

The Medical Movement in Mexico 1964-1965: What's happening half a century later?

César Gutiérrez-Samperio*

Faculty of Medicine, Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, Academia Nacional de Medicina, Academia Mexicana de Cirugía, Querétaro, Qro., México

Abstract

We reviewed the literature covering the medical movement in 1964-1965, which began on November 26, 1964 with the ISSSTE November 20 Hospital scholarship protest and the emergence of the Mexican Resident Interns Physicians Association (Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internos, AMMRI) and the Mexican Medical Alliance (Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos, AMM). We describe four work stoppages, two protest marches, the takeover of hospitals by the police, four interviews with Licenciado Gustavo Díaz Ordaz and his first presidential report. After that, attacks in the press, harassment, and repression provoked the weakening of the movement that ended in the AMM assembly on January 18, 1966. (Gac Med Mex. 2016;152:109-18)

Corresponding author: César Gutiérrez Samperio, cesargtzsamp@prodigy.net.mx; cegusa@uaq.mx

KEY WORDS: Medical movement. AMMRI. AMM. Repression.

Introduction

With the passage of time, individual and social information turns into history, which is gradually formed through short-lived verbal information; in turn, written communication prevails even after the disappearance of those who took part in the facts, as well as documentary information, in which evidence remains of the above, as a reliable source of occurred events. Man is the only living being with a conscience of his own history, and making an analysis and reflecting on past events allows for him to detect failures and successes, value the present and plan the future. This year, we commemorate that half a century has elapsed since the 1964-1965 Medical Movement. Those of us who lived through it maybe have forgotten many details and changed our point of view, but there are many doctors who have studied and even have been born after this

movement and, therefore, the information they have on the subject may be partial, incomplete or non-veridical^{1,2}.

The purpose of this article is to review the existing information on this important social event that deeply affected the medical profession, as well as to review the new information available since 2003, thanks to the disclosure of files from the National Security and Investigation Center (CISEN – *Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional*), equivalent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the U.S.A. We will try to analyze, contrast and reinterpret all this, so that, in the light of experiences and events occurred during the movement, we can have a judgment that is closer to reality. This does not pretend to be an exhaustive document, but the collection and reading of the most relevant literature will surely provoke a reflection on the Medical Movement by those who took part actively, by those of us who participated in a lesser degree, by doctors who were mere spectators, or by those who have not had any relationship with the movement³⁻⁷.

Correspondence:

*César Gutiérrez Samperio
H Frías Soto, 15
Col. Ensueño
C.P. 76170, Querétaro, Qro., México
E-mail: cesargtzsamp@prodigy.net.mx
cegusa@uaq.mx

Date of reception: 14-01-2015

Date of acceptance: 06-06-2015

Background

Social, working and economic conditions of doctors in the past century changed after World War II, during which Dr. Gustavo Baz, as secretary of Welfare and later of the Ministry of Health and Welfare (SSA – *Secretaría de Salubridad y Asistencia*), appointed an important number of Mexican physicians for specialization in hospitals of the USA, where there was a shortage of doctors because they were serving at battlefronts. This resulted in a decrease in the influence of French medicine and an increased influence of North American medicine. Health institutes were founded, mandatory social service was implemented and specialty teaching was formalized in medical residences, with well-structured programs endorsed by Higher Education Institutions^{8,9}.

In the decade of 1940, most part of professional practice was private; some physicians served in health dispensaries supported by social or religious associations, others, due to their interest on the most complex healthcare activities, teaching and research, worked at mornings in public hospitals for a precarious salary or freely, and devoted their afternoons to the care of their private clientele. In the decade of 1940, the Law of Social Security was promulgated and the first medical units were implemented, which were rejected by most healthcare professionals; however, soon enough, owing to the salary, the benefits and facilities for practice, they became an attractive option, which came to constitute a professional goal for newly graduate physicians and specialists⁸⁻¹⁰.

During specialization, doctors remained working for years with a prestigious physician, whom they helped in his healthcare, and occasionally teaching, activities. This specialization gave way to formal institutional teaching endorsed by a university. Residencies had large differences according to the hospital hosting the course, which many times only saw residents as workforce. Sometimes, residencies' conditions were deplorable: in the SSA hospitals, rooms were improvised in patient ward corners or even in storerooms or garages; meals were provided together with those of the rest of the personnel and sometimes together with those of patients; at the Red Cross Hospital, the dining hall was at the basement, which got flooded when it rained, making it impossible for residents to have their meals^{8,9,11}.

With postgraduate teaching structuring, residencies were planned and comfortable, well ventilated rooms with toilets were set up to accommodate scholarship holders, in addition to dining halls and adequate places for rest and study. At the La Raza Hospital, the

residency occupied the entire ninth floor, and in the rear part, small houses were built to accommodate residents of the female gender. At the Centro Médico Nacional, a building was constructed to accommodate residents from all its hospitals. In the new ISSSTE 20 de Noviembre Hospital, appropriate rooms were implemented. And in the SSA Hospital General, a medical residencies building was constructed, which collapsed during the 1985 earthquake, causing for an important number of interns to perish; the same happened at the Juárez Hospital when the new hospitalization tower collapsed, with the decrease of staff physicians, teachers and residents^{11,12}.

The background of the movement can be identified in the 1962 doctors' strike in Saskatchewan, a province of Canada, as a protest to healthcare reorganization¹³, although the real origin of the problem in Mexico was the ISSSTE 20 de Noviembre Hospital residents and interns unconformity with working conditions and study programs. Very rarely did they complaint about meager salaries, but in November 1964 second fortnight, the rumor was spread in the hospital that they would not be receiving the 3-month's salary Christmas bonus. On November 26, the hospital's director, Dr. José Ángel Gutiérrez, confirmed the order to cancel Christmas bonuses, arguing that they were grant holders, not workers of the institution and, therefore, they received grants rather than salaries. On the 28th, the first strike was started, which was to last 22 days. At the same time, and to confer legitimacy to their claims, the doctors created an association and, this way, the Mexican Association for Medical Residents and Interns (AMMRI – *Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internistas*) was born¹⁴.

The problem posed by the doctors was not valued in its true dimension; perhaps it could have been solved by the authorities of the hospital where it originated, or else by the ISSSTE authorities, but the government's response to the protest was drastic and not carefully considered, with the immediate firing of 206 interns and residents of the 20 de Noviembre Hospital, who published an open letter directed to the President of the country with five demands: rehiring of all fired doctors; an increase in the scholarship stipend and reconversion into renewable contracts; preferential hiring of former residents; solution of these problems in all hospitals, and increased access to postgraduate studies. The demands were focused exclusively on benefits for younger doctors, the sector with less political and economic power, who, for 36-h work days for 12-h rest received a monthly salary of \$ 400.00 pesos, lower than the minimum wage (in the SSA Hospital General, monthly salary was \$ 250.00). Inadequate

management of the problem resulted in the protest movement spreading throughout the country, involving the entire medical community^{3,14,15}.

Evolution

On December 6, in a press release, the AMMRI informed that 23 Mexico City hospitals and 20 of the rest of the country had already joined the strike. In this press release, and in a letter addressed to the President of the country, the names of the AMMRI leaders were revealed: Guillermo Calderón Rodríguez, Abel Archundia García, Roberto Pedroza Montes de Oca, Fernando Herrera, Roberto Sepúlveda and Oralia León. After several meetings with the President's private secretary, Mr. Joaquín Cisneros Molina, on December 8, the President's posture became clear, in the sense of not personally solving the conflict, which should be dealt with by the authorities of the healthcare institutions and hospitals involved^{6,7,15}.

The same December 8, a meeting took place at the 20 de Noviembre Hospital in the afternoon; an interview was carried out between a commission of fired doctors, formed by doctors Guillermo Calderón Rodríguez, Jorge Alberto López Curto and Nicanor Chávez Sánchez, and Dr. Xavier de la Riva, ISSSTE Medical Services sub-director, and Mr. Rómulo Sánchez Mireles, general director of the institute itself. The commissioned doctors exposed their problem and submitted a list of demands. Mr. Sánchez Mireles expressed the convenience of allowing for the problem to be studied, that the strike should be symbolic in order not to leave the patients unprotected, that he would try to solve things satisfactorily, but in the meanwhile, doctors should have to take care of their responsibilities, and not only serious or emergency cases. The commissioners indicated they would forward the proposal for consideration in the assembly that was going to take place that night at the General Hospital of the Centro Médico Nacional of the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS – *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social*). It should be noted that while Sánchez Mireles was present at the 20 de Noviembre Hospital, an individual who claimed being a doctor and identified himself as Alfonso Díaz Conti, delivered fliers of the so-called Medical Union of the Distrito Federal, domiciled in 300 Insurgentes Sur, in which confusion was created and doctors were offered labor law services and legal advice^{3,14}.

The AMMRI assembly took place at lecture room number 1 of the IMSS Centro Médico Nacional General Hospital, with attendance of more than 120 residents and interns from 39 hospitals of public institutions, health institutes and private hospitals of Mexico City.

In addition, this was the first time a representative of a hospital from the interior of the country, the Morelia Civil Hospital, was present, which conferred the movement a national scope. The assembly was informed on the results of the interview with Cisneros Molina, who had not made any concrete and viable proposals to solve the conflict. The audience was also informed that permission for a pacific demonstration on next day had been denied. After the intervention of several speakers, it was agreed to carry out a silent concentration at the Zócalo the next day at 09:00 h. The doctors were summoned at 07:30 h at the 20 de Noviembre Hospital to march towards the Zócalo carrying placards with the legend "Listen to us, Mr. President"; more than 1,300 medical residents and interns gathered and remained in perfectly ordered formation before the *Palacio Nacional* for several hours. A commission was received by President Díaz Ordaz, who insisted that the problem had not a national scope, that he had more important business to take care of and, hence, the corresponding authorities should handle the problem, and that having received them did not set any precedent, but he was going to keep informed on the matter^{3,6,15}.

The course of events was not peaceful at all. On the December 15 AMMRI meeting, now constituted as a civil association, repudiation was expressed to the publication, on doctors Sergio Novelo and Francisco Gómez newspapers, of unjustified attacks against scholarship holders¹⁶. On December 18, 5,000 medical interns and residents lifted the first strike, which lasted 22 days, in light of the trust and offerings of the authorities. Two days later they expressed publicly their gratitude to the President for having listened and tried to solve their problem adequately. Between the interview and the end of the strike there was a campaign of attacks and discredit on behalf of the Distrito Federal Medical Federation, formed by workers of the Distrito Federal Department, led by Dr. Sergio Novelo¹⁶, an association that with its attitude lost the opportunity to legitimate its existence. There were also support demonstrations by the National Pediatrics Association and by medical associations of the General Hospital, Gea González Hospital, Colonia hospital and other medical corporations, as well as by the Mexican Republic Medical Association, the Federation of Medical Profession Colleges and the Revolutionary Workers Federation (FOR – *Federación Obrera Revolucionaria*). The interview with the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM – *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*) Faculty of Medicine director, Dr. Donato G. Alarcón, who expressed his sympathy for the movement's demands and his support, was highly significant^{3,15-17}.

Time was running and no substantial changes were observed. In an open letter by the AMMRI, dated January 11, 1965, they expressed that the demands had not been addressed, but they only had been answered with promises, which forced them to declare a second strike of all medical activities as of January 13. As an unusual case, on January 15, Dr. Ismael Cosío Villegas, director of the SSA Huipulco Hospital, resigned his position in disagreement with the firing of medical residents and interns in retaliation; this was followed by massive resignation of the hospital's heads of department and staff doctors. In a communication to the public opinion they clarified that they would continue attending to hospitalized patients free of charge, until new personnel was appointed. On the other hand, in the business session of the SSA General Hospital Medical Society celebrated on January 16, an agreement was voted stating that the hospital's doctors would resign in case any of the AMMRI's members or hospital personnel was morally attacked or deprived from his or her liberty by any authority of the country^{6,7,15,17}.

The AMM

With no doubt, General Hospital Medical Society participation was definitive in the constitution of the Medical Alliance (AM – *Alianza Médica*). Decisions made at its assemblies were proactive and carefully thought. On the December 10 assembly, they decided to lift the partial 48-h strike, since they considered it to be the movement's Achilles heel, to take care of everything related to the medical conflict. A commission was voted, which was comprised by doctors Fernando Romero Castillo, Mario Salazar Mallén, Mario Trapaga Altamirano, Norberto Treviño Zapata and Horacio Zalce Torres. In the December 14 session, a second commission was appointed, which would take care of relationships with other medical societies of the country; this commission was comprised by doctors José de Jesús Álvarez Llerena, Bernardo Castro Villagrana, Xavier Ibarra and Octavio Rivero Serrano. On the Saturday December 19 session, next day after the first AMMRI strike was lifted, a historical session was carried out, which produced the *Unification of physicians of the entire country manifesto*, which was made public at the Monday December 21 session, with attendance of 22 hospitals and medical groups representatives. Thus was born the AMM, which later would be known only as AM. The referred commissions were in charge of writing the articles of incorporation and the manifesto published on January 26, 1965¹⁸.

We have to mention the full page spread of the Distrito Federal Workers Union Executive Committee, signed by its general secretary, Deputy Dr. Everardo Gámiz Fernández, published in some newspapers in response to these assemblies. This doctor was exposed by considering that traditional union rights had been violated, thereby marking official unions' posture with regard to the Medical Movement¹⁹. The answer did not take long; as a Christmas present, in a sensible full-page spread published on December 24, the General Hospital Medical Society expressed the unrest and dissatisfaction of the medical community throughout the country, and urged both the AMMRI members, asking them for a waiting period and to postpone the general strike scheduled for December 26, of course, reiterating their support, and the competent authorities, urging them serenely and fairly examine such an important problem for the population's health and wellbeing of the country, asking them to try to find a solution according to the recommendations expressed by the President of the country^{17,20}.

The support by hospitals from Mexico City and other cities of the interior of the country, by medical associations and colleges from all over the country was evident from multiple letters addressed to the AMM, as well as full-page spreads published in local and national newspapers and journals. In a publication endorsed by the signatures of doctors Antonio Prado Vértiz, Felipe Mota Hernández, Ismael Mendoza Fuentes and Joaquín de la Torre, among others, the Children's Hospital Medical Association confirmed what they had expressed in their December 1964 *Clinical Gazette*, where the reality of medical residents and interns, who were interchangeably regarded as grant holders or workers at the hospital managers or health sector officials convenience, was made public^{21,22}. On the other hand, in an attempt to find guilty parties in full-page spreads published by the press, doctors Norberto Treviño Zapata and Guillermo Treviño were incriminated as instigators of the movement; the former, because of his political trajectory: former president Adolfo Ruiz Cortines personal physician, leader of the lower chamber and former governor of the State of Tamaulipas, and the latter, due to his known socialist ideas, labeling him as a communist^{17,23}.

As was to be expected, there were multiple full-page spreads published in the press by official unions supporting the statements expressed by Fidel Velázquez on behalf of the Mexican Workers Confederation (CTM – *Confederación de Trabajadores de México*) who, as its general secretary, condemned the Medical Movement for breaking the law and not having followed the course workers claims' should follow. Statements of the

Workers and Peasants Revolutionary Confederation (CROC – *Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos*) went in the same direction: “Physicians are obligated to offer their professional wisdom to the benefit of aching mankind, and not only to receive a much higher salary than the rest of the Mexican population; for this reason, the strike is inadmissible”^{7,15,17}. In contrast, only the FOR, as an independent representative of the worker’s sector, analyzed the CTM and CROC leaders’ statements and expressed its entire recognition of and support to the AMMRI demands, requesting for them to be satisfied^{15,17,23}.

On the Monday January 18 1965 session, chaired by Dr. Guillermo Alfaro de la Vega and held at the General Hospital Dr. José Terrés lecture hall, with attendance of 218 doctors representing hospitals and medical associations, the AMM was officially constituted and a Provisional Government Council was appointed. The act of incorporation was signed by the attendees, among which the names of prominent doctors whose contribution to medicine has been valuable and meaningful could be identified. On Wednesday January 20, the President of the nation received at Palacio Nacional a commission that read out the AMM brief and manifesto published the 26th of same month¹⁸. In the nearly 2-h-long meeting there were several interruptions, and the President’s monologue, reproducing declarations of the AMM appeared on the press that same morning, was listened to; the President acknowledged the importance of the medical community and argued on the complex medical-social problem posed by the Alliance, without offering any definitive and fair solution. At the Friday 22 meeting, the AMM Government Council urged the AMMRI representatives to put an end to the second strike^{17,18}.

On January 26, coinciding with the AMM manifesto publication¹⁸, the AMMRI took a turn and announced that, on January 30, they would lift the second strike, which lasted 17 days, in recognition to and confidence in the AMM, which it was a member of, advocating for national medical unity and taking into account the authorities’ promises on the solution of their problems; all these was revealed in an open letter published next day²⁴. Of note, many of the full-page spreads published in the press against the Medical Movement used adjectives and characteristics of doctors and medicine as arguments, such as *abnegated*, *altruism*, *apostolate*, which made reference to the ideology of the then UNAM director Dr. Ignacio Chávez, whose intervention as a mediator in the conflict was rejected in the January 17 meeting^{8,17,19}.

Different Alliance commissions were designated, such as the Project Coordination and Statute Writing

Commission, the duty of which was taking into account the opinion of the different organisms that made up the Alliance; the Diffusion Commission, which proposed the publication of a bulletin to keep the medical community informed on the real conditions of the movement, or the Conflicts Commission, to act as a mediator between the authorities, the AMM and the AMMRI. The latter commission could not reach agreements and effective solutions with the different government branches to give an answer to the AMMRI’s demands; therefore, on the February 15 assembly, it agreed to give notice of full strike, to be started on March 2. That strike did not take place due to a memorable event that occurred a few days later. On February 18, 1965, the *Agreement of the President of the Republic* was promulgated, which is considered a document with historical projection, since it recognizes the human, social and economic reality of the medical professional class. It was regarded as an adequate answer to the Alliance manifest and led to an atmosphere of optimism and hope and, therefore, recognition to the President of the country was publicly demonstrated and in notes and full-page spreads in the press on the following days^{17,25}.

All this was informed in the AMM’s first bulletin, published on March 15, 1965, which also published the AMMRI inform on wage reclassification, similar to that requested by residents and sub-residents, not so for rotating interns and medicine undergraduate trainees; in a complementary agreement, the scholarship stipend was raised for sixth-grade medicine students from 240.00 to \$ 700.00 pesos per month. In the second issue of the bulletin, published on March 30, the Alliance’s motto was presented: “For the people’s health, medical unity and progress of medicine in Mexico”. The names of the Provisional Government Council members were published, as well as the announcement of the April assembly, 90 days after the Alliance’s foundation, to appoint the definitive Government Council and publish the statutes^{26,27}. It should be noted that, as an opportunistic maneuver, the National Union of Social Security Workers published in its diffusion bulletin, *Seguridad Social*, that the doctors’ wages raise was a legitimate achievement of the union; however, the scholarship stipend’s real increase never crystallized and, consequently, on April 17, the AMMRI started the third strike, which was to last 43 days²⁸.

Among the members of the Provisional Government Council there were highly renowned doctors, as well as AMMRI members who, over time, also managed to stand out in the field of medicine: Alfonso Acevedo Olvera, Luis Alcalá Valdez, Javier Álvarez Hernández,

José de Jesús Álvarez Llerena, Vicente Arambura Alcalá, Manuel Bayona González, Bernardo Castro Villagrana, Ismael Cosío Villegas, Joaquín de la Torre, Rafael de la Torre, Justo Igor de León Loyola, Rolando del Rosal, Gustavo Gómez Azcárate, Rodolfo Guzmán Toledano, Francisco Hernández Orozco, Javier Ibarra E., Emilio Illanes Baz, Rolf Meiners, Ismael Mendoza Fuentes, Felipe Mota Hernández, Miguel Padilla Pimentel, Manuel Palafox, Roberto Pedraza Montes de Oca, Antonio Prado Vértiz, Octavio Rivas Solís, Octavio Rojas Avendaño, Fernando Romero Castillo, Joaquín Romero Olivares, Alfredo Rustrian, Mario Salazar Mallen, Humberto Santini Zabre, Miguel Shultz Contreras, Demetrio Sodi Pallarés, Irene Talamás, Norberto Treviño Zapata, Mario Trapaga Altamirano, Noé Vargas Tentori, José Manuel Velazco Arce and Ismael Zurita Serrano. The majority continued being part of the definitive Government Council. Doctors that joined later included doctors Raúl Contreras Rodríguez, Luis Alfonso Montejo, Leobardo Pérez Murphy, Angélica Salas and Enrique Toledano Rojas^{15,17}.

Harassment and repression

The IMSS authorities issued an order forbidding the use of its facilities to celebrate the AMM sessions, which settled its offices in the Old School of Medicine at the Santo Domingo Plaza, where the assemblies took place and the *Alliance's Bulletin* press releases were written. This way, the historical building witnessed and conferred moral strength to the movement. In parallel to the authorities' promises, there were aggressions against doctors participating in the movement, particularly directed against the AMM Provisional Government Council, and mechanisms were instrumented to dismiss doctors from different public and private institutions, as well as non-government organizations, such as doctors Norberto Treviño Zapata, Guillermo Montaña, Mario Salazar Mallen, Irene Talamás, Francisco Hernández Orozco, Víctor Hugo Chimal, Rolf Maineres, José Manuel Velazco Arce, Miguel Shultz, Joaquín Romero Olivares, Mario Trapaga, Felipe Mota Hernández, Bernardo Castro Villagrana, Guillermo Alfaro de la Vega, Alfredo Rustrián and Octavio Rivas Solís, among many others^{15,17,25}.

Against previous agreements and apparent good will, or else following precise instructions of higher authorities, on Friday May 14, the newspapers published full pages signed by the heads of the SSA, the Communications Ministry, the Distrito Federal Department, the IMSS, the ISSSTE and the National Railroads

of Mexico offices informing that undergraduate students, medical interns and residents who had suspended their activities at different hospital institutions should resume their work no later than Monday May 17, that no conciliatory interviews were to be carried out and that, should they not be present at work, hiring of doctors would start to cover vacant positions. On Monday May 17, several bureaucratic union organizations celebrated, in Mexico City's main square (the Zócalo), a meeting to protest against undergraduate doctors, where the speakers expressed false concepts with insulting terms against the AMMRI doctors^{29,30}.

On Wednesday May 26, male and female doctors dressed in white carried out a silent demonstration. They gathered at the Republic plaza and, from the Revolution Memorial, the march took off towards the Constitution square and remained in silence for 1 h at the Zócalo. Legends on banners included emphatic, yet respectful demands. On the way, groups of people on the sidewalks cheered the doctors as they passed, but there were also hostile groups, comprised by workers of the Department of Sanitation, who, with offensive words, even came to throw rotten fruits and legumes as projectiles. Comments in the media were rather varied, mostly attacking and insulting the doctors. As a corollary, in the AMMRI plenary session, celebrated the night of Saturday 29, terminating the third strike, which had lasted 43 days, was voted and decided by majority⁴³.

On June 23, the fourth and last audience with the President of the nation was celebrated. The AMM representatives read out a brief on the seven months of the movement, emphasizing on the fairness of the demands and on the fact that, in many institutions, the presidential agreement promulgated on February 18 had not been honored. In a long monologue, President Díaz Ordaz expressed contradicting concepts: on one hand, he exposed his appreciation and recognition to the doctors' work, and on the other, he stated that the strike had criminal aspects contained in the penal code and that, as he expressed in the third interview of April 23, he was interested on working with the doctors, for the doctors and for Mexican people, but that the problem had only three ways of solution: apart from the government, with the government or against the government. The conflict continued to be in a deadlock; therefore, in the August 7 session, the AMM decided to send a letter to the President, stating that the raise on scholarships and salaries agreed by the president himself on February 18 and published again in the press on July 9 had not been obeyed in all institutions, neither had been the April 23 agreement granting permanent

positions to temporary personnel. The letter was entirely published in the AMM bulletin³².

In the AMM assembly held on Saturday August 21, in view of the lack of an answer to the letter sent to the President, the fourth general strike, in which IMSS doctors with permanent posts did not participate because they were union members, was voted by a majority to be started on August 24. The following days there was a series of unfortunate events, such as the occupation by the riot police of several hospitals (ISSSTE 20 de Noviembre Hospital, Railroads' Colonia Hospital, Pediatrics Hospital and other hospitals of the IMSS Centro Médico Nacional. At the 20 de Noviembre Hospital, Dr. Trifón de la Sierra and Dr. Alfredo Vicencio Tovar were expelled from the emergency department, as well as Dr. Abel Archundia, head of residents. Military physicians were sent for emergency medical care in different hospital centers. Doctors and nurses of different hospitals were pressed to continue attending to patients, both at their working sites and at other institutions, offering double fees for extra working hours. A wave of contradicting declarations and information was unleashed, in favor of doctors on behalf of medical and intellectual associations and some authorities of the health sector, and against them on behalf of government authorities, some hospital directors and, of course, union leaders³³⁻³⁵.

In the awaited first State of the Union address of September 1, President Díaz Ordaz expressed: "Those who tried to obtain solutions favorable to their interests were mistaken believing that the proximity of this date would force the government to dictate them, without taking into account the determinant factors. They were mistaken because I did not come to tell the people that I have solved all problems; no, I come to inform on those that we have been able to solve and on those that still prevail, on those that were decreased and those that got worse, as well as on new ones that have emerged". He exposed possible solution alternatives and, in another part of his address, he stated: "Procedures are already underway with regard to different crimes that possibly are being committed and that, fundamentally, can involve injury and even manslaughter by negligence, conspiracy, unlawful public servant coalition, job abandonment, abandonment or neglect of persons, resistance of particulars, service provision failure, professional responsibility and incitement to commit a crime". These unfair and inadmissible expressions could not be left unanswered, and the AMM prepared a manifesto that was published on September 7, where it was made clear that in no way during the strike patients had been left unattended, since they

had been continuously cared for by doctors' stepwise shifts^{36,37}.

In an answer to Díaz Ordaz' address, congressman Augusto Gómez Villanueva, of the Revolutionary Institutional Party, stated that the legislative power could not be indifferent or stay at the edge of such an important issue as the medical conflict, and offered the President strong support and solidarity of the congress, but with his words and insults he fed more fuel to the fire and aggravated the problem. The presidential address and the legislative power answer gave the movement a national nature. On subsequent sessions of the Congress, congressmen Adolfo Christlieb Ibarrola, of the National Action Party, and Vicente Lombardo Toledano, of the People's Socialist Party, carefully analyzed the problem and expressed their opinion in favor of the doctors^{36,37}.

In the AMM September 2 assembly, which was prolonged until next day's early hours, two tendencies were discussed: to continue or to lift the strike. In the Saturday September 4 plenary assembly, which had an attendance of 113 representatives, the reflection was posed that the postulates and purposes of the movement would not be achieved by frontally fighting the State; by a majority vote, resuming activities on Monday September 6 was agreed. It was informed that some members of the Government Council had had the electricity and telephone services cut off, and that they were under police surveillance. On September 11, the Distrito Federal Attorney's Office requested the Tenth Criminal Court Judge the apprehension of 30 doctors due to damages caused in the last strike. Dr. Alfredo Ortega Rivero, president of the Medical College of Hidalgo, which was founded by my father, Dr. Librado Gutiérrez Samperio, had published a call to doctors and government to good sense and reconciliation, for the solution of the medical affair but, owing to a complaint filed by the ISSSTE medical delegate in the State, an order for formal prison was issued and he was detained, together with Dr. Alberto Hernández. Fortunately, they were not sent to prison, but they remained under detention at the Pachuca courts detention facilities in Hidalgo, known as La Casa Colorada, for a period of 56 days, during which the trial took place without any guilt been found. There were multiple support demonstrations by society, medical organizations and students, both local and from the UNAM^{37,38}.

Outcome

Both the response and opinion of society with regard to the first State of the Union address were divided.

Opinions condemning the Medical Movement were published, falsifying purposes and objectives, such as the manifesto published by the CTM the same day of the presidential address, indicating that this worker corporation was aware of its contents beforehand. Two days later, the AMM published a broad manifesto clearly and concisely explaining the human, social and economic rights recognition objectives of the medical class. Owing to the Patriotic Holidays, articles impartially analyzing the posture and actions of both doctors and government, as well as the fact that doctors had never abandoned the patients or left them unprotected appeared in the press, and the alleged vindications of the authorities to accuse the members of the Alliance Government Body, hospital representatives and medical societies, as well as doctors and nurses who had joined the movement and refused to serve in other institutions to replace personnel on strike of different crimes were rebutted³⁹⁻⁴².

The Medical Movement went on gradually weakening for several reasons, but perhaps the most important factor was the increased harassment measures on behalf of the authorities. Many doctors were fired or blacklisted, hindering for them to find a job in other institutions. Fear was instilled within the Alliance by the arrest warrants against the Government Body members. Full-page spreads appeared in the press of ISSSTE and National Railroads' doctors expressing their adhesion to the President (many doctors whose names appeared on these publications denied having signed the adhesion documents). The economic factor had an influence: the 35% salary raise for the IMSS doctors rendered their representatives refraining to continue participating in the movement, and it should be recognized that this raise determined that other institutions increased the doctors' salaries as well, though not in the same proportion. At the General Hospital, for an official 2-h shift, although in reality they worked many more, doctors received a monthly salary of \$ 800.00 pesos; shifts were increased to 4 h, and a monthly salary of \$ 2,600.00 was assigned^{36,39}.

Attendance to the AMM assemblies was increasingly scarce. Thus, the September 3 assembly was attended by 113 representatives, the one of Tuesday September 7 by 61, and the one on Saturday September 11 only by 30. Absenteeism was also observed in the AMM Government Body meetings: the meeting held on Tuesday September 14 was attended only by 16 of its members. News in the mass media was directed to sow uncertainty, such as the alleged injunctive relief granted to 28 of 41 doctors who applied for

it. On October 6, news about leaders of the movement leaving the country was published: Dr. Norberto Treviño Zapata, to Houston; Dr. Bernardo Castro Villagrana, to Rome (actually they remained in Mexico City), and Dr. Fausto Pérez Tinajero, to Havana (the name of the latter did not appear on medical societies' lists or Alliance assemblies' attendance records; therefore, he never was a member of the Body of Government). On October 9, Dr. Enrique Arce Gómez handed out Dr. Treviño Zapata a document signed by Dr. Rafael Moreno Valle, secretary of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and by Dr. Mario Loyo Díaz, Medical Care director for the Distrito Federal, dismissing him as doctor from the SSA General Hospital. Dr. Irene Talamás and Dr. José Álvarez Llerena were fired as well^{43,44}.

What happened on October 23 was a parody. Early in the morning, mariachi bands had sung *Las Mañanitas* in some hospitals to celebrate the Doctor's Day. A big festival was organized at the Auditorium of the IMSS Centro Médico Nacional, with the support of the IMSS union. The President sat at the place of honor; at his side were brothers Antonio Martínez Manatou, leader of the IMSS union, and Emilio Martínez Manatou, secretary of the President's office. Before a full auditorium, Díaz Ordaz exposed at his speech his high esteem for the medical community, his recognition to its humanitarian work and his desire to resume the dialogue in order to solve the conflict; he insisted on the obligation of doctors to care for the people's health, stressing on the impossibility to satisfy their demands in order not to create an elitist guild. In a ball celebrated at the *Salón Imperial* with participation of famous artists, 10 cars, TV sets and sound systems were raffled off. All this happened while outside these premises numerous medical personnel was harassed, suffering retaliations, dismissals, suspensions and jail. The October 23, 1965 Doctor's Day, instead of a celebration, should turn into a day of justified mourning^{15,17,45,46}.

On the November 20 assembly, the proposals for the "First stage of the study of reforms, restructuration and planning of Mexican medicine" were discussed, but the conclusions could never be presented to the relevant authorities, who never received them for further development. Doctors started drifting away from meetings, medical associations and hospitals stopped sending representatives, all this as a result of the massive repression started on September 1, with more than 500 doctors dismissed, expatriated and even imprisoned. The UNAM, in particular the Faculty of Medicine, was one of the few institutions that opened its doors to harassed doctors. Thus was born the Department of

Experimental Surgery, where I had the privilege of working with doctors Trifón de la Sierra, Bernardo Castillo Villagrán and Abel Archundia García^{14,17,48}.

On November 26, 1965, in the Old School of Medicine, at the Santo Domingo plaza, an AMMRI assembly was celebrated to commemorate its first anniversary. Dr. Roberto Pedraza Montes de Oca and Dr. Víctor Manuel Calderón made a historical review of the association, its purposes and its projection. Dr. Ismael Cosío Villegas, teacher of generations, clean and combative leader and loved by students, gave a moving speech, which he concluded saying: "When my friend and former student, Dr. Salvador Aceves, gave me document where I was informed of my dismissal, I said to him: 'Tell the Health Minister that this document comes as no surprise, as I was expecting it; tell him as well that leaving Huipulco under these circumstances constitutes for me something to be proud of'", which received a standing ovation from the audience⁴⁸.

On January 18, 1966, in the Old Medicine School at the Santo Domingo plaza, a session was carried out to commemorate the AMM's first anniversary, with few participants, mostly members of the AMM Body of Government, many of whom had already been fired from their jobs. This session was very different from those celebrated months before, where euphoria, hope and combativeness prevailed, where several thousands of doctors coming from all parts of the country came to gather. Everything changed at one-year distance. Works went on and, in the session held on April 23, an epilogue document of the Medical Movement was developed, where physicians, sociologists, lawyers, writers and journalists participated. In this historical document, important scientific and technical, but especially social and human considerations were made, claiming for equity for the medical community. In the last number of the GMM bulletin, an extract of the document was published. Of note were the clairvoyant opinions of Professor Raoul Fournier Villada and the guiding points of view from Dr. Pedro Ramos, bidding farewell to the Alliance⁴⁹.

Colophon

Of the documentary evidence research that supported the development of this work, we should specially mention the magnificent book written by Dr. Norberto Treviño Zapata *El movimiento médico en México 1964-1965: crónica documental y reflexiones* (The medical movement in Mexico 1964-1965: documentary chronic and reflection), the materials of which were given to

Mr. Jorge Carpizo, director of the UNAM, for publication on the 25th anniversary of the Movement. Surprisingly, however, the graphic materials were lost, allegedly because of the change of university authorities. A copy was handed out to Dr. Fernando Cano Valle, director of the UNAM Faculty of Medicine, who took care for the publishing of this magnificent historical work, with 163 documentary annexes¹⁷. It is not easy to consult because only one edition has been published and it would be desirable that, in the framework of the 50th anniversary of the movement, a second edition with larger run would be published, in order for a higher number of doctors to have access to this valuable information. Fortunately, an abridged version was published in the *Gaceta Médica de México* in 1986^{25,47}.

Much has been written about the movement in books^{2,10,17} and journals^{3,13,15,25}. The truthful and clear information was obtained from the AMM bulletins^{26,27,32,44,49}. The abundant information published by the press sometimes was committed to the truth, but most of the times it was biased and sensationalist, with a marked tendency towards the criterion and interests of the government. We selected four confidential information documents of the Federal Security Direction, which were declassified in 2003⁴⁻⁷. It should be mentioned that this information directed to the authorities of those moments, many times poorly written, corresponds to the reality we saw and experienced, very different from what the press published and from the information diffused by the mass media, riddled with lies, insults and praises for the government.

The Medical Movement never had political objectives, although many doctors with radical ideas used the sessions to express their opinions. Government imputations on the abandonment and neglect of patients and possible crimes were clearly false. Conversely, dismissal and even imprisonment of many doctors, especially among the members of the Body of Government, were certainly true. The Medical Movement and the AMM managed to unite the medical community closer than ever, and perhaps as never will happen again. Much was achieved in terms of recovering dignity and respect for healthcare workers, as well as improvements in the training of residents and economic remuneration of interns, residents and staff physicians. The doctors' wages increase in an institution such as the IMSS necessarily had to impact on wage increase in other institutions. There were also deplorable acts of doctors who attended the sessions and became Federal Security Direction informants and medical authorities that, in order to maintain their jobs,

lent themselves to be the instruments for dismissals or claims that ended up in imprisonments.

50 years later

Fifty years later, is there a need for another Medical Movement? Probably yes, but it should start with a reflection about what we're doing, on whether we are giving the best of ourselves in the benefit of patients, with a protest against squander and corruption in public medicine, which has led to shortage and medical care delay, against service duplicity, since while some people have two or three medical services, the majority lacks any. It would be desirable, in spite of many created interests, to enable for a single public medical insurance to be available. In private medicine, it is necessary to fight for fair fees, as well as in managed care, with payment through third payers, insurance companies or service provider companies, which, while on one hand lessen medical fees, and on the other, pay with no complaint expenses of hospitals that frequently are also of their own. Only with doctors' unity, fair fees that are proportional to hospital expenses will be achieved. Hospitals are indeed a business, but this should not be disproportionate; the aim is for everybody to win, companies, doctors and especially the patients.

References

- Poza-Horcasitas R. Democracia en blanco. México: Siglo Veintiuno; 1993.
- Zermeño S. México: una democracia utópica. El movimiento del 68. México: Siglo Veintiuno; 1978.
- Soto-Laveaga G. Médicos, hospitales y servicios de inteligencia: el movimiento médico mexicano 1964-1965 a través de los reportes de inteligencia. Salud Colectiva. 2011;7:87-97.
- Dirección Federal de Seguridad. Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internos (documento descalificado). Archivo General de la Nación. Archivos de Seguridad Nacional, México, D.F., gal. 1, vol. 50-1-964, exp. 1, fol. 168-173.
- Dirección Federal de Seguridad. Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internos (documento descalificado). Archivo General de la Nación. Archivos de Seguridad Nacional, México, D.F., gal. 1, vol. 50-1-964, exp. 1, fol. 68-69.
- Dirección Federal de Seguridad. Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internos (documento descalificado). Archivo General de la Nación. Archivos de Seguridad Nacional, México, D.F., gal. 1, vol. 50-1-964, exp. 5-16-1-65, L. 201, fol. 15-14.
- Dirección Federal de Seguridad. Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internos. Informe sobre el Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los trabajadores del Estado, 3 de diciembre de 1964 (documento descalificado). Archivo General de la Nación. Archivos de Seguridad Nacional, México, D.F., gal. 1, vol. 50-1-964, L. 1, fol. 13-14.
- Chavez I. México en la cultura médica. En: México y la cultura. México: SEP; 1946. p. 677-746.
- Gutiérrez-Samperio C. Dr. Gustavo Baz Prada: su obra educativa. Rev Med Universitaria. 1994;2:15-8.
- Alonso CA. Cronología médica mexicana. Cinco siglos. México: Siglo XXI/ANM, AMC y Consejo de Salubridad General; 2010. p. 216, 220.
- Reyes FA, Hernández HJ, Moreno SJA. Estado actual y perspectivas de los programas de educación médica. Simposios de la Academia Mexicana de Cirugía. 2001;1:99-108.
- Cravioto, A, Viesca-Treviño C, Gutiérrez-Samperio C. La formación de médicos cirujanos, una visión al futuro. Simposios de la Academia Mexicana de Cirugía. 2003;3:227-343.
- Wolfe R, Badgley S. Doctor's Strike: medical care and conflict in Saskatchewan. Toronto: MacMillan; 1971.
- AMMRI. Carta abierta al Sr. Lic. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, presidente constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, y a la opinión pública. Excélsior, México, D.F., 6 de diciembre de 1964.
- Casas-Patiño D, Reséndiz-Rivera S, Casas I. Reseña cronológica del movimiento médico 1964-1965. Bol Mex His Fil Med. 2009;12:9-13.
- Novelo S. Postura de la Federación Médica del D. F. ante el Movimiento Médico. Novedades, México, D.F., 10 de diciembre de 1964.
- Treviño-Zapata N. El movimiento médico en México 1964-1965. Crónica documental y reflexiones. México: Facultad de Medicina, UNAM; 1989.
- Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. Manifiesto. Últimas Noticias, México, D.F., 26 de enero de 1965.
- Gamiz-Fernández E. A la opinión pública. Excélsior, México, D.F., 25 de diciembre de 1964.
- Sociedad Médica del Hospital General de México. Los médicos del Hospital General se dirigen a las autoridades del país, a los miembros de la Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internos A.C. y a la opinión pública. Últimas Noticias, México, D.F., 24 de diciembre de 1964.
- Asociación de Médicos del Hospital Infantil de México. Boletín Clínico, México D.F., 15 de diciembre de 1964.
- Asociación Médica del Hospital Infantil de México. A la Opinión Pública. La realidad de los sucesos médicos actuales. Últimas Noticias, México, D.F., 15 de enero de 1965.
- Federación Obrera Revolucionaria. Habla la FOR sobre el problema de los Médicos y el Seguro Social. El Día, México, D.F., 30 de diciembre de 1964.
- Asociación Mexicana de Médicos Residentes e Internos A.C. Miembro de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. A la Opinión Pública. Excélsior, México, D.F., 27 de enero de 1965.
- Treviño-Zapata N. El movimiento médico en México. Crónica documental y reflexiones (Versión extractada) Gac Med Mex 1986;122:39-47.
- Boletín de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. Informe del Consejo de Gobierno de la AMM y de la AMMRI. N.º 1, 15 de marzo de 1965.
- Boletín de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. Informe del Consejo Provisional de Gobierno de la AMM. N.º 2, 30 de marzo de 1965.
- Seguridad Social. Órgano del Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Seguro Social. 4 de marzo de 1965.
- Repudia la burocracia a los paristas. Cargos en el mitin de empleados y obreros. Últimas Noticias, México, D.F., 14 de mayo de 1965.
- Repudia el paro un grupo de médicos. El Universal, México, D.F., 14 de mayo de 1965.
- Teissier EJ. De domingo a domingo. Novedades, México, D.F., 30 de mayo de 1965.
- Boletín de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. Carta al Presidente de la República. Lic. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. N.º 8, 21 de agosto de 1965.
- 54 sociedades médicas acordes en hacer huelga. La Prensa, México, D.F., 23 de agosto de 1965.
- Granaderos ocupan hospitales. La Prensa, México, D.F., 28 de agosto de 1965.
- Sacan a los paristas del 20 de Noviembre. El Universal, 27 de agosto de 1965.
- Primer Informe de Gobierno. El Día, México, D.F., 2 de septiembre de 1965.
- Manifiesto de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. La Prensa, México, D.F., 7 de septiembre de 1965.
- Ortega RA. Mensaje de un médico encarcelado. Boletín de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. N.º 10, 15 de diciembre de 1965.
- Primer Informe de Gobierno. El problema médico. El Día, México, D.F., 2 de septiembre de 1965.
- Contreras R. Se manifiesta la CTM contra los promotores del Movimiento Médico. Carece de fundamento legal y es manejado con propósitos políticos. Novedades, México, D.F., 1 de septiembre de 1965.
- Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. Manifiesto. La Prensa, México D.F., 3 de septiembre de 1965.
- Medina-Valdez G. El problema médico y la conspiración oficial. La autoridad cumple el 80 Constitucional con burlas, mentiras... y granaderos. La Nación, México, D.F., 15 de septiembre de 1965.
- Ravelo C. Treviño Zapata, Castro Villagrana y Pérez Tinajero salen del país. Últimas Noticias, México, D.F., 6 de octubre de 1965.
- Boletín de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. N.º 8, México, D.F., 1 de octubre de 1965.
- Seguridad Social. Órgano del Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Seguro Social. El Presidente Díaz Ordaz en el Homenaje a los Médicos. México, D.F., 4 de noviembre de 1965.
- El Día del Médico: las palabras y los hechos. Política, México, D.F., 4 de noviembre de 1965.
- Treviño-Zapata N. Panorama de la medicina en México. Gac Med Mex 1986;122:187-92.
- La medicina y el hombre. N.os 3 y 4. México, D.F., diciembre-febrero, 1965-1966.
- Boletín de la Alianza de Médicos Mexicanos. N.º 15. México, D.F., 30 de abril de 1966.