peace which is indispensable when a country finds itself involved in an external conflict. And in this respect, let us recognize that President Avila Camacho has proceeded with tact and caution when in other countries, including democratic ones like Great Britain, much more severe measures are being applied under the primary need to preserve the state and the nation.

It was this need beyond any doubt that led to the application of the emergency laws to the case of the Sinarquistas. All the more so since the measure on which we are commenting only forbids gatherings, meetings, and other activities which tend to disturb the necessary internal peace of Mexico, and the harmonious progress of national work and unity. Anyone, without the blindness of passion, reading the last number of the Sinarquista newspaper, which openly calls upon the Army to mutiny against the highest officials, must admit the justice of what the government has done on this point.

An early repercussion of the articles and the government actions was a statement issued by Manuel ~~Gómez~~ Morán, chief of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), which has long had close relations as well as

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identity of aims with the UNS,<sup>44</sup> declaring that the PAN had "completely broken with Sinarquismo." This declaration of separation incidentally was the first public admission by either group that there had ever been any connection between them. Gómez Morín further explained that Sinarquista support given to Aquiles Elorduy, the PAN candidate for the governorship of Aguascalientes, was the independent action of ordinary citizens.<sup>45</sup> It seems probable that Gómez Morín, sensing the popular temper, hastened to dissociate himself and his party from the UNS lest the PAN be brought under the popular condemnation accorded the Sinarquistas.

An international note was added to the Sinarquista controversy when Salvador Abascal, from his shoe-making retirement in Taculaya, charged that under its present leadership Sinarquismo was managed to a considerable extent by the United States Embassy. Ambassador Meiersmith at once replied that, "Sinarquistas are considered fascists and we will not help those we are fighting against."<sup>46</sup> The Ambassador's statement appears to have settled this one phase of discussion about Sinarquistas.

44. See R&A 843, pp. 143-144.

45. Allied Labor News, Mexico City, 30 June 1944.

46. Ibid.

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IV. Events since July

A. Sinarquista Resistance to the Attorney-General's Orders.

1. Inability to Resist Openly

Weakened as it was by the Abascal schism in May and unable to count upon public support in the face of the general condemnation of the 22 June articles, the leadership of the Unión Nacional Sinarquista was forced to submit to the government orders severely circumscribing Sinarquista activities. The National Committee explained publicly that the articles had been misinterpreted; that they were not meant as a call for a rebellion by the army but merely to call attention to the Communist menace in Mexico.<sup>47</sup> According to a statement by Torres Bueno on 14 July in the Second Criminal Court of the Federal District, where he had come to answer charges brought by Deputy Salvador ~~Ochoa~~ Rentería, president of the Congressional Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, the organization had no subversive purposes and its leaders stood ready to answer any charges made. The Sinarquista national leader also stated that he had had an interview with President Avila Camacho, presumably to protest against the restrictions, in which

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47. SF/2246/3.

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the President assured him that the order prohibiting Sinarquista meetings anywhere in the country did not necessarily mean that the government would actively carry on a campaign to suppress the movement.<sup>48</sup>

The Sinarquista leadership also sent formal appeals to the President and the Attorney-General, protesting against the orders. The letter to President Avila Camacho stated that the UNS was faithfully obeying the order to discontinue propaganda meetings throughout the country, even though the order was illegal and harsh in view of the fact that the organization had no subversive aim. The UNS had found it necessary, however, to authorize local chiefs to hold small meetings with their groups to explain matters since otherwise it would have been difficult to maintain discipline and avoid outbreaks among the membership. The petition further protested against the denial of first-class mail privileges to the UNS, and the cancellation of the postal franchise and second class registry of the newspaper. It asked the President to intercede on behalf of Juan Ignacio Padilla, since the latter had only tried to warn of the menace of a general strike. The petition concluded with a plea that the President allow the Sinarquistas to continue

48. Ultimas Noticias, Mexico City, 14 July 1944.

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their activities as before so that they would no longer be considered subversive--a false estimate of their organization which had resulted in unjust persecution and false alarms throughout the country. The memorandum to the Attorney-General roundly declared that the latter had no right to prohibit the publication and circulation of El Sinarquista since that could be done only by a personal order of the President.<sup>49</sup>

2. Continued Publication of El Sinarquista and Orden

The government's orders have not meant the cessation of Sinarquista publishing activity. On 29 June, without any interval, the regular weekly issue of El Sinarquista appeared, although in a reduced format and a much smaller edition. The content of the newspaper was considerably more moderate than that of previous issues, but used the discussion then current of the speech of Chilean Senator Lafferte at the Ninth Congress of the Mexican Communist Party to suggest that the charges in the 22 June issue were really true. Since 29 June El Sinarquista has appeared regularly on an even more reduced basis. The 6 July issue consists of only one sheet, mostly devoted to blaming on Communist machinations the alleged injustice committed by the Attorney-General.

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49. SF/2246/3.

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The monthly Sinarquista review, Orden, which was not banned, has appeared regularly, apparently with no publishing difficulties whatever. The July number, issued shortly after the government's measures, although still published at general Sinarquista headquarters (Morelos 74, Mexico City), carried a note denying any connection with the Sinarquista movement. A considerable part of the issue was devoted to picture stories of the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War, stressing the anti-religious tendencies of both. An editorial complained of the Attorney-General's measures against the Sinarquistas while the Reds were left free to continue their activities openly.

The August issue of Orden shows a change of office address to a new location at Abraham González 14-18, Felipe Navarro remaining director. A prominent feature of this issue is an interview with Torres Bueno, in which the Sinarquistas are referred to in the third person and not, as in previous issues of Orden, in the first person. In the interview, Torres Bueno stresses the injustice of the charges against the UNS and the measures taken by the Attorney-General, and declares that the UNS will continue to work for the establishment of a Christian Social Order in Mexico.

It appears clear from the slight camouflage employed to hide the Sinarquista character of Orden that the UNS plans to continue

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publishing El Sinarquista as an official organ, thus testing the forbearance of the authorities as an order of the Attorney-General is openly violated, and that Orden is being given sufficient evidence of severance to circulate without loss of mail privileges and to serve as the major vehicle of Sinarquista propaganda should El Sinarquista be forced to cease publication.

3. Continued Sinarquista meetings

While large mass meetings have not been held, the UNS has continued smaller meetings although on a reduced scale, and has persisted in the emission of propaganda. During the months of July and August, Mexico City newspapers reported sufficient instances of meetings discovered by police in various parts of the country to lead to the opinion that the local groups have continued to hold small clandestine meetings. A number of instances were also reported of the printing and distribution of leaflets, propaganda declared illegal under the government orders.<sup>50</sup>

4. The <sup>V</sup>Instituto Mártires Sinarquistas

According to the Congressional Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, which has made a specialty of watching Sinarquista activities, the UNS has organized the most fanatic

50. Novedades, 13 August 1944; Excelsior, 22 and 30 August 1944; El Nacional, Mexico City, 22 August 1944; El Popular, 8, 17, 18, 22, and 25 July 1944; See also La Voz de Mexico, Mexico City, 6 and 20 August 1944 and Tiempo, 25 August 1944.

and militant of its members into a special group, prepared to carry out sabotage, assassination, and other deeds of violence should the UNS decide to turn to direct action. The members of the Institute swear to obey a secret series of ten commandments, do not carry the Sinarquista membership card, and are instructed to deny that they are members. The Institute is supposedly charged with the carrying out of murders planned by the UNS, espionage, and counter-espionage.<sup>51</sup> There is as yet no evidence either to substantiate or disprove this charge.

B. The Failure of the Government to Follow Up Its Measures

After the energetic measures of the first two weeks following 22 June, the Avila Camacho administration has not undertaken further measures against the UNS nor has it enforced the orders issued, with great energy. While Sinarquista meetings have been uncovered and the participants arrested in the states, meetings continue to be held in the Federal District without interference from the federal authorities, although the meeting places were well-known and the police had been informed. The charges against Manrique and Padilla have been acted upon with growing reluctance.<sup>52</sup> The police undertook to search Padilla's house for possible evidence only twenty days after he had been ordered handed over to

51. Tiempo, 25 August 1944.

52. Tiempo, 25 August 1942.

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the criminal courts by the Attorney-General. The house was vacant when examined, and Padilla's files had been removed. Similarly, neither Padilla nor Manrique have been arrested, although orders have been issued for the arrest of both.<sup>53</sup>

C. Pressure Upon the Government to Take Further Measures.

The failure of the government to enforce its own orders strictly and to proceed with the charges against Manrique and Padilla have led to considerable agitation on the part of opponents of the Sinarquistas. On 21 August the Congressional Committee for the Defense of the Revolution issued a bulletin accusing the judicial authorities supposed to prosecute the charges against the UNS with negligence of their duties. The bulletin in a series of questions asked the authorities whether they did not know that Padilla continued to visit the Sinarquista national headquarters regularly, whether the charges against Padilla and his associates had been dropped, whether the authorities were unaware of the fact that the Sinarquistas were continuing their propaganda activities. The bulletin also charged that the UNS had organized a secret society of fanatic killers, the Instituto Mártires Sinarquistas; that the membership in the Federal District continued to hold meetings at

53. El Popular, 1 August 1944.

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a number of houses listed for the benefit of the authorities; that one Sinarquista group had in its possession nearly 60 kilos of dynamite; and that Sinarquistas participated in the 20 July riot in the central square of Mexico City. The Congressional Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, through its president, declared that as soon as Congress resumed sessions, the failure of the authorities to proceed against the Sinarquistas would be brought to the attention of the Chamber and an explanation be demanded.<sup>54</sup>

54. Tiempo, 25 August 1944

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V. The Present Status of the UNS

It is still too early to determine the effects of the government measures upon the UNS. The movement has undoubtedly been greatly restricted in its propaganda activities, just after it had suffered defections in membership because of the withdrawal of Abascal and his followers. More seriously, its rash call to arms on 22 June has alienated a considerable body of public opinion previously favorable to it. On the other hand, none of these events represents a death blow by any means. The UNS can probably still count upon a majority of its membership, and the active anti-Communist campaign it is still carrying on in time may well heal over previous resentment aroused by the May schism, the attempted assassination of President Avila Camacho, and the June articles. Unless the Mexican Government proceeds with the prosecution, the UNS can circumvent the official restrictions and disregard them sufficiently to engage in a considerable amount of agitation. The UNS leadership undoubtedly hopes that within a short time, it will be able to persuade the Mexican Government to lift all restrictions.

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APPENDIX I

SINARQUISMO IS TO BE A POLITICAL PARTY

EX-CHIEF ABASCAL EXPLAINS WHY HE HAS LEFT THE UNS\*

The change in the line of the Unión Nacional Sinarquista, as well as the systematic discrediting and neglect shown him, especially in regard to the condition of the María Auxiliadora Colony in Lower California, were the true reasons which led Lic. Salvador Abascal to leave the UNS, according to a statement made exclusively to Novedades by the man who was once Supreme Leader of Sinarquismo.

A gentlemen's agreement between Abascal and the present leader of the UNS had kept Abascal's lips sealed until Lic. Torres Bueno broke the agreement. This left Abascal free to explain the reasons which he had previously promised not to publish. In his statement the ex-Sinarquista said:

"Lic. Manuel Torres Bueno, the present leader of the Unión Nacional Sinarquista, has not reciprocated my attitude of discretion and silence like a gentleman. Already accustomed to lying and cheating, he has continued spreading false and even slanderous stories about my separation from the Sinarquistas.

\*The full text of the article in Novedades, 17 May 1944.

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"I no longer have any reason to hold back the truth which the people ought to know.

"(1). In July of last year, when I came to Mexico City to better my health and to discuss the affairs of the María Auxiliadora Colony, I found out that Lic. Torres Buenó and his favorite, Salvador Navarro, Chief of Information of the National Committee, were spreading many lies and false, unjust opinions about my leadership of the Colony. I also found out that, although the necessary supplies for the rapid success of María Auxiliadora could have been furnished me, they were refused systematically under the pretext that there was no money, although actually there was.

"(2). At this same time, I became deeply indignant upon reading in El Sinarquista of the whitewashing of the character of Benito Juárez in the León mass meeting last year. Salvador Navarro explained to me that Lic. Torres had been rebuked by the president of the Republic for an attack which I had made upon Juárez in a public meeting. I shall never repent this attack.

"(3). For these two reasons I broke with Lic. Torres in an interview which we had at the end of July of last year. I have never again spoken with him except on one day--in August or September--when for the sake of courtesy I exchanged an extremely brief greeting with him. As soon as possible I informed him,

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through the proper channel, that I was dissociating myself from the organization.

"(4). Afterwards I called to the attention of Lic. Torres, in a letter from María Auxiliadora, a truly shameful thing: that he had placed the Christianity of the Mexican people and the 'Christianity' of the Protestants of the United States on the same plane: when asked by foreign journalists what Sinarquismo means by the words 'Christian Order.' The People have not been revolted by this because they cannot read, and because Lic. Torres Bueno is a master in the art of expressing his ideas with ambiguous words and twists so that he deceives equally people in opposing camps.

"(5). In regard to the colony, Lic. Torres fought me with hunger, refusing me whatever I asked for, with the intention of making me fail.

"(6). At one time I thought seriously of reassuming the national leadership of Sinarquismo and deposing Lic. Torres. He then used fraud and many calumnious stories to force me to leave the colony. I cannot say what this fraud was for I should have to publish the names of certain people who innocently had a part in the matter. They were equally deceived and taken off guard by Lic. Torres.

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"(7). I have become convinced that unfortunately Lic. Torres has corrupted the whole organization since many of its leaders are now no more than his henchmen, without personalities or minds of their own, delighted because they no longer run any risk under their leader's policies. The rank-and-file continue to give up their lives and go to jail. The top men no longer run even the slightest danger. For these reasons I have completely given up contesting control of the organization with Torres Bueno. I could count upon only a very few chiefs.

"(8). The rumor has been spread that I left the colony of my own free will and because of a serious breakdown of my health. Both stories are completely false.

"(9). In the last few days a false story has been spread in the National Committee that I was in Mexico City from the 5th to the 9th of April to oppose the conversion of Sinarquismo into a political party; that I argued behind closed doors with Torres Bueno and with the regional chiefs; and that on the 9th of April I was defeated and renounced Sinarquismo. All the colonists of María Auxiliadora know that I left the colony precisely on Sunday April 9. Many people saw me in La Paz on April 10 and 11. I can prove definitely that I arrived in Mexico City with my father-in-law.

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my wife, and my son April 14. Rafael Devese and Silviano Castellanos, who also have withdrawn from the Sinarquista organization for the same reasons as I, left the Colony with me. With only two or three exceptions, all the colonists remained behind because I begged them repeatedly to stay; but they are profoundly disgusted with the actions of Lic. Torres Buenos and Company.

"(10). It was many days after my arrival in Mexico City that I became aware that Sinarquismo was to become a political party.

"(11). It is said that Sinarquismo is ready to fight against Communism anywhere. This is a demagogic device of Lic. Torres to keep the poor deceived people under his control. It is also a fantasy, which perhaps Torres and his gang believe. They believe or prefer to believe that when the break between the United States and Russia comes, our cousins will demand of the Mexican Government that it destroy the Left, and that therefore the president will be obliged to call upon Sinarquismo. Then Sinarquistas will take up arms if necessary... What is really necessary is that Sinarquismo be ready to overthrow the Revolution, which was destroying Mexico a century before the word Communism was heard in our country. The Revolution will continue destroying Mexico even though Communism is annihilated in Asia and Europe and the entire world. It is

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necessary that Sinarquismo again tell the people the truth and nothing but the truth and that it always tell the truth clearly. But Lic. Torres will do nothing like this.

"(12). Finally, we are told that the political party which Sinarquismo is going to become will oppose any official government party planning to control elections. It is very easy to say that one is going to oppose the PRM, [the present government party] What is difficult is to stand up against guns in order to insist upon an honest election.

"Once Sinarquismo becomes a political party, it is only going to play the game of the well-known 'democracy' and the Revolution. And the people, as always, will be played for suckers.

"People should withdraw from this type of Sinarquismo which is now only one more kind of fraud.

"(13). I ought to ask the forgiveness of the mass of Sinarquistas, and I do so now, for the extremely serious mistake I committed in appointing Lic. Torres national leader.

"(14). The Trueba Olivares brothers, Rubén Mendoza, Rafael Deveze, Silviano Castellanos, and other estimable people have withdrawn from Sinarquismo for the same reasons that I have."

APPENDIX II

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S OPINION OF 5 JULY 1944\*

Considering:

FIRST--That on the first page of the issue of El Sinarquista published on Thursday, 22 June of the present year, there appears an article with eight-column headlines entitled "ATTENTION! GENERAL STRIKE! Sinarquismo makes an urgent appeal to the Army. It must make ready to repel aggression. The people will fight at the side of the soldiers against the Communists."

That in the said article, referring to the agitation for a general strike to take place on 5 July, there occur, among others, the following expressions of opinion:

"The day of the great betrayal is approaching. It has been set for 5 July.--Remember it, soldiers of Mexico, 5 July.-- Soldier of Mexico! The Religion, Union, and the Independence of your brothers--the flag which you serve loyally--are to be wiped off the surface of our country and our consciences. Now as at Angostura, at Puebla, as at Chapultepec, you will know how to act vigorously against knaves, against traitors, against those who have betrayed you by betraying your banner. Remember well, brother

\*El Popular, 6 July 1944, which published the full text.

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soldier: 5 July, or afterwards...whatever day has been chosen....  
You will know the difference between your people and the traitors;  
between your flag and the red-black flag of strikes, between Mexico  
and Russia...And remember also: that wherever you meet a  
Sinarquista, you are sure of finding a brother, a clean, patriotic  
Mexican, resolved like you to go to the place of greatest danger  
and arrive at last at victory.--Mexican soldier, attention!  
Mexican soldier, arms ready!--The password and countersign are:  
LONG LIVE MEXICO!"

That on the first page of the same number of El Sinarquista,  
under the subtitle of "This coming 5 July the Red revolution may  
break out.--Any emergency should find patriots firm and resolute,  
with modesty, with honor, and with courage" appears another article  
which contains the following paragraph:

"Mexico will be at the mercy of the Communists on 5 July if  
the government of Avila Camacho holds fast to its attitude of  
stolid defeat before the challenging insolence of the labor bosses.--  
Upon the declaration of the GENERAL STRIKE, the Soviet Embassy  
will become the National Palace of Mexico, and from there measures  
will be dictated for converting our country into Soviet Republic  
No. 17 and the headquarters for the Bolshevization of America."

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That on the editorial page of the same newspaper, there is an article entitled "THIS IS NO GOVERNMENT", which contains the following lines:

"But when, as in Mexico, the violent passions of the most debased men do not find a check even in the very authority of the Government against which they turn violently to destroy it, and the Government does not even show at least a nominal resistance, society is lost. It has fallen prey to anarchy.

"Order, authority, government--in a word, Sinarquismo-- these we have been demanding for Mexico, for only through Sinarquismo will Mexico attain its salvation after more than a century of complete anarchy. And to that end we have been fighting for seven years, in the course of which we have raised an army of more than five hundred thousand soldiers who are resolved to give Mexico a government with legitimate and effective authority, which will reestablish and guarantee order.

"Can the administration of Sr. Avila Camacho be called a government? He himself does not believe it when he fears to give orders like a man with authority; when the first cry of opposition or threat causes him to show his heels and flee the field.

"Can a regime be called a government when it is presided over by a man who prefers to abandon his people to the mercy of vultures

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in order not to annoy the vultures? Can a regime be called a government when it begins to tremble and also crumbles away before the simple threat of a few cunning people who shield themselves with foreign support?

"Our poor Mexican people! Besieged and despoiled by outsiders, squeezed and rent by insiders, abandoned and betrayed by those who have undertaken the duty to give justice and defend the people, for they live on the flesh of the people and enrich themselves through the people's sweat.

"Poor people of Mexico! They impose humiliating laws on you that degrade you in the eyes of the rest of the world; they destroy your economy and sharpen your misery; those who exploit your hunger and nakedness count upon the friendship and support of your government....

"And there is no one to defend you!

"People of Mexico...HOW MUCH YOU NEED A GOVERNMENT."

SECOND--That, when the present official investigation to determine the people responsible for the expressions contained in the above newspaper articles began, a denunciation of these same facts was received from the deputies Salvador Ochoa Rentería, Adán Velarde, and Pedro Téllez Vargas; it was decided to add their information to the investigations of the Attorney General's Office.

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THIRD--That upon being summoned to declare who had written the articles called "ATTENTION, GENERAL STRIKE!" and "THIS IS NO GOVERNMENT", the Director of El Sinarquista, Sr. Feliciano Manrique, stated that the author of the articles is Lic. Juan Ignacio Padilla.

That, upon being examined in his turn, Sr. Juan Ignacio Padilla admitted that he wrote the articles.

That both Manrique and Padilla refused to agree that in the said articles, they urged the Army to rebel, although they admitted that the said articles are offensive grammatically; but they refused to believe them injurious in their spirit, and the two men explained the nature, procedures, and ends of the Sinarquista movement.

FOURTH--That in the language of the first paragraph of Article 145, revised, of the present Criminal Code, the crime of subversive activity is committed by the foreigner or Mexican national "who by word of mouth or writing, or by any other means, carries out political propaganda, among foreigners or among Mexican nationals, spreading ideas, programs or norms of conduct of a foreign government which disturb public order or affect the sovereignty of the Mexican State."

That, in accordance with the second paragraph of the Article, public order is disturbed "when the acts mentioned in the preceding

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paragraph tend to produce rebellion, sedition, riot, or mutiny."

That, in conformity with the third paragraph of the said Article, "national sovereignty is affected when the said acts can imperil the territorial integrity of the Republic, obstructing the functioning of its legitimate institutions, or propagate disrespect on the part of Mexican nationals for their civic duties."

And that, finally, in accordance with the fourth paragraph of the law cited, it is also a penal offense to carry out "acts of whatever nature that prepare materially or morally for the invasion of Mexican territory or the subjection of the country to any foreign government whatever"; all of which shows that the present laws prescribe punishment for any act which, even though moral, results in a weakening of our political regime at a time when the country is at war, this being the only way to avoid the spread of defeatism.

FIFTH--That the articles of the newspaper called El Sinarquista, which are partially quoted in the first section, beyond any possible kind of doubt, involve the commission of the crime of subversive activity within the meaning of the above Article 145, revised, of the Federal Criminal Code, for:

(a) They carry out political propaganda among Mexican nationals in writing, spreading ideas, programs, and norms of action peculiar to foreign governments;

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(b) They tend to provoke rebellion and thereby disturb the public order;

(c) They affect national sovereignty, creating hinderances to the functioning of the legitimate institutions of the Republic and propagating disrespect on the part of Mexican nationals for their civic duties; and

(d) In view of the fact that Mexico is at war with the Axis powers, they tend to weaken the Government of the Republic and to create a defeatist current [of public opinion.]

In effects:

In order to demonstrate that Sinarquismo carries out political propaganda among Mexican nationals spreading ideas, programs, and norms of actions peculiar to foreign governments, it is necessary to compare the teachings of Sinarquismo with those of the Spanish Falange, which in turn were taken from the "traditionalism" of Vázquez de Mella and from the "Jonsismo" of Ledesma, and adopted officially by the present Spanish government.

This brief comparative study will make it possible, in passing, to emphasize the absolute lack of originality of the Sinarquista movement, the leaders of which have only imitated the procedures of action and repeated almost word for word the ideas of their

Spanish progenitors. It is not, then, mere chance that Sinarquismo takes as one of the fundamental parts of its program an aggressive Hispanism, which openly or secretly deplors the political independence of Mexico and yearns for the state of affairs obtaining in the time of the absolute monarchy.

Upon the death of Ferdinand VII--the archetype of dynastic absolutism--there arose the so-called "traditionalism" of Vázquez Mella, the champion of political Carlism, who based his teaching on three fundamental principles: Catholic unity, Christian monarchy, and the observance of traditional regional autonomy. This doctrine is the foundation of the Spanish corporative state. For Mella--who claimed that he postulated a representative democracy--the basis of representation is not the individual, but the group, the class, the categories which are formed whenever individuals or groups hope to achieve a common end. Therefore the Spanish Cortes ought to represent, according to Mella's thinking, the material interest (agriculture, industry, and commerce), the intellectual or teaching interest (universities, scientific, and artistic associations), the moral interest (the clergy), and the interest of defense (the army). There is however, a point in Mella's teaching which has never been adopted by Falange writers: Mella never thought of suppressing political parties. Actually he

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clearly stated that there will be parties among men as long as they are agreed not to agree, and that this agreement not to agree will last as long as there are men in the world.

If "traditionalism" has its origin in the reaction fighting against the Cortes of Cádiz, which according to the statement of one Falangista embodied "the liberal infamy", "Jonsismo" (taken from the name National-Syndicalist Attack Organizations [one of the fascist movements incorporated into the Falange]) appears during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and begin the job of undermining the Spanish Republic the same day that the Republic was born. And the inspirer of "Jonsismo" was ~~Ledesma~~, whose teaching as regards political parties has been accepted in toto by Falangismo and by the present Spanish government. For Ledesma, parties always represent special interests "without this fact being disproved by the circumstance that at times they represent the majority within a country". But, Ledesma is especially preoccupied by the "strategic work of the seizure of power". The "National State" of Ledesma is supposed to pass through three successive phases: in the first place, the organization of a political force for the exclusive service of what has been called the "National Idea"; in the second place, the installation of this political force as the only political party permitted to exist and

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operating as a dictatorship; and finally the establishment of the "National State", which will have as its object guaranteeing the accomplishment of "the spiritual, political and economic designs of which the National Genius is capable".

The Party (in capital letters) is considered by Ledesma to be the essential element of the revolt which, opening the way for the Dictatorship (also in capital letters), overthrows the "previously existing legality" and constitutes itself as the new regime. "In order that the Party may be able to accomplish its task, which is the greatest possible because of its decisiveness", six fundamental requisites must be fulfilled:

(1). The revolt must be directed by and achieve success through a single Party;

(2). There must be educational preparation for revolt and political organization.

(3). The revolutionary units need frequent mobilization.

The participation of those unable to take part in abortive attempts augurs ill for the achievement of the plans of the Party. One must not count upon people who may offer their services for the decisive day or moment, nor with organizations wrapped up with keeping proper archives. The weight and success of the revolt depend on those units which are drawn from the military formations of the "Party";

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(4). The use of forces and surprise are the principal elements of the revolt. The existing legality usually has at its disposal a powerful armed apparatus and must be dealt with by violent conquest.

(5). The objective of the revolt must be popular and well known to the mass of the population. Revolt is favored and made possible by political causes having their origin in the judgment of the people concerning the actions of the Regime. An absolutely necessary antecedent to revolt is political agitation. Thus there is prepared the atmosphere of agitation and high tension which makes it easy to consider as natural the action of the Party in deciding to adjust the national destiny by violence; and

(6). The revolutionary Party has to be totalitarian. That is, it will be a Party, a political discipline, but against all other parties. In order that its attitude of violence appears just and moral, it must have a totalitarian character. "It must identify itself with the State and represent the will of the country, even to creating that will. Thus, and only thus, can it achieve the success of the revolt and can it give to its Government duration, permanency, and glory." (J. Beneyto and J. Ma. Costa, El Partido, pp. 45 and 46.)

It would be prolix to go further into the ideas, programs, and

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norms of action of Falangismo and the present Spanish government. The explanation above is sufficient to bring out the identity of the teachings which have inspired the Falangista and the Sinarquista movements, even now when, in the countries of the Americas, these political tendencies have been forced to mask their true political countenance, even to the point of denying clamorously their unmistakable totalitarian origin.

Like Spanish Falangismo, Sinarquismo declares that it has as its aim the establishment of a "political order" which will be in accordance with the Christian tradition of the people, with the secular customs of the people, and its distinctive manner of existence. But, the Sinarquistas only appear to be a group with pro-clerical tendencies, since the moment that ecclesiastical dignitaries do not give unlimited approval to Sinarquismo, when they reprove its procedures, the respect and obedience which the Sinarquista leaders say they ought to show to the clergy, disappear. And if it is inadmissible, on constitutional or historical grounds, for us to allow the intervention of the Catholic Church in the political life of Mexico, even less can we accept the plan to supplant popular sovereignty in favor of the leaders of a group which aims at the establishment of a government concentrating all power in one man.

Sinarquismo describes itself as a political-civic organization, but it will not agree that it should be considered as a party, and one properly considered such. On the other hand, it prefers to call itself "Movement"--a word dear to the "Caudillo" [Franco] and to the Spanish Falange. And even though it may be thought that the foregoing comment is a trival detail, when all of the teachings of the Spanish Falange are considered, an adequate explanation of this spiritual attitude is found: Sinarquismo does not seek to be a party on the same plane as other parties, but "The Party", by antonomasia; and not even the leading party but instead the only political party permitted to exist. But as long as Sinarquismo does not succeed in seizing power, by employing the procedures outlined by Ledesma, it refuses the name of political party. Now, this renunciation carries with it another which throws the most light on the ends of Sinarquismo: Sinarquismo states that it is a Christian political-civic organization; and yet it refrains from taking part in local elections; that is, it abandons the only means which could lead directly to its goal. What are, then, the means which Sinarquismo proposes to resort to in order to succeed in having its teachings become dominant? The answer is given in such transparent form that it is unnecessary to state it. Moreover, it should be recognized that the use of its

present tactics has enabled Sinarquismo to grow and expand: the very vagueness of Sinarquismo's program; its ostensible renunciations; the spirit of sacrifice which some of its members pride themselves on showing; its Illuminism, aim deliberately at giving Sinarquismo the appearance of being a strongly moral organization which does not endanger the existence of our incipient democracy.

Up to now Sinarquismo has limited itself to organizing the political force necessary for seizing power; but the newspaper articles published in the 22 June issue of El Sinarquista show that it believes that it is ready to take control of the Government.

Sinarquismo has already achieved the first stage listed by Ledesma. In the editorial entitled "THIS IS NO GOVERNMENT", an expression is let slip, which even though it may not tell the truth, is not a mere figure of speech: The article states that during seven years, Sinarquismo has worked to form an "army" of more than "five hundred thousand soldiers". The plan for revolt is clearly shown when the article states that these "are resolved to give Mexico a government with legitimate and effective authority, which will reestablish and guarantee order". The concentration of masses of people at predetermined places and times is not simply-- as has been thought at times--a harmless activity or a puerile exhibition [but] revolutionary [acts] so that when the hour strikes Sinarquismo can undertake the enterprise of seizing power by force or of taking

control of the Government, taking advantage of a state of stupefaction similar to the one in the Italian Government during the march of the Fascists on Rome. The second and third points of the program outlined by Ledezama have also been fulfilled. The occasion for the people to accept as natural the use of violence (points four and five of the same program) was perfectly provided by the announcement of a general strike, particularly as it had been preceded by a systematic campaign discrediting our institutions. Thus there had been created the moral climate propitious for the use of violence under the pretext of working at the direction of higher patriotic motives. Under such conditions, in spite of their clever form, the articles under examination, can only be interpreted as an invitation to the Army and to the public in general to rebel against the Government of the Republic.

The reactionary character of the Sinarquista movement stands out if one remembers the battles which the Liberal Party had to wage during the past century in order to proscribe all interference by the Church in the sphere of politics. And if in the middle of the nineteenth century, in the Spain of Isabella II, the "Traditionalism" of Vázquez de Mella was an anachronistic and reactionary tendency, what should be said of a political movement born in Mexico a century later, when the separation of Church and State, the

nationalization of the wealth of the clergy, the principle of religious liberty and the law forbidding priests to take an active part in politics, have taken root for all time in our consciences.

Yet more, Sinarquismo aims at exploiting for its profit the religious sentiment of our people--which in itself is entirely respectable--even refusing to listen to the opinions of the highest Church dignitaries when they have repeated emphatically and publicly their disapproval of the procedures adopted by Sinarquismo.

For the rest, the attitude of the leaders of Sinarquismo is not strange in the least. They act like individuals with the destiny of accomplishing a divine mission, and they are sure that they are therefore freed from the duties and the obedience and submission which they say they have toward the ministers of the Catholic cult:

In the recent speech of the "Leader" of the Sinarquista movement in the City of Leon, there are these arrogant expressions:

We are at our post. Let the adherents of the Mexican Revolution and those who are not so know it. We are in the place that Providence has assigned us, and we are carrying out a duty, for it is a duty to serve God and our Country....

And Sr. Juan Ignacio Padilla, when questioned how he could explain the fact that the Catholic clergy--which he called the repre-

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representative of God or earth--agrees with the religious policy of the present Government of Mexico, while, on the other hand, the Unión Nacional Sinarquista--which is not the representative of God--does not, answered in these words:

The Mexican clergy can agree with the religious policy followed by the Government, for they are free to renounce whatever prerogatives and rights are granted to Catholics by natural law; but the Unión Nacional Sinarquista, one of whose purposes is to defend the interests, rights and liberties which natural law accords citizens, also has the right to exercise the right of petition, of protest, and of criticism in regard to those points which refer to the religious policy followed by the Government.

In the light of the above declaration, it is only necessary to add that the Unión Nacional Sinarquista has violated Article 133 of the Constitution of the Republic, which denies to periodical publications of a denominational character the right to comment on national political affairs or to give information on the actions of the authorities of the country, or of private individuals, which are directly connected with the functioning of public institutions.

It is useless to compare, even briefly the platform of principles enshrined in our fundamental laws and faithfully obeyed by the Government of the Republic when it bound itself to the cause of the United Nations, with Sinarquista ideas. Sinarquismo is most clearly the opposite, the antithesis of democratic principles.

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Human rights are the cornerstone of every regime which hopes to be described as democratic. And, if one takes the unlikely hypothesis that Sinarquismo will succeed in getting control of the country, its aim of being the only party permitted to exist gives a hint of the fate of human rights. In that event, it is unimaginable that any differences in political, ideological, or religious opinions would be allowed, and the whole life of the people of the country would depend on the will of one person.

But, even if one does not contrast democratic ideas and the Sinarquista platform, there is no need to think long to determine how reprehensible are Sinarquista activities in the very moments when Mexico is passing through one of the most decisive periods of its history. It is possible that these activities do not constitute treason against our country; but it is undeniable that such activities are hardly a useful contribution to our country in its struggle to reaffirm its political independence and continue working for complete economic emancipation. And even less can it be thought that Sinarquismo is a worthy participant in the international task which the Government of Mexico set itself, when an examination reveals that all Sinarquista efforts tend to weaken the alliance between our country and the United Nations.

To sum up:

Sinarquismo for seven years has been carrying out intensive political propaganda among our peasantry, through written and oral media. It has spread the ideas, programs, and norms of action of a foreign government--the Spanish--which in its turn derives them from Italian fascism, from Falangismo, from "Jonsismo", and from the so-called "Traditionalism" of Vázquez Mella. It has impeded the functioning of our institutions and has propagated disrespect among Mexican nationals for the discharge of their civic duties. Finally, Sinarquismo has disturbed the public peace by a thinly-disguised appeal to the Army and the people of Mexico to rebel against the Government of the Republic.

These actions come within the definitions of Article 145, revised, of the Criminal Code, and the people guilty of this crime of subversive activity should be bound over to the courts.

SIXTH--That the articles contained in the issue of El Sinarquista of 22 June last:

- (a) Advise, incite, and provoke the Army to revolt;
- (b) Advise, incite, and provoke the public in general to revolt or sedition;
- (c) Insult the authorities of the country with the intention of bringing upon them hate, scorn, and ridicule; and

(d) Insult a friendly nation, as well as its legal representative in our country.

That the above facts are punishable under Article 3, Section II, and Article 33 of the Press Law, under which they constitute an attack upon order and public peace; and

SEVENTH--That Article 19, Section VIII of the Organic Law Defining the Functions of the Attorney-General's Office empowers the Federal Attorney-General to send written instructions to Federal officials, and since the matter under investigation should be regarded as of national importance, I have decided to issue the following order:

SOLE ARTICLE--Let orders be issued to the head of the Department of Preliminary Investigations of the Federal Attorney-General's Office that, in view of the facts and considerations expressed above, he initiate criminal prosecution against Sr. Juan Ignacio Padilla and the other persons who are answerable for the crimes of subversive activity and attacks upon public order or the public peace within the respective meaning of Article 145, revised, of the Criminal Code and Article 3, Section II, of the Press Law.

México, D. F., 6 July 1944

The Attorney-General of the Republic, JOSE AGUILAR Y M. YA