

## **Urgent Call to Protest Massacre of Mexican Teachers Thursday, June 15**

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In a massive pre-dawn raid, at 4:30 this morning some 3,500 police in Oaxaca, Mexico brutally attacked a sit-in by striking teachers of the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE), killing at least 11 people. According to the latest reports from the Mexican Red Cross, eight adults and three children were killed by the police, including a woman teacher who aborted and then died as a result of the blows she received from the killer cops. In addition, police arrested more than 20 teachers union leaders. The Oaxaca teachers have been on strike for the last two weeks, and had occupied 56 street corners in the downtown area. The state governor, Ulises Ruiz, is reportedly bringing police from throughout Oaxaca into the capital preparing to declare a state of war.

This is the third massacre in Mexico in the last two months. On April 20, hundreds of federal, state and local police together with a contingent of Navy fusiliers assaulted strikers occupying the Sicartsa steel plant in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, killing 2 workers. On May 5, in the town of San Salvador Atenco, near Mexico City, again a combined force of federal, state and local police assaulted the population, killing two (a 14-year-old boy and a university student), injuring hundreds and arresting 300 townspeople. All three major parties (PAN, PRI and PRD) have participated in the massacres. Now, as the July 2 national elections approach, the repression is escalating as Mexico prepares to hold its blood-soaked vote.

As always, the U.S. government of George Bush stands behind the murderous Mexican government of Vicente Fox Quesada, and is itself preparing to kill Mexican immigrants as it militarizes the border. In 1968, when hundreds of students were killed by Mexican army and police and again in 1971 when death squads murdered students on the streets of the capital, the United States military and intelligence services were up to their necks in preparing the repression, supplying lists of names and training the killers.

This afternoon an emergency picket was called on short notice by the Internationalist Group, outside the Mexican Consulate in New York City. Demonstrators chanted, "Mexican teachers killed for going on strike" and "Atenco, Oaxaca, massacre in Mexico. Another protest has been called for Thursday, June 15, at 5 p.m. outside the consulate, located at 27 East 39th Street in Manhattan. We denounce this heinous crime and demand that all those arrested in Oaxaca, Atenco and in the miners' and steel workers' strikes be immediately released. -----

Dear Friends, I'm writing about the situation in Oaxaca. As I write, the capital city is under siege. At approximately 5AM this morning the state police attacked the teachers occupation of the city center. Though reports are sketchy, it seems that three teachers have been killed, as well as a young girl. [LATEST FIGURE IS 8 ADULTS AND THREE CHILDREN -- SJ.] The teachers have taken three or four police hostage. A raging battle is underway to control the zocalo, the center of life in Oaxaca, and the heart of the teacher's encampment. In the dawn raid the teachers were forced out, but the local paper, Noticias de Oaxaca, has reported that at 9:30AM local time the teachers, armed with rocks and sticks, re-took the main square. Police are firing tear gas from helicopters right now. Thousands (tens of thousands) of people are involved in running battles in the streets. And there is the fear that upwards of 3500 federal riot police -- deployed to Oaxaca in the last two weeks by Vicente Fox -- are about to enter the city. > I've just gotten off the phone with friends in the center. They described the scene on the streets this morning at about 7:30AM. Hundreds of people crying from the mix of tear gas, smoke bombs and some other pepper spray. The men forming groups to launch the assault to retake the zocalo. Mothers telling their boys to take care of themselves as they fell into line. From the rooftops of the single story houses you can watch the helicopters flying overhead shelling tear gas canisters into the crowds. There is a heavy fear, but also, I was told, you could hear the

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sound of people marching and singing.

As a brief background, you might want to read: <http://www.narconews.com/Issue41/article1874.html>

The teachers occupation of the city, known in Spanish as a 'planton' began 23 days ago. More than 80,000 teachers from every municipality in the state had converged on the capital to press a list of demands for more resources for education. They have had two mass marches, the most recent bringing more than 120,000 people out, the largest demonstration in the city's history.

The planton has become an annual event since more than a decade, and I will never forget last year's planton which happened while I was still living there. For about ten days the teachers occupied the entire center of town, sleeping on the streets under tarpaulins stretched overhead. They were extremely well organized and the city center was never more alive. The teachers and their families would cook large meals on open fires, play guitar and sing, rest on folded cardboard in the shade. They set up their radio station "Radio Planton" and played music on loud speakers. There were first aid tents, propaganda tents, mass meetings on every corner.

This year, many have remarked that the planton, and the teachers' mobilization generally, has been different. The question is: If the teachers brought 80,000 to the city, who are the other 40,000? I'm not close enough to give a good answer, but what I understand is that the teachers have offered an opening which hundreds of small community groups and social justice centers from around the state have chosen to follow. The past two years under the new PRI governor Ulises Ruis has intensified the level of state repression. Scores of activists in small villages have been killed, hundreds arrested and still in jail as political prisoners. The spike in repression was so great that Amnesty International sent a delegation to Oaxaca in May of 2005 to investigate. It appears that when the teachers marched on the capital three weeks ago they were joined by tens of thousands of others from the villages in what is becoming a road movement to depose the governor. Ruis has refused to meet with the teachers, and has managed to pull in his party's promisory notes to about half of the state's municipal mayors who signed a decree condemning the teachers action. But there is a palpable sense that the social movements are converging and that something new is underway. > During the past three weeks, the movement has shown a great level of strength and creativity -- occupying the city's airport, smashing the newly-installed parking meters throughout the city center, occupying the toll booths on the main road from Oaxaca to Mexico City -- not to stop the cars, only to stop the collecting of tolls, and the very fact that they have occupied the zocalo has great significance as the new governor, after spending upwards of \$100 million to 'beautify' the zocalo, decreed that it was now off-limits for any demonstrations. > Three nights ago, Ruis met with business leaders at a late night gathering and promised to use the 'mano dura' or hard hand. There were reports that the first 1500 federal riot police were camped in the nearby town of Tlacolula. This morning the governor appears to have proven himself a man of his word. Some reports have said that the tear gas in the city center is so thick you can't see the hand in front of you. > I have not seen any reports in the US media, BBC etc. There is some information on indymedia's Mexico site, some more on the online version of Noticias de Oaxaca -- both in Spanish. (<http://www.noticias-oax.com.mx/>) I know that the police have shut down the teachers' radio station 'Radio Planton' but as of 12:00 noon Oaxaca time the students' radio station 'Radio Universitario' was still broadcasting and "you can hear the broadcast from every window and door in town." The students themselves have occupied the university, but the latest reports suggest that the police are heading there now. > I'm writing this in the hope that you can help spread the word, and alert others in the network of media to turn their attention to the struggle ongoing. In solidarity, David

<http://nyc.indymedia.orgen/2006/06/71509.shtml>