

AT LEAST 20 DEAD AS MEXICO STRIFE REACHES A PEAK

**Troops Fire Machine Guns
and Rifles at Students—
More Than 100 Hurt**

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MEXICO CITY, Oct. 2—Federal troops fired on a student rally with rifles and machine guns tonight, killing at least 20 people and wounding more than 100.

The troops moved on a rally of 3,000 people in the square of a vast housing project just as night was falling. In an inferno of firing that lasted an hour, the army strafed the area with machine guns mounted on jeeps and tanks.

About 1,000 troops took part in the action. Tanks, armored cars and jeeps followed them, spurting .30- and .50-caliber machine-gun fire.

Buses, trolley cars and other vehicles were set on fire at several places in the city. Ambulances screamed through the rainy night.

Many women and children were among the dead and injured.

Games Cast Into Doubt

Also injured was Gen. José Hernández Toledo, a paratroop commander who has led troops into university campuses three times over the last two years. He was undergoing surgery tonight for a stomach wound.

According to the army, at least one soldier was killed and 12 were wounded by sniper fire from apartment buildings towering over the square.

The night's events cast into serious question the prospects for the Olympic Games, which are scheduled to begin here on Oct. 12. Until the troops moved in, it seemed that both the Government and the city's rebellious students were working to establish an atmosphere of calm after some 10 weeks of struggling.

In a statement tonight, the Defense Minister, Gen. Marcelino García Barragán, said that the troops had moved on the rally after snipers fired on the Federal District riot police guarding the nearby Foreign Ministry and a vocational school. The general's statement was disputed by many witnesses.

Hospital Full of Wounded

The army moved immediately to keep reporters from the Red Cross hospital, near the housing project, three miles north of the center of Mexico City. But an interne in the hospital said that it was full of wounded, all of them civilians. Army ambulances took the dead and many other wounded to the Military Hospital, which was closed to reporters.

Witnesses described the widespread killing in the square. Six dead—two of them women—could be counted by this correspondent in a small section of the square.

The clash was the worst in student demonstrations that have been going on in the capital since July 23.

In the last serious fighting, two weeks ago, at least 7 and perhaps 17 people, most of them students, were killed. High-school and university students have been on strike here

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MANY ARE KILLED IN MEXICO CLASH

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for two months to protest the incident. In all, 150,000 have stayed away from classes.

The rally tonight took place in the Plaza of the Three Cultures, a paved area 100 yards square, named for its proximity to some Aztec ruins, a colonial church and the modern Foreign Ministry. On two sides of the square are 12-story apartment buildings of the Nonoalco-Tlatelco housing project, a 10-year-old middle-class development housing 76,000 people.

On the third side is Vocational School 7, one of the institutions involved in the strike. It has been occupied by riot policemen for 12 days. The fourth side fronts on the ruins, consisting of reconstructed ceremonial platforms and building walls interspersed with grass. The stone for the colonial church was taken from the Aztec buildings, so there is little left but foundations.

The rally had been called by the 200-member National Strike Committee to seek the withdrawal of riot policemen from Vocational School 7 and of federal troops from the Santo Tomás campus of the National Polytechnic Institute, a mile away. The students had planned to march from the rally to Santo Tomás.

By 5 P.M., the rally participants were assembled. Many students shouted their school "locomotive" cheers and passed out leaflets. Parents, children and a sprinkling of workmen also turned out. Some workmen and peasant groups recently expressed sympathy for the student strike.

'We Ask You to Go Home'

The first speaker, a youth in a red sweater, announced that the march to Santo Tomás would not take place. He said there were 22 truckloads of troops, 14 jeeps with machine guns and many tanks at the Polytechnic campus. "The committee does not believe in sterile bloodshed," he said. "We ask you to go home when this meeting is over."

The crowd hooted and hissed mildly but appeared to be in good humor. The speaker's estimate of the troop strength at Santo Tomás was accurate. But, by 5:30 the troops had left the campus and were on the way to the rally site.

Just after 6 P.M., while the rally was going on, shooting broke out near the Foreign Ministry. The army said snipers in nearby building had started it. Other witnesses blamed the army.

Troops moved from the Foreign Ministry through the Aztec ruins toward the plaza, firing as they ran. The crowd at the rally swirled in panic, running from the advancing force. Snipers, presumably allied with the students, opened up from the buildings around the plaza.

Throughout the area, people ran for cover. The firing became louder. Grenade bursts and flares exploded over the square. The ground was littered with bodies.

In surrounding buildings, people ran for cover, screaming. Families lay on the floor, away from the windows.

'Just Shot Everyone'

"They came without warning," said one man who was there. "There was no tear gas. They just shot at everyone."

By 7 P.M., the pitched battle was over, although sporadic firing continued through the night.

An hour after the fighting, troops still crouched behind walls and buildings while pedestrians walked past them unconcerned. Soldiers brought stretcher after stretcher of the dead out of the plaza.

Scores of young men, and even a few children, were led away, their hands behind their heads. And in the midst of it all was a little girl led by her mother. The girl held a towel to her left eye. Blood dripped from under the bandage.