

Introduction

The Student Movement of 1968 and the brutal government repression that brought it to an abrupt end deeply disturbed the Mexican people. A political, social, and moral crisis ensued that has not yet been resolved. Elena Poniatowska's book *Massacre in Mexico* is not an interpretation of these events. It is something that far surpasses a theory or a hypothesis: an extraordinary piece of reporting, or, as she calls it, a "collage" of "voices bearing historical witness." A historical chronicle—but one that shows us history before it has congealed and before the spoken word has become a written text. For the chronicler of an era, knowing how to listen is even more important than knowing how to write. Or better: the art of writing implies previous mastery of the art of listening. A subtle and difficult art, for it requires not only sharp ears but also great moral sensitivity: recognizing, accepting the existence of others. There are two breeds of writers: the poet, who hearkens to an inner voice, his own; and the novelist, the journalist, and the historian, who hearken to many voices in the world round about them, the voices of others. Elena Poniatowska first made a name for herself as one of Mexico's finest journalists, and shortly thereafter she was widely hailed as the author of starkly dramatic short stories and highly original novels, worlds governed by an offbeat brand of humor and fantasy in which the boundaries separating ordinary everyday reality from the eerie and unexpected become fuzzy and blurred. In both her writings as a journalist and her works of fiction, her language is closer to oral tradition than to classic literary Spanish. In *Massacre in Mexico* she uses her admirable ability to listen and to reproduce what others have to say to serve the cause of history. Her

book is a historical account and at the same time a most imaginative linguistic tour de force.

Massacre in Mexico is a passionate testimony, but not a biased one. It is a passionate book because cold objectivity in the face of injustice is a form of complicity. The passion that suffuses all her pages, from first to last, is a passion for justice, the same burning ideal that inspired the students' demonstrations and protests. Like the Student Movement itself, *Massacre in Mexico* upholds no particular thesis and puts forward no hard and fast ideological line; on the contrary, it is a book whose underlying rhythm, at times luminous and lyrical and at others somber and tragic, is the rhythm of life itself. The mood at the beginning is one of joyous enthusiasm and euphoria: on taking to the streets, the students discover the meaning of collective action, direct democracy, and fraternity. Armed with these weapons alone, they fight repression and in a very short time win the support and the loyalties of the people. Up until this point, Elena Poniatowska's

Ansel
account is the story of the civic awakening of an entire generation of young people. This story of buoyant collective fervor soon takes on darker overtones, however: the wave of hope and generous idealism represented by these youngsters breaks against the wall of sheer power, and the government unleashes its murderous forces of violence; the story ends in a bloodbath. The students were seeking a public dialogue with those in power, and these powers responded with the sort of violence that silences every last voice raised in protest. Why? What were the reasons behind this massacre? Mexicans have been asking themselves this question since October 1968. Only when it is answered will the country recover its confidence in its leaders and in its institutions. And only then will it recover its self-confidence.

As with all historical events, the story of what took place in 1968 in Mexico is a tangled web of ambiguous facts and enigmatic meanings. These events really happened, but their reality does not have the same texture as everyday reality. Nor does it have the fantastic self-consistency of an imaginary reality such as we find in works of fiction. What these events represent is the contradictory reality of history—the most puzzling and the most elusive reality of all. The attitude of the student leaders and that of the government, for instance—to cite just two examples. From the very beginning the students demonstrated a remarkable talent for political action. Their immediate discovery of direct democracy as a method of bringing new life to the

movement while at the same time keeping it in close touch with its primordial source, the Mexican people as a whole; their insistence on holding a public dialogue with the government, in a country accustomed to wheeling and dealing between various power-figures behind the scenes and secret string-pulling by corrupt, conniving leaders in high government circles; the modest and moderate nature of the students' demands, which might be summed up in the word *democratization*, a heartfelt aspiration of the Mexican people ever since 1910—all of this was evidence both of the students' maturity and of their instinctive political wisdom. But while these virtues and talents were quite obvious on the tactical level, they seem to evaporate from the moment that we hear the students begin to ponder the perspectives that lie ahead for the Movement, its goals, and its import within the twofold context of the history of Mexico and the current world situation. In place of tactical and strategic realism, what we find at this juncture are empty formulas, rigid programs, dogmatic oversimplifications, vacuous high-flown phrases and slogans. Almost all these young people thought that they were participating in a movement that in reality was quite different from the one that they were actually participating in. It was as though the Mexico of 1968 were a metaphor of the Paris Commune or the attack on the Winter Palace: Mexico was Mexico, and yet also another time and another place—another reality. The theatrical drama that they were writing in the pages of history was not the same one that they were reading. Their acts were real; their interpretations were imaginary. A number of them were persuaded that there was a direct connection between the railway workers' movement in 1958 and their own movement ten years later; but they thereby failed to see the difference in objectives and tactics and above all the different class structures involved in the two movements, and hence did not appreciate the entirely different significance of these two episodes. Others were quite certain that the middle-class Student Movement would be followed by worker and peasant movements: history as a relay race. But the Mexican working class failed to snatch up the torch held out to them: it proved as indifferent as the working classes in the countries of the West and in the United States to similar appeals and similar hopes of changing the system.

The attitude of the Mexican government was even more disconcerting—and even less forgivable. It proved to be unbelievably

blind and deaf. But both its blindness and its deafness stemmed from its inability to face up to what was happening. It was not that our government officials were blind and deaf; it was simply that they refused to see or to listen. In their eyes, acknowledging the mere existence of the Student Movement would have been tantamount to self-betrayal. The Mexican political system is founded on a single implicit, immutable belief. The President of the Mexican Republic and the official government Party are the incarnation of the *whole of Mexico*. Accustomed as they are to delivering only monologues, intoxicated by a lofty rhetoric that envelops them like a cloud, our presidents and leaders find it well-nigh impossible to believe that aspirations and opinions that are different from their own even exist. It is they who are the past, the present, and the future of Mexico. The Institutional Revolutionary Party is not a majority political party: it is Unanimity itself. The President is not only the highest political authority: he is the incarnation of all of Mexican history, Power itself in the form of a magic substance passed on from generation to generation in unbroken succession, from the first *Tlatoani* down through the Spanish viceroys to each president as he takes office. Unlike the Hispanic and Latin American pattern of dictatorship by *caudillos*, Mexican authoritarianism is legalistic, and the roots of this legalism are religious in nature. This is the real explanation of the terrible violence visited upon the students. The military attack on them was not only a political act; it also assumed the quasi-religious form of *chastisement from on high*. Divine vengeance. Exemplary punishment. The morality of a wrathful God the Father Almighty. This attitude has profound historical roots; its origins lie in the country's Aztec and colonial past. It can be traced back to a kind of petrification of the public image of the head of the nation, who ceases to be a mere man and becomes an idol to be worshiped. It is yet another expression of the *machismo*, and above all of the pre-eminence of the *father* in the Mexican family and in Mexican society. . . . In a word, in the Mexico of 1968, men once again made history with their eyes blindfolded.

I have always considered it necessary to look back to our colonial history in order to have even a partial understanding of the Mexico of today. By so doing, we will not, of course, find the answer to all our questions. But since the world of New Spain is the immediate antecedent of the world we live in today, our colonial past enables us

to establish certain parallels with our present. In the case of the events of 1968, how can we help but be reminded of the so-called "disturbances of 1692"? The similarities between these two chapters in our history are, as we shall see, no less significant than their differences.

The end of the seventeenth century was a relatively felicitous era in our country's history. While Spain was falling into a more and more profound political and social torpor that was to last for nearly two centuries, New Spain was prospering. For the most part, peace reigned throughout this immense territory, with only sporadic disturbances in the provinces and occasional uprisings by brave Indians in the far north of the country, which was still not completely under the control of the authorities in the capital. Thanks to the remarkable development of agriculture, and even more particularly of mining, a class of wealthy "creoles" (that is to say, descendants of Spaniards who had been born in Mexico) had come into being and was flourishing. An ambitious, enterprising, devoutly religious class eager to flaunt its prosperity: thanks to its generous contributions, splendid civic and religious buildings were erected, lining the streets of every city in the country. This colonial culture reached its apogee in the second half of the seventeenth century, and among the many remarkable talents it produced were two outstanding figures: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a poetess whose genius is recognized the world over, and the historian and mathematician Carlos de Singuenza y Góngora. It is not surprising that the inhabitants of New Spain should regard Mexico City as "the head and capital of the American continent," as Singuenza y Góngora himself described it, and call it, out of a sense of pride not unlike that of Bostonians a century and a half later, "the new Rome." Foreigners were equally impressed by the city, and even as late as the dawn of the nineteenth century Baron Alexander von Humboldt wrote, ". . . no city on the New Continent, including those in the United States, possesses scientific centers as large as those in Mexico . . . or as many beautiful buildings, which would not look at all out of place in the most elegant streets of Paris, Berlin, or Saint Petersburg." Creole society saw its own splendor and solidity reflected in its churches and palaces: gold altars and gilded salons, heavy cement foundations and walls of stone. This society nonetheless turned out to be more fragile than the monuments it erected.

In 1692 a shortage of corn caused an uprising among the common people—Indians, mestizos, and even impoverished creoles—and for

the first time in its colonial history Mexico City was the scene of serious disturbances as the poorer classes rioted in the streets. This act of bold defiance took the government by surprise, for it was not accustomed to seeing its authority challenged. The people raided the storehouses, poured into the main square of the city, burned the official archives, and threatened to set fire to the very seat of Spanish colonial power, the Viceroy's palace. The rioting had turned into something more than a protest against the scarcity of corn and taken on subversive political overtones. Once the authorities had recovered from their initial shock, they unleashed pitiless forces of repression that cast a dark shadow over the waning years of the seventeenth century in Mexico. The golden dream of the Viceroyalty ended in a sudden blaze of fire; in its glaring light colonial society discovered its other half, its hidden face: an Indian, mestizo face, an angry, blood-spattered face. Heretofore, civil disturbances had been limited to local rebellions in the provinces, and the uprisings in the north were seditious acts by tribes not yet subjugated, not yet evangelized and converted to Christianity. The riots in Mexico City, however, revealed a rift that ran through the very heart of Mexican society. The testimony of Singuenza y Góngora, who witnessed these disturbances, is as impressive as Elena Poniatowska's: "Hordes of men came rushing down that street where I was standing (and down all the others that led into the public squares). The Spaniards had unsheathed their swords, but they stopped in their tracks for the same reason that kept me standing there as though rooted to the spot: because the blacks, the mulattos, and all the raggle-taggle plebes were shouting: 'Death to the Viceroy and all his henchmen!' And the Indians: 'Death to the Spaniards who are eating up our corn!' And exhorting each other to bravely enter the fray, since there was no Cortez on the scene this time to conquer them, they stormed into the plaza to join the others and throw rocks. 'Hey, you sisters!' the Indian women shouted to each other in their own tongue, 'let's join in this battle with happy hearts, and God willing, we'll be rid of the Spaniards, so it doesn't matter at all if we die without making a last confession. This is our country, isn't it? So what are these Spaniards doing here anyway?'"

Almost all historians regard these riots of the year 1692 as a forerunner of the battles for Independence a hundred years later. I do not know, however, whether anyone has noted one thing which to me

is the most characteristic feature of this entire chapter in our history. The uprising of 1692 was a rebellion against the power of the Viceroy and Spanish domination; this revolt, however, was not really a revolutionary act, but an instinctive explosion. Its negation contained no element of affirmation. It would be fruitless to study this revolt in depth in the hope of discovering any sort of idea on the part of these rebels as to what Mexican society should be like once the power of the Viceroyalty had been done away with. A return to the world antedating the Spanish Conquest was impossible: it had been completely destroyed, along with its princes and its priests, its gods and its pyramids. Another world had been built upon its ruins: those rebelling against the Viceroy shouted their protests in Spanish, and worshiped the same God as their oppressors. None of the principles, neither of the two universalisms—the Spanish Empire and Roman Catholicism—that had served as the cornerstone of colonial society could serve as a principle of reform. Colonial society suddenly found itself trapped in a blind alley: there was no solution available within the religious, philosophical, and political constructs that served as its foundation. There was an irreconcilable contradiction between the Catholic-monarchic universalism and the particularism of the Indians and mestizos who had risen up in rebellion. Or to put it more precisely: the solution lay not within but without the ideology of New Spain. Yet another century was to go by before Mexicans would begin a slow, hesitant, timid search for the principles of another sort of universalism and attempt to apply these principles to our reality—with very little success, moreover.* These principles borrowed from

* The difficulty that the Hispanic and Lusitanian countries have experienced and are continuing to experience in their effort to adopt democratic principles and adapt them to their own situation ought to be the central concern of historical and social studies in Latin America, Spain, and Portugal. But this has not been the case at all, and however incredible it may seem, we still do not know why democratic institutions have not proved viable in the majority of our countries. There is a great deal of talk about our economic underdevelopment, and in recent years this underdevelopment and our dependence have been used as convenient excuses for all our failings and shortcomings. I do not deny that underdevelopment and dependence do indeed exist in our countries, but I also note that very few people have troubled to ponder the question as to whether or not there is any relation between this underdevelopment and our political life. The modernity of a country cannot be measured solely, or even primarily, in terms of the number of factories and machines it possesses. The most essential criterion is the degree of development of intellectual and political criticism. Doubtless the poverty of our scientific and philosophical tradition has the same origin as our shallow democratic tradition. Our history is as rife with *caudillos* as the waters of the Gulf of Mexico are infested with sharks.

abroad were those of the Enlightenment as they had taken shape in the two revolutions that served as a model for the independence movements in Spanish America: the French and American Revolutions.

There are unquestionably certain similarities between the disturbances in Mexico in 1968 and those in 1692. In both cases there was a sudden awakening from a dream, from the illusion of genuine prosperity and social harmony. Around 1950 the groups holding the reins of power in the economic and political sphere—including the majority of technicians and many intellectuals—began to feel a certain sense of self-satisfaction at the progress that had been made since the consolidation of the post-Revolutionary regime (1930); political stability; uninterrupted economic development despite a high rate of population growth; impressive completed public-works projects; the birth of a sizable middle class; the increased number of jobholders and the rise in the standard of living of the working class; and finally, as in the seventeenth century, an over-all atmosphere of peace and calm, as though each and every sector of the population were in perfect agreement, from labor leaders to bankers and members of the higher echelons of the institutionalized Revolution to the proconsuls of the big international corporations. In 1690, creole society saw itself reflected in its baroque palaces and its convents and its private schools; in 1960, the post-Revolutionary society saw its image in its factories, its ranches, its Hollywood-style mansions, and its colossal monuments commemorating glorious Revolutionary victories and Revolutionary heroes. It would be unfair, however, to compare the baroque art of the seventeenth century, which even in its most deliriously extravagant flights of fancy was an exquisite art, with the megalomaniacal style of post-Revolutionary Mexico, conceived and executed in the very best tradition of Stalinist art. There was no lack of praise of our country on the part of foreigners. The most resounding tribute paid us was that by President Kennedy, who unhesitatingly proclaimed that the Mexican regime was a model for all of Latin America. The heirs of our revolutionaries had at last received Washington's benediction. But it represented a posthumous triumph for the Mexican Revolution. In reality, our poor Revolution had long since been the victim of a twofold takeover: it had been co-opted politically by the official government Party, a bureaucracy that is similar in more than one respect to the Communist bureaucracies of Eastern Europe, and it had been co-opted economically and socially

by a financial oligarchy that had intimate ties to huge American corporations.

In 1968 this apparent consensus fell to pieces, and the other face of Mexico was suddenly revealed: a generation of angry young men and women and a middle class which bitterly opposed the political system that had ruled the country for forty years. The disturbances of 1968 suddenly brought to light the deep split within that area of Mexican society that might be described as the developed sector, within that predominantly urban sector, that is to say, which includes almost half the population of the country and which in the last few decades has undergone a more and more rapid progress of modernization. But the crisis within the Mexico that is modern and developed assumed even more dramatic and crucial proportions when the Student Movement bared what lay concealed behind it, the other Mexico, the Mexico in rags and tatters, the millions of desperately poor peasants and the masses of the underemployed who emigrate to the cities and become the new nomads of our day—nomads wandering about the urban desert.

As in 1692, the 1968 movement lacked any sort of precisely defined ideology. Unlike the uprising in 1692, it was not a movement of the lower classes but of students, the middle class, and intellectual groups. As in 1692, though for different reasons, it was a direct expression of the general dissatisfaction of the country as a whole. A deep dissatisfaction in the face of the paralysis of the political system that had taken root after the violent phase of the Mexican Revolution had come to an end (the PRI was founded in 1929) and a deep dissatisfaction as well at the turn taken by the social program of the revolutionaries, which had degenerated into a policy of "development" that had benefited only a small minority. This is why the summons to "democratize" the country immediately gained the support of the majority of the population belonging to the urban sector. As in 1692—though again for very different reasons—it was political demands that became the prime concern. But it is that very fact which betrays the major difference between the disturbances of 1692 and those of 1968: whereas the principles on which colonial society was based could provide no answer to the crisis of 1692, the principles on which present-day Mexican society is founded are capable of providing, if not a solution, at least the beginning of a solution, to our problems. "Democratization" is far from being the

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final solution, naturally, but it is the right path to follow in order to examine our problems in public, discuss them, propose solutions to them, and organize ourselves politically so as to ensure that these solutions are effectively implemented. Those who are impatient must be reminded what development in the form of a sort of forced march imposed on a people by bureaucratic socialism has meant in the past and continues to mean today: such artificially speeded-up development has been achieved only at the cost of immeasurable physical suffering and moral degradation. The creation of a democratic tradition in Mexico is just as important and just as urgent a problem as economic development and the struggle to achieve genuine equality.

In 1968 the Mexican political system was plunged into crisis. Seven years have since gone by, and we still have not succeeded in creating an independent democratic movement that can offer any real solutions for the enormous problems confronting our country. The spontaneous and healthy negation of 1968 has not been followed by any kind of affirmation. We have proved incapable of drawing up a coherent and viable program of reforms and of creating a national organization. The truth of the matter is that the primary beneficiary of the events of 1968, and very nearly the only beneficiary, has been the regime itself, which in the last few years has embarked upon a program of reforms aimed at liberalizing it. It would be morally wrong to ignore these reforms or minimize their importance; but at the same time it would be an untruth to maintain that they are all that is required. No, the real remedy is not to be found in a reform from the top downward, but rather from the bottom upward, a reform strongly backed by an *independent* popular movement. What must be done is to create an alternative altogether different from the PRI, something that thus far the traditional opposition parties in our country have been unable to accomplish. An intellectual paralysis has overtaken the Mexican left, at present the prisoner of simplistic formulas and an authoritarian ideology that is even more pernicious than the bureaucratic sclerosis of the PRI and the system that concentrates political power in the hands of a president who is a mere party appointee. As for the right: for a long time now the Mexican bourgeoisie has had no ideas—only self-interests. For all these reasons, the “democratization” that the students were seeking in 1968 continues to be a legitimate demand and a pressing

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task. It is absolutely essential for any attempt at genuine reform in Mexico. Democracy may be roughly defined as that free arena in which criticism takes place. But criticism of others must be accompanied by self-criticism. To communicate with others, we must first learn to communicate with ourselves. Those groups that are eager for change in Mexico should begin by taking steps in the direction of their own democratization, that is to say, making free criticism and debate the practice within their own organizations. And what is more: they should examine their own consciences and criticize their own attitudes and ideologies. There are hosts of arrogant theologians and stubborn fanatics among us: their dogmas are as resistant to change as stone. The intellectual regeneration of the left will be possible only if it sets aside many of its ironclad formulas and humbly listens to what Mexico is really saying—what our past history and our present are saying. If it does so, it will regain its political imagination. If not, will our country be obliged to wait, as in 1692, for yet another century? //

—Octavio Paz

The majority of the following interviews were recorded in October and November 1968. The students who had been imprisoned offered their testimony during the two years following Tlatelolco. This is their story, woven out of their words, their struggles, their mistakes, their pain, and their bewilderment at the turn events took. Their impatience, their ingenuousness, their confidence also play a part in it. I am especially grateful to mothers who lost their sons and daughters, to brothers and sisters of the dead who were kind enough to allow me to record their words. Grief is a very personal thing. Putting it into words is almost unbearable; hence asking questions, digging for facts, borders on an invasion of people's privacy.

This story is also that of a mother so stunned that for days and days she uttered scarcely a word, and then suddenly, like a wounded animal—an animal whose belly is being ripped apart—she let out a hoarse, heart-rending cry, from the very center of her life, from the very life that had been taken from her. A terrible cry, a cry of terror at the utter evil that can befall a human being; the sort of wild keening that is the end of everything, the wail of ultimate pain from the wound that will never heal, the death of a son.

In these pages there echo the cries of those who died and the cries of those who lived on after them. These pages express their outrage and their protest: the mute cry that stuck in thousands of throats, the blind grief in thousands of horror-stricken eyes on October 2, 1968, the night of Tlatelolco.

Headlines in the Major Daily Papers in Mexico City on Thursday,
October 3, 1968

EXCÉLSIOR:

SERIOUS FIGHTING AS ARMY
BREAKS UP MEETING OF
STRIKERS.

20 Dead, 75 Wounded, 400 Jailed:
Fernando M. Garza, Press Secretary
of the President of the Republic

NOVEDADES:

SHOTS EXCHANGED BY
SHARPSHOOTERS AND THE
ARMY IN CIUDAD
TLATELOLCO.

Figures Thus Far: 25 Dead and 87
Wounded: General Hernández To-
ledo and 12 Other Soldiers
Wounded

EL UNIVERSAL:

TLATELOLCO A BATTLEFIELD.
Serious Fighting for Hours Be-
tween Terrorists and Soldiers. 29
Dead and More Than 80
Wounded; Casualties on Both
Sides; 1000 Arrested

LA PRENSA:

MANY KILLED AND WOUNDED
ACCORDING TO GARCÍA
BARRAGÁN.

Army and Students Exchange Gun-
fire

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EL DÍA:

**CRIMINAL PROVOCATION AT
TLATELOLCO MEETING CAUSES
TERRIBLE BLOODSHED.**

Fight with Army at Tlatelolco Re-
sults in Many Dead and Wounded:
General Hernández Toledo and
12 Other Soldiers Wounded. One
Soldier Dead. Number of Civilians
Killed or Wounded Still Not Known

EL HERALDO:

**BLOODY ENCOUNTER IN
TLATELOLCO.**

26 Dead and 71 Wounded; Sharp-
shooters Fire on Army Troops. Gen-
eral Toledo Wounded

EL SOL DE MÉXICO (a morning paper):

**FOREIGN INTERLOPERS ATTEMPT
TO DAMAGE MEXICO'S
NATIONAL IMAGE.**

The Objective: Preventing the Nine-
teenth Olympic Games from Being
Held

Sharpshooters Fire on Army Troops
in Tlatelolco.

One General and 11 Soldiers
Wounded; 2 Soldiers and More
Than 20 Civilians Killed in a Terri-
ble Gun Battle

EL NACIONAL:

**ARMY FORCED TO ROUT
SHARPSHOOTERS: GARCÍA
BARRAGÁN**

OVACIONES:

**BLOODY GUN BATTLE IN THE
PLAZA DE LAS TRES CULTURAS**
Dozens of Sharpshooters Fire on
Troops. 23 Dead, 52 Wounded, 1000
Arrested, and More Vehicles
Burned

LA AFICIÓN:

**STUDENT MEETING IN
TLATELOLCO RESULTS IN
HEAVY GUNFIRE**

All witnesses agree that the sudden appearance of flares in the sky above the Plaza de las Tres Culturas at the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing unit was the signal that unleashed the hail of bullets which turned the student meeting of October 2 into the Tlatelolco tragedy.

At five-thirty p.m. on Wednesday, October 2, approximately **ten thousand people** were gathered on the esplanade of the Plaza de las Tres Culturas to hear the student speakers of the National Strike Committee, who were standing on a balcony on the fourth floor of the Chihuahua building addressing a crowd consisting mainly of students, men, women, children, and oldsters sitting on the ground, street vendors, housewives with babies in their arms, tenants of the housing unit, and spectators who had dropped by to watch out of curiosity, the usual idlers and bystanders who had merely come to "have a look." **The mood of the crowd was calm despite the fact that the regular police, the Army, and the granaderos were out in full force.** Men and women students were passing out handbills, collecting money in boxes labeled CNH, and selling newspapers and posters, and on the fourth floor, in addition to the Mexican reporters covering national events, there were foreign journalists and photographers who had come to Mexico to report on the Olympic Games that were scheduled to begin in ten days.

A number of students addressed the crowd: a young boy introduced the speakers, another student from UNAM announced, "The Movement will continue despite everything," and another from the IPN said, ". . . the consciousness of our Mexican family

GUN BATTLE IN THE LAS TRES CULTURAS
Sharpshooters Fire on Head, 52 Wounded, 1000 and More Vehicles

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sudden appearance of flares in the sky at Las Culturas at the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco that unleashed the hail of bullets which of October 2 into the Tlatelolco tragedy. Wednesday, October 2, approximately ten led on the esplanade of the Plaza de las student speakers of the National Strike ing on a balcony on the fourth floor of dressing a crowd consisting mainly of children, and oldsters sitting on the newwives with babies in their arms, tensed spectators who had dropped by to usual idlers and bystanders who had k." The mood of the crowd was calm ar police, the Army, and the granaderos and women students were passing out in boxes labeled CNH, and selling on the fourth floor, in addition to the ational events, there were foreign journo had come to Mexico to report on the heduled to begin in ten days.

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has been aroused and it has become politically aware"; a girl whom I remember particularly because she was so young spoke of the role the brigades were playing. The speakers criticized the politicians and several newspapers, and proposed a boycott of the daily *El Sol*. The people up there on the fourth-floor balcony spied a group of workers entering the Plaza carrying a banner that read: **RAILWAY WORKERS SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT AND REJECT THE ROMERO FLORES-ORDAZ TALKS**. This contingent of workers received an enthusiastic round of applause. This group of railway workers then announced a series of escalating strikes, beginning "tomorrow, October 3, in support of the Student Movement."

Just as a student named Vega was announcing that the scheduled march on the Santo Tomás campus of the IPN would not take place **because the Army had been called out and there might be violence**, flares suddenly appeared in the sky overhead and everyone automatically looked up. The first shots were heard then. The crowd panicked, and despite the fact that the leaders of the CNH up on the fourth-floor balcony of the Chihuahua building kept shouting into the microphone, "Don't run, all of you, don't run, they're just shooting in the air. . . . Stay right where you are, stay where you are, don't panic," the crowd started running in all directions. Everyone was terror-stricken, and many of them fell to the ground there in the Plaza, or leaped down into the pre-Hispanic ruins in front of the church of Santiago Tlatelolco. We could hear heavy rifle fire and the chatter of machine guns. From that moment on, the Plaza de las Tres Culturas was an inferno.

The report on the events at Tlatelolco that appeared in *Excélsior* the following day, October 3, stated, "No one could say precisely where the first shots came from, **but the great majority of the dem-onstrators agreed that the Army troops suddenly began shooting without warning**. . . . There were shots from all directions, from the top of a building in the housing unit and from the street, where the military forces fired round after round from the machine guns mounted on their light tanks and armored transports." *Novedades*, *El Universal*, *El Día*, *El Nacional*, *El Sol de México*, *El Heraldo*, *La Prensa*, *La Afición*, and *Ovaciones* all reported that the Army was forced to return the fire from sharpshooters stationed on the roofs of the buildings. As proof of that statement, they mentioned the fact that General José Hernández Toledo, who was directing the opera-

tion, received a bullet wound in the chest and stated to reporters following the operation he subsequently underwent, "It's my opinion that if it was bloodshed they wanted, the blood I've shed is more than sufficient" (*El Día*, October 3, 1968). According to *Excélsior*, "It is estimated that approximately 5000 Army troops, and many police security agents, the majority of whom were dressed in civilian clothes, were involved. All of the latter had white handkerchiefs wrapped around their right hands so that the others could identify them, for in order to protect themselves in case the students attacked, only a very few of them were wearing badges.

"The heavy gunfire lasted for twenty-nine minutes. Then the hail of bullets tapered off, though there were still sporadic bursts of gunfire."

The rifle fire came from many directions and machine-gun bullets whizzed all over the Plaza. As a number of journalists reported, it is quite likely that many of the police and the soldiers killed or wounded each other. "Many soldiers must have shot each other, since as they surrounded the crowd and closed in, bullets were flying in all directions," the journalist Félix Fuentes reports in his story in the October 3 issue of *La Prensa*. The army employed a pincers movement to take over the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, that is to say, the five thousand troops closed in from two directions, firing automatic weapons at the buildings, Fuentes adds. "On the fourth floor of one building, from which three speakers had delivered inflammatory speeches against the government, flashes from firearms were seen. Apparently the federal security agents and the Federal District police had opened fire on the crowd from up there.

"Many people tried to escape by way of the east side of the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, and a large number of them managed to get out, but hundreds of persons came face to face with columns of armed troops pointing their bayonets at them and shooting in all directions. Seeing that escape was impossible in that direction, many people in the crowd fled in terror and sought refuge inside the buildings, but others ran down the narrow little streets in the housing unit and eventually reached the Paseo de la Reforma near the Cuitláhuac Monument.

"This reporter was caught in the crowd near the Secretariat of Foreign Relations. A few steps away a woman fell to the ground—

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she had either been wounded or had fainted dead away. A couple
of youngsters tried to go to her rescue, but the soldiers stopped
them."

General José Hernández Toledo stated later that in order to avoid
bloodshed he had given the Army troops orders not to use the
heavy-caliber weapons they had been armed with (*El Día*, October
3, 1968). (General Hernández Toledo had previously been in com-
mand of Army troops occupying the University of Michoacán, the
University of Sonora, and UNAM, and has under his command
paratroopers who are considered to be the best-trained assault
troops in the country.) Nonetheless Jorge Avilés, a reporter for *El
Universal*, wrote in the October 3 issue of that daily, "We have now
seen the Army troops in all-out action: using all sorts of armaments,
including heavy-caliber machine guns mounted on twenty jeeps or
more, they fired on all the areas controlled by the sharpshooters." And *Excelsior* added, "Some three hundred tanks, assault troops,
jeeps and troop transports have surrounded the entire area, from
Insurgentes to the Reforma, Nonoalco, and Manuel González. No
one is being allowed to enter or leave this area, unless he can pro-
duce absolute proof of his identity" ("Terrible Gun Battle in Tlate-
lolco. The Number of Dead Not Yet Determined and Dozens
Wounded," *Excelsior*, Thursday, October 3, 1968). Miguel Ángel
Martínez Agis reported, "An Army captain was on the telephone,
calling the Department of Defense, reporting on what was happen-
ing: 'We're fighting back with every weapon we have. . . .' We
could see that the troops were armed with .45's and .38's, and 9-
mm. pistols" ("Chihuahua Building, 6 p.m.," *Excelsior*, October 3,
1968).

General Marcelino García Barragán, the Secretary of Na-
tional Defense, stated, "When the Army approached the
Plaza de las Tres Culturas it was met with rifle fire from
sharpshooters. There was a general exchange of gunfire
that lasted approximately one hour. . . .

"There are both Army troops and students dead and
wounded: at the moment, I can't say exactly how many
there are."

// "Who in your opinion is the leader of this movement?"

"I only wish we knew who was behind it."

[This would seem to indicate that General Barragán had no proof that it was students who were to blame.]

"Are there any wounded students in the Central Military Hospital?"

"There are some in the Central Military Hospital, in the Green Cross Hospital, and in the Red Cross Hospital. They've all been placed under arrest and will be available for questioning by the Attorney General's office. We're also holding a number of them in Military Camp 1, where they will be available for questioning by General Cueto, the Chief of Police of the Federal District."

"Who's in charge of the Army operations?"

"I am."

(Jesús M. Lozano, in a story entitled "Freedom Will Continue to Reign," *Excélsior*, October 3, 1968. The secretary of defense then provided an analysis of the situation.)

The Mexico City Chief of Police denied, however, that he had asked the Army to intervene in Tlatelolco, as the secretary of defense had previously reported. In a press conference early that morning, October 3, General Luis Cueto Ramírez made the following statement: "Police officials informed National Defense the moment they received reports that gunfire had been heard in the buildings next to the Secretariat of Foreign Relations and Vocational 7, where troops have been on duty around the clock." He explained that as far as he had thus far been able to determine, no foreign agents had been involved in the student disturbances which had been going on in the city since July. The majority of the arms confiscated by the police were manufactured in Europe and were the same models as are used in the socialist bloc, according to General Cueto. He also declared that he had no evidence that Mexican politicians were involved in the situation in any way, and that he knew of no United States citizens who had been arrested. "Among the prisoners, however, are one Guatemalan, one German, and another foreigner whose nationality I don't recall at the moment," he stated (*El Universal*, *El Nacional*, October 3, 1968).

No photographs of the dead bodies lying in the Plaza de las Tres

Culturias were taken because the Army troops would not allow it (reported in a story with the heading "Many Killed and Wounded Last Night," *La Prensa*, October 3, 1968). On October 6, in a manifesto addressed "To the Mexican People," published in *El Día*, the CNH declared, "The final list of those killed and wounded in the Tlatelolco massacre has not yet been drawn up. Thus far we know of some 100 dead—those whose bodies were removed from the Plaza. There are thousands of wounded. . . ." That same day, October 6, the CNH announced that it would hold no more demonstrations or meetings, since the attack by the forces of repression "has caused the death of 150 civilians and 40 soldiers." In his book *The Other Mexico* Octavio Paz quotes the figure that the English daily paper *The Guardian* considered most likely, after "careful investigation": 325 dead.

It is quite certain that even today the precise death toll has not yet been determined. On October 3, the figures quoted in the headlines and news reports in the papers varied from twenty to twenty-eight. The number of wounded was much larger, and two thousand people were jailed. The shooting in the Tlatelolco area stopped around midnight. But the buildings in the housing unit were searched from top to bottom, and some thousand prisoners were taken to Military Camp 1. Around a thousand other persons arrested were taken to Santa Marta Acatitla Penitentiary, in Mexico City. The Tlatelolco area continued to be barricaded by Army troops. Many families abandoned their apartments, taking all their belongings with them, after having been subjected to a rigorous search and interrogation by the troops. Platoons of eleven soldiers each entered the buildings in the nearby suburbs to inspect every dwelling. Apparently they had orders to make a house-to-house search.

At present (early in 1971) those still imprisoned in Lecumberri number about 165.

We shall probably never know what motive lay behind the Tlatelolco massacre. Terror? Insecurity? Anger? Fear of losing face? Ill-will toward youngsters who deliberately misbehave in front of visitors? Together with Abel Quezada,* we may ask ourselves, WHY? Despite all the voices that have been raised, despite all the eyewit-

* A famous Mexican editorial cartoonist, who after Tlatelolco drew a now celebrated cartoon in *Excélsior* with the caption WHY? (Translator's note.)

ness testimony, the tragic night of Tlatelolco is still incomprehensible. Why? The story of what happened at Tlatelolco is puzzling and full of contradictions. The one fact that is certain is that many died. Not one of the accounts provides an over-all picture of what happened. All the people there in the Plaza—casual bystanders and active participants alike—were forced to take shelter from the gunfire; many fell wounded. In an article entitled "A Meeting That Ended in Tragedy," which appeared in the Mexico City *Diario de la Tarde* on October 5, 1968, reporter José Luis Mejías wrote, "The men in white gloves drew their pistols and began indiscriminately firing at close range on women, children, students, and riot police. . . . And at that same moment a helicopter gave the signal for the Army to close in by setting off a flare. . . . As the first shots were fired, General Hernández Toledo, the commander of the paratroopers, was wounded, and from that moment on, as the troops raked the crowd with a furious hail of bullets and pursued the sharpshooters as they fled inside the buildings, no one present was able to get an over-all picture of what was happening. . . ." But the tragedy of Tlatelolco damaged Mexico much more seriously than is indicated in a news story entitled "Bloody Encounter in Tlatelolco," which appeared in *El Heraldo* on October 3, 1968, lamenting the harm done the country's reputation. "A few minutes after the fighting started in the Nonoalco area, the foreign correspondents and the journalists who had come to our country to cover the Olympic Games began sending out news bulletins informing the entire world of what was happening. Their reports—which in a number of cases were quite exaggerated—contained remarks that seriously endangered Mexico's prestige," the story read.

The wound is still fresh, and Mexicans, though stunned by this cruel blow, are beginning to ask themselves questions in open-mouthed amazement. The blood of hundreds of students, of men, women, children, soldiers, and oldsters tracked all over Tlatelolco has dried now. It has sunk once again into the quiet earth. Later, flowers will bloom among the ruins and the tombs.

E.P.

is still incomprehensible. Tlatelolco is puzzling. I am certain is that many have all picture of what unusual bystanders and shelter from the gunned." "A Meeting That Mexico City Diario de la Causa Mejias wrote, "The began indiscriminately students, and riot police. gave the signal for the As the first shots were commander of the paramilitaries went on, as the troops and pursued the no one present was usenning. . . ." But the more seriously than is encounter in Tlatelolco," of 1968, lamenting the minutes after the fighting correspondents and to cover the Olympic informing the entire which in a number of remarks that seriously though stunned by this questions in open students, of men, all over Tlatelolco quiet earth. Later,

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We ran down one floor after another in the center wing of the Chihuahua building, and on one of them, I don't remember which one it was, I felt something sticky underfoot. I turned around and saw blood, lots of blood, and I said to my husband, "Just look at all this blood, Carlos! They must have killed lots of people here!" Then one of the corporals said to me, "It's obvious, señora, that you've never seen very much blood. You're making such a fuss over a few little drops of it!" But there was lots and lots of blood, so much of it that my hands felt sticky. There was also blood all over the walls; it seems to me that the walls of Tlatelolco are drenched with blood. It reeks of blood all over Tlatelolco. Lots of people must have bled to death up there, because there was much too much blood for it to have been that of just one person.

Margarita Nolasco, anthropologist

On October 2, Professor Leonardo Pérez González, a teacher at Vocational 7 and a member of the Coalition of Secondary and College Teachers for Democratic Freedoms, was shot to death in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas.

Abelardo Hurtado, professor at the National School of Biology, IPN

Yesterday, October 2, I was put in command of two sections of cavalry troops, numbering seventy-five men, all of whom were attached to the 18th and 19th Cavalry Regiment, and given orders to take these two sections to the Tlatelolco housing unit, with my men and myself dressed in civilian clothes but wearing a white glove so that the authorities would be able to identify us, and upon arriving there we were to guard the two entrances to the Chihuahua building in the aforementioned housing unit and mingle with the crowd that had gathered there for unspecified reasons. Immediately upon

sighting a flare in the sky, the prearranged signal, we were to seal off the aforementioned two entrances and prevent anyone from entering or leaving.

Ernesto Morales Soto, Captain, First Class, 19th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the Olimpia Battalion, under the command of Colonel Ernesto Gómez Tagle, in an official notarized statement, no. 54832/68, filed in the office of the Public Prosecutor

They're dead bodies, sir. . . .

*A soldier, to José Antonio del Campo,
reporter for El Día*

The dead bodies were lying there on the pavement, waiting to be taken away. I counted lots and lots of them from the window, about seventy-eight in all. They were piling them up there in the rain. . . . I remembered that Carlitos, my son, had been wearing a green corduroy jacket, and I thought I recognized his dead body every time they dragged another one up. . . . I'll never forget one poor youngster, about sixteen or so, who crawled around the corner of the building, stuck his deathly pale face out, and made a V-for-Victory sign with two fingers. He didn't seem to have the least idea what was happening: he may have thought the men shooting were also students. Then the men in the white gloves yelled at him, "Get the hell out of here, you dumb bastard! Can't you see what's happening? Clear out of here!" The kid got to his feet and started walking toward them, as though he didn't have a care in the world. They fired a couple of shots at his feet, but the kid kept right on coming. He obviously didn't have the slightest idea what was going on, and they shot him in the calf of his leg. All I remember is that the blood didn't immediately spurt out; it just started slowly trickling down his leg. Meche and I started screaming at the guys with the white gloves like a couple of madwomen: "Don't kill him! Don't kill him! Don't kill him!" We ran to the door, but the kid had disappeared. I have no idea whether he managed to escape despite his wound, whether they killed him, or what happened to him.

Margarita Nolasco, anthropologist

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They started firing from the helicopter, and I began to hear rifle reports overhead. Those idiots were shooting like crazy. That's why the Chihuahua building caught fire, because of the shots from the helicopter.

Estrella Sámano, student

The Plaza de las Tres Culturas is an esplanade quite a bit higher than street level, with several flights of steps leading up to it, and on one side it drops off sharply, giving visitors a good view of the recently restored pre-Hispanic ruins down below. A little church—Santiago de Tlatelolco—was built above these ruins in the sixteenth century. . . .

Luis González de Alba, of the CNH

From the speakers' platform where we were standing, we could see the blue caps of the railway workers below us.

Graciela Román Olvera, student at the
Faculty of Medicine, UNAM

I was handing out leaflets and collecting money for the CNH when the three green flares suddenly appeared in the sky behind the church. A lady who was searching in her purse for change to give me started looking for a place to take cover. "Don't panic, they're just trying to scare us a little, don't panic," I said to her. Several people ran past me and I shouted to them, "Don't run, you're in no danger, they're just firing in the air, don't run." Suddenly one of the Movement people ran by and I called to him, "Where are you going? We have to calm the crowd down so they won't panic and start running." But he turned on his heel like a robot and headed for the middle of the Plaza. When I realized after a while that he hadn't come back, I thought to myself, I wonder what the hell's happening; he hasn't come back.

José Ramiro Muñoz, engineering
student at ESIME, IPN

When I realized that the helicopter had come down dangerously low, circling right above the heads of the crowd in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and firing on everybody—we could see the gray

streaks of tracer bullets in the sky—I was so dumfounded I said to myself, I can't believe it—it's like in a movie! I've never seen anything like this except in the movies. Those just can't be real bullets! I wandered around in a daze, as though I'd gone out of my mind, until finally somebody grabbed me by the arm and stopped me.

Elvira B. de Concheiro, mother of a family

Ever since then, whenever I see a helicopter, my hands start trembling. For many months after I'd seen that helicopter fire on the crowd like that—as I was sitting there in my car—I couldn't write, my hands trembled so.

Marta Zamora Vértiz, secretary

Two helicopters overhead patrolling the student meeting descended and the crews inside started firing on the sharpshooters stationed on the roofs of the buildings.

It has been reported that the co-pilot of one of the helicopters received a bullet wound in the arm when a sharpshooter fired at him repeatedly from the Chihuahua building. The helicopter then took off immediately in the direction of the International Airport.

News story entitled "Many Killed and Wounded Last Night," La Prensa, October 3, 1968

The helicopter had come down so close that I would be able to identify the man who was firing on the crowd from inside it.

Ema Bermejillo de Castellanos, mother of a family

When the shooting began, people immediately headed for the stairs at the front of the Chihuahua building, shouting, "The Committee, the Committee!" Their one thought was to defend their leaders. Then the units of secret agents posted around the building began shooting at the crowd, driving them off with a hail of bullets.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

I couldn't understand why the crowd kept heading back toward where the men in the white gloves were shooting at them. Meche and I hid there behind a pillar watching the crowd coming toward us, shouting and moaning, being fired on, running away in the opposite direction, and then immediately coming back our way again,

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falling to the ground, running away again, and then coming back and falling to the ground again. The whole thing just didn't make sense: whatever were they doing? A whole great crowd was running first in one direction and then another: they'd run away and then head back our way again, and more of them would fall on the ground. I thought they should all have sense enough to keep away from the men who were shooting at them, but they kept coming back. I found out later that they were also being shot at from the other side of the Plaza.

Margarita Nolasco, anthropologist

The Army units approached from all directions and encircled the crowd in a pincers movement, and in just a few moments all the exits were blocked off. From up there on the fourth floor of the Chihuahua building, where the speakers' platform had been set up, we couldn't see what the Army was up to and we couldn't understand why the crowd was panicking. The two helicopters that had been hovering over the Plaza almost from the very beginning of the meeting had suddenly started making very hostile maneuvers, flying lower and lower in tighter and tighter circles just above the heads of the crowd, and then they had launched two flares, a green one first and then a red one; when the second one went off the panic started, and we members of the Committee did our best to stop it: none of us there on the speakers' stand could see that the Army troops below us were advancing across the Plaza. When they found themselves confronted by a wall of bayonets, the crowd halted and immediately drew back; then we saw a great wave of people start running toward the other side of the Plaza; but there were Army troops on the other side of the Plaza too; and as we stood watching from up there on the speakers' stand, we saw the whole crowd head in another direction. That was the last thing we saw down below, for at that moment the fourth floor was taken over by the Olimpia Battalion. Even though we had no idea why the crowd had panicked and was running first in one direction and then in the other, those of us who had remained there at the microphone till the very last found ourselves looking down the barrels of machine guns when we turned around. The balcony had been occupied by the Olimpia Battalion and we were ordered to put our hands up and face the wall, and given strict orders not to turn

around in the direction of the Plaza; if we so much as moved a muscle, they hit us over the head or in the ribs with their rifle butts. Once the trap they had set snapped shut, the collective murder began.

Gilberto Guevara Niebla, of the CNH

NOTARIZED DEPOSITION, NO. 54832/68

DEPOSITION BY ONE OF THE WOUNDED.—MEXICO CITY, D.F. At nine-thirty p.m. (21:30) on October 3, 1968 (nineteen hundred sixty-eight), the undersigned, in pursuit of his official duties, legally entered the Emergency Ward of the Central Military Hospital and recorded the statement of the patient in Bed 28 (twenty-eight). After being duly informed of his rights, as provided by law, the said patient declared that his name was ERNESTO MORALES SOTO, that he was 35 (thirty-five) years of age, a widower, a Catholic, with an education, a Captain of Cavalry, First Class, in the Mexican Army, born in Xicotepec de Juárez in the State of Puebla, residing in this City in Military Camp Number ONE. With regard to the events currently under investigation, the deponent DECLARED: That he holds a commission as a Cavalry Captain, First Class, in the 19th Regiment, stationed in the City of Múzquiz, in the State of Coahuila, and at the present time is attached to the Olimpia Battalion in this City, under the command of Colonel ERNESTO GÓMEZ TAGLE, which has been assigned the special duty of preserving public order during the Olympic Games; that yesterday he was placed in command of two sections of Cavalry, numbering 65 (sixty-five) men, attached to the 18th and 19th Cavalry Regiments, and ordered to proceed to the Tlatelolco housing unit with his men, all of whom were to be dressed in civilian clothes and wear a white glove so that the authorities would be able to identify them, and upon arriving there they were to guard the two entrances to the Chihuahua building of the aforementioned housing unit and mingle with the crowd that had gathered there for unspecified reasons; that immediately upon sighting a flare in the sky, the prearranged signal, his unit was to station itself at both entrances and prevent anyone from entering or leaving; that after the aforementioned flare was set off, they began to hear a great many shots being fired, both from the top of the aforementioned building and from the windows, aimed at the crowd of people gathered below, who attempted to protect themselves by hugging the walls of the building; that a number of people in the crowd attempted to enter the building.

whereupon the unit under the command of the deponent, in accordance with the orders they had received, fired in the air to disperse the crowd, these events having occurred at approximately four-forty p.m. (16:40 hours); that one of the shots from the top of the building wounded the deponent in the right arm, whereupon one of his men notified his superior, who ordered the deponent transferred to the Hospital, where he is at present a patient; that upon being wounded, he lost consciousness and therefore does not know what happened subsequently, and that owing to the fact that he is not familiar with that particular area of the city, he is unable to state precisely what streets the entrances to the Chihuahua building are located on, and does not know who the persons were who fired the shots or how many persons were wounded; that for the present this is the sole testimony that he has to offer. After reading the above deposition, the deponent attested to it by stamping it with his right thumbprint, since the wound in his arm made it impossible for him to sign his name.

STATEMENT ATTESTING TO WOUNDS INCURRED—The undersigned, in pursuit of his official duties, visited Bed 28 in the Emergency Ward of the Central Military Hospital, where he personally examined the patient occupying said bed, who declared that his name was ERNESTO MORALES SOTO, and in witness whereof the undersigned states: that the said SOTO has the following wounds: a jagged bullet wound on the anterior surface of his right elbow, measuring one centimeter in diameter, and a second wound where the bullet exited, presenting the same characteristics and measuring two centimeters in diameter, on the posterior surface of the elbow, indicating a probable fracture. —Wounds of such a nature as not to endanger the life of the victim and requiring more than two weeks to heal. —Case covered by PART TWO of Article 289 of the Penal Code presently in effect. —Hospitalization not required. —The same wounds attested to and described in the certificate signed by Dr. ALFREDO NEME DAVID, the original of which has been examined and annexed to the present statement. . . . HEREWITNESS ATTESTED TO:

GERMÁN VALDEZ MARTÍNEZ, Attorney
Official Notary, Office of the Public Prosecutor

ALBERTO LÓPEZ ISLAS
LÁZARO RODRÍGUEZ MORALES
Witnesses

A heavier rain of bullets than any of the ones before began then, and went on and on. This was genocide, in the most absolute, the most tragic meaning of that word. Sixty-two minutes of round after round of gunfire, until the soldiers' weapons were so red-hot they could no longer hold them.

Leonardo Femat, in an article "A Tape Recording That Tells the Whole Story," Siempre!, no. 79 (The Night of Tlatelolco), October 16, 1968

I left the University with a group of comrades. We arrived at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, and it started to rain. We all assembled in our various groups, and I was carrying a banner that read, THE LAW SCHOOL REPRESENTED HERE TODAY. There were other banners, one for instance that said, "The blood of our brothers will not have been shed in vain." I was sitting on the steps in front of the Chihuahua building when suddenly I saw the flares go off, and a few seconds later I heard what I found out later were machine guns firing on the crowd. Our comrade on the speakers' stand shouted, "Don't move, anybody! Keep calm! Sit down!" So I sat down, holding onto my banner. I had no idea what was happening, or rather, I didn't realize how serious the situation was, so I just sat there clutching my banner till a comrade shouted to me, "Get rid of that thing!" because I was a perfect target sitting there with my banner. I threw it down and started running with Tita. We ran to where the flags were flying, the flagpoles in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, over to one side of Vocational 7, and Tita and I tried to get under cover. Then I heard a girl begging for help: "Oh, God, please help me!" I also heard voices shouting things like "My purse, my purse, where's my purse?" At one point we leaped over those pre-Hispanic walls there and fell into a sort of ditch. I lay there on the ground, and other people started falling on top of me. We heard shouts and groans and cries of pain, and I realized then that the gunfire was getting heavier and heavier. Tita and I crawled out of there and ran toward the Calle Manuel González, and the soldiers yelled to us, "Get the hell out as fast as you can!" As we ran out of the Plaza, a white Volkswagen full of students drove by, and they shouted to us, "Come on! Climb in!" I can't remember if they called

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Tape Recording
no. 79 (The
October 16, 1968)

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us by name: "Come on, Nacha, Tita, get in!" and one of the funny things about the whole bit is that I don't remember how we managed to pile into that car that was already crammed full of a whole bunch of students. We lit out down the Paseo de la Reforma to the Avenida de la República de Cuba, and then Tita climbed out because everybody knew her by sight and she would have been recognized instantly. We all said as much. "You're so big they'd spot you half a mile away," we told her. I went back in that same car with two Movement people from Theoretical Physics at Poli—I don't know who they were—to see if we could find a couple of comrades we had no idea what had happened to. The boys stopped the car somewhere near the Secretariat of Foreign Relations—I don't know the name of the street because I'm not from Mexico City, I'm from Taxco, in the state of Guerrero. They got out and said to me, "Stay here in the car," and I stayed there in the car waiting for them all by myself, but as the minutes ticked by, I got more and more nervous; the shooting still hadn't stopped, it was worse in fact, and ambulances were drawing up with their sirens screeching, more and more soldiers were going by, tanks and convoys of troops armed to the teeth. An ambulance drew up right in front of me, and the attendants put a student in it: his head was all bloody; he was dripping blood from head to foot. I was sitting there in the car no more than ten or twelve feet away, and seeing that student in that shape turned my stomach. Then a whole bunch of people ran by shouting, "They've set fire to the Chihuahua building!" I looked up and saw smoke. A high-tension wire fell down then, and everyone running past that Volkswagen I was in was screaming. I was suddenly frightened and scrambled out of the car in a panic and started running. I must have run for a much longer time than I realized, because I suddenly found myself at Sanborn's, on Lafragua. An acquaintance of mine stopped me there on the street. "What's the matter?" he asked me. I realized then that I'd been crying and my mascara was running down my cheeks. I felt as though I didn't have one ounce of strength left—I was really in terrible shape. Some kids went into Sanborn's and brought me out some coffee because I was trembling so. "Take it easy, take it easy," they kept saying. Then some more kids came to the door. The only thing I could blurt out was, "They're killing the students!" These same kids then took

me to an apartment on the Avenida de Coyoacán, where I was living with Tita and another girl friend.

*Ana Ignacia Rodriguez (Nacha),
of the Action Committee, UNAM*

It never occurred to us that the government might attack us on October 2, because a few days before there had been a meeting at Tlatelolco and in the morning several members of the CNH—the ones who had the most sense and the most savvy, though I never mention names, you know—went to the Casa del Lago to talk with Caso and de la Vega, and we thought that a sort of tacit truce had been arranged, since it looked as though the government was about to reach an agreement with the students. So we scheduled another meeting, but at the same time we decided to cancel the march on the Santo Tomás campus, which had been occupied by Army troops, so we wouldn't be accused of stirring up more trouble. This was announced from the speakers' stand almost immediately after the meeting began. . . . No, I wasn't on the speakers' stand; I stayed down below on the esplanade with Nacha. . . . But then they started shooting—and got their own asses shot off.

Roberta Avendaño Martínez (Tita), CNH delegate from UNAM

There was lots of blood underfoot, lots of blood smeared on the walls.

Francisco Correa, physicist, and professor at IPN

I put my hands over the back of my neck to protect it, with my cheek and my belly and my legs pressing against the floor of the room. I was one of the ones closest to the door of the apartment, almost right next to it. The reports of all sorts of firearms frightened me, and I asked my comrades there in the room to move over and let me share the minimum shelter offered by the partition dividing off the front part of the apartment where we were.

I heard people outside shouting, "We're from the Olimpia Battalion, don't shoot, we're from the Olimpia Battalion!"

My comrades lying there on the floor moved over and I managed to crawl over to the partition. I lay there for some time—I don't know how long exactly—and I kept thinking, The dirty sons of bitches, the filthy murdering bastards.

None of us said much, except once in a while a couple of swear words of the same sort that had been running through my mind broke the impressive "silence" where all we could hear was bullets whizzing all around us. I'd also lost my glasses.

I heard a sob from time to time from one or another of my men or women comrades, and I remember hearing someone say (or perhaps I only imagined it), "Don't cry, this is no time to cry, to shed tears: this is the time to engrave what's happening in letters of fire in our very heart of hearts so we'll remember it when it comes time to settle the score with the people responsible for this." Maybe I dreamed it.

At one point the shooting died down a little, and we made our way on our hands and knees into two other rooms in the back of the apartment. As I crawled back there, I saw several of my comrades from the CNH: all of them had a very odd expression on their faces. It wasn't terror, or even fear; it was a gleam of intense hatred in their eyes, plus a look of pain at being so completely helpless.

We all crawled into one little bedroom, and a few seconds later there was another heavy burst of gunfire. We lay down on the floor again, but it was covered with a film of water, and our clothes got soaked. It turned cold as night fell. Amid the continuous burst of rifle fire, we suddenly heard even louder rounds of gunfire, and immediately afterward it began to pour. We were even more concerned at that point, because the building had started swaying when this very loud gunfire began. It could all be summed up in two words: "A tank."

Eduardo Valle Espinoza (Owl-Eyes), of the CNH

Am I losing much blood?

Pablo Berlanga, to his mother, Rafaela Cosme de Berlanga

There was nothing we could do but keep running. They were firing at us from all directions. We ran six or eight feet, keeping under cover, and then ten or twelve feet out in the open. Rifle fire sounds very much like a jet taking off. There was nothing to do but keep running. We heard the display windows of the shops on the ground floor of the Chihuahua building shatter, and we suddenly decided we ought to make a run for the stairway. As I stood down there,

babbling all sorts of nonsense, I also suddenly remembered all my many friends and comrades at the meeting and got terrible cramps in my stomach. I remembered names, faces. As I reached this stairway that the people from the CNH who were going to speak had been going up and down all during the afternoon, I met Margarita and Meche, who said to me in the most despairing tone of voice, "María Alicia, our children are up there on the fourth floor!"

For the first time I had the feeling I might be able to do something useful amid all this confusion and suffering, despite my sense of utter helplessness, and I said to them, "I'll go up there with you."

The youngster who had saved my life—by leaping on me and throwing me to the floor there on the speakers' stand when they first started shooting at us—went upstairs with us: he was my armor, my cape, my shield. I have no idea who he was. I have a photographic memory, but I can't remember his face at all. . . . The three of us started up the stairs, and on the first landing we met another youngster. I had seen him on the speakers' stand there on the fourth floor of the Chihuahua building, too, talking with various Movement people as though he knew them very well. I remember him particularly because he'd apparently been wounded in the right wrist and had a white handkerchief wrapped around his hand.

"Don't leave, *señora*, it'll all be over soon," he said to me.

I was about to go downstairs again, because I'd spied some girl friends of mine down on the esplanade. But the boy took me by the arm and very solicitously helped me up the stairs. I was touched by this courageous behavior on the part of yet another student hero, and went upstairs with him.

Then Mercedes shouted, "*Señor*, my children are there upstairs!"

Margarita shouted that her children were up there too, and I stopped there on the stairs and looked at the youngster escorting me, thinking that the courage of those kids is really incredible sometimes. Many hours later, I discovered that my escort was one of the assassins guarding the stairway so that none of the CNH people would escape. He took us back downstairs then, and I remember that we were caught up in a whole crowd of people and shoved to the corner of the Chihuahua building, and that meanwhile there was a steady hail of bullets from the buildings.

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A girl came by shouting, "You murderers, you murderers!" I took her in my arms and tried to calm her down, but she kept screaming, louder and louder, until finally the youngster behind me grabbed hold of her and started shaking her. I noticed then that her ear had been shot off and her head was bleeding. The people in the crowd kept piling one on top of another, seeking shelter from the rain of bullets; we were all right on each other's necks, and I felt as though I were caught in the middle of a riot or squeezed in a sardine can.

I stood there staring at the tips of the coffee-colored shoes of some woman. Several rounds of machine-gun bullets suddenly raked the spot where we were standing, and I saw one bullet land just a few inches from that woman's shoe. All she said was, "Oh, my goodness!" and another voice answered, "Make a run for it. If you stay here you'll be even worse off; you're sure to get hurt here." We all started running again and just then I spied a red Datsun with a young girl at the wheel. She'd been shot, and I saw her collapse on top of the steering wheel; the horn kept blowing and blowing. . . . The youngster kept saying, "Don't look, don't look." We ran on toward one of the buildings behind Chihuahua. . . .

Maria Alicia Martinez Medrano, nursery-school director

Then I heard voices shouting things like "We're wearing white gloves, don't shoot, don't shoot!" And then other voices shouting, "We need a walkie-talkie here, don't shoot us, contact us by walkie-talkie!" There were desperate cries, coming either from down below us on the third floor, or from up above on the fifth or sixth floor: "Olimpia Battalion!" And then I heard whistles blowing. . . . "Olimpia Battalion, line up over here! . . ." And then all I heard was "The eighth and the fourteenth . . ." "The eighth . . . are you all here?" "The fourteenth . . . how many are missing in the fourteenth?" Then voices shouted, "Have the ones from the elevator turned up?" and then more whistles blowing: "Olimpia Battalion, Olimpia Battalion, over here, all of you! Olimpia Battalion, answer!" There were desperate shouts from the police for a long time: "Don't shoot! . . . They're wearing white gloves!" This will give you some idea of how absolutely chaotic the whole affair was, on one hand, and also how it took on proportions that the organizers hadn't expected and got completely out of control. I can assure you that the whole thing was obviously planned in advance; the au-

thorities knew exactly what they were up to. They were trying to prevent any sort of demonstration or student disturbance before the Olympics and during the games. The flares were the signal to start shooting, and they began firing from all directions at once. As for the supposed "sharpshooters," I can assure you—because those of us who were there saw it with our own eyes and know it's true beyond the shadow of a doubt—that the sharpshooters were agents playing their part in the government's plan.

Mercedes Olivera de Vázquez, anthropologist

The authorities said, "Stop all this, right now." They hadn't counted on the fact that the *granaderos*, the soldiers, the security agents would act entirely on their own initiative—they've always had a mind of their own.

Roberta Ruiz García, grade-school teacher

One agent got scared stiff and started shooting. That's what started the whole thing.

Luis Argüelles Peralta, geology student at ESIME, IPN

Hundreds of persons on the fourth floor of the Chihuahua building saw that after arresting the people they had found up there, the plainclothesmen wearing white gloves began firing on the crowd attending the meeting and also on the troops that were moving forward. Immediately thereafter, as the soldiers answered their fire, the agents in civilian clothes took cover behind the cement balustrade, their guns still aimed at the prisoners, who continued to stand there with their hands up, directly in the line of fire. The first shots the soldiers fired landed on the roof, but as the troops moved forward across the Plaza they began aiming lower and bits of plaster started falling off the wall. Then the agents ordered the prisoners to lie down, and as a hail of bullets struck the Chihuahua building, the men in the white gloves, a number of whom had shouted that they were from the Olimpia Battalion, began yelling in chorus to make themselves heard over the heavy gunfire: "We're the Olimpia Battalion, don't shoot!" As the rifle fire grew heavier and heavier and the high-power machine guns mounted on the tanks began to chatter, the men in the white gloves started desperately searching about for a walkie-talkie. One of them, apparently the leader of the

were trying to
time before the
signal to start
the massacre. As for
those of us
now it's true
they were agents

anthropologist

They hadn't
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SIME, IPN

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battalion, ordered the others to stop shooting. Shouts of "Stop shooting, let's get a walkie-talkie!" were heard. Amid all the shooting they had recognized the burst of small bombs being launched from the tanks to clear openings in the walls for the troops to shoot through. The men with a white glove or a white handkerchief on their left hand kept crawling by, very cautiously, on their hands and knees. Apparently they had no way of communicating with the troops that were firing on everyone in the Plaza. We were surprised it was taking them so long to kill all of us.

Félix Lucio Hernández Gamundi, of the CNH

We lost sight of Reyes and I heard a shout from my brother: "Don't let go of my hand." We clutched each other's hand and headed toward the right, trying to reach the park with the ruins. There were lots of people down there, trying to find cover from the terrible hail of bullets coming from all directions. We could hear shells exploding over all the other noise; the ruins were being shattered by the bullets, and bits of stone started raining down on our heads. I was still clutching my brother's hand, despite the fact that there were other people between us, and I tried to pull him closer to me. Some students were lying there on the ground between us, some of them dead and others wounded. There was a girl right next to me who had been hit square in the face with a dum-dum bullet. It was ghastly! The entire left side of her face had been blown away.

The shouts, the cries of pain, the weeping, the prayers and supplications, and the continuous deafening sound of gunfire made the Plaza de las Tres Culturas a scene straight out of Dante's *Inferno*.

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

"A doctor, please, I beg you, in the name of everything you hold most dear, get me a doctor!"

Olga Sánchez Cuevas, mother of a family

They wouldn't even let the Red and Green Cross ambulances through! They pulled up with their sirens screeching. They were told to turn off their sirens and their lights.

Berta Cárdenas de Macías, tenant in the
Tlatelolco housing unit

I warned all of them that the Plaza was a trap—I told them. There's no way out of it, I warned them. But they thought they knew it all. I told them they would have no way of getting out of the Plaza, that we'd be surrounded there, boxed in, like cattle in a corral. I kept telling them that, but they paid no attention.

Mercedes Olivera de Vázquez, anthropologist

I lone love.

Hippie button found in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas

I tugged at my brother's arm. "Julio, what's the matter?" I asked him. I tugged at his arm again; his eyes were half closed and there was a very sad look in them. And I heard him murmur the words "I think . . ."

My mind was a total blank. The tremendous crush of people screaming in panic made it hard for me to hear what he was saying. I thought later that if I'd known, if I'd realized that Julio was dying, I would have done something absolutely crazy right then and there.

Later some of the soldiers who had been shooting at the buildings around the Plaza came over to us. The smell of gunpowder was unbearable. Little by little people made room for me so I could kneel down beside Julio.

"Julio, Julio, answer me, little brother," I said to him.

"He must be wounded," one woman said to me. "Loosen his belt."

When I loosened it, I could feel a great big wound. I found out later at the hospital that he had three bullet wounds: one in the stomach, one in the neck, and another in the leg. He was dying.

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

That's enough of this! When are they going to stop all this?

Pedro Díaz Juárez, student

"Hey, little brother, what's the matter? Answer me, little brother . . ."

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

The hail of bullets being fired at the Chihuahua building became so intense that around seven p.m. a large section of the building caught on fire.

... a trap—I told them. There's
they thought they knew it all. I
getting out of the Plaza, that
like cattle in a corral. I kept
silence.

José de Vázquez, anthropologist

the Plaza de las Tres Culturas

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Diana Salmerón de Contreras

"How can we stop all this?"

Pedro Díaz Juárez, student

"Answer me, little brother? Answer me, little

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

The Cuauhtémoc building became so
crowded that a section of the building

The fire burned for a long time. All the floors from the tenth to the thirteenth were enveloped in flames, and many families were forced to leave the unit, amid the heavy gunfire, carrying their children in their arms and risking their lives. We also saw many others struck by bullets fall to the ground.

*Jorge Avilés R., in a story entitled "Serious Fighting for Hours Between Terrorists and Soldiers,"
El Universal, October 3, 1968*

Little brother, speak to me. . . . Please, somebody get him a stretcher! I'm right here, Julio . . . a stretcher! . . . Soldier, a stretcher for somebody who's been wounded. . . . What's the matter, little brother? . . . Answer me, little brother. . . . A stretcher! . . .

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

A number of dead bodies lying in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas. Dozens of wounded. Hysterical women with their children in their arms. Shattered windows. Burned-out apartments. The outer doors of the buildings destroyed. Water pipes in a number of buildings broken. Water leaking all over many of them. Yet the shooting went on and on.

News story entitled "Terrible Gun Battle in Tlatelolco. The Number of Dead Not Yet Determined and Dozens Wounded," Excélsior, October 3, 1968

Now that I'd managed to get to Julio and we were together again, I could raise my head and look around. The very first thing I noticed was all the people lying on the ground; the entire Plaza was covered with the bodies of the living and the dead, all lying side by side. The second thing I noticed was that my kid brother had been riddled with bullets.

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

This reporter was caught in the crowd near the Secretariat of Foreign Relations. A few steps away a woman fell to the ground—she had either been wounded or had fainted dead away. A couple

of youngsters tried to go to her rescue, but the soldiers stopped them.

Félix Fuentes, in a news story entitled "It All Began at 6:30 p.m.," La Prensa, October 3, 1968

"Soldier, please have somebody bring a stretcher!"

"Shut up and stop pestering me or you'll be needing two of them!" was the only reply I got from this "heroic Johnny," as our president calls the soldiers in the ranks.

Just then a med student hurried over and said to this "heroic Johnny," "That boy there ought to be taken to the hospital right away!"

"Shut your trap, you son of a bitch," the soldier answered.

Everyone standing around watching began shouting in chorus, "A stretcher, a stretcher, a stretcher!"

A couple of people made a makeshift stretcher out of some lengths of pipe and an overcoat. But the med student who helped us was arrested.

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

In a few minutes the whole thing became a scene straight out of hell. The gunfire was deafening. The bullets were shattering the windows of the apartments and shards of glass were flying all over, and the terror-stricken families inside were desperately trying to protect their youngest children.

Jorge Avilés R., in "Serious Fighting for Hours Between Terrorists and Soldiers"

Lucianito is there upstairs!

Elvira B. de Concheiro, mother of a family

"Please let me go with him—I'm his sister!" I begged.

They gave me permission to leave the Plaza with the stretcher-bearers. I climbed into the Army ambulance with my brother.

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

PEOPLE—UNITE—PEOPLE—UNITE—PEOPLE—UNITE
Chant at demonstrations

Why don't you answer me, *hermanito*?

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

Everything was a blur—I don't know if it was because I was crying or because it had started to rain. I watched the massacre through this curtain of rain, but everything was fuzzy and blurred, like when I develop my negatives and the image begins to appear in the emulsion. . . . I couldn't see a thing. My nose was running, but I just snuffled and went on shooting pictures, though I couldn't see a thing: the lens of my camera was spattered with raindrops, spattered with tears. . . .

Mary McCallen, press photographer

[As they started lining us up against the wall of the church] I saw two of my pals from *Excélsior* there, a reporter and a press photographer. They'd grabbed Jaime González's camera away from him. The reporter was saying, "I'm a journalist," but one of the soldiers answered, "Very pleased to meet you, but I couldn't care less whether you're a journalist or not; just stand over there against the wall." They'd slashed Jaime González's hand with a bayonet to get his camera away from him.

Raúl Hernández, press photographer, in a story entitled "The Gun Battle as the Press Photographers Saw It," *La Prensa*, October 3, 1968

Before I climbed into the Army ambulance, a "student" whom I'd seen at UNAM came up to me and said, "Your handbag, please. . . ."

"What do you want it for?" I asked.

The soldier who was with me was surprised too: "Who are you?" he asked him. But then he noticed a white handkerchief or something in the fake student's hand and said to him, "Oh, you're one of *them*, are you?"

The guy was an undercover agent posing as a student. I handed him my purse, and he searched through it and then gave it back to me. I have no idea to this day why he asked me for it.

They took my brother to the hospital then, and I waited there for hours to find out how the operation had gone. A male nurse kept coming in every so often, and one time he asked the women who were there waiting it out, just as I was, "Which one of you was with a boy in a blue suit?"

"He was with me . . . I came here with a boy in a blue suit," I said.

They took me to identify Julio's body and sign the necessary papers.

When we held the wake for Julio, I was deeply touched by his fellow students' loyalty to him and their concern for us. All the boys from Vocational 1 came to the house the minute they heard the tragic news of his death. They had taken up a collection and offered us some five hundred pesos. My sister told them we didn't really need the money, and would prefer that they use it for the Movement. "No," they all said. "The way we see it your brother is the Movement. We'd like you to accept the money."

Julio was fifteen years old, a student at Vocational 1, the school out by the Tlatelolco housing unit. That was the second political meeting he'd ever gone to. He had asked me to go with him that day. The first meeting we went to together was the big Silent Demonstration. Julio was my only brother.

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

I'm going to die. I'm badly hurt. I'm certain I'm going to die. I've been sure of it ever since the police put their pistols to my chest and made all of us put our hands up. I think to myself, Well, this is the end. I guess my number's up. . . . I could hear shots and terrible screams down below. The cops kept their pistols trained on us and ordered us to lie face down, and I suddenly regretted that I hadn't accomplished more during my life. I had a few brief thoughts about what I'd done with my life up to that point, and then suddenly I realized that a bullet had struck me. And there I was, in Tlatelolco, on October 2, 1968, at the age of twenty-four. I'm losing lots of blood, I thought to myself. That guy over there is bleeding lots too. He moved a minute or so ago, but he's not stirring now. How

come, I wonder? I didn't feel a thing when that bullet struck me, not one thing, but man, it sure hurts now! I even managed to run a few steps and now I've fallen on the ground here. Everybody's running every which way! And I can't even move my leg now. There's not one damned stretcher-bearer anywhere in sight, and nobody can hear a thing with all those machine guns rattling. If I die China * will take up half her column writing about me, or maybe even the whole thing. I gave her the info she needed for her column on Luis H. de la Fuente. It was a good obit, China. Who'll give you the info for mine?

Rodolfo Rojas Zea, reporter for *El Día*

I saw blood smeared on the wall.

Luz Vértiz de López, mother of a family

I didn't get arrested at Tlatelolco—and it was probably just by luck or fate or some instinct of self-preservation or something that I wasn't nabbed; but we saw that afternoon how a person's life can be snuffed out in just a few moments or a few hours, whether he's lived it well or badly; we saw many lives come to a sudden end in that brutal attack on the Mexican people: Tlatelolco. They eventually arrested me and threw me in prison, but that was later, not at Tlatelolco.

We kept tugging at people's arms, trying to calm them down: "They're trying to stir up trouble, don't run, don't panic, that'll just make it worse, don't try to run for it, take your time and just file out slowly," we told them, but the crowd had had a number of bad experiences earlier and wouldn't obey the Movement people or anybody else. There was a general stampede then, because just after the first shot, all hell broke loose and a hail of bullets started raining down on us from all directions. I saw several comrades fall to the ground, and I tried to make my way over to help them, but the gunfire got heavier and heavier and there was nothing I could do but run for cover. There were several little kids that were either shot to death or trampled to death as the crowd panicked. The soldiers had already blocked off the back of Vocational 7, and I saw that people

* "La China" Mendoza, a popular reporter who in 1968 had a column in *El Día*.
(Translator's note.)

were leaping down into the pre-Hispanic ruins; it was utter madness, because they were all landing one on top of the other; everyone was screaming and moaning—women with little babies in their arms, workers, students, railroad men, little kids. The soldiers were advancing toward us with fixed bayonets, like in the movies; they would crouch down and move forward a few yards and then duck behind the vehicles and fire at the Chihuahua building. I couldn't believe my ears when I heard a machine gun start chattering. I remember especially—and this is a very important point—that when the machine gun started firing, two comrades, a boy and a girl, raised their hands way up in the air to surrender and I don't know whether it was because the soldiers had been given drugs, or what, but they suddenly fired round after round at the two of them. Other comrades who had also seen that happen screamed in terror; that was the only thing they really could do, because they had nothing to defend themselves with. The machine gun was right there near them, firing directly at the building; the spent cartridges kept falling all around and we were absolutely desperate, because there wasn't a single thing any of us could do. . . .

I was able to get under cover almost immediately because one lady opened her door, or perhaps made the mistake of just opening it a crack, and we all flung ourselves on it and piled inside: in seconds there were about sixty-five of us there inside that apartment in the San Luis Potosí building. We heard the machine gun still chattering away, and then a real war of nerves began: one lady fainted, and the owner of the apartment went all to pieces; the Movement people fell into a helpless rage at not being able to defend themselves, at not having any way to fight back, and lots of my pals, comrades I had thought were pretty tough kids, started to cry, and it was some of the girls who finally calmed them down. By sheer coincidence, I'd spotted my sister in the crowd a few moments before. I'd dropped everything, dragged her away by the hair, and refused to let go of her. My sister's much more aggressive, much more of a hothead than I am—as a militant she's got me beaten all hollow—and she was so indignant she started cussing a blue streak. . . .

We couldn't leave the apartment—not till the shooting died down anyway. The lady who lived in the apartment was worried because her children hadn't come home, and for the moment we were her

children. Her own kids came home two or three hours later and she calmed down then. "All right, you youngsters, the problem now is how to get all of you out of here," she said. We thought, Well, there are several middle-aged ladies here; we can take them along with us. So then we ditched everything we had with us that would identify us as students and left it behind there in the apartment, because at that stage of the game being a student was a worse crime than committing murder. My sister and I left with one of the older ladies about three in the morning.

The lady whose apartment we'd invaded was really great. All the people who lived in the Tlatelolco housing unit were wonderful to us. They had given the students a hand at the meeting on September 21, too. The tenants in many of the buildings in the unit had thrown boiling water down on the *granaderos* from their windows: we were all defending Tlatelolco together. So that's why they were just as heartsick about what happened on October 2 as we were.

Daniel Esparza Lepe, student at ESIME, IPN

We all felt absolutely helpless. On the other side of the street, across the Paseo de la Reforma, I happened to see comrades—kids no more than twelve or thirteen or fourteen—trying to throw stones at the cops and the troops across the boulevard. I think they might have been junior-high-school kids, and they were in tears at what was happening: they were trying their best to help us, and were weeping with helpless rage. I went over to one of them then and said, "Listen, that isn't going to do any good. A bullet's got much more velocity than a stone. You'd better cool it, because they can kill you with their bullets over here, but your stones aren't landing anywhere near them over there on the other side of the street." The kid thought about it for a minute and then said, "You're right," and climbed down off the wall and went away. A man came along shouting, "Murderers! Cowards! Killers!" He wasn't wounded, but they dragged him away, because he was trying to get back to the Plaza. A family—they were Chinese, I think—was walking toward the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, all of them clinging desperately to each other. Nobody could understand a word they were saying, but everyone moved aside to let them by because they were all in tears.

When I got home, a comrade who lives nearby wanted to go back to Tlatelolco to look for her mother, who'd gone to the meeting with my friend's youngest brother.

José Ramiro Muñoz, student at ESIME, IPN

Lucianito's there upstairs!

Elvira B. de Concheiro, mother of a family

A little trickle of blood started running down his cheek, from just below his eyelid.

Blanca Vargas de Ibáñez, mother of a family

By the time I got there, the shooting had already started. Dozens of people ran past me, and I heard one girl shout, "Lots of people have been killed, a whole bunch of them! . . ." I was absolutely beside myself when I heard that, and started screaming. There were troops blocking off the whole Plaza. I thought I might be able to crawl in between them on my hands and knees, but some women stopped me, and a whole crowd of people gathered round.

"Let her through, let her through, she's looking for her son! Her son's in there!" they all shouted.

I was screaming terrible things, and could hardly stand on my feet. People around me were saying, "She's right . . . if her son is in there . . ."

"It's not just *my* son—they're all *your* children too. . . ."

More soldiers arrived. Suddenly one of the women who had been standing there listening to me took an empty milk bottle out from under her coat—I still have it in the cupboard over there—and handed it to me. "Here, take this, maybe it'll be of some use to you," she said to me.

Elvira B. de Concheiro, mother of a family

There were tragic scenes that no one who witnessed them will ever forget. We will always remember the look of terror on people's faces, the moans of the wounded as they were taken away, and the continuous gunfire. The people watching what was happening from several blocks away were livid with rage. They didn't know whether it was the authorities who were to blame for the turn events had taken or who, but they were cursing everything and ev-

everybody. People in the city, who naturally had been badly upset at what had happened, were in an ugly mood and tried to march on the area where the shooting was going on: at nine-fifteen p.m. the troops had to drive a crowd on the corner of Allende and Nonoalco back with tear-gas grenades.

Jorge Avilés R., in "Serious Fighting for Hours Between Terrorists and Soldiers"

My father died shortly after Julio was killed. He had a heart attack as a result of the shock of his death. Julio was his only son, his youngest child. He would often say, "Why did it have to be my son?" My mother has managed to go on living somehow.

Diana Salmerón de Contreras

He had a huge cut over his eye and the blood was streaming down his face. I said to him jokingly, "Have you gone a couple of rounds in a boxing ring?" And he burst into tears, because he was so upset I think, since ordinarily he's a quiet, self-contained youngster.

José Merino Gasca, engineer and father of a family

Who was responsible for this? Who gave orders for this?

Pablo Castillo, student, Iberoamerican University

All that shooting was the very worst yet! The gunfire at Santo Tomás was mere child's play by comparison!

Juan Medina Castro, engineering student at ESIQIE, IPN

I was in the Aguascalientes building—it's very elegant—the one right next to Vocational 7 in the Nonoalco housing unit. The minute the first shots rang out, as if someone had given them orders, all the tenants of the building lay down on the living-room floor of their apartments. The minute the shooting started—at six-fifteen, I think it was—the supervisor of the building ran and hid in the basement and didn't appear again till four hours later. Up on the eighth floor an engineer, a man of about fifty, was hit in the right shoulder with a bullet which shattered it completely. It was apparently a dum-dum bullet. Someone phoned the Red Cross to come, but two soldiers appeared instead, armed with submachine guns. That was

the last we saw of the engineer. There was a look of terror and desperation on the faces of all the tenants of the building. Once the shooting died down, they tried to get in touch with their husbands, their wives, their children, or their relatives who were somewhere else at the time to tell them what had happened to them and warn them not to try to come back to the housing unit, because anybody who tried to enter or leave was immediately taken into custody.

They began talking about all the recent events and making bitter remarks about the national press "which never tells the truth about what's really happening." They mentioned the case of Lieutenant Uriza Barrón in particular, a man who had killed two policemen or two members of the "special riot squad." They said, "All the reporters claimed that the lieutenant had shot them because they'd beaten up his mother, but those of us who live here in Tlatelolco know he shot them because they insulted his sister. The reporters never said a word about that. . . ."

I don't know whether that's true or not—there are so many rumors going around—but they must have done something terrible to Lieutenant Uriza Barrón for him to have pulled out his pistol like that and murdered those two police.

There was no water and very little food available for a time. The tenants all banded together and shared whatever food they had on hand with their neighbors. Those who had the biggest families and bare cupboards were given food by their neighbors, who all stuck by them. The littlest kids were all crying and the bigger ones were staring at their parents with terror-stricken eyes.

Alfredo Corvera Yáñez, student at the School of Commerce and Business Administration, UNAM

Those of us in the CNH have been accused of having piles of money at our disposal. But the real story is that there were many very large brigades (some of them had two hundred students in them, all going out in our buses to visit various neighborhoods in the city); we divided them into groups of ten students, and gave each group a box to collect money for the Movement. Since people always contributed very generously, there were always at least fifty pesos in each of their boxes.

Félix Lucio Hernández Gamundi, of the CNH

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student at the School of Administration, UNAM

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of the CNH

They nabbed one kid with one of the boxes used by the Action Committees to collect money from people, and the authorities started looking for the member of the CNH who'd given him orders to do that. They lined us all up in front of him and shone flashlights in our faces, one by one, so he'd be able to recognize us. "Is this the one? . . ." "No." "This one? . . ." "No." He didn't recognize any of us.

The officer got mad and started beating him up. Then he said to him in a very angry tone of voice, "You taught classes in guerrilla warfare, didn't you, you little bastard?"

"No, the only things I taught were algebra and math, which don't really have very much to do with guerrilla warfare."

There was great pride in his voice when he answered back like that. His attitude really warmed the cockles of my heart.

Eduardo Valle Espinoza (Owl-Eyes), of the CNH

When I heard that comrade who'd been taking up collections speak up like that, it struck me that things weren't going all that badly, that we weren't beaten yet by a long shot. Then after a while, long past eleven o'clock, the shooting started again.

Luis González de Alba, of the CNH

The sharpshooters weren't satisfied just to fire a hail of bullets at the women and children and innocent bystanders who had turned up at the meeting; they began to fire on the Army troops and the police who had surrounded the Plaza to prevent the crowd from marching on the Santo Tomás campus.

As the first Army troops and police were hit and fell to the ground, orders were given to return the fire, and one of the most terrible gun battles ever to occur in our city began. Despite the fact that the Army troops and the police immediately responded and fired round after round at them, the sharpshooters continued to shoot at the panic-stricken crowd of women and children and innocent bystanders fleeing for their lives in all directions.

News story entitled "Many Dead and Wounded Last Night," La Prensa, October 3, 1968

My daughter's blood was tracked all over the Plaza by the shoes of youngsters running from one end of it to the other.

Dolores Verdugo de Solís, mother of a family

I turned the dead body face up. His eyes were wide open, and his clothes soaking wet. I closed his eyes. But before I did so, I saw that there were tiny little raindrops on the whites of his eyes. . . .

Luisa Herrera Martín del Campo, grade-school teacher

I saw a child eleven or twelve years old who suddenly raised his head a few inches—he was only a little boy, after all—and a bullet went clear through his cheek. His sister was with him. We were all lying on the ground on the esplanade as the soldiers had ordered us to do, but this little boy raised his head up. His sister, who looked to be about sixteen years old, began to scream hysterically, "My little brother's been shot!" but the soldiers and the Movement people told her that if she stood up, they would probably shoot her too. They didn't give the boy any sort of medical attention until the shooting was all over. He had a big gaping wound, and they waited two or three hours before taking care of him! I imagine he died, but I don't know for sure because around eleven p.m. they came and took us around behind the church.

*Esther Fernández, student at the
Faculty of Sciences, UNAM*

They're shooting very low, terribly low! Crouch way down!

An Army officer

Stop shooting! Stop shooting! Stop shooting!

Voices in the crowd

I can't stand this another minute!

A woman's voice

Stay under cover! Don't move!

A man's voice

Surround them! Over there, over there! Hem them in, I tell you!

A voice

I've been wounded. Get me a doctor. I've been . . .

A voice

It looks like the shooting's almost over. . . .

A voice

wide open, and his
I did so, I saw that
of his eyes. . . .

A grade-school teacher

suddenly raised his
after all—and a bullet
with him. We were all
soldiers had ordered us
his sister, who looked
hysterically, "My
the Movement people
probably shoot her too.
attention until the
mind, and they waited
imagine he died, but
p.m. they came and

*Miranda, student at the
Instituto de Ciencias, UNAM*

way down!
An Army officer

Voces in the crowd

A woman's voice

A man's voice

I tell you!

A voice

A voice

A voice

The Plaza de las Tres Culturas was a living hell. Every so often we could hear gunfire and the bullets from the machine guns and high-powered rifles were whizzing in every direction.

*Miguel Salinas López, student at the School of
Commerce and Business Administration, UNAM*

It was also reported that many persons had been wounded by bullets coming in the windows.

Meanwhile, Roberto Legorreta reported to the city desk that a fire had broken out in the Chihuahua building and the flames had reached a number of apartments in this building, the center of most of the action.

Reyes Razo reported that on the thirteenth floor of the Tamaulipas building a man had been killed in one of the corridors. There was also another fatality in the San Luis Potosí building.

At seven-thirty-five p.m., firemen arrived to put out the fires inside the Chihuahua building, which by now was burning on three floors. There were continual reports of more wounded who had been found, among them both Army troops and civilians, including many women.

*News story entitled "26 Dead and 71 Wounded;
Sharpshooters Fire on Army Troops..General Toledo
Wounded," El Heraldo, October 3, 1968*

I had blood on the edges of my shoes, on the hem of my dress.

Eugenio Leal Lima, medical student, UNAM

The majority of the corpses were lying face down, swelling in the rain, but there were also some lying face up. They looked like trampled flowers, like the mud-spattered, crushed flowers planted around the Chihuahua building.

Pilar Marín de Zepeda, grade-school teacher

They're dead bodies, sir. . . .

*A soldier, to José Antonio del Campo,
reporter for El Día*

Get down, I tell you! They're going to kill us!

A man's voice

I saw a soldier stretched out on the ground with his rifle, his face dead-white with fear. He didn't dare shoot and asked us not to move, because if they saw the slightest movement, they'd shoot in our direction and he'd be hit too.

*Esther Fernández, student
at the Faculty of Sciences, UNAM*

Their fingers were on the triggers of their rifles. There were a number of direct hits. They shot immediately at anybody who moved.

*Santiago Ruiz Saiz, student at the Faculty of
Sciences, UNAM*

Medical Corps! Officer! We've got somebody who's been wounded over here!

Voice in the crowd

Grab that man! Make him let go of that damned thing!

A man's voice

A child no more than five or six years old who was running about crying fell to the ground. Several other children who had been with him fled in terror, but one six-year-old came back and started shaking him: "Juanito, Juanito, come on get up!" He began to pull at him as though that would revive him. "Juanito, what's wrong with you?" he asked him. He obviously had no idea what death was, and was never to find out that his little friend was dead, because his questions suddenly were heard no more, just a moan. The two tiny bodies were left lying on the pavement there, one on top of the other. I saw the whole thing. I wanted to get the littlest one into the ditch where I was hiding. I called to him several times, but bullets were whizzing all over the place and I didn't dare go out there and get him. I just shouted several times, "Come on down here, little boy!" but he was too busy trying to revive his friend to notice. Then the bullet hit him! I know I'm a coward, and I also know now that the instinct to save your own neck is terribly selfish.

*Jesús Tovar García, political science student,
UNAM*

Gently! Gently! This one's got a chest wound!

A stretcher-bearer

If you make one move, I promise I'll let you have it. . . .

A soldier

And the smell of blood moistened the air,
And the smell of blood stained the air.

*José Emilio Pacheco, reciting Nahuatl texts
translated by Father A. M. Garibay*

I told you not to go over there! Crawl in under the bus!

*A soldier, to Alberto Solís Enríquez,
student at Vocational 1*

One of the soldiers stumbled and fell to the ground right there beside us. We lay there on the ground, because one of the Movement people had shouted, "Get down, everybody, lie down on the ground!" We were on the esplanade in front of the Chihuahua building. The soldiers were running back and forth as though the whole thing were a training maneuver.

Then one of them came over to the soldier who'd fallen down and said to him, "Don't shoot at them, man, shoot in the air! They're not criminals—they're just kids. Don't shoot at them, shoot in the air, shoot over their heads, man!"

We were reassured because of the way those two soldiers had acted, so we got to our feet, ran right in front of them, and went into the 2 de Abril building. We stayed there for the next two and a half hours, which seemed like sixty to me. . . .

*Maria Ángeles Ramírez, student at the School of
Anthropology, a division of the SEP **

We all started running and leaped down off a wall about six feet high. All the little kids and the women who had jumped off it had fallen down, and we tried our best not to land on top of them, because there was nobody to help them to their feet or give them a

* Secretaría de Educación Pública (Department of Public Education).

hand. It was every man for himself. There were lots and lots of shoes lying around, a whole bunch of women's shoes. . . . I remember one shoe especially, one with a little strap. I kept on running till I came face to face with three or four soldiers. They pushed me and shoved me and my brother and ten or fifteen other people over toward the ground floor of one of the buildings; I don't know the name of it, it's the one opposite the Chihuahua unit. We could see more troops pouring into the Plaza from all directions. We tried to go up to the second floor of this building, one of the biggest ones in the housing unit, but the soldiers gave us strict orders: "You're not to budge an inch. . . ." They were quite polite to us, and I'm quite sure they were trying to protect us, because there was already heavy gunfire at that point, and we could also hear the chatter of machine guns. We asked them if we could leave, and they told us not to, to stay where we were. We thought that if we could disappear from sight, they wouldn't come looking for any of us, and little by little we all sneaked up the stairs to the second floor of the building. The soldiers downstairs had their hands full at that point, and didn't even notice. We knocked at the door of one apartment after the other, but nobody answered at any of them. We sat down on the floor in the hall upstairs there and waited. Around seven o'clock, or seven-fifteen, we heard the sound of hobnailed boots and the thud of the heavy Army shoes of the soldiers downstairs, and two kids went down to ask them if we could leave, and they told them it was okay. The kids yelled to us to come down, and we all left the building. But instead of letting us go home, the Army troops searched us, asked us to show our identification papers, and made us line up down there. The first one they ordered to step forward was my brother.

"All right, you, come over here."

And then they began to beat him.

Carlos Galván, student at the School of Library Sciences, UNAM

. . . But trivial little remembered details linger in one's mind. Women with their bellies raked with machine-gun bullets; children with their heads smashed in from the impact of large-caliber bullets; innocent bystanders riddled with bullets; street vendors and reporters wounded or killed while going about their everyday jobs;

were lots and lots of men's shoes. . . . I re-strap. I kept on running soldiers. They pushed fifteen other people buildings; I don't know Cuauhtémoc unit. We could all directions. We tried one of the biggest ones strict orders: "You're polite to us, and I'm because there was already hear the chatter of noise, and they told us that if we could disappear any of us, and little floor of the building at that point, and one apartment after another sat down on bed. Around seven of hobnailed boots soldiers downstairs, would leave, and they come down, and we home, the Army identification papers, and they ordered to step

The School of Library Sciences, UNAM

in one's mind. Bullets; children large-caliber bullets; vendors and everyday jobs;

students, police, and Army troops dead and wounded. . . . Perhaps the most tragic sight of all was the blood-stained shoes scattered all over the Plaza, like mute witnesses of the sudden flight of their owners.

José Luis Mejías, in an article entitled "A Meeting That Ended in Tragedy," Diario de la Tarde, October 3, 1968

We knocked on all the doors of the 2 de Abril building, but nobody would let us in. A woman who lived there in the Tlatelolco housing unit and had gone out to buy bread with her little girl became hysterical and started screaming. We tried to help her and pushed a little slip of paper under the door of one apartment that said, "Please let a lady and her little girl take shelter in your apartment." The people inside answered by pushing another piece of paper under the door: "We can't—we're afraid to." That's exactly what their note said. I lost that piece of paper; it never occurred to me that I ought to keep it. I think the only reason people answered at all was to stop us from knocking on the doors like that, because Lina and I were pounding on them like crazy. I don't know where we found the strength to hammer on them like that—I guess it was because we were so scared.

Maria Ángeles Ramírez, student at the School of Anthropology, SEP

We went up to the third floor and knocked on the door of several apartments, but no one answered. Then we went on up to the next floor, and the next, and the next. We went from one floor to another, in desperation, but nobody would open their door and let us in. We heard the thud of the boot heels of the soldiers coming up after us. I stood outside the door of one apartment then and shouted, "Please let my wife and children in, at least!"

*Ramón Oviedo, geologist, IMP **

In the apartment where we were hiding, there were kids chewing up their identification papers and swallowing them.

Gerardo Martínez, student at the School of Economics, UNAM

* Instituto Mexicano de Petróleo (Mexican Petroleum Institute).

The soldiers helped me get out with my daughter, who was pregnant, and my four-year-old grandchild.

Matilde Galicia, age seven

Then he gave me a kiss to give me courage and said to me in a quiet but very firm voice, "Clear out of here!" He took me by the hand when he saw that I was paralyzed with fear. "Come on, get a move on, there's nothing wrong with you!" I couldn't move. "Okay, crawl then . . . you can't stay here," he said. They were shooting us from every direction. He threw himself on the ground beside me and started dragging me along, as though I were a big heavy bundle. . . .

Magdalena Salazar, psychology student, UNAM

I have six children. Pepe, Sergio, a biology student we call "Pichi Miguel Eduardo, whom everybody calls "Buho"—Owl-Eyes Chelo, my only daughter, and a pair of twins, Rubén and Rogeli who never took any sort of active part in the Movement. Eduardo on the other hand, is a member of the CNH. At three o'clock this afternoon, Chelo and Sergio were getting ready to go to the demonstration. My husband, Cosme Valle Miller, was going to go with them, but I stayed behind to do some housework. At eight o'clock my daughter came home again. Her clothes were all torn and her knees were bloody.

When I opened the door and saw her standing there looking like that, the first thing I asked her was, "Chelo, what in the world happened?"

"They attacked us, Mama, they attacked us," she replied.

She could hardly talk. I'd never heard her voice quaver like that. "Has anything happened to your brothers?"

We hadn't seen Eduardo for almost three weeks because, like other members of the CNH, he'd gone into hiding. Chelo burst into tears and said that Army troops had occupied the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, that a helicopter had fired on the demonstrators, and that agents wearing a white glove on one hand had started shooting anybody who made the slightest move, no matter who they were. She'd seen one security agent shoot at three little kids, from four to six years old, who'd been left behind when their mother ran off.

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Galicia, age seventy

said to me in a quiet
took me by the hand
"Come on, get a move
wouldn't move. "Okay,
They were shooting at
the ground beside me
I were a big heavy

ology student, UNAM

student we call "Pichi,"
"Buho"—Owl-Eyes—
Rubén and Rogelio,
Movement. Eduardo,
At twelve o'clock that
to go to the demon-
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were all torn and her
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she replied.
quaver like that.
because, like
Chelo burst into
Plaza de las Tres
mentors, and that
shooting at
who they were.
kids, from four to
her mother ran off,

carrying an even smaller child in her arms. Chelo had been with my husband. He'd said to her, "Lie down, Chelo; if you don't, you're going to get killed." She had lain down and started dragging herself along, and one whole side of her face got scraped raw. "The bullets were raining down like hailstones, Mama," she said to me. She managed to get to a wall with barbed wire on top of it, behind the Chihuahua building. That was the last she'd seen of her dad, who had been trying to help people find some way out of the Plaza. He motioned to her to make a run for it, and that was the last she'd seen of him. She finally got out to the street, and met a soldier there who said to her, "Don't try to go back in there—you'll get killed."

Chelo wanted to go back and look for her father and Sergio and Miguel, but as she was walking down the street she met some men who were driving away with a whole carful of students. The driver handed her ten pesos and told her, "Pay somebody to give you a ride out of here."

She says she saw lots of private cars loaded with students. They were stopping along the street to pick them up, and then taking off with the driver's foot to the floor so the soldiers wouldn't catch them.

Then Chelo went to the factory where Rubén and Rogelio work, and she told Rogelio, "They got us this time, kid."

Rogelio brought her back home, and we sat there waiting for the other kids to turn up. But the only one who showed up was my husband: "They've arrested everybody in the CNH! I saw Eduardo up on the balcony on the fourth floor. . . ."

"What about Sergio?"

"He went back to look for Eduardo. . . ."

I sat there at the window all night waiting—we live in the Loma Hermosa housing development—because I thought they might try to sneak back home if they could dodge the police. I thought to myself, I have to stay awake so I can open the door for them the minute they show up. But there was no sign of them. I waited there at the window all night long, watching for the slightest movement, listening for the least little sound. But I didn't see or hear one thing. How many times I opened the door leading to the corridor outside, thinking I'd heard them coming home!

Celia Espinoza de Valle, grade-school teacher and
mother of a family

We hid the student on the floor of the car under a blanket. I even climbed into the back seat and sat there with my feet on top of the blanket so nobody would notice him. Before that, I'd tried to bathe his wound, but the water had stopped running everywhere in the housing unit. There was no water and no electricity anywhere! My daughter was in the front seat, my husband was driving, and what worried me most during the whole trip getting that boy out of Tlatelolco was that he seemed to have stopped breathing—I couldn't hear him breathing at all. We finally got to his house and dropped him off. . . . Afterward, my husband drove another boy out; he hid this second one in the trunk of the car, but this time my husband didn't take my daughter and me along so the soldiers wouldn't suspect anything. Each time we had gone in or out, the soldiers had stopped the car and asked us to show our identification papers to prove that we lived in Tlatelolco. . . .

*Isabel Montaño de la Vega, tenant
in the Tlatelolco housing unit*

Who got out safely? Did everybody make it out all right? Is everybody here? Did Marta get out? Has anybody seen Juan? Which of you saw Juan last?

Rosalía Egante Vallejo, biology student, UNAM

Concha's mom says that Concha went to the demonstration with her things for school, her textbooks and her notebooks, under her arm, and that she was wearing a blue sweater. . . .

Ernestina de la Garza, medical student, UNAM

The doors of the elevators had big bullet holes in them. Only high-powered firearms could have penetrated them like that. The bullets had gone right through them, just as they went straight through the bodies of so many defenseless people.

Roberto Sánchez Puig, student at Vocational 1

I looked at the pools on the Plaza, lost in thought as I stared at them: reflecting pools is exactly the right name for them. I thought to myself, Just yesterday morning, children were playing there, splashing around in them! . . . Just yesterday I saw a man selling balloons in the park next to San Marcos! I had gone up to the fourth

under a blanket. I even
with my feet on top of the
that, I'd tried to bathe
running everywhere in the
no electricity anywhere! My
was driving, and what
getting that boy out of
breathing—I couldn't
his house and dropped
another boy out; he
but this time my hus-
along so the soldiers
had gone in or out, the
to show our identifica-
nesses . . .

Montaña de la Vega, tenant
of Tlatelolco housing unit

all right? Is every-
seen Juan? Which of

biology student, UNAM

demonstration with
notebooks, under her

radical student, UNAM

in them. Only high-
like that. The bullets
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student at Vocational 1

as I stared at
them, I thought
were playing there,
I saw a man selling
up to the fourth

floor of the Chihuahua building just the day before to see whether the public-address system was going to work all right, because I was scheduled to speak as the representative of the National Union of Mexican Women. Just yesterday there were men sitting there on the benches in the Plaza reading their newspapers! . . . How stupid, how really stupid I am! When I saw the three flares go off behind the church, I thought to myself, That's really neat! These kids are really something. They think up some new gimmick every time they have a demonstration! And this time they've arranged a fireworks display! I thought they'd turned the whole meeting into a fiesta, a real celebration—everybody always associates a fireworks display with some kind of gala occasion. And despite the tension and the presence of Army troops, the students' meetings had always seemed like a fiesta: joyous greetings being exchanged, big hugs and kisses, handshakes, how's it going pal, great to see you, hey don't let your girl friend hook you into marrying her, hi there, fancy meeting you here, what's with you these days, man, live it up a little, have you seen Luis? His old lady's really worried about him. . . . I saw the flares from the stairway, going off just over the church, about fifteen or twenty feet above the cross.

Maria Alicia Martinez Medrano, nursery-school director

It was just another meeting—one like all the others we'd held before. Reports, briefings, plans for the future and guidelines laid down by the Strike Committee—and laughter, joking, slogans shouted in chorus, hand-clapping, and shouts from the crowd. The announcements from the speakers' platform were warmly received and there was lots of applause from the crowd. Up on the speakers' platform, representatives of a whole bunch of organizations were crowding around the microphone, eagerly awaiting their turn to address the crowd, to talk about their particular problems and demonstrate their support of the Movement. Representatives of the doctors out on strike at eight different hospitals had shown up that day to support our six-point student petition, and representatives from a number of small labor unions had shown up too: groups of parents, of grade-school teachers, of women's organizations, of railway workers, of peasants had also sent representatives. . . . There wasn't time for all of them to speak, but messages and letters and telegrams and greetings were read to the crowd, and the organiza-

tions that had come out in support of the Movement were announced.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

The blood that had spattered my blouse was red, bright red, and when I looked again it had turned coffee-colored. . . . I thought to myself, All this can't be true: I must be dreaming!

Cristina Fernández Ríos, social worker

"Can't you hear me?"

I kept shaking him, but he didn't answer one word. So I left him, and started running.

Antonio Llergo Madrazo, nine-year-old boy from the Tlatelolco housing unit

Just as we reached the foot of the stairway a very young girl wearing a big dark raincoat ran past, trembling with fear. She wasn't shouting or saying anything, just making very peculiar sounds, grunts, sort of. She kept running, so they shot at her feet too, but instead of heading in the other direction, she ran straight back toward where the bullets were coming from, over our way, and the only thing we could think to do was to grab her by the arm and get her in behind us and stay there at the bottom of the stairway where we were standing yelling for them to let us in. She began murmuring, "I'm going over to the Guerrero building . . . I have to get to the Guerrero building . . . I've got to get over there. . . ."

"You mustn't go anywhere," I said to her. "Just stay right here."

She ran in behind us then. I could see she was trembling and shaking from head to foot, not because she was cold but because she was scared to death, and she kept making those strange moaning sounds. We kept shouting to the men blocking the stairway, "Let us by! Our children are up there on the fifth floor! I live up there. Let us go upstairs! Our children may be hurt! They're all alone up there! Let us go upstairs, sir! They must be scared to death! Please let us go to our children! You can go up to the fifth floor and see for yourselves—if you don't find our children up there you can come down and shoot us on the spot!"

Then the security agent with the white glove who was in com-

of the Movement were

Alvarez Garin, of the CNH

was red, bright red, and
uncovered. . . . I thought to
screaming!

González Ríos, social worker

one word. So I left him,

a nine-year-old boy from
the Tlatelolco housing unit

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mand of that particular unit decided that in order to shut us up, they'd either have to shoot us then and there or let us go upstairs. So he told his men, "Okay, let all these two-bit whores go on upstairs if they want to!"

Two agents went up with us. It was plain to see that they were more scared than we were; they were so terrified when I opened the door of my apartment, shaking from head to foot, that one of the men with a white glove escorting us closed the door in my face and said, "Take a look if you want to, but if you see that your kids in there are dead, don't start screaming." His tone of voice wasn't at all sympathetic or friendly: it was a threat, because he had his pistol aimed at my back as he said it.

We were horrified when we went inside: there wasn't a soul in there, the entire apartment was full of smoke and bits of fallen plaster, the floor was covered with rubble, the walls all had big holes in them, there were things strewn all over the floor, and there wasn't one single piece of furniture in its usual place. Despite having been warned not to scream, Margarita and I both started yelling at the top of our lungs, and just then my mother's helper stuck her head out of the bathroom door and said to me, "The children are in here with me, señora."

The police who'd gone upstairs with us were so terrified at that point that they shouted to us, "Get down on your hands and knees, all of you!"

They locked us up in the bathroom, searched the whole apartment, and took my maid off with them. We sat there on the floor in the bathroom, hugging the children in our arms, with the young girl we'd found downstairs, the one in the big heavy raincoat which probably didn't belong to her, sitting there on the floor beside us. When she took the raincoat off, a bunch of leaflets fell out of the pockets, and the poor child was so distraught that she dropped a CNH collection box on the floor and the coins in it rolled all over the bathroom, just as the police were searching the apartment. You can imagine how scared all of us, including the kids, were when that happened. If they'd heard all those coins falling on the floor, they would have taken it as certain proof that all of us were active in the Movement.

Margarita and I were so incensed we couldn't help blurting out,

"You little fool, you! How could you have been so stupid as to hold on to that collection box? Why didn't you get rid of it downstairs?"

And the girl, still half dazed, answered, with simply unbelievable naiveté, "You mean I should have thrown it away? Oh, I couldn't have done that—it's money that belongs to the CNH! It's their money—I couldn't possibly have thrown it away!"

We took the CNH label off the Mobil Oil can she'd been collecting the money in, opened it, and took the money out of it.

"Oh, no, don't do that! . . . that money belongs to the Movement. . . . It's money for the CNH—how can you possibly take it?" she moaned.

"Listen, it doesn't matter who the money belongs to. I promise I'll keep it for you and give it back to the Movement later. . . ."

And despite her protests, we emptied the can. Most of the coins in it were twenty-céntimo pieces; * as I remember, there were fourteen pesos altogether. Amid this terrible massacre, the bullets flying in all directions, the building on fire, the leaking gas mains, the broken water mains, the ambulance sirens that set our teeth on edge, the only thing that had mattered to this young girl was hanging onto her CNH collection box. We also set a match to her Movement handbills, because she simply didn't realize what terrible trouble she'd be in if she were found with leaflets like that in her possession.

We heard someone inserting a key in the lock on the bathroom door and turning it.

"They've gone, *señora!*" a voice said.

It was my mother's helper.

Mercedes Olivera de Vázquez, anthropologist

We ran behind one of the buildings and somebody opened a little chute of some sort leading down into a tiny tin shed in the basement. When we slid down that chute into that little room, we discovered that there were already other people down there, and soon many more people slid down the chute. . . . There were air holes between the floor and the roof, and an opening with a little grate over it. There was a stairway alongside the chute we'd slid down.

* A coin worth about one and one half cents. (Translator's note.)

one. There was no electricity anywhere in the building, and the whole housing unit was flooded. I had no idea why there was water all over the place, but from what other comrades told me later, the main water boilers had been riddled with bullets and they had leaked all over. As you know, the walls of the apartments in the Chihuahua building are made of masonite. The first order they gave us when they entered the apartment was, "Take off your shoes, you sons of bitches!" and then they made us throw them into a room that I think must have been the kitchen of the apartment. I have no idea why they made us do that. The whole kitchen, or whatever it was, was full of men's and women's shoes. They arrested other comrades in an apartment on one of the floors above where they had sought shelter, and they were not taken down to the floor where we'd been, the fourth floor, till much later, after they'd taken the rest of us away. They all said the same thing had happened to them: they had found themselves in a pitch-black apartment, with the furniture all shoved in one corner, and a kitchen full of shoes.

When they took us out of the apartment there on the fourth floor, they escorted us down to the ground floor. By the time they took me downstairs, there were already a whole lot of kids there, all practically standing one on top of the other, with no shoes on and their pants down around their ankles, and most of them stripped of their shirts by that time, standing there in nothing but their undershorts. Their stripping us like that to prevent us from making a run for it was ridiculous. They no doubt did it just to humiliate us. When they read me the twenty charges against me, I remarked to the court secretary that there was one charge missing on the list of supposed crimes I'd committed: disorderly conduct, since I'd been forced to run around in public bare-ass naked. He didn't think my little joke was the least bit funny.

Luis González de Alba, of the CNH

As the gun battle was raging, all the members of the National Strike Committee were arrested, and were among the several hundred prisoners taken to Military Camp 1.

A number of the members of the CNH were stark naked.

"Terrible Gun Battle in Tlatelolco. The Number of Dead Not Yet Determined and Dozens Wounded"

there. One speaker said that there had been plans to march on to the Santo Tomás campus, but since there were many Army troops on the campus, the march was being canceled. "Go home now, all of you. Don't make any trouble! Just go quietly home now." It seemed to me that the meeting had broken up very quickly. Then suddenly we saw a flare in the sky and all of us turned around to watch it, and when I looked toward the speakers' stand again, I saw some men wearing a white glove on one hand standing up there next to the speakers. The leaders were shouting through the microphone, "Don't run; there's no danger," but one of the men in the white gloves started firing on the crowd or on the soldiers standing behind us. Then the crowd panicked and everybody started to run. I stood there trying to stop people: "Why are you running?" I asked them. When I finally realized what was happening, I was standing behind one of the big pillars supporting the Chihuahua building. I hadn't panicked and started to run because I wasn't afraid, I was merely angry. My daughter was the one who pushed me over behind the pillar. My daughter and I stayed there then, crouched behind the pillar, trying to keep under cover. . . .

I'd really gone to the meeting just to keep her company because my grandsons are high-school students who'd gone to several of the meetings. When we heard the first shots, I saw boys jumping off a wall and falling one on top of the other down below. They must have gotten badly trampled! The whole esplanade was being raked with machine-gun fire, and some youngsters started calling to us from some sort of store, a flower shop or a gift shop—I've wanted to go and see exactly what sort of shop it was, but it makes you feel bad to go back there. "Come on inside here, *señoras*," they called to us. Since we didn't move—I just stood there gripping the pillar, as angry as could be—a boy came out and grabbed hold of me, put his arm around my neck, and dragged me into that shop, but there was another burst of machine-gun fire just then, and the next moment I felt just a slight prick in the leg, and it immediately began bleeding. Fortunately it was only a fragment of a dum-dum bullet, because if the entire bullet had hit my leg, it would have torn it right off. One of the youngsters took off his shirt, tore it into strips, and bandaged my leg above the knee. I felt no pain at all. I realized I was bleeding, but it was only a little trickle of blood.

ning off at the mouth like that. What had apparently made him the maddest was, as he put it, "For two months now we've been confined to barracks because of all of you kids. We're going to get even with all of you." He got madder and madder as he sat there letting off steam, and finally he shouted, "And this is only the beginning you fucking little punks. You're going to really get it when we get you to Camp 1."

He gave us a long lecture: he said that we were pretty thick between the ears if we thought we could overthrow the government because they had machine guns too. "What have we done, anyway?" he asked. "How come you keep insulting us? You keep screaming 'You murderers' at us. . . . It's the government that gives us our pay: we have to defend it. They docked us a day's pay after what happened at the University." He also said that if it was really true that the government was bad, he and his buddies on the riot squad would be the first to join a movement such as ours. He told us all this as the panel truck drove on and on, and we had no idea where they were taking us. They parked it somewhere for about three minutes, and we noticed that we were in some very dark spot with nothing but trees around. I thought they were going to order us out of the truck, but they didn't; instead two other *granaderos* got in, the truck started off again, and the two of them who'd gotten in began talking together. We were piled up in there one on top of the other; we'd all been beaten up pretty badly, and they made us keep our hands behind our necks the whole way. We finally arrived at Military Camp 1, the one right next to the Cuatro Caminos bullring.

We didn't want to get out of the truck; we were all so scared we were shitting in our pants, but they shoved us out, and once we were inside the camp a lieutenant colonel said to us, "Señores, you may put your hands down; you're among gentlemen here. . . ."

Ignacio Galván, student, San Carlos Academy

I beg parents to restrain their children, so that those on both sides may be spared the pain of mourning dead loved ones. I believe that parents will understand this appeal that we are making.

General Marcelino García Barragán, Secretary of National Defense, as reported by Jesús M. Lozano

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*García Barragán, Secretary of
Health, as reported by Jesús M. Lozano*

*in a news story entitled "Freedom Will Continue
to Reign: the Secretary of National Defense Is
Studying the Situation," Excélsior, October 3, 1968*

They rounded us all up—I think there were more than five hundred of us there in that little recess on one side of the church of Santiago Tlatelolco—and ordered us to put our hands behind our necks and walk around to the front of the church. Then a colonel told all of us women who were carrying umbrellas to throw them down and made all the men take off their belts. We all threw these articles down on the ground, and then they left us standing there for a long time. After an hour or so, people began to get tired, and some of them sat down on the ground without even asking permission. Fortunately there were two peanut vendors who had also been taken into custody there with the rest of us, and we bought all their wares because we were famished. It was nine p.m. by then and it had been raining hard.

People started striking up conversations with each other, trying to figure out why the whole thing had happened; they spoke of repression and began discussing their problems, and when they realized that I was a foreigner, they told me, "They're bound to let you go, but they're going to throw us in prison." Then they all began giving me their telephone numbers, with instructions that when someone answered at the other end, all I should say was, "Pablito's all right. . . ." "Paco's all right. . . ." "Marisa's all right. . . ." "Juan's okay. . . ." "Rosa's okay. . . ." "Eduardo's okay. . . ." We realized, because it was taking them such a long time to get them all out of the Plaza, that there were a great many dead and wounded. Later, around three o'clock in the morning, I heard an Army doctor say that they'd found more than seventy dead thus far, and then he added, "I'm certain we'll find many more."

Claude Kiejman, correspondent for Le Monde, Paris

Don't spirit my son's dead body away, the way you have all the rest! You can't do that to me! Even if he's been killed, even if he's here among the dead somewhere, I want to see him!

Elvira B. de Concheiro, mother of a family

Around two a.m. this morning, the families of two persons who had been killed in the Chihuahua building refused to allow the ambulance attendants to remove the bodies.

Raúl Torres Duque et al., in news story, "Bloody Gun Battle in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas"

Leobardo López Arreche, whom we all called "Cuec"—a comrade whose death enraged me—and I were among those being held on the east side of the church of Santiago Tlatelolco. They kept us there until five in the morning, and then they took us to Santa Marta Acatitla and put us in dormitory ward 4. . . . At six o'clock that evening, October 3, some agents went down the line to see if they could identify any of us locked up there in the ward, and by eight o'clock we'd been taken to Military Camp 1. We were held there incommunicado for thirteen days. They put me in solitary, and I was glad I never once saw a soul, because it makes me nervous to have to talk to people. It's better to be by yourself: it gives you a chance to think. But being in solitary often has a very bad effect on people. I was never in solitary long enough for it to affect me. . . . Thirty days after I arrived at Military Camp 1, I was transferred to cell block H in Lecumberri.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

I found out that the warden of Santa Marta Acatitla Penitentiary had asked the authorities not to send him any more prisoners, that there was no room for them, that he had no place to put any more of them. . . . And then along came seven hundred students and there was simply no place to put them. Four or five days before October 2, they cleared all the prisoners out of ward 4, which proves that the attack on the Plaza of Tombs was all planned beforehand, in the most underhanded way, in cold blood. . . . Even so, they arrested so many youngsters that there was no room for them anywhere!

Demetrio Vallejo, prisoner in Santa Marta Acatitla

They took the dead away—heaven only knows where.
They filled every jail in the city with students.

*José Carlos Becerra, "El Espejo de Piedra"
["The Stone Mirror"]*

I'd never seen him cry before, and I was shocked to see how much older his face suddenly looked, his eyes as red as blood, all bloodshot, with bags underneath, dark circles under them in that dawn that reeked of gunpowder. . . . I think he must have cried all night long without my noticing, or without my being really willing to accept the fact that he was actually shedding tears. . . . I had heard his stifled sobs, but I was so ashamed for him, so unwilling to admit to myself that I'd heard them, that I pretended that it was someone else sobbing like that. . . . It was five in the morning; I looked at the reflecting pools; the soldiers seemed to be trying to avoid us now; they kept going by there in front of us, pretending not to see us. It was a bright, clear morning, as mornings usually are in October. I looked at him again. Big tears were streaming down his cheeks, which I suddenly noticed had very deep wrinkles in them. "There, there, Papa, don't cry! Don't be upset," I said to him.

Elba Suárez Solana, political science student

No, no, I'm not going to grant anybody an interview, not after what happened to me: they shot me, they stole my wristwatch, they left me lying there bleeding on the floor of the Chihuahua building, they refused to allow me to make a phone call to my embassy. . . . I would like to see the Italian contestants withdraw from the Olympics: that's the very least they can do. I'm going to present my case to the Italian Parliament; I'm going to let the whole world know what's happening here in Mexico, what kind of democracy you have in this country—everyone in the entire world is going to know! What a bunch of savages! I've been in Vietnam and I can assure you that there are barricades, foxholes, trenches, holes, and things like that you can take cover in during machine-gun barrages and bombings. (And they use flares in Vietnam, too, to mark out the areas that are to be bombed.) But here there was absolutely nowhere to take cover. On the contrary, I was lying there face down on the floor and when I tried to cover my head with my handbag to protect myself from the shrapnel, a policeman pointed his pistol at me, just an inch or so from my head, and said, "Don't move." I could see the bullets imbedded in the floor of the terrace all around me. I also personally witnessed how the police were dragging stu-

dents and young people around by the hair and hauling them away. I saw many wounded, and lots of blood: I was wounded myself, and lay there in a pool of my own blood for forty-five minutes. One student next to me kept saying, "Chin up, Oriana, chin up." The police paid no attention when I begged them, "Please phone my embassy, please phone my embassy." They all refused to make the call, and then finally one woman said to me, "I'll get word to them for you."

I've called my sister, who's taking a plane here today; I've called London, Paris, New York, Rome. When they took me to be X-rayed this morning, some reporters asked me what I was doing in Tlatelolco. What was I doing there! I was doing my job, for heaven's sake! I'm a professional journalist. I've been in touch with the leaders of the National Strike Committee because the Student Movement is the most interesting recent development in your country. The students talked to me at my hotel on Friday and told me that there was going to be a big meeting in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas on Friday, October 2, at five p.m. Since I'd never seen the Plaza, and knew that it was an archaeological site, I thought I'd combine the two things. That's why I was there. Ever since I arrived in Mexico, I've been impressed by the students' efforts to put a stop to police repression. I'm also amazed at the stories in your newspapers. How bad your papers all are—so afraid to speak out, so afraid to express any sort of indignation! To hell with the Olympics and all the rest of it. As soon as they let me out of this hospital, I'm leaving.

*Oriana Fallaci, correspondent for L'Europeo,
patient in the Hospital Francés*

Within minutes after the beginning of the gun battle, the wire services started sending teletypes out from one end of the world to the other reporting what was happening—stories that were quite exaggerated, thereby causing irreparable and incalculable damage to our country's reputation.

*"26 Dead and 71 Wounded; Sharpshooters Fire on
Army Troops. General Toledo Wounded"*

Another hour went by. The lights in the buildings had gone out, and there wasn't a soul to be seen at any of the windows. Oh, yes,

there was one woman who for some strange reason was cleaning the windows of her apartment on the fifth floor. I found out later that many apartments were full of people who had fled from the gunfire and were lying stretched out on the floor in the dark. We saw many prisoners go by in front of us there on the esplanade—young kids, for the most part, with their hands behind their necks, being herded along by the soldiers, who were clubbing them in the back with their rifle butts. Many of these youngsters were stark naked and the police and the Army troops were forcing other youngsters to stand stark naked on the terraces on the rooftops. There were dead and wounded, many of them children, all over the Plaza de las Tres Culturas. Strangely enough, I wasn't really very scared; the one thought in my mind was that it would be absurd to die like that. That same thought was running through so many of our minds at that very same instant.

Claude Kiejman, correspondent for Le Monde, Paris

They lined both the boys and the girls up against the walls and made them take all their clothes off. Then they loaded all of them, stark naked, into paddy wagons and panel trucks to take them to Military Camp 1.

Rodrigo Narváez López, student at the School of Architecture, UNAM

I would have liked to kill the guy, or at least cut off his fingers gripping the trigger of that machine gun. I'll never forget the ear-splitting chatter of that machine gun. For days afterward, as I walked down the streets, all I could hear was the tracatracatracatracataca of that machine gun.

Jaime Macedo Rivera, dentistry student, UNAM

Behind the church of Santiago Tlatelolco
thirty years of peace
plus some thirty more years of peace
plus all the iron and the cement used for
the fiestas of this dreamlike country
plus all the speeches—all this
poured out of the muzzles of the machine guns

José Carlos Becerra

We sat there like that, waiting, and at ten that night they started shooting again, but we couldn't tell exactly where the shots were coming from. It seemed as though they were firing at us from behind the church and from other buildings farther away, either the November 20 or the September 16 unit, I'm not sure which, and there we all were, with no sort of cover at all. There was another moment of panic then, because the bullets were much more likely to strike us there in front of the church than they were around the corner of it, where we'd been before. The women were terror-stricken, and began screaming for them to open the door of the church so they could take shelter inside: "Open the door of the church, they're going to kill us, they're going to shoot us. . . . Open up . . . we're Mexicans too!" They never did open the door of the church. I was scared to death too, because it occurred to me that if the Army was firing on the crowd, there was no reason why they wouldn't shoot at us, too. There has been a great deal of talk about sharpshooters. Maybe there were some, but I didn't see a single person shooting from any of the windows, nor did I ever see any groups that might lead anyone to suspect that Tlatelolco was a guerrilla headquarters. But since people were firing in every direction, and bullets were whizzing every which way, there was a very good chance that we'd be wounded. I saw youngsters with a white glove on one hand who went back and forth all over the square without the police or the Army troops ever stopping them; that was why I took particular notice of them.

There were thousands of people in the square: eight or ten thousand perhaps—it's difficult to estimate how big the crowd was. But I never once saw anybody trying to get rid of a pistol he might have had on him. Perhaps there were people in the buildings who grabbed their rifles or pistols when they saw that they were being attacked, that's quite conceivable—wouldn't any of us do the same if a thief or a marauder were attacking us?—but there really weren't any armed guerrillas inside the Tlatelolco housing unit. The very manner in which the Army troops conducted the attack, closing in on the square from all sides at once, and therefore shooting at each other, is quite sufficient in and of itself to account for the large number of soldiers killed.

This second barrage went on till about eleven p.m., and we were detained there in front of the church till three in the morning. Then

at three a.m. they ordered us to put our hands behind our necks again, and took all of us inside the old convent next to the church. They herded us all in there like animals, and people kept saying that everybody was going to be arrested, including all the women, but that since I was a foreigner, they'd let me go.

I told an Army doctor who came in to have a look at us, "I happened to be here by sheerest chance. I was on my way to the Railway Workers' Theater, just around the corner, to see *The Magic Lantern*. I was to meet one of my relatives there. Would you be so kind as to phone my house so they won't worry about me?"

I also told him that I was a journalist and thought the authorities might not like it very much that I'd been there and seen everything that had happened. I also asked him to phone the French Embassy for me, and he told me that it was not necessary for me to contact my embassy, and that he would get in touch with my relative—which he did, I hasten to add—and what's more, I think it was because he intervened on my behalf that I was allowed to leave Tlatelolco at seven the next morning.

As we left, we passed by the other side of the church and I realized that there were many, many people still in custody there. I thought that those in our group were the only ones who had been taken into custody, but near a pond or a reflecting pool I saw that there were many more people who had been arrested. The Army doctor was escorting me. Even at that late hour, we could still hear shots from time to time, all over the place, more or less. The Avenida Nonoalco was full of tanks, but on the other streets traffic seemed to be completely normal, and since all the lights were still off in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and all the buildings around it, and it was pitch-black everywhere in the square, doubtless people passing by had no idea that five or ten thousand people were still trapped in there. A friend of mine went to the Secretariat of Foreign Relations searching for somebody who had gone to the meeting. He was told that there was nobody in the Plaza, that everybody had gone home, so he had no idea what terrible things were happening.

When I got in the Army car, it seemed incredible that everything was just the same as always. It was as if the entire Tlatelolco incident had never happened. The driver asked me where I wanted to go; there were people along the streets who didn't even turn around to watch as we drove by, there were cars honking, taxis cruising the

streets, bicyclists pedaling along, as though nothing at all had happened.

Claude Kiejman, correspondent for Le Monde, Paris

The way people were going about their business as usual outside, quite normally and peacefully, was like a slap in the face to me.

Elvira B. de Concheiro, mother of a family

When we left Tlatelolco, life was going on just as usual—everything was so normal it was horrible, insulting. It simply wasn't possible that everything could just go on as peacefully as before. But people were going about their business as though nothing at all had happened, and there we were, filthy dirty and feeling like fools. We rode along in the taxi and when we got to Bellas Artes we saw that they'd set a trolley bus on fire and a crowd had gathered to watch, as always happens whenever there's a little excitement. I was suddenly overcome then with a kind of fit of hysteria, and began to scream at the top of my lungs, "They're shooting a whole bunch of people in Tlatelolco!" and who knows what else. My screaming like that scared the taxi driver, who put his foot to the floor and told us that if we were going to behave like that he was going to make us get out on the next corner.

Margarita Nolasco, anthropologist

We were riding along in the car, taking the girls we'd picked up back to where they lived, when Margarita braked to a halt at a stop sign when she saw a man selling papers standing there. She reached out of the window, grabbed the newspaper vendor by the shirt, and asked him, "Does it say anything in your paper about the massacre that's going on in Tlatelolco?"

"No, señora, it doesn't say anything about it, and it's not going to. You don't expect them to report a thing like that in the papers, do you?"

"Well in that case, it's your duty to spread the news to everybody that comes along. . . ." And then she stuck her head out of the car window and started shouting, "They're killing people by the hundreds . . . in cold blood!" This was on the corner of Tacuba and San Juan de Letrán, and she hadn't noticed that just behind the

nothing at all had

for Le Monde, Paris

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in the face to me.

mother of a family

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simply wasn't possible
as before. But people
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Tlatelolco, anthropologist

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man selling papers there were four or five soldiers closing in on a trolley bus that was on fire on the corner. . . .

It's useless to do things like that, I agree, but there are times when you can't help doing them. We just couldn't calm Margarita down. I realized what she was going through, because I had all my children right there with me and she didn't.

Mercedes Olivera de Vázquez, anthropologist

I went back home and sat down and thought to myself, Tomorrow the people are going to rise up in arms! When they find out what's happened tomorrow, there'll be a revolution. And when I saw that everything was going on just as usual, that nothing was about to happen, it was the greatest shock I've ever had in my life.

Enrique Vargas, student at ESIQIE, IPN

What's going to happen now, pal? Where do we go from here?

Eulogio Castillo Narváez, student, Vocational 1

The only explanation for what has happened in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas is the need for the ruling class to remain in power. But even though there is a logical explanation for Tlatelolco, this does not make the situation that it has given rise to any less absurd. What is even more senseless than the slaughter is the desire that has suddenly arisen to prove that the whole thing never really happened, that nobody was really responsible for it and that nobody can possibly be held accountable for it.

Carlos Monsiváis, in an article entitled
"Conjectures and Reassessments," in
Siempre!, no. 453, October 14, 1970

Emery told me afterward that he had also been in the Plaza when the Army occupied it. Bullets landed inches from him, and they kept firing round after round straight at him, but he threw himself to the ground right next to the dead body of a young boy. They kept shooting at him, but all the bullets hit the other boy's dead body.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

because they came and picked her up in a car, which then took off like greased lightning. . . . Everybody there at Tlatelolco was trying to get in touch with their families before the Army troops started arresting people. . . . I was scared then, and decided not to report that man with a bullet through his head. He was past help by that time—as dead as a doornail.

Manuel Pacheco Hinojosa, student at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, UNAM

I saw a bloodstain on the wall opposite, a great big one dripping down the wall. I reached my hand out and touched it, and got my hand all sticky. And then, for some reason, I felt terribly nauseated and almost vomited.

Sofía Bermúdez Calvillo, student at the School of Commerce and Business Administration, UNAM

Who gave orders to do this? Who could possibly have ordered such a thing? It's cold-blooded murder.

Voice on a tape recorded by Juan Ibarrola, amid the barrage of gunfire

I can take it okay when they club me with their rifle butts, but what I can't take is when they spit in my face.

Mauricio Sabines Cándano, student, Vocational 1

Up against the wall, you mother-fuckers, we're going to give you a taste of the revolution you've been agitating for!

One of the "White Gloves," to members of the CNH

Don't turn around or I'll blow your head off! Don't turn around! Keep your face to the wall!

A "White Glove," to Luis González de Alba, of the CNH

Get down, get down, I tell you!

Voice recorded by Juan Ibarrola

There are a number of bullet holes in the walls of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations. It was not possible to evacuate everyone from the

offices. Only a few employees on the night shift were able to get out of the building, with the help of the police and Army troops.

The only precautionary measure possible was to turn out all the lights in the building. The employees who were unable to leave kept away from the windows and crawled across their offices on their hands and knees to answer incoming telephone calls. The motorcycle courier of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations, Manuel Landín, received a bullet wound.

Report to the AMEX News Service by Adolfo Alanís, clerk in the Secretariat of Foreign Relations

The body of a fifteen-year-old boy who had received a fatal head wound was removed from apartment 615 of the Chihuahua building in the Tlatelolco housing unit.

*Augustina Román de Falcón, tenant in the
Tlatelolco housing unit*

"Stand up, señora," I said.

The woman tried to get to her feet, but was unable to.

"Are you a paralytic?" I asked her.

"No, no, I don't know what's wrong with my legs. I can't move them all of a sudden."

"I'll help you up. . . ."

"No, young man, you'd better not. . . . I'm so embarrassed. . . . I'm a mess, my skirt is filthy. . . . please don't look. . . ."

"Don't worry, señora, I won't look. . . . That's the least of your troubles. You can't stay here. . . . please try to get up. . . . I promise not to look. . . ."

The old woman tried to get up on her knees, to stretch one leg out and to get to her feet. . . . That was when I noticed that both her legs were all bloody, way up past her knees.

"Señora, you've got shrapnel wounds in your legs! I'm going to go get a stretcher-bearer for you! Please bring a stretcher over here: there's somebody who's been hurt over here!" I shouted.

And it was only then that that woman began to cry. She was over seventy.

Ricardo Esteves Tejada, student, UNAM

I am attached to the Fourth Infantry Battalion, a sergeant second class; my commanding officer is Colonel Ramón Arrieta Bizcarra. At

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ice and Army troops.

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who were unable to leave
ed across their offices on
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Relations, Manuel Lan-

MEX News Service by Adolfo
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de Falcón, tenant in the
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my legs. I can't move

I'm so embarrassed . . .
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That's the least of your
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I noticed that both her

Your legs! I'm going to
a stretcher over here:
I shouted.

began to cry. She was over

student, UNAM

a sergeant second

Arteta Bizcarra. At

approximately seven p.m. I received orders to get into a military transport, which brought me to the Tlatelolco housing unit. When the transport arrived there, I got out and headed toward one of the entrances to the unit; I don't recall exactly which one it was. As I was walking along, I heard several bursts of gunfire coming from the tops of various buildings; they were firing at me and the other men in my unit, so one of my buddies and I started to run for cover in a zigzag pattern, but as I was running my rifle suddenly went off and wounded me in the right foot. An ambulance picked me up later and took me to the Central Military Hospital. . . . I made an official statement reporting what had happened, Deposition number 54832/68, which has been filed with the Division of Investigations.

*Jesús Marino Bautista González, sergeant second class, quartered in the Fourth Infantry Battalion
Military Barracks*

The woman was sobbing as though her heart was breaking.

Carlos Lemus Elizondo, clerk, Canadá Shoe Store

It makes me boil when I hear people say that the students looted abandoned stores and shops and commercial establishments in the Chihuahua building. They weren't the ones who robbed them at all; it was the agents in the white gloves and Army troops who broke the windows of these shops and filled their own pockets. I know that for a fact, because I was right there and saw it with my own eyes.

Angelina Rodríguez de Cárdenas, mother of a family

Alberto went to the meeting with his friend Emilio. They were standing on one corner of the esplanade listening to the speakers and watching the crowd. There were young kids riding their bicycles around the square and other youngsters playing with each other—children who doubtless lived right there in the housing unit. They seemed to be paying no attention to the speakers—or at any rate the meeting hadn't kept them from going on with their games and having fun. Alberto and Emilio had gotten there early. They noticed that the sound equipment had already been set up, because people were testing it, the way they always do: "One,

around for a while, thinking of leaving. Then the demonstrators flung up of Alberto, and the noise of the guns going on, get up, you're Emilio, get up—let's get out as he did so Emilio's stone-cold dead.

One way or the other Emilio was killed in Tlatelolco, that he organize demonstrations

mother of a family

banners, there were

student, UNAM

they return to their home free . . .

*journalist, and resident
Tlatelolco housing unit*

they saw people Margarita leaned her head a hail of bullets when she put a dark-colored hair and felt a hand in the window.
archaeologist

wanted to organize much of anything . . . Every so

*resident of the
Tlatelolco housing unit*

Just as it was getting light, four more corpses were carried into the headquarters of the Third Police Precinct, bringing the number of dead who had been taken to this particular police station to around fourteen to eighteen. Those who have been identified thus far are: Leonardo Pérez González, an employee of the SEP; Cornelio Caballero Garduño, from Prep 9; Gilberto Ortiz Reynoso, a student at ESIQIE; Luis Contreras Pérez; José Ignacio Caballero González; and Ana María Reyes Touché. A child who had received a bullet wound and been evacuated from apartment 615 of the Chihuahua building was also brought to this police station.

There are rumors that there are four dead in the Rubén Leñero Hospital, one of whose corpses was thrown out of a car, immediately in front of the hospital.

Ovaciones, October 3, 1968

Approximately fifteen thousand bullets of various calibers were fired during the exchange of gunfire in Tlatelolco.

An officer

Unlike previous occasions, the hundreds of Molotov cocktails thrown by the demonstrators are of a remarkably high quality this time.

An officer

After what's happened, I'm resigning my commission in the Army. It's getting worse and worse for both sides. The situation has become much more serious since we occupied CU. Heaven only knows where we're all going to end up.

A lieutenant in the Parachute Troops

The situation is very delicate. We are unable to fire at will, because we've had orders to shoot only in self-defense. We've been shot at continually with heavy-caliber weapons ever since we arrived here. . . . Life's hard, you know, and you have to earn your daily bread somehow or other. Unfortunately we have to obey orders, because if we retreat a single step, our own buddies plug us.

A sergeant in the Nineteenth Infantry Battalion

Here in the Plaza, if we move one inch they shoot us. There are sharpshooters all around. A convoy of civilian ambulances should

be sent here to see if they'll let them come in. They should drive up with their sirens on full blast to show they're ambulances.

*Miguel Ángel Martínez Agis, in news story,
"Chihuahua Building, 6 p.m."*

Armed troops with machine guns were shooting at anybody who moved, especially people at the windows in the nearby buildings. A platoon of soldiers grabbed a sixty-year-old man who'd been wounded right out of our hands. We have no idea where they took him. We were enraged at that.

*Lorenzo Calderón, Alfonso García Méndez, and
Vicente Orozco, tenants in the Tlatelolco housing unit*

Quiet words, an announcement: "We should like to inform everyone that the demonstration that has been scheduled has been canceled. We repeat: there will be no march on the Santo Tomás campus. This march has been canceled. In a few moments we shall all go our separate ways, because there is not going to be a march on the Santo Tomás campus," and the spontaneous chants of a tense but peaceful crowd were suddenly met with bursts of machine-gun fire and death-dealing bayonets.

We do not speak that sort of language. The language we have used has always been entirely different. When our struggle took on national proportions, our banners, on more than one occasion, suddenly appeared in the Zócalo, demanding political freedom, an end to repression, the right to strike, and the release of political prisoners.

We were united and we had right on our side.

The authorities could have granted these demands, but faced with the choice of giving in to our demands and murderous repression, they chose the latter.

Pablo Gómez, student and member of the Communist Youth

The headquarters of the Third Precinct was surrounded by police they were not allowing anyone in, but my husband went over and asked to speak to one of the men in charge because he had suddenly remembered that one of the officers in this particular precinct had been a patient of his at the Social Security hospital. The authorities sent for him, and they recognized my husband who then explained that we were very worried because our son ha

They should drive up
ambulances.
*Juan Agis, in news story,
Tlakua Building, 6 p.m."*

shooting at anybody who
nearby buildings.
old man who'd been
no idea where they took

*Alfonso García Méndez, and
the Tlatelolco housing unit*

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Communist Youth

condemned by police;
and went over and
because he had sud-
this particular police
Security hospital.
organized my husband,
because our son had

gone to the movie theater in Tlatelolco and we hadn't heard from him, and also told them that he knew there were many dead bodies in that police station and asked the officer to let him in to see if our son was among them.

"All right, I'll see if I can arrange it." The police officer came back in a little while and said, "It's okay, you can go on into the morgue, you two." But when he saw how upset I was, standing there with tears streaming down my face, the officer changed his mind and said, "On second thought, you go in alone, doctor, since you're used to this sort of thing."

My husband came back after a while, his face deathly white.

"What is it? Is he one of the dead in there?"

"No, he's not in there. . . ."

"Did you take a really good look?" I asked.

"Good Christ, of course I did! Come on, let's get out of here."

We left, and once we were outside my husband told us that he'd counted twenty-two dead bodies lying there on the floor. It said in the paper later that there were twenty dead. Among the dead bodies he'd seen was the corpse of a pregnant woman. He went over to see whether the baby was alive, and the anthropology student who was with us remarked, "Sir, she's no doubt been dead for more than five hours!"

"I realized that when I went over to examine her, but that was my first instinctive reaction," my husband said to me. At one o'clock in the morning we tried to get back into Tlatelolco; but the only way you could get through was on the Avenida de la Reforma side, and one of the policemen standing on the corner in front of the Cuiláhuac Monument told us, "They've arrested lots of people and taken them to Military Camp 1. . . ."

We went there to the camp and the guards outside denied that there were any prisoners there. Both at the main entrance and the side entrances the soldiers told us, "There are no prisoners here, not a single one. . . ."

Margarita Nolasco, anthropologist

The Leñero Hospital reported that it was literally impossible for people who wanted to see their friends or relatives to enter the hospital, because the police were barring the door.

"Partial List of Dead and Wounded in the Gun Battle"

...began counting us off in
...l turned out to be number
...ed to me. So the two of us
...er ward with another
...aking our names down
...us was. Almost all of us
...ough there was one man
...young children; three for-
...omen, because they had
...them—and three teen-age
...med to death.

...fifteen cots, but they're big
...for sixty kids. I was the
...ing the floor in there—a
...and the very first thing I
...my student-body card up
...been told that they'd be
...ng there in the ward, and
...from group to group,
...nd then another.

...in hysterics because
...kids are locked up in
...they made me leave my
...d to us, "Please, every-
...d to you here. I want
...use yourselves comfort-

...told her to pull herself
...be taken to the infir-
...her's wife and daugh-
...under their arms all
...school they were from,
...academy—I don't re-
...A chubby kid
...cked her in his arms,
...the wife, the three

"I want all the ladies to come with me to the infirmary, please," one of the officers said.

The husband demanded an explanation, and the colonel said something about "offending people's sense of decency"—I don't remember his exact words. "They can't stay here," he said. The women didn't want to go, and clung to their loved ones in tears, but they were all eventually taken to the infirmary where the rest of the women were.

After a while the officers came back to ask which of the men there had been with the older lady and the girls, and took them away. They also took the foreigners away. We never found out what happened to them.

"Are they going to let the rest of us out now, too?" we asked the soldiers.

They just laughed in our faces.

"Aren't they going to come for us, too?"

"Sure they are—they're going to come and give you a nice little warmup."

One of the soldier-prisoners said to me, "They're going to bring you all mattresses in a while."

I believed him, but all they brought us was a few cardboard boxes, not nearly enough to go around. They lined us up and shouted, "Here you are—here're some 'box springs' for you."

I didn't get any of the boxes. In the lockers next to the lavatory we found some newspapers and comic books and grade-school textbooks. We latched onto the textbooks to use for pillows and grabbed the newspapers for blankets. That first night I was so sore from the beating I'd gotten I couldn't sleep. Around midnight a chubby little second lieutenant with a mustache came in to talk to us. We asked him what was going to happen to us and when they were going to let us out.

"Don't worry. If you youngsters don't have anything to do with the Movement you're not going to have a hard time of it—they won't even hold you here. The ones who are really going to have a rough time of it are the members of the National Strike Committee—they're going to shoot them for treason," he told us.

More officers came in and we all got up off our cots, thinking they were going to let us out, but they just lined us up and took a roll

about four in the morning the door came in and beat up six other kids. They were we'd gotten. One of the kids had been covered with blood and his eye was all been bloodied; the soldiers had stood there in the rain with their necks for four hours, and then later, Tlatelolco housing unit had been riddled put them in a room where more and We all began trading stories of what the kids had been robbed; some of had on them stolen by the soldiers, money swiped by the secret agents. had been quite decent to them, that it Army troops who had beaten them; that it wasn't the Army troops the cops. That's why I think those in than anybody else—because we Army and the police; both the sol- seven a.m. they lined us up to take o'clock some officers and the same time came in with big kettles to pass a line that went the whole length one by one they handed us a plate

Public Prosecutor's office came. They took both our thumbprints and profile, in other words they made and when they'd finished they can test some more now."

Jesús Galván, student at the School of Library Sciences, UNAM

Camp 1. Around two in the entrances—number 3, I think it the back anyway, and pleaded if they've brought any pris- you can get a mes- whether they're here." But the

troops on duty there wouldn't tell us a thing. What's more, every time any sort of vehicle approached, the soldiers cocked their rifles and kept them at the ready.

All of a sudden a military transport drove up, and a man dressed in civvies stepped out and said, "I'm from the Olimpia Battalion. Clear all these people out of here, because we're bringing in the others."

"All right, clear out of here this instant, all of you," the soldiers barked at us.

"Why do we have to leave, pray tell, if we're just standing here quietly on a public thoroughfare?"

Then they pointed their guns at us and said, "We've got rifles, that's why."

We got back in the car and left. I know now that the Army troops were bringing in more prisoners and didn't want us to see what they were up to. From there we went to the Attorney General's office, where they informed us that around eight o'clock the next day they were going to announce the lists of names of those who had been arrested. Since it was past four a.m. by that time, we decided to go back home and wait it out there till eight o'clock.

At six that morning, our son still hadn't come home, and we hadn't heard one word about him. All I knew was that he apparently wasn't among the casualties, because we'd gone to the Red and Green Cross hospitals and given them a photograph of him, and they'd checked to see whether he was among the dead and wounded. What's more, my husband had kept in touch with other doctors. Since my son apparently wasn't among the dead and wounded, I was afraid he'd been arrested. At seven that morning I went back to the military camp and was told once again that there were no prisoners there. At eight o'clock we went back to the Attorney General's office to see if the lists of people arrested had been posted, but there wasn't a one. They told us there at the Attorney General's office that there were no prisoners there, we'd been told at the military camp that there were no prisoners being held there, and at the district police headquarters they also told us there was no one detained there. So according to the authorities nobody was being held in custody anywhere. Then we went back home to leave word where we were going next; it had occurred to us that we should perhaps go to the Defense Department, but my daughter

you had phoned to say
I went to the Chihuahua
Meche pretended she
had left in; she showed
me and me in. It must
have arrived there at the
beginning, but we started
to search. We had no idea
of every door, on one

"Where are you?" I got
back, "Carlitos, it's me
again." Soldiers kept tagging
us. I thought to myself just finding him

Mexico, anthropologist

the entire night
reached its peak, so to
say that was in one of the
they couldn't tell us
awful scenes,
nothing, but lots of
children, lots
two years or so
high-school kids.
that time and was
Mama! Let me
son wouldn't

Mexico, anthropologist

in a panic
the hundreds of
who lived in
and out to help,
had been in
the risk of their

own lives, and then, in the gray light of dawn, with not a drop of water coming out of the faucets, after the endless sleepless night . . . a mother . . . a mother sobbing and calling "Carlitos, Carlitos!" along all the corridors and up and down the stairways, searching for her son and asking everybody if they had seen him. . . .

*Maria Luisa Mendoza, writer and resident
in the Tlatelolco housing unit*

Around five that morning, the entire family started organizing. My husband began making the rounds of the various offices of the Attorney General, Pepe went to all the police stations, Chelo and I went to the Red and Green Cross hospitals and all the other hospitals and morgues where there were dead or wounded. The twins, Rubén and Rogelio, went off to work, waiting for us to get in touch with them the minute we had any news.

At the Red Cross hospital, they asked me if I was brave enough to go down to the morgue in the basement. (The Red Cross hospital is on Ejército Nacional, opposite Sears.) I replied, "Don't you think a mother is automatically brave enough to do a thing like that?"

One of the hospital employees went down with me in the elevator. My daughter didn't go in with me: "Wait here for me outside, Chelo," I told her. Once inside the morgue, the hospital employee pressed a switch and began to pull the drawers out. In the first one he pulled out there was the corpse of a youngster about sixteen years old; his skin had already turned a deep purple. Since part of his face was missing, I tried to identify him by looking at his teeth and seeing if he had any moles on his face, since all my children have them. The only thing left of this cadaver's face was the jawbone and a couple of teeth. When I saw this youngster's dead body, I was sure it was Pichi, because every one of the corpses I saw seemed to be one of my children; every dead body I saw seemed to be one of my boys; but in order to make sure I opened whatever was left of their lips and looked at their teeth, and none of them was Pichi, because there is a big gap between my son's front teeth and the teeth of all these corpses were very close together, and my oldest son has gold caps on his. . . . They produced other corpses that had been brought in from Tlatelolco, but none of them was Pichi. Lots of them were women's bodies, but I didn't pay much attention to them because what I was looking for was bodies of dead

women's bodies—a woman about dressed in an orange blouse. And the hospital attendant where Balbuena," he told us. "I didn't say one word to each other to the clinic were people let me in to see them, and give. I was absolutely beside they might have taken people a number of them had been that they would refuse to anyone who had been brought later that they'd taken fifty-and there, but none of the dead. Prosecutor's office photos of my and said to me, "No, they here look like these photo-

searching nor their dead or of the Third Police Precinct in were full of smoke, as they'd set a bus on fire and the police station, and if you want to, it'll teach go in form a line, so we

"I said to my daughter. and was ushered into colder than the one in there were seven years old, but these That's why they'd were the only ones there, and saw three stone slabs

with three dead bodies of railway workers on them, with their heads half blown off by dum-dum bullets. I realized they were railway workers because they had bandanas around their necks and were dressed in coarse blue cotton work shirts. The other corpses were underneath them. The first one I caught sight of was a woman about to give birth: the fetus's head was showing because the bullets had ripped her belly all to pieces.

Later I asked Cosme, my husband, "How come her belly was ripped apart like that?"

"Because they were dum-dum bullets," he answered.

A little farther on I saw the body of the Olympic Games hostess, a very pretty girl with long dark hair, lying there with a peaceful expression on her face. Her whole bosom was bare, like a flower that had opened, and I thought to myself that she must surely be even colder than I was, so I took my sweater off and put it over her. She was naked from the waist up and it made me feel bad seeing her lying there with her breasts exposed like that, so that everybody could see. There were other dead bodies there—twelve more of them—all railway workers, piled up one on top of the other, and I asked the policeman, "How come there are only railway workers' bodies here? What about the students who were killed?"

"They didn't bring any of them here," he answered.

"Well, where are they then?"

"You might take a look out at Military Camp 1."

And when I asked there in the police station how I could get to Military Camp 1, a lieutenant colonel told me, "It's no use going out there, señora. They won't tell you a thing. It's no use trying out there."

I was really in a state when I left the police station, because it had all been such a terrible experience. I walked and walked, and it all seemed like a nightmare that had made me break out in a cold sweat. I walked on and on down the entire length of the Paseo de la Reforma, hugging the walls. I wasn't even aware of Chelo walking along there beside me. We didn't say one word to each other. She didn't ask me one question. We turned off the Reforma then and headed home. The others came back then, one by one.

"I haven't found out a thing," Cosme reported.

"I couldn't find out a single thing," my son Pepe reported.

It was two weeks before I had any word at all. I remember that I

sat for hours at a time at the window waiting. I felt sick to my stomach the whole time. I was as limp as a dishrag and felt as though I were at the end of my rope. And I'm a strong woman. For two weeks I never sat down to a meal, I was so upset. I hardly ate a bite, really; I just drank liquids every once in a while. We never sat down together at the table from then on. Two weeks later I found out that Pichi had been in cell block H in Lecumberri, and I went to pick him up the day they let him out because they couldn't prove the charges against him. We found out where Eduardo was when my son Rogelio got word at the place where he worked that he was in Military Camp 1. He was alive! I was terribly distraught, I admit, but it would have been hard not to be upset. When they transferred Eduardo to Lecumberri, his fiancée and I went to see him.

They would only let one of us into cell block H to see him, and said to me, "You go in, *señora*."

Everything that all of us had been through made me very brave, because when I saw Eduardo stumbling down the stairway from his cell block like a mole, clinging to the banisters, and only recognizing me because he could hear my voice as I shouted to him "Eduardo, over here! I'm over here!"—well, it's something I'll never forget. He had to crawl downstairs like that, clutching the banister, because they'd beaten him within an inch of his life and he'd lost his glasses. All he had to guide him was my voice. He's had to wear glasses for the last four years and can hardly see without them; they're glasses with a very strong correction, with thick thick lenses—that's why everybody calls him Owl-Eyes.

The whole thing made me terribly depressed, and I began writing a great many poems to give vent to my feelings. Read this one, for instance:

PRISON BARS

Move the prison bars even closer together
As close as you possibly can
Because however close together you place them
You will never be able
To trap the desire for freedom behind them.
And I suggest that you also
Erect bars shutting out the sky

I felt sick to my stomach and felt as though I was among women. For two days I hardly ate a bite, not a while. We never sat down. Two weeks later I found Lomberri, and I went to see them couldn't prove where Eduardo was when he worked that he was really distraught, I admit, when they transferred him to see him.

... to see him, and

... made me very brave, down the stairway from his room, and only recognizing him I shouted to him something I'll never forget, reaching the banister, his life and he'd lost his life. He's had to wear glasses without them; with thick thick lenses, and I began writing ... Read this one, for

So that people's thoughts cannot escape
And cause you trouble.

One morning when I read in the papers that Diaz Ordaz was going to have an operation on his eye, I wrote an epigram for the occasion:

The doctors are doing their best
To give light to a person who plunges others in darkness.
Wouldn't it be more proper
To give him a little dose of hemlock?

I am going to hand my poems over to you—not so that you'll try to get them published or anything like that, but just to see what you think of them. Write my name down, go ahead, write it down; after all the things I've been through, could anything worse possibly happen to me? What more can they do to me now that they've got my son there behind prison bars?

*Celia Espinoza de Valle, grade-school teacher,
mother of a family*

They brought several bodies to Military Camp 1. A friend of mine who's also an accountant went to claim his mother's body, and they told him they'd give it to him on one condition: he would have to sign a statement that his mother was a dangerous agitator. He signed everything they asked him to. Everything. His mother was a little old lady who had been there at Tlatelolco by the sheerest chance.

Maria de la Paz Figueroa, public accountant

The police station in Tacuba—the headquarters of the Ninth Police Precinct—reported that the body of a fifteen-year-old student from Vocational 1, Guillermo Rivera Torres, had been brought there. The detective on duty stated that the young man had still been alive when he was brought to the Central Military Hospital, but had died there, and that his corpse had subsequently been taken to the Ninth Precinct morgue.

At two-ten a.m. the Third Police Precinct reported that thus far a

total of eighteen dead bodies had been brought to police headquarters in that precinct.

The Third Police Precinct headquarters also reported that the following dead had been identified: Leonardo Pérez González, an employee of the Secretariat of Public Education; Cordelio Garduño Caballero, a student at Preparatory 9; Gilberto R. Ortiz Reinoso, a fourth-year student at the School of Chemical Engineering, IPN; Luis Contreras T.; José Ignacio Caballero González, a thirty-six-year-old office clerk; and Ana María Touchet.

The Red Cross hospital reported that they had seven dead there, among them two young boys; an ambulance attendant, Antonio Solórzano García; and an unidentified woman.

The Balbuena first-aid station reported one fatality, Cecilio León Torres, who had been picked up by their ambulance in the vicinity of Tlatelolco.

At eleven p.m. fourteen dead had been brought to the Third Police Precinct morgue by Red and Green Cross ambulances. Among them were three women: a young girl of about twenty-three years of age, a pregnant woman about thirty-five years old, and another woman of about forty years of age. At the headquarters of this precinct there are also bodies of two men over thirty, and nine bodies that appear to be those of students. Only three or four of these dead have been positively identified thus far, and no names of any of the dead will be made public until the proper legal procedures have been complied with, according to this detective. (Later four more dead bodies were brought in.)

The Secretariat of National Defense announced one fatality: Corporal Pablo Pinzón Martínez, of the 44th Infantry Battalion. As of twelve-forty-five a.m. this morning, the reports received by our newsmen indicate that there are a total of twenty-five dead and more than seventy wounded as a consequence of the tragic events at Tlatelolco.

"Partial List of Dead and Wounded in the Gun Battle"

THE DEAD:

Red Cross: Manuel Telésforo López Carballo, Antonio Solórzano Gaona, and three unidentified persons, a woman of approximately

bodies brought to police headquarters

also reported that the following victims were brought to the hospital: Leonardo Pérez González, an employee of the Ministry of Education; Cordelio Garduño; Gilberto R. Ortiz Reinoso, a student at the School of Chemical Engineering, IPN; Cornelio Caballero González, a thirty-six-year-old man.

They had seven dead there, including an ambulance attendant, Antonio Solórzano, and a woman.

One fatality, Cecilio León, was found in an ambulance in the vicinity.

bodies brought to the Third Police Precinct by Red Cross ambulances. There were about twenty-three bodies, all men, ranging in age from about twenty-three to thirty-five years old, and mostly young men. At the headquarters of the Third Police Precinct, there were over thirty, and nine more were brought in. Only three or four of them have been identified thus far, and no names have been given to this detective. (Later)

One fatality: Corporal of the Infantry Battalion. As of now, we have twenty-five dead and missing, including the tragic events

"in the Gun Battle"

Antonio Solórzano, a man of approximately

fifty-five years of age, and two young men, about eighteen and twenty-five years old.

Central Military Hospital: Corporal Pedro Gustavo López Hernández.

Rubén Leñero Hospital: Carlos Beltrán Maciel, though this body has not yet been positively identified. It was thrown out of a car at the entrance to the hospital.

Balbuena: Cecilio de León Torres.

Headquarters, Third Police Precinct: Eighteen bodies, none as yet identified.

Story entitled "Bloody Encounter in Tlatelolco,"
El Heraldo, October 3, 1968

Ambulances 3, 4, 6, and 9 of the Red Cross, plus ambulance 71 of the Green Cross and another from the Mexican Social Security Institute, last night picked up the bodies of fourteen persons who had died of gunshot wounds in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas.

These bodies are being held in the morgue at the headquarters of the Third Police Precinct until they are identified by their families.

These persons were apparently innocent victims of gunfire from various groups of professional sharpshooters, who fired indiscriminately on the crowd below from the Chihuahua building of the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing unit.

Only five of these victims have thus far been identified. The names of the dead positively identified to date are: Ana María Regina Teucher, approximately twenty years of age, a first-year medical student, either at the IPN or at UNAM; Gilberto Reinoso Ortiz, approximately twenty-four years of age, a fourth-year student at the School of Chemical, Industrial, and Electronic Engineering, IPN; Cornelio Caballero Garduño, a student at Preparatory 9; Luis Contreras López; and José Ignacio Caballero González, thirty-six years of age.

There were no identification papers found on any of the other bodies.

Military Hospital

At midnight, the Central Military Hospital reported one fatality: Private Pinzón Martínez, who was struck by a bullet that entered the left occipital area and exited in the right temporal area. This

expansive .38-caliber bullet.
member of the 44th Infantry

*29 Dead and More Than 80
Casualties on Both Sides; 1000
El Universal, October 3, 1968*

was a very pretty young girl,
addressed all the Olympic hos-

Caldern, grade-school teacher

in the souls of these dead
into a land of truth and justice;
republic free of poverty and
bread, and schooling for
and were fighting to do
of children, the frustration
people. In some of them there
a teacher, an artist, an en-
physiological processes
tipped apart. Their death
and left a horrible scar on

night are admittedly not
never be forgotten by those
tomorrow will write the
it is still possible to realize
the dream, for instance, of the
student and an Olympics
dead body lay there on
space and lips which
silent. Some day a vo-
Tres Culturas in memory
it burning brightly.
*Lament for
Who Died," Siempre!,*
799, October 16, 1968

The Night of Tlatelolco

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Among the fatalities were a young man, Antonio Solórzano, reportedly a Red Cross ambulance attendant, although he was not on duty when he received the wounds that cost him his life; a woman, as yet unidentified, around fifty years of age; a young man between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two, apparently a student; and another man who has not yet been identified.

*News story entitled "The Student Situation. Shots Fired
from the Chihuahua Building, According to
Cueto. Cueto Also Reports Three Secret Service
Agents Wounded, Two of Them Seriously," El
Día, October 3, 1968*

Moreover, according to information furnished by the Red Cross, fifty-four wounded were treated in the hospital of that institution; of these fifty-four wounded, four subsequently died. Thus far only one of these four dead has been identified: Antonio Solórzano Gaona, a thirty-six-year-old ambulance attendant, killed in the line of duty. This ambulance attendant was just about to evacuate one of the wounded when he was struck by a burst of machine-gun bullets.

*News story entitled "Sharpshooters Fire on Army
Troops in Tlatelolco. One General and 11 Soldiers
Wounded; 2 Soldiers and More Than 20 Civilians
Killed in a Terrible Gun Battle,"
El Sol de México, October 3, 1968*

Regina, the [Olympics] hostess, was engaged to be married. Her father is a doctor, did you know that? I think he's from a German family. That's why Regina learned so many languages, because of her father. And that's why she was chosen as one of the hostesses. She was so happy that day!

*Maria Inés Moreno Enríquez,
student, Iberoamerican University*

The Red Cross hospital reported that it had admitted forty-six patients with injuries, almost all of them the result of bullet wounds, a number of which were very serious. The Red Cross also reported that four of the wounded who had been brought to the hospital of

that institution had died after being admitted. These four dead have not yet been identified.

"Terrible Gun Battle in Tlatelolco. The Number of Dead Not Yet Determined and Dozens Wounded"

The next day and during the days that followed, people became more and more apprehensive. There were thousands of persons who had suddenly disappeared without a trace. Alarming, contradictory rumors that went the rounds made people even more enraged and distraught. There were huge throngs at the hospitals day after day, around the clock: people kept scrutinizing the lists of wounded and making the rounds of all the morgues in the city to see if their friends or relatives were among the dead, and spent endless hours waiting at the gates of the prisons and the various courts for the lists of prisoners to be posted. People were not only grief-stricken and worried; they were also angry at the government's repressive policies, and the situation was further aggravated by the insolent behavior of the police toward those who came to them to inquire after their friends and relatives. After eleven days with absolutely no news as to what had happened to Raúl, my husband and I paid to have a petition addressed to the Attorney General of Mexico inserted in the newspaper.

*Manuela Garín de Álvarez, mathematician
and professor at the School of Engineering and
Faculty of Sciences, UNAM*

A barefoot woman
with a black shawl over her head
is waiting for them to hand over the dead body:
a boy twenty-two years old, a student at Poli
with a red hole in his side
made by a regulation
M-1 rifle.

Juan Bañuelos

We would not like to find ourselves in a situation which would require measures that we do not wish to take, but we shall take

mitted. These four dead
in Tlatelolco. The Number of
and Dozens Wounded"

followed, people became
thousands of persons
in trace. Alarming, contrac-
made people even more
strongs at the hospitals
scrutinizing the lists of
morgues in the city to
the dead, and spent
prisons and the various
People were not only
angry at the govern-
was further aggravated
those who came to
After eleven days
to Raúl, my hus-
to the Attorney Gen-

mathematician
School of Engineering and
Sciences, UNAM

dead body:
at Poli

Juan Bañuelos

which would
but we shall take

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such measures if necessary. Whatever our duty requires us to do, we will do. We shall go as far as necessary.

Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, President of Mexico, Fourth Annual Message, September 1, 1968

Recovering what was lost during that dark night of Tlatelolco is vital to the country. Recalling the soldiers to their barracks, emptying the jails of prisoners, and purging souls is what is needed in this dark hour. Nobody is winning in this bitter fight in which Mexico is foundering.

Francisco Martínez de la Vega, in an article entitled "Where Is Our Country Headed?"

El Día, October 8, 1968

We all thought we would be out in seventy-two hours and began to give up hope when they didn't release us. We spent ten days and nights there in jail. I was so nervous and so scared that I slept very badly. There was one man—a worker at the Pepsi-Cola plant—who had happened to get assigned a cot right next to the door; he didn't sleep much either, and he told me that around three a.m. every morning officers would come in with flashlights and go from cot to cot looking for people who belonged to the CNH. Since they had already photographed all of us, I suppose they showed our pictures to the members of the Committee that they'd already nabbed—I can just see them asking them, "Okay, you guys, tell us, which of these kids do you recognize? Which of them had anything to do with the Movement?" One time they took all of us into the john and turned the lights in the dormitory ward off, leaving just the one light on there in the lavatory where the officers were. They took us in one by one and one of the officers began asking questions:

"Where were you picked up?"

"In Tlatelolco, of course."

"And what were you doing there?"

"Just attending the meeting. . . ."

"When did they pick you up? Before or after the shooting?"

"Er . . . well . . . let's see . . . after."

"Have they given you a paraffin test?"

"No."

"Okay, go back to bed. . . . We'll give you one tomorrow. You should have been given one along with all the others."

They took us all in the lavatory and questioned us like that, one by one. But a rumor went the rounds later that Sócrates was standing there by the john, in the dark, watching us as we filed in one by one to see if he recognized any of us. When we went into the lavatory, one of the officers grabbed us by the head and made us turn our faces first one way and then another, and when a teacher from Vocational 5 went in, they kept him there quite a while. "Wait a minute, sir, let's see, you're . . ."

"You're a member of the Teachers' Coalition, isn't that right?" one of the other officers said.

"No," the man answered. "I don't know a thing about it."

"Have you gone to any of the demonstrations, to any of the meetings?"

"Yes, some of them."

"And did you meet any of your colleagues there?"

"Of course I did—it's only natural that I'd have run into a number of them."

"And how do you know one of them didn't squeal on you?"

"I don't have any idea what this is all about . . . there must be some mistake."

"Well, go back to your cot and get some rest. But if you hear your name called out during the night, you'd better start saying your prayers, because they're going to bump off anybody they find that belongs to the Coalition."

The teacher then gave an engineer who was there in the ward with us a photograph of his daughter and told him that if anything happened to him to please get word to his family. There was nothing he could do then but lie down and try to get some rest. But every time they opened the door of the ward after that we sat up on our cots to see what was going to happen. But that teacher just lay there on his cot trying to rest so as not to go to pieces.

Ignacio Galván, student, San Carlos Academy

I realize that the government could not possibly permit the student disturbances to continue since the Olympic Games were scheduled to begin in a few days. The eyes of the entire world were focused on Mexico. They had to stop the students any way they could, at

whatever cost! Many visitors from European countries who had planned to come to the Olympics began canceling their reservations; the students' acts of bravado and the turmoil they were causing were threatening to ruin the Olympic Games; they were attempting to exploit an international event for their own personal ends, to further demands having to do with a purely domestic situation. The presence of foreign correspondents who are always on the lookout for sensational news and lurid stories made them behave all the worse; it encouraged them to stir up even more trouble. They had to show the foreign journalists that they were real *machos*; they invited them to their demonstrations and got them to take part in their meetings. . . . I understand very well why the Mexican government reacted as it did, and if I had been in the authorities' shoes, I would perhaps have been obliged to behave in precisely the same way.

*Daniel Guian, director of an insurance company
and Olympics visitor from France*

When one is so alarmed and so painfully disturbed by the repeated bloody episodes that have occurred during the student conflict, one cannot help wondering whether the government is not being two-faced, whether there is any sports event that is worth the death of Mexican citizens, and whether the celebration of an international event promoting the cause of peace can be held when the country is in the grip of the cruellest sort of violence.

Alberto Domingo, in an article entitled "Bloody Wrath Held Its Own Celebration," Siempre!, no. 799, October 16, 1968

What happened was that students wanted to steal the spotlight from the Olympics.

Lola d'Orcasberro, Olympics visitor from France

If they're killing students so they can have their Olympics, it would be better not to hold them at all, since no Olympic Games, or even the Olympics as a whole, are worth the life of a single student.

An Italian athlete, member of the Italian team competing in the Olympic Games, as quoted in Ovaciones, October 3, 1968

Everything was so carefully planned, such enormous sums of money were spent, that not a single detail was overlooked; even the tickets for each event had been designed with the greatest good taste; and the same is true of the signs, the brochures, the printed programs, the uniforms of the hostesses, the advertisements, and even the balloons; and every event has begun exactly on time. It was all beautifully organized, and that's why it makes me sick at heart that the Nineteenth Olympic Games are stained with blood.

Beatriz Colle Corcuera, graphic arts designer and artist

Once the shooting started, the Army acted as if it were putting down an armed insurrection rather than stopping a meeting of students. There were more than fifteen hundred people arrested, and the treatment of the prisoners afterward was even more outrageous and severe: many persons—of both sexes—were stripped naked, thrown against the wall, and made to stand for hours with their hands up. A photograph in one of the morning papers on Thursday, October 3, shows a group of soldiers grinning from ear to ear as they cut one young prisoner's long hair off, an act that is both completely unjustified and most disturbing.

Alberto Domingo, in "Bloody Wrath Held Its Own Celebration"

People should wash their dirty linen in private. The students wanted to wash theirs in full view of the Olympic contestants, who had come to Mexico from all over the world, and to take advantage of their being there to get them involved in the country's domestic politics.

Douglas Crocker, museum curator and Olympics visitor from the United States

We never claimed we wanted to boycott the Olympics. On September 14 the head of the Department of Internal Affairs informed us in a written statement that if it was our intention to apply pressure on the government by causing disturbances that might prevent the Games from being held or to interfere with them in any way, the authorities would take advantage of every legal recourse available to them to ensure that the Olympics went ahead as planned.

such enormous sums of money was overlooked; even the posters with the greatest good will, the brochures, the printed advertisements, and so on, began exactly on time. It makes me sick at heart why it makes me sick at heart because they are stained with blood. *Designer and artist*

...as if it were putting on a meeting of students and people arrested, and then even more outrageous things—were stripped naked, beaten for hours with their own papers on Thursday morning from ear to ear. *That is both*

'Bloody Wrath Held Its Own Celebration'

...private. The students... Olympic contestants, who... to take advantage... the country's domestic... *and Olympics*

...Olympics. On September 25, the Ministry of Public Affairs informed the Strike Committee to apply pressure to the government that might prevent them in any way, from taking recourse available ahead as planned.

We still maintain that we were not against the Olympics. As a matter of fact, on August 29 we drew up a manifesto that was published on the thirtieth in *El Día*, declaring that our Movement had no connection whatsoever with the forthcoming Olympic Games, and that we had no desire to disrupt an event that was international in scope.

Gilberto Guevara Niebla, of the CNH

One time, when we were all exhausted (we've already told you that the CNH sessions sometimes went on for as long as ten hours at a time), Ayax Segura Garrido pulled a manifesto out of his pocket and proposed that it be published the next day in the papers. He said that his school would pay for it. We asked him to read it—it was five in the morning by that time, let me add—and as soon as he'd read the first few sentences we told him he needn't read the rest of it and approved it for publication. The text had to do with a previous position the CNH had taken, one we'd discussed at length and approved weeks before: it was an announcement to the public that we were not against the holding of the Olympic Games in Mexico City. But Ayax had added other things to this text, paragraphs promising that we would sweep the city streets, serve as guides, wash windows, and even shine people's shoes, practically. That was the part we hadn't heard. And the reason we hadn't was that I had gotten up after he'd read the first few sentences and said, "Comrades, we approved this manifesto three weeks ago, so let's not start discussing it all over again. Let's publish it." So the others agreed. When I read the text in the papers the next day, my hair stood on end. I arrived at the meeting that day fully prepared to get my ass chewed out. And of course that's exactly what happened! The rank-and-file Movement people were furious—and they had every reason to be. I thought at first I'd dream up some sort of story, invent some sort of fancy explanation; but in the end I decided to simply lay it on the line and tell the people at the meeting how the session of the Strike Committee had gone on and on till the wee hours of the morning and how we had happened to give our stamp of approval to such a terribly stupid announcement. If they believed me, okay, and if they didn't, too bad. But after hearing me out, they accepted my self-criticism.

Luis González de Alba, of the CNH

We weren't against the Olympics as a sports event, but we were against what the Games represented economically. We're a very poor country, and the Olympics meant an irreparable drain on Mexico's economic resources, despite what anyone says to the contrary. López Mateos* was responsible for getting Mexico City chosen as the site of the Nineteenth Olympics, but he made this commitment simply to make a big splash, to enhance our country's outward image, which had nothing at all to do with the country's real situation.

Gustavo Gordillo, of the CNH

It will perhaps be of some interest . . . to note all the lectures which the students who demonstrated their discontent received from their naturally meddlesome and officious advisors and mentors. These complacent, sour adults, who are so solidly behind the rule of law and order, even if it is indiscriminately enforced by the most violently repressive means, who are so touchingly imbued with a sublime spirit of patriotism, have neglected, as was only to be expected, to acknowledge the policy that the Student Movement and its leaders, who had been badly beaten and assaulted, adopted with respect to the Olympics. These lily-white Catos who have been most eager to point out the errors and excesses committed by the students and their docile compliance with directives from "obscure foreign interests" have not said one word about these youngsters' willingness to declare a "truce" during the Olympics so as not to appear to be irresponsible "spoilsports."

Francisco Martínez de la Vega, in an article entitled "The Peacefulness of the Rebels," *El Día*,
October 23, 1968

Being sensitive to the pressures being brought to bear by the 25,000 American businessmen and technicians present in Mexico, the Mexican government decided to use force to remedy the situation. It did not occur to the authorities that they were running the risk of emptying the Olympic stadium when they filled the jails.

Albert Paul Lentini, in an article in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Paris, October 7, 1968

* Adolfo López Mateos: the president of Mexico immediately preceding Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, elected in 1958.

This is a sports event, but we were need economically. We're a very important irreparable drain on Mexico. What anyone says to the contrary, Mexico City chosen as our capital, but he made this commitment to enhance our country's outward image to do with the country's real

Gustavo Gordillo, of the CNH

to note all the lectures and their discontent received from their advisors and members who are so solidly behind the discriminatory enforced by the are so touchingly imbued we neglected, as was only to that the Student Movement was assaulted, adopted by white Catos who have excesses committed by with directives from "ob word about these young the Olympics so as not

de la Vega, in an article of the Rebels," El Día, October 23, 1968

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an article in Le Nouvel Paris, October 7, 1968

Is that how you people in Mexico have a dialogue? By firing bullets at each other? You'd almost think Pancho Villa was still around, shooting up the town!

Andrew Fulton, American businessman and Olympics visitor

It is my opinion that the dialogue has already begun, and that in his Annual Message the President of the Republic discussed in detail each of the six points contained in the petition drawn up by the so-called CNH, as well as other subjects of fundamental interest and transcendent importance. Surely the most important of the problems confronting us is the restructuring of higher education in Mexico.

Thus the dialogue has already begun, for the president's remarks were delivered from the highest tribunal in Mexico, amid great solemnity, and reached as large an audience as possible, for his Annual Message was heard not only by those present but was also broadcast over the radio and the television networks and later published in the national press. Thus the president has now taken part in the dialogue, answering each of the points raised in the petition.

Luis Echeverría Álvarez, Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, as reported in a news story by Rubén Porras Ochoa entitled "According to the Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs, the Dialogue with the Students Has Already Been Initiated by Díaz Ordaz in his Annual Message on September 1," La Prensa, October 3, 1968

Leaders of the CNH died in Tlatelolco, you say? It's even worse when entirely innocent people are killed.

Álvaro Monroy Magaña, cabinetmaker

The Tlatelolco incident led those who sincerely believed that great improvements had been made in our democratic institutions, and that the political and social system of our country was basically sound except for certain minor failings and mistakes, to re-examine all their most cherished beliefs.

Elena Quijano de Rendón, normal-school teacher

A kid in bare feet asked one of the soldiers imprisoned in Military Camp 1 whether he could get him some shoes to wear, and the soldier hunted him up a pair of boots, but was asking a lot of money for them. We all chipped in to buy the kid the boots, because he didn't have a cent in his pockets.

Then the boy said, "You're real pals, all of you, and to show you how grateful I am to you, I'm going to dance the 'Jarabe Tapatio' for you."

We all began humming the melody: Tarara, tarara, tarara, tarara, tarara, tarara. . . . and he did the "Mexican Hat Dance" for us.

Ignacio Galván, student, San Carlos Academy

The clearest proof that our educational system is in a profound state of crisis is that all of our government officials, the majority of whom are university graduates, are incompetent and ignorant.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

"I only went to the meeting out of curiosity. . . ." "The only reason I went was because I was curious. . . ." You idiots—that's all you know how to say. You see where your curiosity got you!

An officer, to sixty prisoners in the dormitory ward in Military Camp 1

They'd lined us up to take our fingerprints, and since there were lots of us waiting, I started rapping with one of the soldiers.

"Listen, you guys don't know what you're talking about," he said. "I suppose you'd like to have a government like Che Guevara's? I suppose you'd like to see Che Guevara President of Mexico?"

"No, of course not."

To keep on the good side of him, I pretended to more or less agree, and, like a fool, I started talking politics with him.

"No, listen, you people are all wrong. How come you want to see Che Guevara president?" he asked.

I thought to myself, It's obvious this guy doesn't even know that Che Guevara's dead. Apparently they don't give soldiers any sort of education.

Carlos Galván, student at the School of Library Sciences, UNAM

soldiers imprisoned in Military
some shoes to wear, and the sol-
but was asking a lot of money
the kid the boots, because he

pals all of you, and to show you
to dance the 'Jarabe Tapatio' for

Tarara, tarara, tarara, tarara,
Mexican Hat Dance" for us.

student, San Carlos Academy

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*prisoners in the dormitory
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with one of the soldiers.
what you're talking about," he
a government like Che Guevara President of

I pretended to more or less
politics with him.
How come you want to see

guy doesn't even know that
don't give soldiers any sort of

*at the School of Library
Sciences, UNAM*

How pigheaded those cops are! They even made paraffin tests on
corpses!

Ramón Ceniceros Campos, student

As a matter of fact, there were hardly any public protests after October 2. The authorities may have shut people up. Or perhaps most people were too frightened to speak out. On October 3, teachers and students who had been at the meeting in Tlatelolco inserted a paid announcement in *Excélsior*, stating that they merely wished to express their profoundest indignation as human beings, that the sole persons responsible for what had happened were the forces of law and order, both those in uniform and those in plainclothes, and that there had been no provocation of any sort on the part of ordinary citizens attending the meeting: students, workers, peasants, families, and the general public. Also in *Excélsior* the Bloc of Resident Physicians on Strike in the Hospitals declared on October 4 that they wished their names to be added to those expressing their indignation at this unconscionable attack on the people who had peacefully gathered together in Tlatelolco, and stated that they were still determined to continue their all-out strike in support of the National Strike Committee indefinitely, until such time as the CNH's conflict with the government was resolved to the complete satisfaction of the Committee. . . . On October 5, a protest signed by the Congress of Intellectuals, Artists, and Writers was also published in *Excélsior*. . . . But the organizational framework of the National Strike Committee had been weakened, and there were already clear signs that it was falling apart politically. The police were hunting down and attacking those "on the outside." For these reasons, the general indignation and the popular discontent could not be properly channeled into political acts in response to the repression. After the Committee unilaterally declared the so-called "Olympic truce," a great many sectors of militants were isolated and brutally attacked by the authorities, for they had practically no means of defending themselves. In a word, it was one hell of a mess!

Félix Lucio Hernández Gamundi, of the CNH

The massacre on October 2 was "justified" by every sector of the government—the most shameless authorities made brazen public

statements and the others responded with a total silence that made them accomplices in the repression. Not a single official voice was raised in protest against the murder of students, with one exception: outside the country, Octavio Paz submitted his resignation as Mexican Ambassador to India.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

I do not believe that images can ever lie. . . . I have seen the newsreels, the photographs. . . .

Octavio Paz

I have the impression that people were taken completely by surprise, and have remained more or less petrified. They still don't understand what the whole thing was all about. Why? What was behind it all? Who is responsible?

What struck me most was that a week afterward, the Olympic Games began amid at least the outward appearance of perfect calm, as though nothing at all had happened. . . . What in any other country in the world would have been quite enough to unleash a civil war has resulted here in Mexico in nothing more than a few tense days immediately following the events of Tlatelolco.

I am so appalled by Tlatelolco that I sometimes wonder if the whole thing ever happened at all. I am not making any sort of moral judgment with regard to Tlatelolco: the only thing I can say is that I don't understand it. What was the reason for it? Nor do I understand why everyone has remained silent. Personally speaking, from what I have seen, it would seem to me that the system here has enormous shortcomings. A professor from the University said to me one day, "You must never forget that all of us are government employees." Apparently they are all caught up in the system, and as I see it, this is one of Mexico's major problems.

Claude Kiejman, correspondent for Le Monde, Paris

It's a shame, but there's nothing that can be done about it!

José Vázquez, owner of a small corner grocery store, La Nortenita

Oh, there's one other thing! Finally, just after they'd lined us all up to take us away, the top-ranking officer there gave us a lecture: he

told us we should be grateful to General Marcelino García Barragán for not wanting to see so many people suffering needlessly, that what had happened should be a warning to us not to stir up any more trouble and that we were more than welcome in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas: "You can come here to play soccer whenever you like, you can come here and exercise whenever you please, you're more than welcome here," he said, plus a lot of other stuff like that. But who's going to want to come play games there in the Plaza after what's happened? Then everyone began applauding—most of them, of course, were clapping so that they'd be let out of the military camp—but I refused to applaud and a kid behind me shook my hand and said, "Good for you! Right on! I'm happy to see you're not like the rest of these sheep."

"I've got no reason to applaud what that guy over there said; I don't go along with what he said at all," I replied.

I didn't approve of what he said because I don't see things his way at all: I'm all for freedom, myself. I talk about freedom in the songs I write. I'm resigned to things as they are, I admit, but at the same time I still hope to accomplish something, though most of my songs are about total failure, about how hard life is. I also remember one other thing. When they were taking us back to the city in trucks after they'd released us there at the military camp, some of the kids were fooling around, and it made one kid mad: "Listen you guys, don't get rowdy, or they'll take us all back there," he told them. Those kids were in very good spirits still, but most of us were scared to death; we were terribly demoralized after they let us go.

Ignacio Galván, student, San Carlos Academy

The only concerted protest came from the very militant Bloc of Resident Physicians on Strike in the largest hospitals in the city. The most severe repressive measures taken by the government were naturally directed against those sectors that had gone on fighting. On October 12, this bloc announced that the Secretariat of Public Health had sent a notice around that no residents on strike would receive their stipends as medical trainees; and at the same time the police began searching for the leaders of the bloc, a number of whom had gone into hiding, among them Mario Campuzano.

Félix Lucio Hernández Gamundi, of the CNH

and professors and students was

Dr. Paula Gómez Alonso

Madero led by Victoriano
that had damaged our
that had so defiled us, that
our mouths with the taste of

Maria Barraza, mother of a family

have been doing, but in all

Olguin Andrade, bank clerk

and on that day we also de-
genuine justice and

Maria Vazquez Garin, of the CNH

I don't know whether it's
sort of person I am after
I die.

Student at ESIQIE, IPN

years of Tlatelolco.

Student at ESIQIE, IPN

I am now, because I'm

Student, Vocational 9

time and time again

too leave us in

Perla Vélez de Aguilera, in an article

"Is Democracy Heading?" El Dia,

October 8, 1968

So going back to the Chihuahua building the next day was like . . . like . . . I can't describe it . . . something so vague and indefinable that I can't put into words; returning to my apartment and finding it riddled with machine-gun bullets, turned upside down, still reeking of gunpowder, with soldiers at the door, with police watching your every move, searching through everything you have with you, and the floor with bloodstains all over it. . . .

Well anyway . . . I'm living there in that apartment in Tlatelolco again because the bullet holes have been filled in, the walls have been repainted, and everything looks very nice again and nobody remembers anything about what happened. . . . On the contrary: we receive absolutely priceless messages every day telling us we must all come demonstrate against the students at the Secretariat of Education, that we must all sign petitions demanding that the schools in Tlatelolco be closed down because they're a threat to society.

Mercedes Olivera de Vázquez, anthropologist

The municipal sanitation workers
Are washing away the blood
On the Plaza of Sacrifices.

Octavio Paz

We women have never in our lives shed as many tears as we have in recent days. It's as though we were trying to wash all of Tlatelolco—all the images, all the walls, all the curbs, all the stone benches stained with blood, all the traces of bodies bleeding to death in the corners—clean with our tears. But it is not true that images can be washed away with tears. They still linger in your memory.

Perla Vélez de Aguilera, mother of a family

For days afterward, going to Mercedes's apartment just to try the soldiers' patience became almost an obsession on our part. We made up all sorts of reasons why we wanted to go up there, that we were coming so as to . . . well, we invented all sorts of excuses. We really had it in for those Army troops. We would see them reading, and say to them sweetly, "My goodness, you know how to read, do you? Isn't that nice!"

make a phone call we saw a man outside the phone booth at the corner. He said to them in that same simpering voice whether we civilians are allowed to speak for policemen and soldiers?" "I realized we were making fun of us that we could use it too. We sat right in front of us put his call through like, "Listen, darling, I can't stand it if they're going to let us out of here. Come on, have him say a few words." He was talking to a child on the phone. "How have you been, son? Have you got any money?" and all the other silly little things. It was when Meche and I realized that we had been made fun of us, because on October 2 in

Marguerite Nolasco, anthropologist
"I don't want to live here, no more, even if they repair the houses, and I don't mind telling you that I walked along the esplanade of all the dead choking me. Now, that it's turning black, right down through the cracks of las Tres Culturas, that it's even the tezontle seems like why I can't live here. . . . Plaza and she kept saying, "Look, here's bullet holes have been repaired. . . . The elevator's broken. I can't bear Tlatelolco any longer. I can't go far away."

Marguerite Nolasco, tenant in Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing unit

The whole country reeks of blood.

Eulalio Gutiérrez, appointed Pro Tempore President of Mexico by the Aguascalientes Convention, serving in that capacity from November 1, 1914, to January 20, 1915

Thank God I bought my apartment here in the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco housing unit rather than just renting! I'm never going to leave it, even if General Marcelino García Barragán shows up in person, with all his gold stripes, and troops armed with bazookas to try to get me out of here. This is my own little bit of breathing space, my trench. . . . Oh, no, listen, don't put down that I said it was my trench, because they'll think I've got a stock of bombs and hand grenades in here, when even my kitchen knives are so dull they won't cut!

Maria Luisa Mendoza, writer

THE PARISH POOR

I went to the Franciscan Brothers of the Tlatelolco parish and told them that I had come as a representative of a group of mothers of youngsters who had been killed and wounded on October 2, and that we would like to have a requiem mass said for them there in Tlatelolco.

The reply was, "We're very sorry, but there aren't any priests available to celebrate a requiem mass on the day you've requested. Our list of masses that day is already full up."

"We've been saying the Our Father for them, Padre, but we would like to have a mass celebrated for them here on the second of November, because this is where our children lost their lives, you see."

"But we just don't have time on our schedule," was the Padre's answer.

"In that case this is doubtless the only church in Mexico that has every minute of its time booked up, because usually there aren't enough priests to fill the . . ."

"No, the church is entirely booked that day."

"Well, in that case, it doesn't necessarily have to be a requiem

mass; you could say matins for them or whatever you wanted—just something in honor of our dead."

"I'm sorry, but we just can't do anything for you."

"Well then, let us erect a memorial altar that day in one corner of the church."

"I'm sorry . . . we can't permit that either."

"But this group of mothers wants to come here and erect an altar. We've been trying to dissuade them, but they insist that that's what they want to do. If anything happens on the second of November, it's going to be your fault."

"We're terribly sorry. We can't grant your group permission."

"All right. Since you say it's impossible, I'm going to bring these mothers to see you, because they're all devout Catholics, even though I'm not one, and if I don't they're going to say that it was my fault we didn't get your permission because I'm not a Catholic. They'll say that I'm just one of those people who spread stories about how bad the priests are, so it's best that you explain to them personally your reasons for refusing."

"Very well. Bring them here and we'll try to convince them."

The next day a delegation of thirty of us in all went to talk to them again: the mothers of two dead students, the brothers of the two dead boys, other members of their families, and a number of students. We took them all to the Franciscan prior and he began to explain how he didn't have time and how it was impossible to grant permission for an altar to be erected in a church such as Santiago Tlatelolco, because the smoke from the tapers would make smudges on the wall, the walls of the church were four hundred years old, and so on—the same old story. Those of us who had gone there prepared to have it out with the priests suddenly shut up and didn't say a word because one of the mothers started to moan in a very strange sort of way, a plaint that started as a kind of quiet lament and ended in a shrill scream that gave us all goose pimples. She said that even the Church was turning its back on them, that it was more than she could bear if they wouldn't say a prayer for her son, and at that the Franciscan finally took pity on us and said, "I can't celebrate a special requiem mass for your dead, but we usually say four masses during the day for the poor of the parish, and if you like we might consider those dead youngsters poor people of the parish."

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We agreed at once: we said we would be very happy to have them considered poor people of the parish.

"Well then, you must write the name of each poor person on an envelope and put one peso inside as alms."

Since we were furious at the way the Franciscans had treated us, we wrote the names of the dead on the envelopes and put exactly one peso, not one centavo more, in each of them. We wrote down only the names of the dead that had been published in the newspapers—thirty-four dead, among them women, students, and children, without making out any envelopes for the unidentified corpses that all the papers had mentioned. . . . Unfortunately a complete list of all those killed on October 2 in Tlatelolco has never been made public.

We took a notice around to all the newspapers, and asked them to publish it on November 2. In it we said that we remembered with the most profound grief those who had died on October 2 and listed their names. That was all our notice said.

It eventually reached the desks of the editors-in-chief of all the papers, and every last one of them refused to publish it.

On November 2, a woman with bright blue eyes who's absolutely fearless approached one of the Franciscans of Santiago Tlatelolco and told him that her labor union had given her a wreath in memory of her son, and whether he approved or not, she was going to place it there for him, no matter what. She had no sooner placed it against the wall when people suddenly popped up from all over, even from beneath the gravestones it seemed like, and began to light votive candles. They made little altars all over the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, with flowers and candles. As I came to the square with my *compazúchitl* flowers, I saw that there were *granaderos*, armed to the teeth, not only in the Plaza but all over the housing unit. There were cars full of secret agents in front of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations! And others were patrolling the area with walkie-talkies. On the ground were a number of cards placed there in memory of the dead: "To the martyrs of Tlatelolco, murdered in cold blood." We saw a very pretty green cross from the Union of Women with a card that said, "To our martyrs of October 2," and next to the cross a large square of bristol-board with a drawing of a youngster impaled on a bayonet.

Margarita Nolasco, anthropologist

They've killed my son, but now all of you are my sons.

*Celia Castillo de Chávez, mother of a family,
to students on the esplanade of University City,
at the meeting on October 31, 1968*

On the eighth we buried Jan. After the funeral, during that endless trip back that was not taking us anywhere, my mother looked out of the car window and saw a helicopter in the sky. I'll never forget her face and the fear in her voice as she exclaimed: "My God! A helicopter! There must be a demonstration going on somewhere."

E. P.

That helicopter circling just a few feet above our heads frightened me. It seemed to be a great ill-omened bird.

Maria Elena Cervantes, grade-school teacher

Some four thousand students and parents gathered today at five-fifteen in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco to begin their march on the Santo Tomás campus.

Armored vehicles, light Army assault tanks, had been patrolling the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and nearby areas.

Agents of the Federal Police, the Judicial Police of the Federal District, and the Secret Service have also been keeping a close watch on developments in this area.

The tension between students and police in civilian clothing is evident, but thus far there has been no active intervention or any sign of violence on either side.

Press bulletin

At six-ten p.m. a helicopter fired several green flares. The Army moved in then and blocked off all the exits.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

Four green flares shot off at six-ten p.m. were the signal for troops attached to the Olimpia Battalion, dressed in civilian clothes, to open fire on the students and workers demonstrating in Tlatelolco that afternoon.

Margarita García Flores, press secretary, UNAM

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Chavez, mother of a family,
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Press bulletin

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secretary, UNAM

The Night of Tlatelolco

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Two helicopters kept circling the church. I saw several green flares go off in the sky. I stood there like a robot, listening to the familiar sound of bullets whizzing past. . . . The gunfire became heavier and heavier, and then Army troops appeared, as though somebody had pushed a button. . . .

Rodolfo Martínez, press photographer,
in "The Gun Battle as the Press Photographers
Saw It," La Prensa, October 3, 1968

Don't be frightened, don't run, they're trying to stir up trouble, don't try to escape, comrades, keep calm, everybody, don't run, keep calm, comrades. . . .

Eduardo Espinoza Valle (Owl-Eyes), of the CNH

They're dead bodies, sir. . . .

A soldier, to José Antonio Campo, reporter for El Día