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# Youth Movements in Latin America: 20th Century Stories of Age, Struggle, and Socio-Political Independence

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YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA:  
20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY STORIES OF AGE, STRUGGLE, AND SOCIO-POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

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By

Amaris DelCarmen Guzman

2009

## DEDICATION

This Thesis paper is formally dedicated to those youth movement activists and participants in Latin America, whose ideologies were forbidden, censored, and outright shunned by those within such governments whose excessive use of force allowed for their misfortunate disappearances, tortures, and eventual deaths. Specifically, I would like to contribute this thesis paper to the youth movement in the Dominican Republic known as *Los Panfleteros de Santiago*, the student movement in Mexico known as *Movimiento Mexico 68*, and the student movement in Brazil known as *União Estudantil Nacional dos Estudantes Brasileiro*, whose tireless efforts and struggles awoke the political consciousness of these countries and led way towards positive changes as reflected in today's Dominican, Mexican, and Brazilian societies.



This paper is also dedicated to those countries who continue their struggles towards more just and democratic societies, especially those countries in Latin America who have undergone military rule and dictatorship beyond power and whose democracies are a reflection of their youth movement's former struggles towards socio-political independence.



For my mother, Ercilia Maria Guzman, and father, Adolfo Miguel Guzman, the spirits of my grandparents and Dominican brothers and sisters who underwent such rule in the Dominican Republic, my mentors, my generation of young leaders and all of those who believe in the power of youth around the world, this thesis paper is dedicated to you.

YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA:  
20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY STORIES OF AGE, STRUGGLE, AND SOCIO-POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

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THESIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

Throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the very nature and everyday functions of Latin American governments under dictatorship, authoritarian-like governments, and military regimes were questioned and challenged by many of its citizens, especially its young citizenry. Literary journals and books suggest that many young people in the late 1950's to early 1980's were very aware of their government's practices, did not agree with such practices of the government, and therefore created youth movements in countries as the case in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil to bring about change. This topic was brought about as an interest to analyze the phenomenon of the creation of such historical movements and political struggles towards socio-political independence, and to also shed light to the many stories of young men and women who helped create changes as reflected in today's societies in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Brazil. The stories and data attained in this thesis were collected through the use of literary journals, books, documentaries, second-hand radio interviews and other historical documentation. This study aims to put forth age as the key factor in the successful implementation of change within the societies.

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*“Youth movements have always been extreme, uncompromising, emotional, enthusiastic; they have never been moderate or rationalist. This has been the charm of the youth. It has made youth, as Martin Buber put it, the great ever-recurring chance of mankind. Or as Benjamin D’Israeli said, almost everything that is great has been done by youth.*

*Walter Laqueur, 1984*

**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA:**  
**20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY STORIES OF AGE, STRUGGLE, AND SOCIO-POLITICAL**  
**INDEPENDENCE**

Today, there is a great need to study the phenomenon of 20<sup>th</sup> century youth movements in Latin America in order to better understand the political involvement of youth in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the way these young members of political organizations affected, changed, and transformed contemporary nations. The aim of the present study is to analyze and compare three youth movements in Latin America: Los Panfleteros de Santiago<sup>1</sup>-Dominican Republic, Comite del 68-Mexico<sup>2</sup>, and União Nacional dos Estudantes Brasileiros<sup>3</sup> in order to arrive at a better historical and sociological understanding of the origins and contemporary impact of these movements. This topic was brought about as an interest to analyze the phenomenon of the creation of such historical movements and political struggles towards socio-political independence, and to also shed light to the many stories of young men and women who helped create changes as reflected in today's societies in these countries.

As a historical topic, this thesis will add to the few literary publications and bibliography articles to help interpret the facts through new lenses, questioning why they are important to be rethought of using different perspectives and revisited for academic discussion and historical purposes. This study differs from the existing or previous studies on youth movements in Latin

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<sup>1</sup> English Text: The Pamphleteers of Santiago

<sup>2</sup> English Text: Committee of 1968

<sup>3</sup> English Text: National Student Union of Brazil

America in three significant aspects: first, it contributes to our knowledge by adding an understanding of the significances of age playing a major role to the success of these movements; second, it presents new data on The Pamphleteers of Santiago, Dominican Republic, the student protestors during the 68 events in Mexico's Federal District, and the National Student Union of Brazil (UNE); and third, it includes specific details of how these youth movements have impacted the aftermaths of these governments.

Through a brief overview of the Pamphleteers of Santiago, Committee 68, and National Student Union of Brazil, this work will focus on how the movement's members influenced the development and impact of these nations today. Specifically, this work addresses two main questions: What did these movements consist of? And what is the importance of a political faction of the society represented young, upper, middle, and poor classes in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil who questioned and confronted their governments?

Although there are many ways to study the Pamphleteers of Santiago, the Mexico 68 student movement, and the National Student Union of Brazil, the present study will conclude by focusing on age as an important variable for determining outcomes of the movement. The historical experiences lived by the two previous generations (parents and grandparents) have affected—in a positive or negative way—the generation discussed within this study. Generation is also an important concept in these cases, as it strongly represents a base for the history behind political ideologies and the importance of studying such movements today.

As this is a multidisciplinary analysis it intends to cut across different traditional and non-traditional disciplines—including historical, sociological, and political lens—creating an alternative and more complete approach for better understanding this complex topic. This

interdisciplinary analysis will offer the conclusions of my research on the topic of the aforementioned movements. The final chapter will also examine the similarities and differences of these three movements within the context of the Dominican Republic in the 1950's-1960's, Mexico in the 1960s'-1970's and Brazil in the 1960's-1980's.

Twentieth century youth movements in Latin America, especially those in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil had an impact on governmental politics and society because these youth movements were brought about by young citizens. The theoretical perspective used in this study is represented in the following: as a result of political oppression within the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil during their times of their military dictatorships created conflicts and struggles with those youth who had a political active attitude and confronted or threatened the official status quo. Hence, the result of such creating socio-political independence and societal change overtime within these given countries.

The data in this study was obtained through the use of documentaries, radio interviews, books, articles, and other first-hand historical documentation (although not all this material was directly included in the present narrative). As there are a variety of perspectives regarding the occurrences of student movements in Latin America, the objective of these methods was to obtain a first-hand sociological and historical perspective the political scenarios of the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil throughout different periods of dictatorships in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, these methods were utilized to discuss the importance of youth movements.

While research methods for this study were mainly comprised of documentaries, radio interviews, books, and articles, the scarcity of such first-hand historical documentation became

a determinant factor in the outcome of this study. This study's outcome may have suggested to the reader a different theoretical perspective opposing to the aforementioned one above. Time constraints when performing such research for this study has opened up new windows to future articles and a potential manuscript to broaden the themes and main points addressed and discussed here.

### **A Brief Historical Perspective: Latin America in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Dictatorships in Latin America have often been seen as the left over ideologies and government system of *Caudillismo* and other forms of social elites at the oligarchies in Brazil stemming from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that overtook power after Iberian imperialism faded. According to Latin American Historian Marc Becker's account in *Dictatorship in Latin America*, of the Science Encyclopedia, "after the removal of Iberian crowns, some 20<sup>th</sup> century military dictatorships followed the pattern of the 19<sup>th</sup> century caudillo leaders who often ruled more through the use of personal charisma than brute military force."

Moreover, the characteristics of such 20<sup>th</sup> century dictatorships transitioned to authoritarian, repressive and military based governments with rightist ideologies as exemplified in Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic from 1924 to 1961, Diaz Ordaz authoritarian government in Mexico from 1964 to 1970; and the five-General military regime in Brazil from 1964 to 1985. These governments will be referred to as the scenarios for the uprising of youth political movements for this paper. On the same hand, the political context that framed the creation of these socio-political youth movements—socio-economic background and political

knowledge of the organizers/participants—and how these factors impacted these movements is also discussed in this study.

During the 1930's to the early 1980's, repressive violence (including forms of torture) was used as form of forcefully obtaining information from such young leaders and other young men and women involved within socio-political youth movements throughout Latin America. These historical facts portrayed the tensions and the conflicts between two main opposed political and ideological groups, one embodied by a military (right wing) and the other by leftist parties influenced by communist and socialist ideologies. In order to maintain its power or to affect the state, these groups used political violence including terrorism, murder, torture, threats, kidnappings and repression.

### **Representations in Art**

Art also represented this historical period in variety of ways, such as in films, literature, paintings, and music. These representations of art referred to the structure of government institutions and society during the time of military governments in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil. As an example of the Dominican Republic, the film documentary, *Los Panfleteros de Santiago* [The Pamphleteers of Santiago] produced and directed in February of 2009 by Nestor Montilla, member of the Common Roots Project Films of New York, vividly tells the untold story of this group of young pamphleteers who underwent political violence throughout the Trujillo military dictatorship decades of the Dominican Republic. Another example of Trujillo's military ruled government within the Dominican Republic is artistically addressed in the novel by the author Junot Diaz in his novel titled *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Diaz sheds light to minute historical details throughout his novel, about the

rampant disappearances of any who dared speak against Trujillo or his governance. Other significant texts such as *In the Time of the Butterflies* published in 1994 by Julia Alvarez and *La Fiesta del Chivo*<sup>4</sup> written by Mario Vargas Llosa in 2000 described the political times during the *Trujillato*.

The 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre of students in Mexico has also been represented in fictional and non-fictional literature works such as *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, and Politics* by Joseph Gilbert, *The Rise of Mexican Counterculture* by Eric Zolov, *Posdata* by Octavio Paz, the movie *Rojo Amanecer*<sup>5</sup> filmed in 1989 and directed by Jorge Fons presents a quite violent portrait of the event that took place in La Plaza de Tlatelolco and involved confrontations between the student protestors and military police.

Music also represented this period in the three countries. In Dominican Republic, typical *merengues*<sup>6</sup> during the era of Trujillo's administration were comprised of lyrics including Trujillo's name in most verses. In Mexico, Eric Zolov, a Latin American Historian and author of the 1999 book entitled *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* related the events of 1968 to that of the rise of rock 'n' roll music in Mexico and around the world. Zolov comments on the crisis of authority that the Mexican regime faced in 1968 referring to the event as a social and cultural one more than a political one. Zolov described, "from this perspective, the student's movement to challenge the dominant political structure reflected less a spontaneous organizational response to repression and the wastefulness associated with

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<sup>4</sup> English Text: The Feast of the Goat

<sup>5</sup> English Text: Red Morning

<sup>6</sup> *Merengue* is a musical genre commonly danced in the Dominican Republic.

the staging of the Olympics than a cumulative crisis of patriarchal values.” The musical counterculture fused with the ideologies of the young hippie movement throughout the entire North American region and the world.

In Brazil, artistic representations of the political scenarios during the military dictatorship were referred to within the music of Brazil. Samba evolved from a marginal musical genre performed exclusively in a few, poor, afro-Brazilian neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro into a huge, multi-millionaire, popular industry and widely recognized as a symbol of Brazilian national identity. During the Vargas administration in Brazil, Getulio Vargas used Brazilian musical artists to support his projects where he needed to reach and inspire a broad population. Among other Brazilian artists who performed musical pieces which represented Brazil’s politically intense times were Luiz Gonzaga and Joao Gilberto.

A few other filmed works in Brazil also represented the complex political situation during Brazil’s dictatorship. For example, the film *Pra frente, Brasil* filmed in 1982 and directed by Roberto Farias was comprised of lyrics that mentioned concepts of the economic miracle in Brazil, the combat of subversives, and resistance of leftist groups toward the government. Another recently released movie *Zuzu Angel* (2006) directed by Sergio Rezende also framed the political times during Brazil’s dictatorship. Zuzu Angel was the nickname for Zuleika Angel Jones, a fashion designer in both Brazil and U.S. who was known for opposing the Brazilian dictatorship after her son was arrested by military officials.

## **Youth Uprisings**

The everyday functions of dictatorship-like Latin American governments throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century were questioned by many of its citizens, especially its young citizenry. While socio-



political youth movements formed between the 1930's and 1960's in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil, it is imperative to question the reasons as to why these groups of young people were in fact created. Academic scholars and researchers suggest that many young people in the late 1950's to early 1980's were very aware of their government's practices, and did not agree with its procedures; due to the political and ideological forces, supported and influenced by other socialist-communist countries at that time, they engaged in changing through the "uprising" of youth movements.

However, opinions on this complex matter vary; as for Meredith W. Watts describes Seymour Martin Lipset's views in her (1973) article titled, *Efficacy, Trust, and Orientation toward Socio-Political Authority*, Lipset stressed that "the lack of reality or experiential base for student attitudes, and implied that such attitudes are less valid than the presumably *superior* and *more realistic* encounters have with society...such political behavior is an outgrowth of elements specific to the situation and environment of university life. (p. 284)"

Although many scholars may agree or disagree in perspectives of youth movements, they all point to one major underlying component of youth. The characteristics and ideologies of these different youth movements were very similar throughout these specific Latin America countries. The following chapters will provide the reader with a brief overview of the political scenarios that took place within the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil and more importantly, provide the reader with the information necessary to understand the origins of these youth movements, the struggles of those youth whose ideologies were the force behind

protests and manifestations, and the socio-political independence of these movements as seen within the restoration of civil liberties as seen within these present-day nations.

## CHAPTER 2

### **LOS PANFLETEROS DE SANTIAGO**

#### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The political instabilities of former Dominican dictators and leaders, its bankrupt economic status, and the possible Europe/U.S. annexations of island nations, among others, plagued the historical state of the Dominican Republic between 1844 and 1916. Dominican Presidents including Buenaventura Baez, Ulises Heureaux, Ramon Caceres, and Juan Isidro Jimenez became actors within the political sphere of the newly founded republic. Consequently, *Republica Dominicana*<sup>7</sup> had become one of the most controversial Caribbean nations in the Americas. With World War I approaching and the new Republic's presidential actors becoming too shaky, the U.S. Marines occupied the Dominican Republic for eight years [1916-1924]. As Historian Eric Paul Roorda wrote in his 1998 book *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic, 1930-1945*:

The onset of World War I had virtually removed European competition for commercial ascendancy in the Caribbean, and the military occupations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic supplanted the remaining German interests in those countries. Having removed both domestic and foreign political actors from their positions of power, the occupation government of the Dominican Republic proceeded unilaterally to restructure the country's social, economic, and military institutions...public health, public works, education, fiscal management, and civil and military service. (p. 17, para. 1)

Following the United States military occupation, a new dictator was on the rise to power in the Dominican Republic. Trained by the U.S. military during the U.S. Marine occupation, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina quickly moved up the ranks and became one of the youngest military generals to hold positions of power within the *Policia Nacional Dominicana* [National Dominican Police]. Through the newly trained *Ejercito Nacional Dominicana* [Dominican

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<sup>7</sup> Dominican Republic

National Army]<sup>8</sup>, young Brigade General Trujillo had gained strength and confidence in the politics of the country. Shortly after the six year provisional governments of President Juan B. Vicini Burgos and President Horacio Vasquez, the presidential elections of 1930 were held. Military trained, *El Generalísimo* General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, became President of the Dominican Republic that year.

Trujillo ruled the island's Dominican nation for over thirty years. Similar to Brazil's military regime in the mid 1960-1980's and Mexico's authoritarian government in the mid 1960's-1970, Trujillo's dictatorship encompassed three main elements: a military ruled government, economic prosperity, and the oppression of its citizenry. These three elements provide a framework as to why socio-political movements came about in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil. Trujillo's "formal constitutional framework, elections in which every candidate for office received one hundred percent of the votes cast, the utilization of force, the functioning of the single *Partido Dominicano* [Dominican Party], the role of various social groups" were also among similar characteristics of the Diaz Ordaz authoritarian government in Mexico and military regimes in Brazil.

The Dominican Republic had become an economically and nationalistically prosperous nation during the *Trujillato* [the time period during the Trujillo dictatorship]. In the article published in the New York Press in 2001: "The Jesus Galindez Case," New York Journalist William Bryk referred to this economic prosperity as the "building of highways, low income housing, hospitals and schools, balancing the national budget, repaying the entire national

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<sup>8</sup> Policia Nacional Dominicana [Dominican National Police] later became known as Ejercito Nacional Dominicano [Dominican National Army] under Trujillo's leadership of the army.

debt, and putting the Dominican *peso* [currency in the Dominican Republic] at par with the American dollar.” Foreign investment was decreasing, nationwide capital was increasing, and the exportation industry was booming. Crime rates were at an all time low due to strict sets of laws and the extreme sanction measures enforced by the military run government. As a result, many Dominicans felt safe from civilian to civilian crime such as robbery, car theft, murder, trespassing, among others. This paradoxical feeling could be explained in an analogical example, through other very organized hierarchical type of governments such as illegal mafias, where the communities feel protected and at the same time controlled but surrounded by no chaos and no arbitrary violence.

As many nations have “prospered” during political periods of dictatorship, there is always room for certain negative caveats and nuances. While the world’s perception of the Dominican Republic was fixated on the notion of a prosperous and progressive nation, a large portion of the citizens stated otherwise. As in Brazil and Mexico, the history of the Dominican Republic presents evidence of internal conflicts between the military government and specific groups within Dominican society. The ideology of the right wing military dictatorship clashed with those of the left wing communist and socialist political groups in the Dominican Republic. For example, the political rights and constitutional freedoms of Dominican citizens became an issue for government officials. The leftist groups sought the type of government with no military excessive power and sought after the ability to publicly express their political views in the media and public manifestations. As a protective reaction, the conservative government enforced laws to arrest and imprison any individual who was suspected of the alleged opposition against the government of Trujillo. Leftist narrative referred to a more equal

distribution of wealth, while the reality was that Trujillo's government's private businesses and lands were in the hands of members of an elite group, i.e.: Trujillo's allies. Conflicts between political groups led to violent confrontations: one of them was the massacre of a leftist group.

The dictatorship of Trujillo became fierce and strong and it was not long before political uprisings became increasingly apparent. Any socio-political groups who spoke out against the Trujillo dictatorship and/or did not agree with the *Trujillato*--vis a vis the media or other ways of communication to the world—would suffer the consequences of censorship. Many of those who were suspected of being part of a leftist group, or publicizing acts against the Trujillo government disappeared. This means: the Dominican 'secret' police known as the *SIM-Servicio Militar* [Military Service] would "arrest," or take the suspect, interrogate and torture him/her, and if the suspect survives take him/her to the prison centers or jails known as *La Victoria* [The Victory] and *La Cuarenta* [The Forty]. The "questioning" process was also known as the process of extorting information from an individual through the use of torture. These were common tactics used to obtain relevant information pertaining to any opposition against Trujillo and his system of government. The bodies of those killed during this process were dumped in nearby rivers or in some instances burned, as they were in Mexico in 1968. Others who were not killed were later released with massive torture injuries and yet others were left in jail where they had become political prisoners.

Survivors of such holocaust stated that before prisoners were killed, Trujillo mandated their signature of on a statement indicating that they were being released from jail. In actuality, the statement stated the Dominican government was not responsible for the injuries or deaths

of any prisoners incarcerated in those torture centers. The signature of the prisoner indicated that they understood the Trujillo government was not responsible for his/her death. These false statements suggest that the Dominican government sought to rid itself of any responsibility or alleged accusations of torturing or killing any prisoners. In addition, this provides evidence of illegal practices promoted by the government of Trujillo.

### **Los Panfleteeros de Santiago: Las Voces Rebeldes [The Pamphleteers of Santiago: The Rebel Voices]**

German Emilio Ornes, who lived throughout most of the *Trujillato*, was a long time publishing editor for a newspaper *El Caribe* based in Santo Domingo and the author of the book *Trujillo: Little Caesar of the Caribbean*. Published in 1958, Ornes wrote this book during the *Trujillato* and referred often to the permanent and every-day fear Dominicans experienced during Trujillo's dictatorship. Similarly, the book entitled *Los Panfleteeros de Santiago* published the testimonies of Dominicans who described everyday life in the Dominican Republic during the *Trujillato* as the following:

We lived in a dictatorship, more so a tyranny, there for 30 years. There existed an asphyxiating climate of insecurity and terror. Trujillo's name or his family's name were on streets, stadiums, etc., and in addition, there was strong vigilance, cars with Military Intelligence known as [SIM], a system of vigilantism throughout all of society in a way that planted no trust between friends and family members, which may have been informants. (English Translation by Thesis Author)<sup>9</sup>

With such significant student and youth movements happening around the world during the 1950's, the influences of communism and socialism, and the ideologies of revolution and

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<sup>9</sup> *Viviamos en una dictadura, mas bien tirania, que llevaba 30 anos. Existia un clima asfixiante, de inseguridad, y terror. Habia el nombre de Trujillo o su familia en ensanches, calles, estadios, etc. Y además de eso una estrecha vigilancia, causa de zozobra, de los carritos del servicio del Inteligencia Militar (SIM)...un sistema de delatores en toda capa de la sociedad de tal manera que se sembro la desconfianza entre amigos y aun familiares, pues quien menos se pensaba podría ser un informante. (Original Text)*

positive societal change, the younger citizenry of the Dominican Republic questioned its government's illegal practices, abuse of power and corruption. The older generation of Dominicans began its progression towards political consciousness while students and youth groups began building their base for change. One of these particular groups consisted of about 32 young people and students residing in Santiago, Dominican Republic. These young citizens were between the ages of fourteen and twenty years-old and came from lower class and middle class socio-economic backgrounds. This group was known as *Los Panfleteros de Santiago* [The Pamphleteers of Santiago].

Led by then sixteen year-old Wenceslao Marcial Guillen Gomez [also known as Wen], the name of The Pamphleteers of Santiago came from their distribution of politically conscious flyers around Santiago. Wen began organizing this group of Pamphleteers in 1956. His ideologies of change originated from his regular readings of Karl Marx and Vargas Vila at his school's library. Wen was considered a visionary by his close politically supportive friends because of his visions to change Dominican society. He expressed his political views to students, professors, and other community intellectuals in Santiago. He later integrated groups like *Catorce de Junio* [14<sup>th</sup> of June], church organizations, and other individuals who were interested in becoming part of *la revolucion* [the revolution].

The Pamphleteers of Santiago became a part of an umbrella collective known as the *UGRI-Union De Grupos Revolucionarios Independientes* [Union of Revolutionary Groups] in the Dominican Republic. Their primary goal was to awaken the consciousness of the Dominican Republic whose constitutional freedoms vanished throughout thirty years. All forms of media



and mass communication were run by the government. The Pamphleteers of Santiago accomplished their goal by distributing and posting pamphlets, around towns like Santiago. An example of a phrase used on a pamphlet was the following: “Con el perdon de la expresion, Trujillo es una mierda, abajo con el tirano” [Excuse my language, Trujillo is shit, down with the tyrant]. These pamphlets were instruments used to silently but violently express their sentiments towards the *Trujillato* and political injustices that were occurring. Most of these pamphlets were written between 1958 and 1960. Due to the scarcity of supplies and lack of financial support within Los Panfleteros, these pamphlets were often made using plastered paper and written with the red lipsticks and help of the Pamphleteers’ girlfriends, mothers, and grandmothers. The pamphlets were hidden in the underneath compartments of homes of leading Pamphleteers, later becoming evidence of opposition to the Trujillo dictatorship.

The Secret Military Police<sup>10</sup> [SIM] had found the pamphlets posted on street light lamps, school bulletins, parks, and other outdoor community areas. As pamphlets or any other opposing material of this kind were prohibited in the Dominican Republic, there were severe consequences that lead to the arrest, imprisonment, torture, and death of individuals responsible for these postings.

One by one, each member of *Los Panfleteros de Santiago* was arrested and later “disappeared”. Survivors of torture centers like *La Cuarenta* and *La Victoria* described the vivid details of the type of illegal tortures that Wen and other members of the Pamphleteers had endured during their time there. The testimony of a survivor of the prison torture center *La*

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<sup>10</sup> Original Spanish Text: Servicio Militar

*Cuarenta* [The Forty], published in the recent book *Los Panfleteros de Santiago*, Jose Israel Cuello Hernandez observed the deaths of the pamphleteers as the following:

They took them out again from their cells around eight at night (it was difficult to appreciate night hours) and they began killing them one by one using the noose methods and hanging them, and they placed them two at a time in the Volkswagen secret military police cars to throw them in a common area in the farmers cemetery, the cemetery located in Ortega and Gasset streets. The group of twenty-seven were the Pamphleteers of Santiago. Their crime: distributing pamphlets reproduced with plastics and carbon made of burned vegetables (English Translation by Thesis Author)<sup>11</sup>

The pamphleteers were killed at the torture centers in January 1960 and their bodies were later disposed of.

Despite the death of the Pamphleteers, the leftist movements grew stronger. By the end of the 1950's and early 1960's, many Dominicans supported the wave of socio-political movements on the island. Leftist groups such as *Catorce de Junio*, other members of *La Union de Grupos Revolucionarios Independientes* and other government officials *continued* their collaborative efforts to topple the dictatorship and bring about a change in government. These groups understood that a change was to be brought about from within the Dominican government. On May 30, 1960, Trujillo was allegedly assassinated by two of his own military protégés on the street of San Cristobal, in Santo Domingo.

Almost half a century has gone by since the disappearance of *Los Panfleteros de Santiago* and other individuals accused of conspiring against the *Trujillato*. Family members of these pamphleteers have demanded the rights to the bodies of these young men for years. Yet,

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<sup>11</sup> "A ellos los sacaron de nuevo de las celdas cerca de las ocho de la noche [ahí era difícil apreciar la hora de la noche] y los fueron matando uno a uno con el método de la soga y dos palitos, ahorcados, y los colocaban de dos en dos en un carro Volkswagen para tirarlos en una fosa común en el cementerio obrero, el cementerio que está en la parte alta de la calle Ortega y Gasset. Ese grupo seria de 27, eran los panfletistas de Santiago. Su delito: regar un volante reproducido con corcho y hollín de carbón vegetal..." (Original Text)

the Dominican government has been unable to locate these bodies, stating that many of the prisoner records were destroyed when the torture jails and centers were closed down. Those who conducted such illegal acts within the prison torture centers were never brought to justice. Other government officials who approved such tortures and killings fled the Dominican Republic in political exile to Europe.

*Los Panfleteros de Santiago* were seen as visionaries and agents of change. These young men risked their lives to restore the freedom and liberties of the Dominican people that was once a part of their lives. Their fearless actions played an instrumental role of the socio-political independence of the Dominican people. This socio-political independence was reflected both shortly after the death of Trujillo in the Joaquin Balaguer transitional government. Today, almost fifty years later, the Dominican Republic shares a government of democratic values. Although corruption, crime, and violence, exist, the civil liberties of Dominican citizens are restored to a greater extent in the history of the Dominican Republic.

### **CHAPTER 3**

### ***MEXICO '68***

### **MEXICO**

Forty-one years have gone by since the student massacre occurred in Mexico at *La Plaza de Tlatelolco* in Mexico City on the second day of October, 1968. In order to understand this historical event, it is imperative to first recount the events in Mexico, in the mid 1960's events that lead up to it that culminated in this event. Starting in the 1950's, Mexico started to witness what could be perceived as challenges to the authoritarian government of the PRI, the party that ruled Mexico starting in 1929. The 'campesinos' [countrymen] and 'obreros' [working class] sectors went on strike for a raise in salary and better working conditions in the 1950's. The education sectors also protested for better pay. Due to the strict ruling style that sometimes included military regimes relied on by the *PRI-Partido Revolucionario Institucional* [Institutional Revolutionary Party] political party in Mexico, the government incarcerated leaders of such strikes and other members of similar movements that were considered a threat to the government. The PRI party ran the Mexican government since 1929 became increasingly repressive during the 1960's. After Mexico's many political uprisings and economic turmoil in a few major sectors, Gustavo Diaz Ordaz became President of Mexico on September 8, 1964.

According to a testimonial on NPR News Radio Diaries Interview conducted by Robert Siegel in 2008 with various student movement leaders in Mexico during the Diaz Ordaz administration, one individual commented that economically speaking, the 1960's were very good times for Mexico. Like Brazil during its economic expansion of important sectors in the 1970's, jobs were readily available and Mexico was becoming a financially stable and prosperous country. Due to Mexico's economic prosperity, Mexico was chosen to host the

World Olympics for the first time in the history of 'developing' countries. The Olympics provided a great "marketing" opportunity for the PRI. However, when international media came to Mexico to cover the sports event, what was represented to the rest of the world was not only the spectacle of the various sports, but the spectacle of political violence from the government against its citizens. At the same time the violent events during the Olympics showed not only the weakness and desperation of the Diaz Ordaz government but also the strength, political involvement and surplus of great sectors of the population.

All across Mexico City, university students caught onto the ideologies of young student movements all over the world. Elena Poniatowska, the Mexican writer and journalist, contributed most to a judicious evaluation of the events of 1968 (Joseph and Henderson, 2003). In her article published in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, and Politics* in 1980, Poniatowska described Mexico's upcoming World Olympics as the following:

It was fitting that Mexico City should be the site of the Olympiad; no other country in the world was more appropriate than ours; it shone like a gold coin in the midst of the jungles and undiscovered regions of Latin America. In that atmosphere, prosperity, peace, evident economic growth, the absence of social conflicts, the permanence of the PRI which ensured the political stability of the country—the student movement of 1968 was the political awakening of the young (Joseph and Henderson, 2006).

While the Olympic Games made its way to the top of Mexico's political agenda, university students began organizing a sort of national agenda based on leftist beliefs and personal analysis of philosophical and political literature as well as meetings to bring about change within Mexican society.

It is important to note that in July 1968 about two months prior to the October Tlatelolco massacre, there were a series of events that led up to the happenings on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. There were a series of confrontations between students from the National Polytechnic

Institute, IPN and the Autonomous National University of Mexico City, UNAM. As a result, the military and police including *granaderos* [grenade experts] intervened by using physical force against students. Two days later, there were two manifestations scheduled to take place: one to protest against the repressive actions of the 'granaderos' confrontation with the students and the second to celebrate the Cuban revolution. Both of these events were organized by youth allegedly involved with the *Partido Comunista Mexicano* [Mexican Communist Party]. The student movements in Mexico gained momentum from these July protests and began to intensify. Massive marches took place throughout the rest of the summer and into the fall. By October 2, 1968, previously feuding leftist groups joined forces and set out on a march which many would not return.

The event that took place on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1968 in Mexico City should be seen and understood within the context of political events involving young people and violence in other Latin American countries such as the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. Students, professors, business owners, farmers, and other sectors of Mexican society gathered in *La Plaza* on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1968 in the evening to hear students and other community leaders discuss their demands for socio-political freedoms and to plan actions to counteract the repressive use of force by the military-run government.

During the manifestation, head persons of the Mexican military and national public security ordered the killing of any 'subversive' individuals. Battalions from Mexico's military infantry divisions positioned themselves in strategic posts around *El Zocalo* [The Plaza of Tlatelolco]. The military brought in tanks, rifles, and a variety of weaponry to be used in a potential case of student riots and/or confrontations between those gathered and the military.

Hours after the military took their posts, the second day of October 1968 became a historically tragic day. After an alleged provocation by the student protestors who the military later claimed opened fire first, the military opened fire on the crowd. As a result, widely incongruous data suggests that between 30 and 2,000 students were killed and many more were beaten, arrested and incarcerated.

These students and other members suspected of supporting such movements were sanctioned for exercising their right to freedom of speech. Many ended up in prison expressing their political views, and attempting to create a consensus for change away from an authoritarian form of government in Mexico. Yet, equally as important from two political perspectives is that this day marked an indelible stain on the PRI rule. The administration of Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, became publically and internationally known as authoritarian abusive and corrupt.

### **México '68: "No Queremos Olimpiadas, Queremos Revolución" [Mexico '68: "We do not want Olympics, We want Revolution]**

Led by student movement leaders like Marcelino Perello Vals, *Mexico '68* student movement was comprised of urban middle-class and lower-class students who mainly attended the Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN). Other groups and universities such as the *Coalicion de Profesores de Enseñanza Media Superior*<sup>12</sup>, *Iberoamericana*<sup>13</sup> and the *Colegio de Mexico* also supported and joined the movement of 1968. *La UNAM y La Poli* became hotbeds for student political involvement and

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<sup>12</sup> English Text: Coalition of Professors for Teaching

<sup>13</sup> English Text: Iber-American University

the independent socio-political expressions of ideological forces via leftist-rebel principles. These students became adherents to a political ideology that men sought to spread throughout Mexican society. This clash of ideologies was described by Aguayo (2008) as a “clash of an old Mexico and a new Mexico<sup>14</sup>.”

Similar to the student movements in the Dominican Republic and Brazil, young people in Mexico manifested their ideologies via alternative means. Students and others from the *Mexico '68* movement held daily meetings at *La UNAM* and *La Poli*. They held protests and marches against repression, political prisoners, and the censorship of their freedom of speech, torture, and other forms of injustices and violence used by the Mexican government to oppress its citizenry during the authoritarian rule of Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. On one occasion, in September of 1968 students held a successful massive protest in Mexico City attended by approximately 200,000 people. The Diaz Ordaz government criticized the frequency of such gatherings and promised extreme sanctions if such a massive protest happened again.

Ten days before the World Olympic Games commenced—October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1968—“Mexico '68” gathered about six thousand to eight thousand people for a reunion at *El Zocalo* [Plaza of Tlatelolco]. Luis Echeverria Alvarez, former secretary of government, approved an order for the military to eliminate and kill the “terrorists”. During the speech of several student movement leaders, military men, military tanks and sniper men surrounded *La Plaza* in Mexico City. The military opened fire killing a large number of students and other observers. Data suggests that the exact number of those killed that day has been estimated between three hundred and two

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<sup>14</sup> Comment made by Sergio Aguayo, historian, during the interview by National Public Radio posted on December 1, 2008 hosted by Robert Siegel.



thousand and arrests are estimated at six thousand. The bodies of the slain students were later placed into garbage trucks and vans and were disposed of at the government's discretion. This disposal of the body also took place in the *Panfleteros* case discussed in Chapter One.

The massacre of Tlatelolco continues to be discussed in Mexico even now years after it occurred. The Mexican government denied the forceful use of repression and stated that the reason for firing at the crowd was self-defense in response to random shots fired by students. Yet, the origin of these stray bullets was never clarified nor has it been substantiated that the protestors ever even fired shots. The facts do substantiate, however, that the military received orders to surround the area and fire at will on the protestors. To this day, no one has been tried for the killings of the students.

Today, *la Poli y la UNAM* [the IPN and the UNAM] continue to be political cradles for many student social movements. Students in Mexico enjoy relative freedom of speech unlike under the censorship of the 1960's. The Tlatelolco Massacre commonly referred to as *El Dos de Octubre*<sup>15</sup> continues to serve as an example of how students of *Mexico'68* played an important role in creating a positive change within Mexican society. These students struggled to win socio-political freedoms for their fellow citizens. Their age became a strong factor behind the energy of the movement, and the force of their ideological beliefs exerted a previously unrecognized pressure on the repressive PRI government to change. These young voices, many of them now silenced, contributed to a more democratic Mexico.

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<sup>15</sup> English Text: 2<sup>nd</sup> of October

## CHAPTER 4

### *UNIÃO NACIONAL DOS ESTUDANTES*

#### BRAZIL

Thousands gathered in Wall Street when they had heard the news of the U.S. Stock Market Crash in October of 1929. The World's financial markets collapsed and the international community fell into an economic recession, Brazil included. Brazil's major exportation industry at that time was coffee. World coffee prices fell, coffee planters needed loans to plant coffee, and the consumption of coffee fell dramatically. In the middle of financial crisis in 1930, presidential campaigns were taking place in Brazil and Julio Prestes, then governor of Sao Paolo and Getulio Vargas, then governor of Rio Grande do Sul and former military man ran for election. Júlio Prestes won the election, however the opposing military did not agree. The election was considered flawed and was questioned by the military.

Military governments in Brazil became a common ground since its early years during its standing as a Republic. Similar revolutionary episodes occurred in Latin America between 1930 and 1932; one of which was represented in Brazil. Newly elected President Júlio Prestes was ousted by a coup d'état' on October 24, 1930 and Getulio Dornelles Vargas came into power in November of that year. Vargas remained in power for 15 years and would be re-elected president in 1950 by a popular vote, but did not remain long as he committed suicide on August 29, 1954.

Getulio Vargas used 'populism' to favor his anti-communist agenda for Brazil. As Brazil was becoming more vulnerable to economic downfalls, Vargas also sought economic opportunities for Brazil and planned for the *Estado Novo* [New State] of Brazil. The *Estado Novo* brought about economic prosperity to Brazil represented within the industrialization and

nationalization of sources: mines, mineral deposits, and waterfalls among others. It was also comprised of new labor laws to protect workers and children. Vacations time and health insurance were also provided for workers, and women were also allowed in the labor force. During the Vargas administration, the relationship between government and the church also strengthened. The Church supported Vargas in many aspects as exemplified during the symbolic mark of their collaboration the *Cristo Redentor*, given by the Vatican as a present to Vargas in 1931. The Church received support from the Vargas administration by promoting the increase of Catholics in Brazil through programs like the teaching of catechism in all public schools.

To understand 'Brazilian Prosperity' within the global situation and the industrial investment in Brazil, we must also discuss Brazil's involvement within World War II in the early 1940's. For the first few months of the war, Vargas declared Brazil as neutral. However, after Brazilian ships were attacked on several occasions by German submarines, Vargas joined forces with the Allies and declared war against Italy and Germany in 1942. Brazil became the only South American country to join the war and send military troops to fight abroad. Brazilians were affected by the War both economically and politically. The *Estado Novo* economic package was deteriorating and Vargas was becoming 'unpopular' in the eye of the international community at war.

Vargas followed a combined political agenda; in one hand he created a system of social reforms and programs that allowed citizens to access health care, labor policies, formal education. Alliances between the industries and the working class gave place for the creation of unions and increased migration from the countryside to urban areas, especially Sao Paulo and

Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, the government decentralized its political focus in these two cities and started programs in different parts of Brazil.

Vargas on the other hand had also received pressure from political factions within Brazil and more so, the ideologies of socialism, fascism, communism, and nationalism stirred unsettling conflicts throughout Brazil. Members of the middle class and lower class Brazilians were engaging within political agendas; for example, communism and socialism in Europe and the USSR-Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, influenced leftist groups in Brazil to form a “counterpart” opposed to Vargas’ government. Facing oppositions from leftist groups influenced by communism –especially from Russia—were persecuted and oppressed by Vargas. Gradually, as a form of liberalizing his government, Vargas reinstated the *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* in Congress, released political prisoners, and held presidential elections.

### **União Nacional dos Estudantes: Levantamento de Ativismos Juvenis [National Union of Students of Brazil: Uprising of Young Activism]**

Initiated in the late 1930’s at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the *UNE-União Nacional dos Estudantes do Brasil*<sup>16</sup> organized National Student Conferences to discuss the socio-political struggles of Brazilians during Getulio Vargas’ dictatorship and supporting the end of his *Estado Novo*. With World War II taking place in Europe, Brazil’s government maintained strict guidelines against the expressions of communism and socialism in the country. Vargas’ administration began its repression and violence against members of the UNE and as a result students began to publically protest. One particular incident occurred during a march of silence against Vargas in 1943 which resulted in the death of a student named Jaime da Silva Teles.

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<sup>16</sup> This point forward, the UNE refers to the União Nacional dos estudantes.

Another student named Democritus de Sousa Filho was also killed for campaigning against Vargas in 1945. These incidents exemplify the repressive acts of violence used by the government to suppress subversive civil behavior to Brazilians, specifically those who opposed the official government.

The *União Nacional dos Estudantes* created a reputation for fighting for the working classes in Brazil, especially union workers and lower classes in the 1940's and 1950's. Members of the UNE grew stronger and joined forces with several groups including the political party in Brazil *UDN-União Democrática Nacional* [National Democratic Union] and a leftist group known as the *ANL-Aliança Nacional Libertadora* [National Liberation Alliance], students from the University of Sao Paulo and Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, specifically Faculty and laws school students that supported these movements. According to the UNE's history on its national website, students also organized and promoted in 1947 one of the most important movements in public opinion in Brazilian history until this time: the campaign "The oil is ours," series of events to a nationalistic defense of the territorial and economic development of the country.

Many right wing groups expressed repressive behaviors towards left-leaning groups in Brazilian society during the mid 1930's and 1940's. It is important to mention that right-wing groups were supported by the government and the Brazilian Catholic Church. One of the most important ultra-rightist organizations was the *AIB-Ação Integralista Brasileira*. As Brazilian historian Thomas E. Skidmore stated in *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (1999):

The *Integralista* vision was of a Christian Brazil based on a disciplined society, with little tolerance for revolutionary action on the left. Its members wore green uniforms, had a quasi-military hierarchy, and engaged in paramilitary parades and exercises. They also relished street confrontations with their enemies on the left. Although it bore an obvious superficial

resemblance to European fascism, in fact, the AIB lacked the racist...expansionist, fully militaristic qualities typical of European—especially German—fascism. (p. 111)

The AIB also had Nazi-like representations such as the  $\Sigma$  patch symbol on their military outfits similar to the swastika, and the raising of the hand as a 'formal' use of greeting members. Similar to fascist countries throughout the 1930's and 1940's, these symbols were referred to as member-only representations of rightist ideologies.

During the mid 1950's, Brazil's optimistic government played a major role during the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek. Kubitschek's major goal during his term of office was to advance Brazil 50 years in 5 years also known as "50 in 5". His economic policy was defined in his new *Programa de Metas* [Program of Goals] which consisted of 31 objectives spread over 6 large areas: energy, transportation, foodstuffs, basic industry, education and in addition brought about the christening of Brasilia as the new capital of Brazil. Although these *metas* became the essential element for a Kubitschek's political agenda, the propagation of strikes was an indication of increasing social mobilization.

The increasing mobilization of opposing groups became a significant indication of the rising conflicts between the military groups that were on the rise to power in the 1960's and politically conscious youth movements in Brazil. In 1964, Joao Goulart, then elected president of Brazil was overthrown by a coup d'état and General Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco became President of Brazil. Similar to the economic prosperity of the Dominican Republic in the early 1930's, Castelo Branco's government [1964-1967] was one of economic affluence. Funding from the international community, specifically loans from the World Bank and heavy investments from Multi-National American companies factored in to the economic growth in

Brazil. In addition, these positive economic interventions created “popular” propaganda for the military to continue in power over the course of 20 years.

During the Cold War, the political, economic and military tension between USSR and its allies, and the western world—having the USA as its leader— allowed for Brazil to support the U.S. and its battle against communism. Military governments established a new period of repression, violence and corruption in Brazil. Students—attending universities in Rio de Janeiro and the University of Brasilia—were becoming main targets of oppressive actions by the governments. Unions and worker federations were also targeted and many of its leaders were jailed. Forty-nine judges were purged, fifty congressmen had their mandates canceled and most PTB-Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro [Brazilian Labor Party] deputies lost their mandates as well. Political parties were diminished, and the *Lei de Imprensa* [Press Law] became strictly controlled by the government. Left wing politicians were overthrown from Congress, however, two political parties remained, the *ARENA-Alicança Renovadora Nacional* [National Renovated Alliance] and the *MDB-Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* [Brazilian Democratic Movement].

The military regime was the inauguration of a more repressive form of dictatorship in Brazilian history. The coup d'état of 1964 stirred conflicts among its opposing forces of the UNE. As military dictatorship infiltrated Brazil's political spaces, members of the UNE including students, university intellectuals among others, were banned from manifesting repressions and violence against citizens done by the military government. So much so, the headquarters of the UNE was invaded and burned on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1964 by the national police. Thereafter, confrontations arose between the UNE and government officials during protests and on a few occasions, students were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and/or executed.

After the Presidency of General Castelo Branco, Army General Artur da Costa e Silva replaced Castelo Branco on March 15, 1967. Throughout his governmental period, Costa e Silva took a stricter approach in oppressing leftist communist groups in Brazil by institutionalizing punishment. Institutional Acts --similar to the Executive Orders and Acts issued by state and government officials in the U.S.—amended the constitution of Brazil and allowed for the removal of elected officials, allow for 2 party systems in congress, and enforce civil disobedience through imprisonment or incarceration, and no elections among others. For example, Institutional Act number 5 installed by Costa e Silva, allowed for the “closing of Congress, all crimes against ‘national security’ were subjected to military justice, and censorship was introduced” (Skidmore, 1999).

General Emilio Medici came to power at the peak of economic growth in Brazil and governed Brazil between 1969 and 1974. During this period, Brazil’s left-wing groups intensified their strategies and tactics to oppose the military dictatorship. As former U.S. Marine Corps captain and veteran writer, Robert B. Asprey wrote in his book, *War in the Shadows: The Guerilla History, Volume 2* (1994):

Brazilian insurgents also chose urban guerilla warfare in attempting to overthrow the military dictatorship and establish a Marxist and Leninist form of government similar to that in Fidel Castro’s Cuba. The nucleus of guerilla groups that emerged in the late 1960’s came from a split in the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), which, guided by Moscow, was pursuing a reformist as opposed to a militant policy. (P. 1089)

The *ALN-Aliança Nacional Libertadora* and the *MR-8-Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro* [October 8<sup>th</sup> Revolutionary Movement] became two of the strongest ‘left-wing armed resistance’ based guerilla groups in Brazil. Carlos Marighela, member of the Brazilian Communist Party and founder of the ALN, became known as the “chief theoretician” who



introduced “guerilla tactics<sup>17</sup>” to help combat dictatorship in Brazil. The ALN was formed in March of 1935 during the Vargas administration and was comprised of middle class officers and poor servicemen whose social-democratic and anti-imperialist ideologies went against the elite groups that owned many of the agrarian industry in Brazil. As stated in the online mini-manual of Carlos Marighela in June of 1969:

The accusation of ‘violence’ or ‘terrorism’ no longer has the negative meaning it used to have. It has acquired new clothing; a new color. It does not divide, it does not discredit; on the contrary, it represents a center for attraction. Today, to be ‘violent’ or a ‘terrorist’ is a quality that ennoble any honorable person, because it is an act worthy of a revolutionary engaged in armed struggle against the shameful military dictatorship and its atrocities.

Since these guerilla movements behaved on the grounds of resistance and liberation ideologies, Marighela suggested the use of arms to resist such repressive behaviors by the government. For organizations like the ALN, the use of arms was considered the “power of the people” to “fight back” the government’s use of arms as repressive actions.

Later led by Luis Carlos Prestes—son of an army officer and himself a military commander—opposed the oligarchic movements occurring in the 1920’s and sought a rebellion on the countryside of Brazil. Although the movement proved unsuccessful, the communist leader continued his efforts of leading both the Brazilian Communist Party and the National Liberation Alliance (ALN). Young people in their teenage years and twenties who were supporters of Marxist ideologies, radical nationalists, and others members of the Catholic Church who also professed Liberation theologies joined the guerilla movements, including: *VAR-Vanguarda Armada Revolucionaria-Palmares*, *ALN*, and *COLINA-Comandos de Libertação Nacional*. Some of these resistance actions included bank robberies and kidnappings of foreign

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<sup>17</sup> These guerilla tactics usually derived from foreign communist and socialist governments including Cuba, China, and the Soviet Union.

officials, and also executions of tortures, rural guerilla actions, among others. Influenced by Marxist-rebel principles, members of these groups committed these crimes as a self-interpretation of “taking justice into their own hands.”

In the late 1960’s, *Movimento Revolucionario 8 de Outubro*, a more ‘urban guerilla group’ whose name came from the date of Che Guevara’s death, also formed as a derivative of the Brazilian Communist Party. The MR-8 used guerilla tactics of armed resistance and strict training for its members to ensure that the government heard their demands. As Thomas E. Skidmore commented in his book, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-1985* (1988):

In their manifesto the kidnapers announced “that it was possible to defeat the dictatorship and the exploitation if we arm and organize ourselves.” They accused the military government of “creating a false happiness in order to hide the misery, exploitation and repression in which we live.” They ended on an ominous note: “Finally, we would like to warn all those who torture, beat, and kill our comrades that we will no longer allow this to continue,” concluding “now it is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”(P. 101-102)

Led by Daniel Terra, the MR-8 held Marxist-Leninist ideologies and differed from other leftist social groups through their utilization of physical armed force to manifest their demands. For example, in September of 1969, members of the MR-8 and the ALN became forces behind the kidnapping of U.S. Ambassador—Charles Burke Elbrick—to Brazil in exchange for the release of fifteen political prisoners specified political prisoners and the need for their “revolutionary manifesto” to be aired throughout Brazil’s most important news program, *Jornal Nacional* (Red Globo). In addition to kidnapping elected officials, these guerilla groups also took part in robberies and other forms of criminal activities.

Due to these forces of opposition, Medici’s government created the DOI-CODI *Destacamento de Operações de Informações-Centro de Operações de Defesa Interna* [Operations and Information Department-Internal Defense Operation Central] and the OBAN-

*Bandeirantes* Organization which acted as the “second army”. Similar to the secret police of the Dominican Republic during the *Trujillato*, the DOI-CODI served as the Brazilian intelligence agency through which its agents used a variety for torture techniques to obtain information from prisoners considered associated with oppositional groups. Although these methodologies were censured to the general public of Brazil, leaders of leftist groups were aware of these practices and therefore executed “revolutionary manifestos” to end such practices.

As conflicts continued between opposing factions of society, General Ernesto Geisel came to power between 1974 and 1979. Geisel’s model government was referred to as a slower, secure, and steadily open government. Despite the fact that the military dictatorship still endured and intense repression existed, the *MDB-Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* [Brazilian Democratic Party] became a strong force against the opposite rightist factions in Brazil. Liberation Theologians or other members of the church in Brazil were also considered ‘outspoken critics of the military regime.’ At this time, the military dictatorship in Brazil began deteriorating and Brazil was undergoing an economic crisis. General João Batista de Oliveira Figueiredo [1979-1985] was the last military president during the dictatorship.

Throughout the rule of five Brazilian generals, it is also imperative to provide an analysis for Brazil’s sustainability of dictatorship support and rule. The national economy grew and unemployment decreased. Foreign investment also increased and the nation’s wealth was booming. Much of Brazil’s domestic production grew wealthy and so did business owners. As a result, business owners relied on certain stability the military conservative regime seems to offer opposed to the unstable, chaotic, and largely opposed by the U.S. government, leftist parties and political agendas.

The UNE was the strength of most major movements in Brazil, specifically in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. However, after much repression by the government during the 20-year dictatorship, demonstrations were decreasing and students were continuously threatened and incarcerated. Mário Maestri,<sup>18</sup> a Brazilian historian who went into exile during the 1960's, stated that "demonstrations in the country began to decline and on October 12<sup>th</sup>, the student movement, the backbone of the opposition, suffered a strong blow." Maestri continued by stating that participants of the UNE's 30<sup>th</sup> Congress in Ibiúna, Sao Paulo were arrested along with many of its leadership causing its activities to rapidly decline.

The 1970's and 1980's represented a historical timeframe of actions for the UNE. Specifically, in 1979, members of the UNE kept protesting in the streets of major cities in Brazil due to the deaths of students caused by military. According to their declarations (also posted online at [www.une.org.br](http://www.une.org.br)) they also fought for the "greater resources for the university, the protection of free and public education, and the release of students arrested in Brazil." The *União Nacional dos Estudantes* also supported the first public and direct elections during the election of Tancredo Neves in 1984. It was not long before the military dictatorship of Brazil was nearing its end. The UNE's efforts within public manifestations continued in the early 1990's while promoting "ethics in politics" as their main item on their political agenda.

Today, Brazil's *União Nacional dos Estudantes* still remain active. As one of the most important powerhouses of historical youth activism and Marxist-rebel ideologies, the struggles of many young people paved the way for a more democratic government in Brazil. Although

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<sup>18</sup> Published: MAESTRI, Mario. Brazil, 1968: o assalto ao céu, a descida ao inferno. Revista Espaço da Sophia, v. 1, p. 12, 2008 titled Brazil 1968: The Assault on Heaven, the Descent into Hell in The Translator's Network for Linguistic Diversity Mario Maestri.

many of the student leaders during its early Vargas years and dictatorship years were tortured, executed, and/or imprisoned, its legacy and historical significance has flourished within Brazil.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, groups of young citizens, specifically students and other members of society were politically involved in the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Brazil. The aforementioned chapters presented a brief yet informative political framework of these three countries that led to the creation of socio-political youth movements in periods of dictatorship and repressive and authoritarian governments. In addition, these chapters presented the reader with details of main culminating historical events that led to the peak of each movement in each country.

This study used a sociological, political, and historical approach which focused on how the movement's members influenced the development and impact of these actions. Specifically, this paper briefly stated the historical origins, leaders, and ideologies of these movements and their importance as a political faction of society represented through the young, upper, middle, and poor classes of these three countries in Latin America; these groups questioned and confronted their governments vis a vis public manifestations including pamphlets, protests, strikes, and armed resistance.

While there are a variety of ways to study how these movements in fact impacted these contemporary nations, it was imperative to provide an interdisciplinary lens to interpret how the political scenarios contributed to the formation of politicized groups that confronted the *Trujillato*, the authoritarian government of Diaz Ordaz, and the military dictatorship of Brazil. This study's aimed to cut across different traditional and non-traditional discipline—including historical, sociological, and political lens—in order to create a more complete approach for

better understand this complex topic. This phenomenon of these youth movements must be seen from a variety of perspectives to comprehend why these movements were created and why they were important to transitional democracy in Latin America.

This study differs from the existing or previous studies on youth movements in Latin America in three specific ways. First, it has contributed to the knowledge of these historical movements by adding and understanding the significances of age playing a major role to the success of these movements. To understand the interest in analyzing the creation of such historical movements and political struggles towards socio-political independence, the reader must acknowledge that age—young people of ages 12-25—was the force behind the ideologies of these youth movements. Twentieth century youth movements in Latin America, especially those in the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Brazil has an impact on governmental politics and society because these youth movements were brought about by young citizens. The leaders of these youth movements were young and usually relied on socialist, communist, Marxist, and Leninist ideologies to act upon the repressive actions of these military ruled governments.

In addition to the “age factor,” there is an importance of historical position of these groups in relation with the generations before them. While the age factor contributed to the forces of change, the element of age also contributed to the consciousness and alternatives opposing the ideologies of systems before their generation. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century became an important historical period for the implementation of regimes with which allowed the settling bases for the success of authoritarian/military governments in these countries. Latin America conformed to a tradition of elitist groups, who based their power on oligarchies

which subjugated and oppressed the country, preventing a plural political representation. These countries became the product of benefits for a few, while the European and Russian model governments which offered proposed differences which allowed for the transmitting of the “power to the people” and displaced the elites. The leftists ideologies served as based and foundation for these groups. For example, La Victoria [The Victory], the triumph of the Cuban revolution proved that the status quo was able to be confronted.

Second, it presented new data on The Pamphleteers of Santiago, Dominican Republic, the student protestors during the 1968 events in Mexico’s Federal District, and the National Student Union of Brazil. The stories of young men and women who helped create change as reflected in today’s societies in these countries have been often neglected as reflected in the absence of such topics within many scholarly materials. This study has shed light to these missing stories, thus adding to the few literary publications and bibliography articles. For example, the stories of *Los Panfleteros de Santiago* of the Dominican Republic were recently documented in the spring of 2009. Dr. Ramon Veras, one of the surviving *Panfleteros* wrote a manuscript regarding the everyday risks these young men took to make the Dominican Republic aware of the injustices of the *Trujillato*. His manuscript also described details as to the tortures and deaths of the pamphleteers that were never openly discussed in published material due to the censorship of media in the Dominican Republic even after the fall of Trujillo.

While many publications exist regarding the socio-political struggles of the student protestors during the 1968 movement in Mexico’s *Distrito Federal*, this study has contributed to our knowledge of the *Mexico ’68* movement by contributing age as a determinant factor of the



success of these movements. For example, before the Tlatelolco Massacre, students began sharing ideas within universities of how to implement change within the government in Mexico. The energy of these young people became the drive of this movement, and the culminating set of events brought about confrontations. During the October march, students of young ages were the force behind the student protests that took place in Mexico during 1968. These young people confronted the status quo and risked being beaten, arrested, and jailed to protest against the repressions committed by Mexico's authoritarian government. In addition, many universities in Mexico were considered—and still considered—hotbeds for student 'subversive' behavior; creating the sense of 'normalcy' for university students to openly manifest their beliefs.

This study has also contributed a different perspective for analyzing the historical significance of the *União Nacional dos Estudantes Brasileiro* throughout 20 years of military dictatorship in Brazil. As many published material have included the significance of youth movements in Brazil, this study has specifically focused on the importance of the socio-political struggles of the UNE within the political scenarios which took place in Brazil. This study also focused on the impact of the UNE against the oppositional forces who ruled Brazil during the 1960's to 1980's. For example, the UNE took action and protested against the repressive actions of the military government.

Third, this research work aimed to direct the reader's attention to the undeniable impact these groups had on the aftermaths of these governments. Although the Dominican Republic after Trujillo did not experience transitional democracy right away, the efforts of these

young people had an impact of this democratic transition. A similar scenario occurred in Mexico after the Tlatelolco Massacre of 1968. Although the Diaz Ordaz authoritarian government weakened after the student massacre, overtime democracy slowly transitioned throughout the following three decades. Brazil also experienced a slow shift of military dictatorship to democracy but was relatively faster than the Dominican Republic and Mexico. This change is evident in Brazil with the democratic indirect elections held after the last general/president of Brazil in the 1980's. While these changes were apparent within these governments' years later, it is important to deeply analyze the importance of discussing the aftermaths of these governments within my future research. It is also crucial to mention that future research on this topic should discuss how many of these youth movement's leaders are play an active role in today's politics and how this involvement affects the political framework in today's society.

### **Continuous Cycle of Student Struggle and Dictatorships**

My intention was to offer a distinctive yet plural perspective on similar historical events that took place in three Latin American countries with a specific time frame (Dominican Republic: 1956-1961, Mexico: 1964-1970, and Brazil: 1964-1984). The violent events were the result of confrontations between opposed ideological and political national projects, one belonging to the military and the other one built around a leftist narrative which intended to offer the country an alternative, and at the same time confront a strong tradition. In this sense, my study pretends to broaden the actual panorama of the consolidation of this decisive historical movement. Like many Latin American countries throughout the 1960's including Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, and Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil were all undergoing similar government changes.

My work is still developing and this study signified the beginning of a greater work. While the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have contributed to the development of such an ample and complex rooted topic, there is a need for a cautious approach to interpreting these events. The presence of these politically active youth movements who opposed their governments and who publically manifest continue happening; as the case in Honduras of Manuel Zelaya, Honduran President, who was ousted by a military coup earlier this year.

Today, the democratic values of many Latin American countries stand on the shoulders of those young people whose efforts have risked their own lives to strive towards socio-political independence for citizens in their country. It is important to question whether dictatorship has become a revolving door within Latin America and if so why? It is also imperative for scholars to pay close attention to the cycle of youth movements and why these movements have continued to generate force behind the injustice committed by their governments. The future of this research will depend on the expansion of such knowledge throughout a dissertation work in the coming years.

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## CURRICULUM VITA

Amaris DelCarmen Guzman was born in Paterson, New Jersey. The youngest of three, and Caribbean-Dominican native parents, Ms. Guzman is the first in her immediate and extended family to obtain a Master's Degree. While pursuing her M.A. at the University of Texas at El Paso, Ms. Guzman worked as a Graduate Research Assistant for the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies at UTEP between the fall of 2008-2009. Ms. Guzman also remained very involved in extracurricular activities during her masters, as the youngest Board Member and Secretary of a national non-profit organization and directed both a national youth fellowship program and the youth initiatives of the organization.

Ms. Guzman was also able to successfully complete the M.A. degree in 3 semesters. Her outstanding grade point average allowed for Ms. Guzman to be named the fall 2009 Outstanding Latin American and Border Studies Graduate Student. In addition, her outstanding academic achievements and community service merited Ms. Guzman to be named the Graduate School Student Marshal for the fall 2009 commencement ceremony.

Ms. Guzman has also presented her research in both the spring 2009 and fall 2009 research symposiums held at the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies at UTEP. Ms. Guzman will continue onto her Ph.D. in the fall of 2010 where she will pursue further research on the phenomenon of youth movements in Latin America throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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