

**The Dirty War in Mexico:
Mililitants, Guerrilleros and
Disappeared Political
Prisoners**



The unsuccessful assault on the Madera barracks in the northern state of Chihuahua led by former schoolteacher Arturo Gámiz on September 23, 1965 marks the emergence of several radical organizations in Mexico that pursued a socialist utopia. During more than 15 years, the federal government combated them using different strategies, including the one known as the “dirty war”. Hundreds of members of these groups were subjected to different types of violence that ranged from arbitrary detentions to physical disappearance.

Part of the history of this dirty war is kept in documents elaborated by the Federal Directorate of National Security (DFS), the Directorate for Social and Political Investigations (DIPS), and the Secretary of National Defense (SEDENA). In 2002, in an unprecedented decision, President Fox ordered the transferal of these archives to the National General Archive (AGN) in Mexico City and their opening to public access. This was the first time since the emergence of guerrilla groups in Mexico that researchers had access to documents and photographs that evidenced the detailed surveillance of groups and persons carried out by the security agencies. The recovery of this material is significant not only from a historical and political point of view but also in relation to the defense of human rights, because it sheds light on the way the State described, manipulated, and dealt with radical dissidents through its security agencies. The photographs exhibited were taken between 1967 and 1977. These are men and women detained by police corporations in various regions at different points in time. Some of the images show individuals whose whereabouts are unknown. They are disappeared political prisoners and these photographs may constitute their last proof of life.

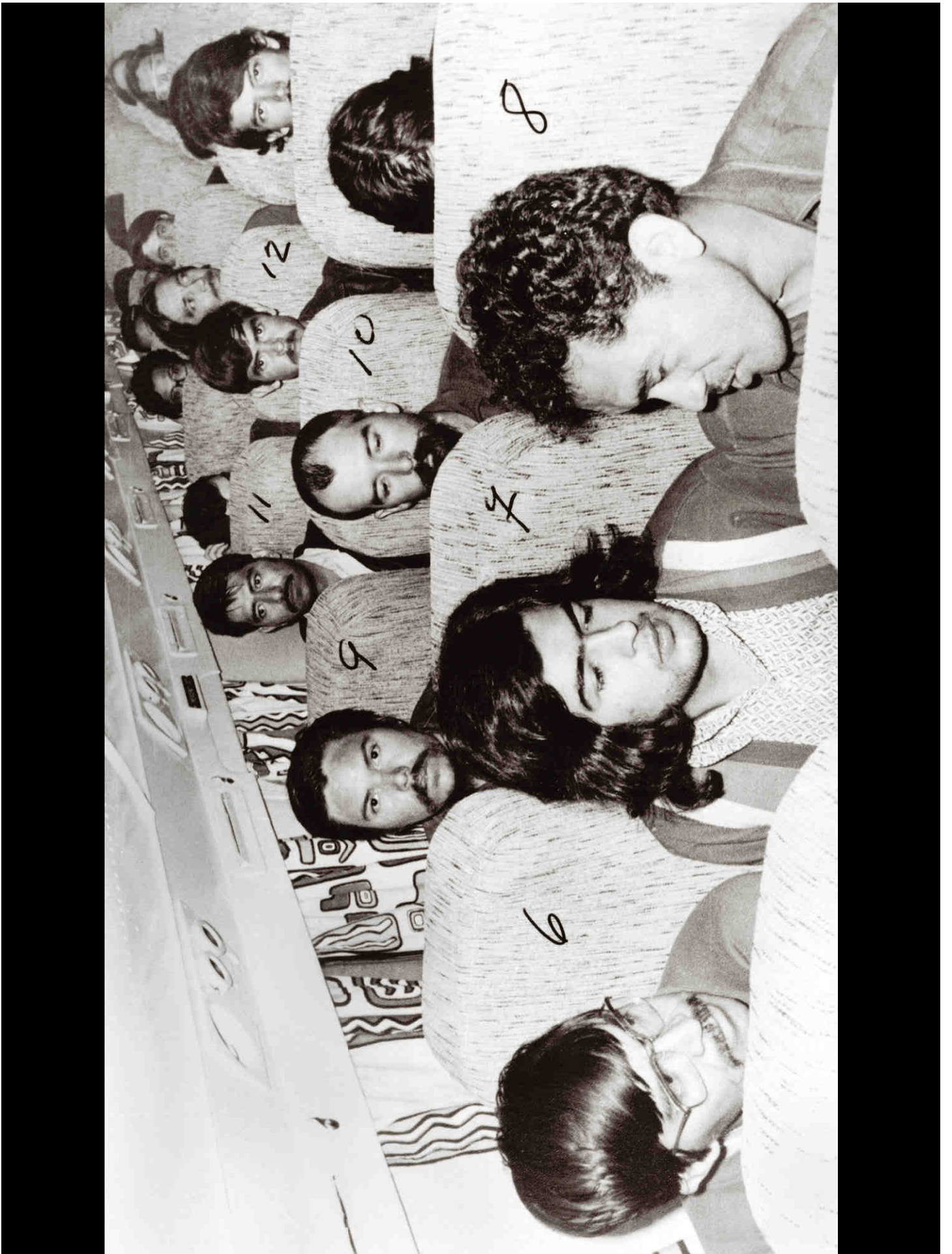














To date there are documented cases of more than 1500 disappeared, 395 political prisoners and 740 politically motivated murders in México.

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