



Matanzas en Orlando

Our community has absorbed the massacre of forty-nine *gente* at the Pulse Lounge in Orlando Florida this past weekend in a relatively calm manner. For those in the Cleveland area which have a personal connection to this attempted extermination of a generation of future leaders, they are for the most part enduring their grief in isolation without the usual support of family, friends and church. The preconceived notions of the circumstances surrounding the massacre; venue, lifestyle and sexual orientation repel many of the usual cultural sources we rely upon when mourning losses to our future.

We exclaim, “Oh, how terrible, it’s so sad”, and we pray silently for the souls and the families. As if these sound-bite proclamations somehow give us a pass, and sanction us to go about our daily routines without emotion and outrage. The murder of forty-nine beautiful, bright young people is a national disaster which calls into question policies that facilitated it. Policies which of course must be challenged and changed. However, as a community of Puerto Ricans and Latinos we must demand a deep dive into political, social and economic backdrops that contributed to the massacre. **Of the forty-nine killed, thirty-three, seventy-five percent were Latinos; twenty-five, over 50% of those murdered were Puerto Rican!**

Latin Night at the Pulse Lounge was selected to inflict the most pain into the heart of the Puerto Rican and Latino communities around the world. It will go down in history alongside the Ponce Massacre in March, 1937, when nineteen unarmed Puerto Ricans were killed by local National Guardsmen while marching in a Nationalist parade in Ponce, Puerto Rico. And, it is not that different from the public execution of over twenty students by Mexican authorities while they demonstrated in La Plaza Tlatelolco in DF, Mexico in October 1968; and the countless other future leaders killed or disappeared in Cuba, Dominican Republic and throughout Central and Latin America.

Political and social scientists, and economists cannot view this attack on Puerto Ricans in isolation from the economic meltdown resulting in social chaos, and a diasporic flight of eighty-four thousand Puerto Ricans to the United States in 2015 alone, most of who settled in Central Florida. The challenge to our spiritual consciousness is formidable, we must rely on each other to bring sense to that which is insensible, and work tirelessly toward a complete and thorough analysis of how the *matanza en Orlando* will impact the pathway toward the self-determination of the Puerto Rican people, and define the legacy of those who died. Wear your outrage with pride *mi gente!*

Juan Molina Crespo
Hispanic Alliance
Cleveland, Ohio
15 June, 2016