

Masacre en Tlatelolco, No se Olvida

As we honor our beloved family and friends who have left us, I'm offering this Ofrenda to help remember innocent people who've died from State violence anywhere in the world.

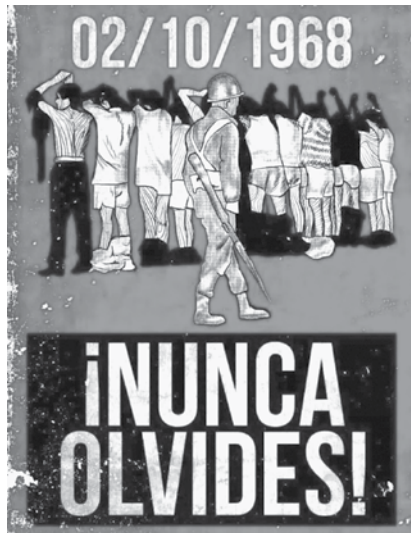
Such is the case of the hundreds of victims of Mexico's October 2, 1968, massacre at the Tlatelolco Plaza in Mexico City. Last month marked the 53rd anniversary of that massacre. Thousands marched throughout Mexico to honor those victims. Around the world, people stopped to remember the hundreds of university students, professors and tenants of the multi-story residential buildings surrounding the Plaza who were hunted down and killed by government soldiers and state police as ordered by Mexico's President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz.

Díaz Ordaz was president from 1964 to 1970 but had served as Secretario de Gobernación—the second most powerful position next to the President. During that time he unleashed a terror war against workers' unions starting with the railroad workers who were on strike demanding just wages, safety measures and better working conditions. Thousands were rounded up and jailed including union leaders Valentin Campa and Demetrio Vallejo. In the 1980s, Mr. Campa stayed in my home in San Antonio and told me how Díaz Ordaz had ordered the “disappearance” of many union leaders. Campa documented that period of history in his book “Si Te Agarran, Te Van a Matar” which was the warning he got privately from Army General Lázaro Cárdenas.

By the time he became president, Díaz Ordaz already had blood on his hands and a reputation as being mentally unstable.

Prior to the October 2, 1968, he was told that students all over Mexico were protesting demanding economic and social reforms. It was also when the Olympics were being held in Mexico and Díaz Ordaz did not want visitors to see or hear the protests against his spending millions on the games while thousands in Mexico lived in extreme poverty.

Students and professors protesting at the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM) had taken over some buildings to bring attention to their demands including an end to corruption, better teaching facilities and an end to the infamous storm troopers that violently quashed all peaceful protests. Díaz Ordaz responded by



In Mexico the slogan for the Tlatelolco massacre has always been, “2 de Octubre, No Se Olvida!”

sending tanks and paratroopers to take over the university, something that had never happened before in Mexico because universities had been considered autonomous entities.

Student unions called for a rally for October 2 at the Plaza Tlatelolco to protest the Army invasion where over 400,000 men, women and children gathered to protest. The plaza was also chosen to commemorate October 2, 1521 when Cuauhtemoc, the last leader of the Aztec resistance, was taken by the Spanish invader, Hernán Cortes.

Díaz Ordaz sent thousands of soldiers dressed in civilian clothes and wearing a white glove so that they could recognize themselves as they started shooting into the crowds. They also invaded the residential buildings shooting and killing innocent tenants. Hundreds of movement leaders were arrested and taken to Military Camp #1 then killed. Their bodies

were then taken by helicopters and dumped in the open sea.

In past decades, in San Antonio, some of us organized public events to focus attention on that massacre and remember the hundreds who died believing that another Mexico, and another world, are possible, and to remind them that the U.S. has always supported right-wing despots to govern Mexico and other Latin America countries. One example: On September 3, 1970, only two years after the Tlatelolco massacre, President Nixon held a ceremony in California to honor the outgoing President Díaz Ordaz. In his speech, he stated, “the name of Díaz Ordaz will be always remembered as one of Mexico's greatest presidents.”

Unfortunately, today's young activists and leaders either do not know the significance of October 2, 1968 or do not understand why they must look back at history. Historical events of resistance, here in the U.S. and in Mexico must serve as a guide towards progressive human consciousness—vital tools for today's social activists.

This bloody history of Tlatelolco has been well documented and must be remembered not only by young and old generations in Mexico but worldwide. The slogan remains, “2 de Octubre, No Se Olvida!”

Peace and Solidarity Forever,
Antonio C. Cabral

Half of Me

It was a civil war:
Salvadorans were killing their own.
We sided with the rich.

Our army's School of the Americas
trained the death squads who
left headless bodies in the streets.

So many, that kids
had to go around them
on their morning walks to school.

Decades later, one of those girls told us:
I still wake from dreams where
half of me is killing the other half.

—Tom Keene & Muse

