

NOTES FOR A STORY ABOUT

STUDENTS PROTESTS



NOTEBOOK
PABLO MELLADO

May 2006

It has been three days since we have been alone at school. Night and day. This is our protest, our own way to defy the establishment, the unjust and obsolete educational system.

But others have done the same in the past. The least we can do is research what those others have claimed and protested against: In Córdoba, in 1918; in Paris and Mexico in 1968; in La Plata, in 1976; and in Beijing, in 1989.

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Almost a hundred
years ago...

UNIVERSITY REFORM

—
Córdoba, Argentina

June of 1918

*On how the Argentinian reformists raised their voices
at the beginning of the past century.*

WHAT WERE STUDENTS DEMANDING?
Modernization, democratization,
and autonomy for the universities.

HOW?

The students of the National University of Córdoba (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba), led by Deodoro Roca, declared a general strike and demanded that the university be intervened by the government. Founded by the Jesuits during colonial times, the university maintained elitist and clerical structures that the students rejected. After intervention and the subsequent failure to elect a new dean, in mid-June of 1918, the students occupied the university and launched the *Liminar Manifesto* (Manifiesto Liminar), in which they listed all their complaints and petitions. The central idea of the document was to denounce the “antiquated and anachronistic structure” of university

governance that hadn’t changed since the Independence.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD...

The influence of the *Liminar Manifesto* spread rapidly through various universities in Argentina and throughout other Latin American countries, constituting the foundations for all subsequent student reform movements.

“Our university system is obsolete. It is founded on the divine right of the university professorship”.

“If no spiritual link exists between he who teaches and he who learns, then education becomes hostile and is thus infertile. All education is a long labor of love with those who learn”.

From the *Liminar Manifesto* of the University Reformation.



MAY OF 68

Paris, France

May of 1968

On how Paris was a celebration of barricades and poetry.



WHAT WERE STUDENTS DEMANDING?

In the beginning, they asked that the regulations of the University of Paris Nanterre be more flexible, but as the movement grew like an avalanche, the protest overflowed towards political and social assertions against the consumer society, sexual repression, colonialism, the Vietnam war, capitalism...

HOW?

On May 6th, the students of Nanterre that had occupied the university made a declaration to the Discipline Committee. This trial sparked demonstrations in support and solidarity from the students of La Sorbonne who also seized and occupied their university. Chased by the police, the students and some workers raised barricades in the Latin quarter of Paris with the cobblestones they removed from the streets. It is referred to as “the night of the barricades”. The police repressed the students leaving many injured and some detained. There was an overwhelming manifestation of solidarity by the workers and French society in general on the 13th of May when there was a massive response to a call for a general strike. It was the climax of this extraordinary movement. The workers continued to join the protests with their demands and they occupied factories and workplaces.

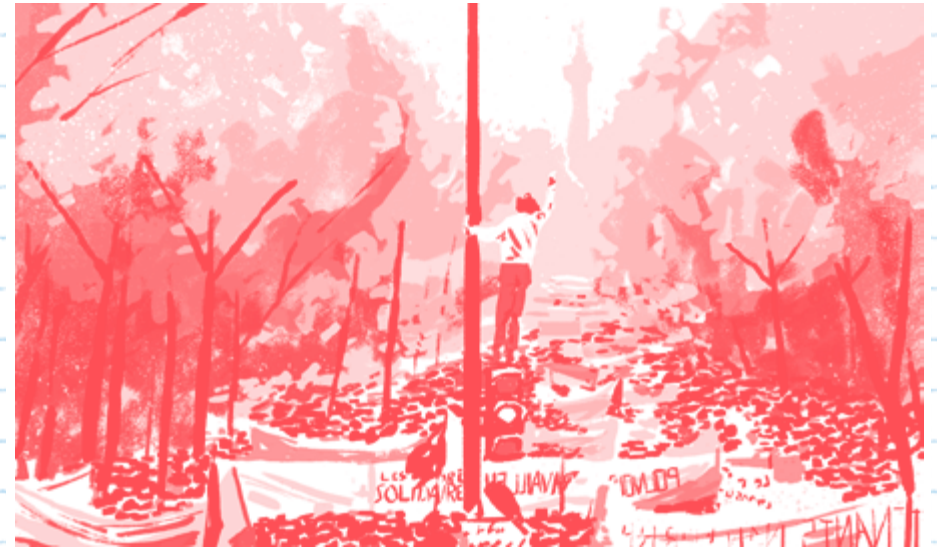


The government of Charles De Gaulle feared a popular uprising that never ended up occurring. The protests died down towards the end of June.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD...

There are different views. Some claim nothing was achieved; others, that May of 68 remains an icon of the utopia and an irreverent and original vision against the establishment. The universities changed –not only in France–, giving way to a generation of progressive teachers and the active participation of students in university management and policies. Workers obtained a raise in salaries and improvements in working conditions. But society continued down the road of capitalism and consumption. Nevertheless, May of 68 was a notably spontaneous movement, of impromptu creativity, of liberty and joy, of many and varied participants, each one with different ideas. In the words of the philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky: “May of 68 was the first revolution of the present. All other great movements in history were revolutions for the future, that called for sacrifice and death. The youthful spring of 68 rejected this tragic sense of history to lead the first playful and peaceful revolution”.

*I would've liked
to be there ...*



The revolt of May of 68 in France was an unexpected explosion: the occupation of the University of Nanterre by a small group of students who asked for changes in some of the internal faculty norms was the beginning of an escalation of protests that ended in the greatest general strike in French history: nine million workers joined in. For the first time, students were viewed as a powerful force of change in society. The student revolution spread throughout Europe and America, driving reforms and greater participation of students in the universities.

~ Poetry is on the streets ~

WALLS HAVE EARS;
YOUR EARS HAVE WALLS

If you think for others,
others will think for you

DOWN WITH SOCIALIST REALISM
LONG LIVE SURREALISM!

♥ the more I rebel
the more I want to make love

the more I make love
the more I want to rebel ✨

BE REALISTIC =
ASK FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

Unbutton your brain
as much as your pants

POWER TO THE IMAGINATION!

→ Forbidden to forbid ←

RIGHT TO
ORGASM!

LA PLAZA DE LAS TRES CULTURAS OF TLATELOLCO

Mexico City

October 1968

On how the Mexican capital was bathed in blood.

WHAT WERE STUDENTS DEMANDING?

Improvements in the quality of education, freedom for imprisoned students, protest against an authoritarian government and police repression.

HOW?

During more than two months diverse protests, strikes and shutdowns developed throughout Mexico, motivating – two above all, by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) and the National Polytechnical Institute (Instituto Politécnico Nacional). From late July to early October, many violent confrontations took place between students, police and the military. The students organized under the National Strike Council (CNH) (Consejo Nacional de Huelga) to protest against the police repression (especially the so-called Cuerpo de Granaderos) and the authoritarian government of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. Schools and Universities were occupied and destroyed by governmental forces, meanwhile, in the marches, dozens of students were arrested and hundreds of people were injured.





“¿Quién? ¿Quiénes? Nadie. Al día siguiente, nadie. La plaza amaneció barrida; los periódicos dieron como noticia principal el estado del tiempo. Y en la televisión, en el radio, en el cine no hubo ningún cambio de programa, ningún anuncio intercalado ni un minuto de silencio en el banquete. (Pues prosiguió el banquete)”.

Rosario Castellanos, *Memorial de Tlatelolco*.

“They are many. They come on foot, they come laughing. They descended Melchor Ocampo, la Reforma, Juárez, Cinco de Mayo, young male and female students advancing arm in arm in the march, with the same joy that only a few days earlier they had on their way to the open fair; Carefree youth with no idea that tomorrow, in two days, within four they will be there swelling under the rain, after a fair where the shooting ranges bullseye will be them, young-targets (...) Here come the young ones, towards me, so many, none with their arms raised, none with their pants around their ankles as they strip them to frisk them, there are no surprise punches or blows, no harassment, no vomiting from torture, no piles of shoes, they breath deep, walk proud, stepping strong, obstinate; they close in on the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and they stop at the edge where the plaza suddenly drops two or three meters to display the pre-hispanic ruins; they resume their march, they are many, they advance towards me with their hands raising their picket signs and banners, childlike hands because death makes hands childlike; they advance in tight formation, happy, they are happy, somewhat pale, a little worn down, but happy...”

Elena Poniatowska, *The night at Tlatelolco (La Noche de Tlatelolco)*

NOTE = go deeper into the node the CIA played in all of this

WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD...

On October 2, 1968, thousands of students congregated in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas of Tlatelolco. This happened only ten days away from the inauguration of the Olympic Games, so the government decided to silence the protests at once. Paramilitary forces advanced on the plaza. Helicopters hovered over the area. Snipers opened fire. Soldiers attacked the protesters. To this very day, there is no official count of the dead, injured, disappeared and jailed. But it is said to be over 300 dead and more than 1,200 injured.

THE NIGHT OF THE PENCILS

La Plata, Argentina

September of 1976

On how they took them from their homes and made them disappear



WHAT WERE STUDENTS DEMANDING?

During the government of Isabel Perón, the students of La Plata mobilized to demand a reduction for student bus fares (the BES or Boleto Estudiantil Secundario). They succeeded and the fares were reduced. This was in September of 1975.

HOW?

When the dictatorship began, in 1976, the BES was suspended. The secret police carried out a meticulous search to detect who had led those protests the year before. Their goal was to uproot and exterminate the "breeding ground of potential subversives".

The morning of September 16, 1976, ten students were abducted by members of the Military Intelligence Service and the police of the province of Buenos Aires. They took them to a clandestine detention center (Arana) and afterwards to the Investigative Division of Banfield ("Pozo de Banfield" / "The Banfield Pit"), as well as other torture centers.

They weren't the only secondary (high school) students to disappear during the brutal Argentinian dictatorship (more than 200), but it is the most well-documented case we have thanks to a book: The Night of the Pencils, by Héctor Ruíz Núñez and María Seoane, made into a film by Héctor Olivera in 1986.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD...

Only four of the ten abductees were released after months of torture and imprisonment. Thanks to the testimony in 1985 of one of them, Pablo Díaz, the horror of what they had suffered was finally revealed: rape, electric prods, beatings, faked executions...the list is bone chilling. The other six still remain disappeared. In 1998, in commemoration of these tragic events, September 16 was established as the Day of Secondary Students and was thus incorporated into the Argentinian school calendar.

OTHER SURVIVORS

Gustavo Calotte (18 y/o)
Patricia Miranda (17 y/o)
Emilee Moler (17 y/o)

* Review in class the concept of STATE TERRORISM

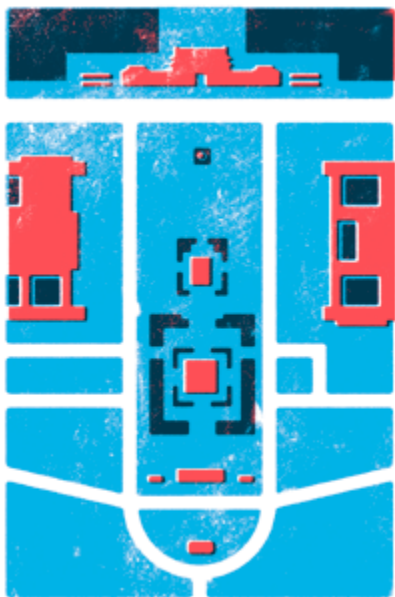
* Download the songs "Rasguña las piedras" and "Camión para mi muerte" by Sui Generis

MASSACRE AT TIANANMÉN

Peking, China

June of 1989

*De cómo los estudiantes chinos
enfrentaron al régimen.*



天安门广场
TIANANMEN SQUARE
and the
GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE

WHAT WERE STUDENTS DEMANDING?

Better food in the cafeterias, better living conditions in student residencies, more money for the faculties. But as the protests intensified, they began to demand more profound political reform: freedom of expression and democracy. Also, the workers protested against inflation and corruption.

HOW?

The death of the reformist leader Hu Yaobang, on April 15th of that year, was the detonator of the protests. The prayers and the mourning gave way to small revolts that spilled over into a great revolutionary movement that extended to more than 50 Chinese cities and whose epicenter was in Tiananmen Square, in Peking, led by the students. They concentrating in the square, organized marches, shutdowns



of their universities and a hunger strike that was followed by hundreds and awoke much solidarity among all people. By late May of 1989, not only students but also workers, intellectuals...thousands of Chinese citizens began to convene in the square. Each day more and more arrived, from all over the country. During six weeks the square was transformed into a small city, with zones for rest, infirmaries, food, and assemblies, until it held more than 1.200.000 people. In the center, the students of Fine Arts raised a statue more than 11 meters high: the Goddess of Democracy.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD...

On the night of June 3, a Saturday, more than 50,000 soldiers began marching towards the square. The first victims were citizens who tried to stop them. But the tanks kept rolling in from all directions. At 1 in the morning, they entered the same square in which Mao had declared the victory of communism in 1949. While many were assassinated and crushed, hundreds of other students sat and began to sing. "Why do you want to kill us? We carry no weapons", they chanted.

Until this very day, there is no certainty how many died that night. But estimates are around three thousand, as well as tens of thousands injured. The student leaders were imprisoned or deported and only a few were able to flee the country.

THE MAN AND THE TANK

It was June 5, 1989, shortly after midday, the day after the bloody massacre that occurred during the night and into the early morning. Various journalists took refuge in the Beijing hotel, next to the square. From their balconies, three photographers captured the image of something unbelievable. Along the Great Avenue of Eternal Peace, a long column of tanks was approaching, one, two, three, seven, nine, the line seemed unending. Suddenly, a young man crossed the Street. He was wearing a white shirt and dark pants, he was carrying a jacket and a shopping bag in one hand, as if he had just done his grocery shopping. He stopped in front of the first tank of the column and didn't move. With his arm that held the bag, he made signs for the tanks to back up. The tank attempted to move around him. Later it stopped. The Young stranger climbed on to the tank and pleaded with the pilot. A few minutes later, three people moved him off the street. ¿Were they friends of his that intended to protect him or were they secret police dressed in civilian clothing that arrested him? Nobody knows. But the photograph that these journalists captured from the Beijing hotel has become the most iconic of the resistance.

They baptized him "The Unknown Rebel" or "The Tank Man" because his real name was never known. It is said he was a 19-year-old student. That his name was Wang Weilin. The only thing certain is that he disappeared after his heroic act. Someone has claimed that he currently lives in Taiwan, but it is more probable that he was arrested and executed. Some claim he was shot in July. Others, that he appeared dead on the street in the city a few days after the massacre. Others, that he is still in prison.



PENGUIN REVOLUTION

-
Santiago, Chile

May of 2006

*On how we, high school students, are
mobilizing an entire country.*

WHAT ARE OUR DEMANDS?

At the end of April, when the marches began, we protested about the student bus-fare pass, better food scholarship allowances and making the PSU test free (standardized test for entering the university). But, little by little, as more schools joined the peaceful protests and the school occupations, we have become more aware of the importance of our movement and how we need to formulate and fight for deeper educational reform, which includes revoking the LOCE (a law inherited from the dictatorship) and for free high-quality education for all.

HOW ARE WE DOING IT?

Marches, strikes and occupations of schools throughout Chile. Also calling for a National Strike for May 30th. It is expected that by then 900 schools and 800.000 students will join us throughout the entire country.

WILL WE SUCCEED?
WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE?
AND WHEN?



NOTE TO READERS

What you are holding in your hands is a reproduction of the notebook in which Pablo Mellado wrote down ideas and took notes for the seminar *The History of Student Protests*, that he taught to his classmates during the strike and occupation of his school in May of 2006, in Santiago, Chile.

Pablo Mellado, also known as Fat Mellado (Gordo Mellado), is one of the characters in the illustrated novel *Al sur de la Alameda* (Ekaré Sur, 2014), that plays out during the vibrant beginnings of the so-called “Penguin Revolution”. The notebook dates back to 2006. Since then students throughout the world have led many movements demanding better education, liberty, democracy. Some of them are:

THE SAFRON REVOLUTION

AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2007, MYANMAR
Buddhist monks and students demand a civil government, economic reform, and democracy.

AGAINST THE PLAN BOLONIA

2008-2009, SPAIN
In defense of public education and against the privatization of education.s.

CHILE 2011

2011, CHILE
University students demand free and high-quality education for all.

NO TO LAW 30

FROM APRIL TO NOVEMBER 2011,
COLOMBIA
Student syndicates align against a law that was intended to push for privatized university institutes for economic gain.

THE OUTRAGED OF 15M

MAY 2011, SPAIN
For a true democracy NOW; in favor of civic participation, against bi-partisanship and corruption.

INSCRIPTIONS BY HALF

FROM MAY TO JUNE 2011, SOUTH KOREA
Against the high cost of university fees.

GREEN TIDE

FROM JULY TO NOVEMBER 2011, SPAIN
Teachers against cutbacks in education.

#IAM132

MAY 2012, MEXICO
For the democratization of the country, for freedom of expression and the right to information.

THE MAPLE SPRING

2012, QUEBEC, CANADA
Against the increase in prices of university inscription fees.

THE DIGNITY REVOLUTION

NOVEMBER 2013, KIEV, UCRANIA
Against autocracy and Russian intervention, with the intent of bringing Ukraine closer to the European community.

PROTESTS ON YOUTH DAY

FEBRUARY 2014, VENEZUELA
Against the government, increased delinquency, high inflation and general scarcity of food and basic products.

THE UMBRELLA REVOLUTION

SEPTEMBER 2014, HONG KONG
For a universal vote without pre-selected candidates.

THE AYOTZINAPA 43

SEPTEMBER 2014, IGUALA, MEXICO
43 disappeared students, after confrontations with the police.

19TH OF APRIL MOVEMENT

APRIL 2018, MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
University students protest for the reformation of Social Security and against the regime of Daniel Ortega

#NEVERAGAIN

2018, PARKLAND, FLORIDA, EE UU
In the wake of the Parkland school mass shooting, high school students protested for more effective gun control legislation in the United States.

FEMINIST OCCUPATIONS

2018, CHILE
Against abusive professors and for gender equality within university institutions.

Third edition, 2018
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Julio Cortázar
Carta a Lezama Lima (fragmento). *Cartas 1965 - 1968*
© 2000 Sucesión de Julio Cortázar

© Elena Poniatowska *La noche de Tlatelolco* (fragment), 1971 (Courtesy Agencia Literaria Schavelzon Graham)

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This is the notebook written by Pablo Mellado (also known as Fat Mellado), one of the characters in the illustrated novel *Al sur de la Alameda* (*South of Alameda*) which takes place in Santiago, Chile during the student protests of May of 2006. Fat Mellado teaches his classmates about student protests in other times and countries, a necessary background for their own demands.

AL SUR DE LA ALAMEDA