

Massacre in Mexico

BY ELENA PONIATOWSKA

They are many. They come down Melchor Ocampo, the Reforma, Juárez, Cinco de Mayo, laughing, students walking arm in arm in the demonstration, in as festive a mood as if they were going to a street fair; carefree boys and girls who do not know that tomorrow, and the day after, their dead bodies will be lying swollen in the rain, after a fair where the guns in the shooting gallery are aimed at them, children-targets, wonder-struck children, children for whom every day is a holiday until the owner of the shooting gallery tells them to form a line, like the row of tin-plated mechanical ducks that move past exactly at eye level, click, click, click, "Ready, aim, fire!" and they tumble backward, touching the red satin backdrop.

The owner of the shooting gallery handed out rifles to the police, to the army, and ordered them to shoot, to hit the bull's-eye, and there the little tin-plated creatures were standing, open-mouthed with astonishment and wide-eyed with fear, staring into the rifle barrels. Fire! The sudden blinding flash of a green flare. Fire! They fell, but this time there was no spring to set them up again for the next customer to shoot at; the mechanism was quite different at this fair; the little springs were not made of metal but of blood; thick, red blood that slowly formed little puddles, young blood trampled underfoot all over the Plaza de las Tres Culturas.

These youngsters are coming toward me now, hundreds of them; not one of them has his hands up, not one of them has his pants around his ankles as he is stripped naked to be searched; there are no sudden blows, no clubbings, no ill treatment, no vomiting after being tortured; they are breathing deeply, advancing slowly, surely, stubbornly; they come round the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and stop at the edge of the square, where there is a drop of eight or ten feet, with a view of the pre-Hispanic ruins below; they walk on toward me again, hundreds of them, advancing toward me with their hands holding up placards, little hands, because death makes them look like children's hands; they come toward me, row on row; though they are pale, they look happy; their faces are slightly blurred, but they are happy ones; there are no walls of bayonets driving them off now, no violence; I look at them through a curtain

of raindrops, or perhaps a veil of tears, like the one at Tlatelolco; I cannot see their wounds, for fortunately there are no holes in their bodies, no bayonet gashes, no dum-dum bullets; they are blurred figures, but I can hear their voices, their footsteps, echoing as on the day of the Silent Demonstration; I will hear those advancing footsteps all the rest of my life; girls in mini-skirts with their tanned young legs, teachers with no neckties, boys with sweaters knotted around their waists or their necks; they come toward me, laughing, there are hundreds of them, full of the crazy joy of walking together down this street, our street, to the Zócalo, our Zócalo; here they come; August 5, August 13, August 27, September 13; Father Jesús Pérez has set all the bells of the cathedral to ringing to welcome them, the entire Plaza de la Constitución is illuminated; there are bunches of *campazúchitl* flowers everywhere, thousands of lighted candles; the youngsters are in the center of an orange, they are the brightest burst of fireworks of all. Was Mexico a sad country? I see it as a happy one, a marvelously happy one; the youngsters are marching up Cinco de Mayo, Juárez, the Reforma, the applause is deafening, three hundred thousand people have come to join them, of their own free will, Melchor Ocampo, Las Lomas, they are climbing up through the forests to the mountaintops, *Mé-xi-co, Li-ber-tad, Mé-xi-co, Li-ber-tad, Mé-xi-co, Li-ber-tad, Mé-xi-co, Li-ber-tad, Mé-xi-co, Li-ber-tad*.

I didn't "join" the Student Movement; it had been an intimate part of my life for a long time. What I mean is, I'm from Poli;⁴ I live in a house there; that's where my pals, my neighbors, my work are, ... My kids were born there. My wife is from Poli, too. The Movement has been very close to our hearts for many years. It's not a whim of the moment, or a joke or "good vibes," or anything like that. That's not what it is at all. It's a question of fighting for everything we believe in, for the things we've always fought for, things that our fathers and our fathers' fathers fought for before us. ... We come from working-class families, people who have always worked hard for a living.

*Raúl Álvarez Garín, theoretical physicist, ESFM;⁵
professor at the National School of Biological
Sciences of the IPN; CNH⁶ delegate; prisoner in
Lecumberri*

Mé-xi-co—Li-ber-tad—Mé-xi-co—Li-ber-tad—Mé-xi-co—
Chant at demonstrations

I joined the Student Movement simply because one day the *granaderos*⁷ turned up at the INBA⁸ with police dogs and chains and hauled everybody off to jail, And the INBA hadn't even come out and said whether it supported the Movement or not!

4 Instituto Politécnico Nacional (The National Polytechnical Institute [IPN], Mexico City).

5 Escuela Superior de Físico—Matemáticas (School of Theoretical Physics at the IPN).

6 Consejo Nacional de Huelga (National Strike Committee).

7 The riot police.

8 Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (the National Institute of Fine Arts).

(I'm rather inclined to think it didn't, right?) This arbitrary invasion made many of us actors and actresses aware of what was happening, and we decided to join the students and help them, *really* help them, not just march arm in arm in demonstrations or yell at the top of our lungs in meetings. ... So then we formed an actors' brigade.

Margarita Isabel, actress

PEOPLE UNITE—PEOPLE UNITE—PEOPLE UNITE

Chant at demonstrations

The decision confronting us was not whether to join the Movement but whether to get out of it or stay in it. We had a rather good idea what was going to happen from the very beginning—we suspected, quite rightly, that repression, mass arrests, and clubbings were in the offing—so we had a choice. We could either “go underground,” meaning buy a plane or a train ticket or whatever and get out, or stay in the city and wait and see what would happen. ... We were all in our schools, Raúl in Theoretical Physics, I in Philosophy, and we were already involved in student affairs. The concrete problems in my school, for instance, were: a preparatory program for working-class students, flunk-outs, freeing Vallejo,⁹ the curriculum and other academic problems, the independence of the School of Psychology, etc. I was elected president of the student body in 1967, but now I'm just an ordinary alumnus. ... Everything changed after the twenty-sixth of July. ... I'm not the same now; we're all different. There was one Mexico before the Student Movement, and a different one after 1968. Tlatelolco is the dividing point between these two Mexicos.

*Luis González de Alba, CNH delegate from the
Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, UNAM;¹⁰
prisoner in Lecumberri*

“Going underground” means doing nothing.

*Gilberto Guevara Niebla, CNH delegate from
the Faculty of Sciences, UNAM; prisoner in
Lecumberri*

I think that repression was responsible for the effectiveness and the importance of the Student Movement. More than any political speech, the very fact of repression politicized people and led the great majority to participate actively in the meetings. It was decided that classes would be suspended in each school, and that was what got us to thinking about forming brigades and action committees in each department.

9 Demetrio Vallejo, leader of the railway union, imprisoned from 1959 to 1970 for leading an illegal strike. (Translator's note.)

10 Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Autonomous National University of Mexico).

The members of the brigades were students who engaged in all sorts of activities, from collecting money to organizing “lightning meetings” in the streets, in the most isolated working-class districts. Mass demonstrations were one of the most effective political weapons of the Movement.

Carolina Pérez Cicero, student at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, UNAM

Mexico had never seen such huge and such enormously enthusiastic spontaneous demonstrations as the ones organized by the students. There was one demonstration, in support of the Cuban Revolution, some years ago, but it was not nearly as wide in scope. The Student Movement really shook Mexican society to its foundations, and that’s why the government began to be so afraid of it.

Félix Lucio Hernández Gamundi, CNH delegate from ESIME,¹¹ IPN; prisoner in Lecumberri

At most, fifteen thousand demonstrators took part in the marches in Mexico City. But six hundred thousand people, from every walk of life, and young people in particular, gathered to show their support. When have we ever seen anything like that? How could the government put up with something like that? It had every reason to go off its nut.

Salvador Martínez de la Roca (“Pino”), of the Action Committee of the Faculty of Sciences, UNAM; prisoner in Lecumberri

They couldn’t stand the thought that a veritable multitude, between three hundred and six hundred thousand people, had marched down the principal streets of Mexico City, the Paseo de la Reforma, Juárez, Cinco de Mayo, bearing banners and placards that made fun of the “principle of authority.” They were forced to put down the student protest undermining the status quo, the PRI,¹² fake labor unions, and leadership by “mummies.”

Eduardo Valle Espitwza (“Owl-Eyes”), CNH delegate from the National School of Economics, UNAM; prisoner in Lecumberri

By marching through the streets, we were more or less avenging all the students in the provinces who had been the victims of repression before our turn came: the students of Puebla, Tabasco, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Guerrero, Sonora, and in a certain sense, the victims of oppression in Morelia, Hermosillo, and Monterrey.

Ernesto Hernández Pichardo, student at the National School of Economics, UNAM

¹¹ Escuela Superior de Ingeniería Mecánica y Eléctrica (School of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering).

¹² Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party, the official Mexican government party).

DON'T SHOOT, SOLDIER: YOU'RE ONE OF THE PEOPLE TOO*Banner at the August 27 demonstration*

Mexico today has a population of forty-eight million, scattered over a territory of two million square kilometers. Its rate of population growth is 3.6 per annum (at any rate that is what Dr. Loyo tells us), and since this rate of growth increases every year, there will be ninety million people in our country in 1990. Seventy per cent of them will be under twenty-three years of age.

I mention this because I believe that young peasants, workers, and students are facing a very dim future, since job opportunities are being created for the benefit of special interests rather than society as a whole. We are continually told, "You are the future of the country." But we are constantly denied any opportunity to act and participate in the political decisions that are being made today. ... We want to and ARE ABLE TO participate today, not when we are seventy years old. ...

*Gustavo Gordillo, CNH delegate from the
National School of Economics, UNAM*

PEOPLE, DON'T ABANDON US—PEOPLE, UNITE!*Chant at the August 13 demonstration*

I didn't join the Movement; I was part of it from the day I was born. It's my medium, the very air I breathe, and to me the Movement meant protecting my home, my wife, my children, my comrades.

*Ernesto Olvera, teacher of mathematics at
Preparatory 1,¹³ UNAM; prisoner in Lecumberri*

FREE-DOM FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS!**FREE-DOM FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS!***Chant at the August 13 demonstration*

The 1968 Student Movement was not suddenly born that same year; it did not come about by spontaneous generation. Countless revolutionary political organizations and important student groups had previously made the same demands. In Mexico freedom for political prisoners is a demand that goes back as far as political imprisonment itself. The same is true of the fight to do away with Article 145, which establishes penalties for "social dissolution," and the fight to do away with the *granaderos*. The 1968 Movement took up all of these demands and not only pressed

¹³ University high school.

for the six reforms on its list but also became the spokesman for the reforms most urgently sought by Mexican students, workers, and intellectuals.

In many parts of the country, students had previously led the entire nation in protest movements whose general tenor was very much like that of the 1968 Movement. The most important movements of this sort were those in Puebla in 1964, Morelia in 1966, and Sonora and Tabasco in 1967. Moreover, the demonstrations in support of Cuba, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic mobilized large groups of students, particularly in Mexico City, and the awareness of the oppression of other peoples greatly raised their level of political consciousness and their awareness of their own strength. This was quite evident in the student protests in Morelia during 1962 and 1963; the movement for university reform in Puebla in 1962; the UNAM strike in 1966; the frequent student strikes for economic and academic reforms in various parts of the country (in particular in the rural normal schools); the student movement in the School of Agronomy in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, which was supported by the other schools of agronomy and by the students of the IPN, and many other student protests.

I do not believe that these protests are isolated incidents. On the contrary, I believe that after the national strike in April 1956 there was a sharp escalation of student protest movements. The Teachers' Movement in 1958, the Railway Workers' Movement in 1958–1959, and the demonstrations in support of the Cuban revolution all contributed to this process, which reached its peak in 1968. Doubtless the Student Movement has hopes that workers and peasants will carry on the struggle.

Pablo Gómez, student at the National School of Economics, UNAM; member of the Communist Youth; prisoner in Lecumberri

Every year the “fish,”¹⁴ the little fishes, organize two demonstrations that are always the same: one for Cuba and another for Vietnam. They gather in front of the Teatro Xola or go to the Juárez Hemiciclo, let out a few shouts and a few *vivas* and a very few *mueras*, hold up three banners, and at eight o'clock sharp the demonstration ends, as punctually as it began; they fold their banners, put away their placards, and go back home. That's all they ever do! I can't imagine why they keep doing the same old stuff!

Salvador Martínez de la Roca (Pino), of the Action Committee of the Faculty of Sciences, UNAM

**DIA-LOGUE—DIA-LOGUE—DIA-LOGUE—DIA-LOGUE—
DIA-LOGUE—DIA-LOGUE—DIA-LOGUE**

Chant at the August 13 demonstration

14 Members of the Communist Party (PC) are often called this in Mexico because “*los PCes*” is pronounced the same as “*los peces*,” the fish. (Translator's note.)



The railway workers were alone in 1958. We aren't.

Litis Gonzalez de Alba, of the CNH

PEOPLE, OPEN YOUR EYES!

Street poster

The conflict is very different from the one in May in France. In Mexico there were practically no demands for changes in the schools and universities, only political petitions: freeing the political prisoners, abolishing the *granaderos*, firing the mayor of the city [*sic*], the head of the security police. ...

Can we really talk about solid democratic traditions when in fact there is only one political party? When candidates of any other party are not seated in either house of the legislature or only a few are seated to give the appearance of an opposition? And what can we say of the solid tradition of the *tapado*, the next presidential candidate whose name is kept a secret by the president in office and his advisors till the very last minute and then announced through the official Party, the PRI? Everyone in Mexico knows that in the space of just a few weeks, the *tapado*, who often has been a complete unknown up until then, suddenly becomes the most talented, the most capable man imaginable; his portrait begins to appear on every wall, on all the billboards, on lampposts draped in the colors of the national flag, on neon signs—full-face, profile, half-profile; his monogram, the initials of his name are painted on every fence, they are carved more or less indelibly into the sides of

mountains: scars, stigmata defacing the land. Millions of pesos are wasted on this sort of propaganda to hoodwink the ignorant and gullible masses into believing that the candidate proposed by the PRI has exceptional virtues. What can opposition parties do in the face of this sort of enslavement of the masses, these astronomical expenditures? Either join the other side, or carry on a very modest campaign, a few speeches that blow away in the wind. ...

These political tricks, these trappings are what have disgusted young students who find every door closed to them and all the jobs set aside for politicians of the PRI, unless they “fall in line” and “get on the bandwagon.”

*Professor M. Mayagoitia, letter to Le Monde, Paris,
October 7, 1968*

**WE DON'T WANT OLYMPIC GAMES! WE WANT A
REVOLUTION!**

Chant by students at a number of meetings

DOWN WITH MUMMIES!

Student slogan

There is no doubt that students at the University and the IPN, with their disturbances in the streets and their rowdy behavior in their schools, gave the police every reason to intervene. There were many holdups by students. Public warnings and threats of possible punishment had come to have no effect at all. Discipline inside the schools was practically nil. The student “victory” that forced Rector Ignacio Chávez to resign had obviously brought on a tense and demagogic atmosphere within the National University that forced the authorities to covertly adopt the policy of “Agree that the student is right, even though he’s not.” Many of us remember how a member of the Supreme Court, who was also acting president of the Board of Regents of the University, Attorney José Caso Estrada, referring to the group of “fossils”¹⁵ and gangster-like student leaders at the University, declared that historically the victors (the loser was Rector Chávez) always carry off the spoils. And the spoils in this case turned out to be control of the University. The new authorities were all in favor of catering to the students’ demands. University Reform was looked upon as a panacea, and the sorcerers’ apprentices heated up their test tubes and their cauldrons, concocted their magic mixtures, announced that the University would be run democratically with the participation of the student body, called on these young people to help decide on the curriculum, plans for improvement, and appointments of teachers and directors. They even went so far as to raise the question “Why not have

¹⁵ “Professional students,” who spend years at the University without getting a degree—often political agitators. (Translator’s note.)

a student as rector?" Any sort of disciplinary rules were automatically regarded as bad pedagogy. We would have to be understanding and sympathetic and kowtow to these young people whose possible faults or feelings of confusion were due only to the sins and the bewilderment of their elders. We would have to pay for our sins like good Christians. The hour of repentance had come. Fathers have the sort of sons they deserve. *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea culpa.*

*Gerardo Hernández Ponce, teacher
at Preparatory 2, UNAM*

My father keeps telling me what a good son *he* was and all that. ... And then I start thinking, "Good Lord, am I some strange sort of creature, or neurotic, or what?" Grownups are so anxious to set exemplary standards for us that they make themselves out to be absolutely perfect, abstract models we should imitate, and bang! that's the end of any communication between us. I get to thinking, "Jeez, to hear my old man talk, he did everything right, and I'm doing everything all wrong!" That's why I can't communicate with him, no matter how hard I try. When my old man begins with that business of "When I was your age ..." I feel like going off to bed.

Gustavo Gordillo, of the CNH

Young people are angry. They have a right to build the world they live in. They have every reason to be angry. We must humbly admit that this is so, because that is one way of remedying our defects and shortcomings. Our traditions are bad; our attitude toward life couldn't be worse. We have fathered a rebellious, misunderstood generation of young people, who have no free choice as to the sort of present and future they would like to have. We older people ought to become young in heart again, beg these youngsters to accept us, dye our gray hair and cover up our wrinkles with cosmetics, get in on the action, try out this new dance step and do our best to hide the fact that it leaves us panting. Show them that we understand, that we're sorry, and above all do what we can to maintain our position with them, or better yet, improve it. Our deepest, most heartfelt desire is to be popular with young people, to be accepted by them. We *must* succeed in doing this, but the question is how.

*Pedro Tamariz, teacher at the Erasmo
Castellanos Quinto School*

Hey there, you with the long hair, didn't I put money in your collection box for a haircut?

Juan López Martínez, father of a family

Everybody shuts himself up in his own little world. Adults look on anything young people do as an attack on their principles and their moral code. That's the reason behind their illogical hostility toward long hair. What does long hair have to do with decency or whether a kid's good or bad? I like having long hair, but that doesn't mean I'm a homosexual or feminine or who knows what all. Adults try to make the length of your hair the one measuring rod of your sexual normality or your moral decency.

Gustavo Gordillo, of the CNH

My old man and my old lady regard their principles as immutable.

*Gabriela Peña Valle, student at the Faculty of
Philosophy and Letters, UNAM*

Why do you wiggle your behind like that? What's more, you don't know how to sit properly. I'd sooner die than wear a skirt like that.

*Mercedes Fernández de Cervantes,
mother of a family*

A hundred and fifty pesos for a skirt like that! And it's not even twenty inches long!

Elsa Treviño de Zozaya, mother of a family

Why don't you just go around stark naked?

Sofía Arrechiga de Toscano, mother of a family

Enrollment at the National University and the Polytechnical Institute is snowballing. The number of students in both institutions is already much larger—proportionally—than in any other part of the world. The standard of work accomplished in these institutions is discouraging, for both the quality and the quantity couldn't possibly be any lower.

There is, of course, no single, clear-cut cause for this situation—which has gotten no better and in fact is getting worse all the time. The reasons are both numerous and complex, and if I list a few of them, it is not with the intention of indicating their relative importance, nor do I maintain that they are the only ones: prostitution as a public activity and an effective means of controlling the government, workers, and peasants; bad students and worse teachers; the passivity and the lack of exemplary models of behavior within the family; the lack of attractive political parties that would promote independent points of view in public life; social inequalities with scandalous extremes of wealth and poverty; an inexorable colonial dependence that deeply influences, debases, and distorts every aspect of our development; the extremely painful image of an overall international situation that is chaotic, unjust, and bloody.

In short, a complex state of affairs where nothing is clear-cut, where the few positive forces are slow-moving and inadequate. Hopes that continually come to nothing, because a painful, ever present, desolating reality brands our souls with its stigmata. This has been, and continues to be, the daily bread of young and old. What can we expect of our young people? What do we dare demand of them? What are we older people giving and receiving?

The 1968 Student Movement in Mexico admittedly lost its bearings, and the sudden violent turn it took seemed disproportionate to the street incident that gave rise to it. But which of the rest of us knew where we were heading? What do we have to offer and what are we seeking? If we do not find the right road soon, we must face up, in all honesty, to one fact at least: tragedies such as that on October 2 in the

Plaza de las Tres Culturas in Tlatelolco will blindfold us even more, and the lack of hope will lead to more bloodshed still.

*Pedro Ramírez Arteaga, professor of philosophy,
University of Hermosillo, Sonora*

My folks are pompous asses, and so are my teachers.

*Vera Pomar Bermúdez, student at the School of
Dentistry, UNAM*

The only time I get along well with my parents is when we go to the movies, because nobody talks then.

*Victoria Garfias Madrigal, student at the Faculty
of Engineering, UNAM*

You see now why I'm a hippie.

Eduardo Parra del Río, hippie

I'm delighted by young people today—their fashions, their songs, their freedom, their lack of hypocrisy, their way of looking at love and living it. I prefer the Beatles to Beethoven. How can I explain the difference between John Lennon's "I, Me, Mine" or Paul McCartney's "The Fool on the Hill" and the romantics of my day? I spent my entire youth sitting on Augustín Lara's¹⁶ white brocade sofa, with my tiny foot, as slender as a needlecase, resting on a little cushion; the boys sang "Mujer, mujer divina" in my ear, and you wouldn't believe how bored stiff we were. I don't know what I would have given to have them say to me, "See you later, alligator, after while, crocodile," instead of humming, "You've become timid and fearful," and I only wish that when we broke up we'd have merely said,

*Bye bye love
Bye bye happiness
Hello loneliness
I think I'm gonna cry.*

Luz Fernanda Carmona Ochoa, mother of a family

We had no spirit at all; "I'd like to but I can't" was our motto; when we liked a boy we pretended we didn't; we spent our days fretting, exchanging little notes, gossiping, playing footsie under the table, putting on an act, telling the boys "hands off," making "deals" not worth two cents. We did everything on the sly and it seems to me that's how I lived my whole life, on the sly, getting what I wanted in secret, the way a little girl steals jam from the cupboard, hurriedly closing the door, terrified that somebody might have seen me. ... That's why I like the way young people live now; the life my daughter leads seems a thousand times better to me than the one I led. I know my daughter doesn't lie to me.

Yvonne Huitrón de Gutiérrez, mother of a family

16 Writer of sentimental Mexican popular songs. (Translator's note.)

I come from a working-class family. My parents are too tired at night to talk about anything. We eat and go to bed. The people I talk to are my pals at night school.

*Elpidio Canales Benítez, messenger
boy at Ayotla Textil*

My folks don't even talk to each other. Nobody says much around our house. Why would they talk to us?

*Hermelinda Suárez Vergara, operator
at Esperanza Beauty Salon*

We've got a television set at home.

*Rodolfo Nieto Andrade, student
at Vocational 1,¹⁷ IPN*

Communicate with my old man and my old lady? Are you kidding?

*Javier Garza Jiménez, student at the Faculty of
Political Sciences, UNAM*

At Poli I never heard expressions like "mummies," "squares," people "on the right wave length," and so on. Nobody ever talked about the "sandwich" generation, our parents' generation, crammed in between their children and their own parents like a slice of head cheese. Maybe they use that kind of language at the UNAM, but it seems more like the jargon of intellectuals or small groups hankering to be part of the Movement, to be "in." When we talk among ourselves at Poli, we use the crudest sort of language, bricklayers' language.

Raúl Álvarez Garín, of the CNH

We foresaw the clubbings and the mass arrests, we more or less expected to be thrown in jail, but we didn't foresee that some of us would be murdered.

Gilberto Guevara Niebla, of the CNH

During the Movement, when there was one violent incident after another, many comrades suddenly disappeared, bunches of them were thrown in jail, there were fewer and fewer meetings, lots of people dropped out, there were tanks and bayonets all over the place—this was after the attack on the Santo Tomás campus, the bloodiest and most frightening incident before Tlatelolco. The students took their wounded to the School of Medicine so they wouldn't be hauled off to jail and the *granaderos* and soldiers would go away; I was terribly down in the dumps that day. All of a sudden the thought came to me, "What in the world am I doing here?" ... I'm lying there on the bed, looking at the ceiling, and suddenly I decide that I don't give a damn whether there's going to be a dialogue with the government or not, whether anybody starts spouting absurd arguments against it, whether they fire Cueto¹⁸ and free the prisoners or not. You're far away right now, and you have no idea what's happening here; I could be with you, I could be like

¹⁷ Vocational high school.

¹⁸ The Mexico City Chief of Police.

you, devoting my whole life to my profession, concentrating on one tiny little area that I would be thoroughly familiar with, poring over the latest research and the most recent findings published in the professional journals. ... I felt that day that those areas in my life that had been most important to me in the last few years were falling to pieces.

Luis González de Alba, of the CNH

A fine thing, setting their dogs on us like that! All because we want what's guaranteed in the Constitution, the right to protest, the chance for everyone to go to school, an end to the sort of poverty I see in the towns my mom takes us to visit.

After what happened at Tlatelolco, me and my buddies are going to carry sticks and stones around with us, and if we come across a *granadero* or a soldier by himself, we'll let him have it!

Rodolfo Torres Morales, eleven years old, in his first year of junior high school

To me, the most horrifying thing was realizing that such a thing was possible in a civilized country: Tlatelolco, killing people, irrational behavior, throwing people in prison, but on the other hand, I also realized how many sources of strength a woman has when she loves a man.

Artemisa de Gortari, mother of a family

It's sad to have to die so young! If you hadn't been an agitator and gotten mixed up in all this, you'd be free and not have a care in the world right now!

An Army officer, to the CNH delegate from the Chapingo School of Agriculture, Luis Tomás Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca, at Military Camp 1

MEXICO—FREEDOM—MEXICO—FREEDOM—MEXICO—
FREEDOM—MEXICO—FREEDOM—MEXICO

Chant at the August 13 demonstration

I'm from the UNAM, where they talk in a pedantic in-group jargon. If you're a university student, you're one of the elite. I'd hung around with boys whose fathers worked for my father ever since I was a kid, and when I began working in the brigades I could make myself understood, but I soon noticed that when guys from the Faculty of Political Sciences, Paco Taibo for instance, came in contact with working-class people, in the beginning especially, they would talk to them about the class struggle, the means of production in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the class in power, and all that stuff, and nobody understood them. There was no communication. As a matter of fact, there was a wall of mistrust between them. The same thing happened with the students from Humanities. The girls from Philosophy would come back from the brigade meetings looking