



UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG

Master Thesis

1968 Movements in Belgrade and Mexico City: A Comparative Analysis

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Academic degree aspired
Master (MA)

Vienna, August 2008

Studienkennzahl: A 067 805
Studienrichtung: Global Studies - a European Perspective

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Introduction

To claim that 1968 was a global phenomenon is almost a truism nowadays with the notion of the “first global revolution of the 20th century”¹ becoming common place in historiography and popular perceptions.² Nevertheless, in studying these movements, historians have generally kept their focus on the nation state with no systematic research of the causes of worldwide synchronicity of the 1968 explosions, nor of their global effects.³ On the other hand, recent efforts to establish a transnational perspective of 1968⁴ have been limited to investigations of the movements in Western Europe and the United States, therefore degrading the events on the periphery of the world system to mere echoes of those taking place in the capitalist metropolises.⁵

The aim of this thesis is to break these molds and focus on the meaning of global 1968 for the developing countries of the time by comparing two movements arising in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and Mexico respectively. The main objectives of this research are therefore: (1) to locate the socio-economic factors that contributed to the birth of these movements by tracing the evolution of economic and political systems of both countries and their changing roles within the world system, (2) to compare similarities and differences in the way these movements arose and organized themselves, (3) to establish a relationship between the 1968 movements and the change in Yugoslav and Mexican development paradigms in the 1980's and

¹ The 1848 wave of revolutions often regarded as the first instance of global revolutions. See Donatella della Porta, „1968“- *Zwischennationale Diffusion und Transnationale Strukturen. Eine Forschungsagenda*, in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *1968- vom Ereigniss zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1998, p. 131

² Jens Kastner & David Mayer, *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive* Zur Einführung, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektiv*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, p. 9

³ Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert & Detlef Junker, *1968: The World Transformed*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 2

⁴ See for example: Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *Die 68er Bewegung: Deutschland-Westeuropa-USA*, Verlag C.H. Beck, München, 2001 or Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-1976*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007

⁵ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische Föderation Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, p. 98

1990's and, (4) to highlight certain common features that distinguish these two movements in the semi-periphery from those in Western Europe and the United States. Following these objectives, my hypothesis is that there is no straight line connecting the 1968 movements in Belgrade and Mexico City and the transformations these two countries went through in the last two decades of the 20th Century. The character of 1968 should not be interpreted in reverse-from eventual consequences.

Some remarks on the Personal Approach, Theory and Methodology

I came to the idea for this historical comparison in the winter of 2008 during the course of a seminar at the University of Vienna entitled “Education and Revolution in 1968 and Forty Years Later in a Globalized World“ which focused upon Latin America. Reading about the student movement in 1968 Mexico, I noticed motivating parallels to the student protest that were happening in my own country, Yugoslavia, that same year. The publication of a collection of essays in Vienna in 2008, dealing with the 1968 events from a global perspective, which included, among other places, a chapter on Yugoslavia, further encouraged me to pursue the topic by offering theoretical guidelines and concrete examples of a transnational approach on this topic.⁶ During the process of the research, I became even more struck by the similarities revealed by the comparison of these two instances of often overlooked 1968 episodes. Simultaneously, I developed sensibility for the complexities of each case. This duality of cross-continental commonalities and exceptionality of local contexts soon emerged as the greatest challenge for my research and the form of the narration.

The movements inside Yugoslavia and Mexico, in strict sense, took place in a short span between June and October in the summer of 1968, making the time frame of the research very tight. Even though these occurrences resonated nation-wide, the center stages for the protests were the capital cities. The urban character of the protests and the dominant place the capitals occupied in the political and cultural life of both countries, allowed me thus to narrow down the spatial frame of the research as well to

⁶ Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008

Belgrade and Mexico City. Nevertheless, from the early stages of the research it became clear that it would be impossible to explain the movements, their origins and ultimate consequences if the narrative remained trapped within the 1968 calendar year. Instead, I look at the 1968 commotions as the mirror of deeper tectonic shifts taking place in the society under the authoritarian façade of the Mexican and Yugoslav states and an early sign of profound changes these systems would go through over a decade later. 1968 is thus seen as the symbolic borderline between two development paradigms or two alternating cyclical time frames in the Braudelian sense.⁷ It is a watershed, representing the peak of one historical period, ushered by events taking place between the years 1910-1920 in Mexico and 1941-1945 in Yugoslavia, and at the same time, it serves as the temporal starting point for the socio-economic mutations starting in the early 1980's in both countries. However, whether 1968 served as a casual opening gate for these events as well, will need to be discovered in the course of this paper.

Kenney and Horn differentiate between comparative histories, which according to them, study one or more national cases to highlight that which is unique to each individual case and the transnational studies which are interested primarily in the connective tissues between the national cases.⁸ This paper sees no major contradictions between these two approaches as it uses comparative analysis between two nation states, primarily in order to track the long term processes extending over the national borders, but also showing attentiveness to local traditions and peculiarities. I tried to achieve this by looking at structural changes in the realm of economy and politics characterizing these two developing countries in the 20th century and their shifting relationship with the world market.

The thesis is divided accordingly into three distinct chapters describing these episodes. Chapter 2 deals with the genesis of the Yugoslav market socialism and the Mexican Industrial Substitution Industrialization, as attempts to industrialize national economies by detaching them, to a certain degree, from the world market, and the

⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991

⁸ Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney, *Introduction: Approaches to the Transnational*, in Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney (ed), *Transnational moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2004, p. x

corresponding political systems overseeing this project. Chapter 3 focuses on the 1968 movements; their organizational patterns, political demands and the government responses. Chapter 4 questions the nature of the linkage between the 1968 movements and the economic opening and political liberalization both countries went through in the last two decades of the 20th century. Therefore the narrative thread proceeds chronologically, while the comparison is kept mostly implicit with a two-track, separate progression of both cases, allowing the reader to draw conclusions from this parallel story line, only to unify the comparative vision in the end.

Comparison as a method of research asks for transparent epistemology. Apart from challenges in organization of the narrative, the set-up of this study demanded clear criteria for the selection of two cases observed. Yugoslavia and Mexico shared some important characteristics that enhanced their utility for analysis. First, each was hailed for their sustained economic growth prior to the 1980's. They achieved this by breaking with the classical economic postulates of open participation in the world economy and established new, more autarchic, projects of development. Yugoslavia abolished capitalist relations and built up, what I describe, among other scholars, as a command economy with controlled elements of the market introduced as an incentive.⁹ Mexico, on the other hand, kept the market at the center of its economic life, but boosted a powerful state sector as the main regulator of the system as a whole.

Second, both Yugoslavia and Mexico had built up relatively strong and effective states and experienced persistent political stability. Yugoslavia developed a one party political system with a strong leadership figure on top, coupled with self-management organs designed to allow the mass participations of citizens in all areas of life. Mexico featured a de-facto one party system with a strong presidency and corporatist structures tying various layers of society to the monopolistic party. For decades, both systems showcased impressive flexibility in arbitrage between different social interests.

⁹ See: Shanti S. Tangri (ed.), *Command Versus Demand Systems for Economic Growth*, D.C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1967, pp. 1-4

Third, both societies were marked by a sense of nationalism and historical uniqueness stemming from the times of national liberation movements and maintained by insistence on sovereignty and the right to an independent model of development in a world strictly divided by the Cold War. The closeness of the United States as a neighbor in the Mexican case and Yugoslavia's persistent walk on the thin edge of the Iron Curtain constantly reemphasized this sentiment and had a big influence on the generation coming of age in the 1960's.

Fourth, parallel with the movements in Western Europe and the United States, these two countries witnessed social mobilizations in 1968. In both cases, seemingly banal incidents triggered the first instance of mass mobilizations and government repression in the streets after decades of relentless economic growth and political stability in both countries. The Mexican events lead to one of the largest tragedy of global 1968- when the government forces massacred protesters gathered in the Plaza of Three Cultures in Mexico City. In Belgrade, the movement also ended in a unique way when President Tito decided publicly to back up the student demands.

Fifth, both countries faced rising foreign debt and major slowdown in the economic growth by the beginning of 1980's. As a result they were forced go down a path of deep economic and political reforms in order to regain economic growth. This process was followed by the dismantling of old economic and social structures and the rise of new ideologies and historical interpretations. The difference in attitudes towards the 1968 legacy in Serbia and Mexico today opens the opportunity to re-examine the assumed connections between the demands of the 1968 movements and the transformations taking place in the 1980's and 1990's.

Collecting sources for this research proved to be a painstaking endeavor. The study is based on secondary sources whose results are synthesized into a comparative perspective. The nature of comparison as an approach required a certain symmetry in the literature obtained. It was difficult to satisfy this precondition, due to many circumstances. First, although my language skills allowed me to read sources in Serbo-Croatian, I was unable to do the same with Spanish titles. Language issue and limited research funds were also crucial in the decision to conduct part of my research in Belgrade and not Mexico City. This imbalance was overcome by the state of

writings done on both topics, especially in the English language. There seems to be a revival of scholar interest worldwide for 1968 in Mexico since the political changes the country has gone through during the presidential elections of 2000, making these titles easier to obtain outside of Mexico. In contrast, the scholarship conducted on Belgrade events remains in deficit and is limited almost exclusively to domestic Serbian scholars.

A further challenge was the difference in categories of inquiry found in two sets of literature. The accounting method for measurement of macroeconomic aggregates in Yugoslavia at the time did not include the so-called unproductive services such as education or health services, therefore making it harder to compare it to the GDP standards found in the market economies. Other social and economic forms that seemingly corresponded at the first sight proved to hold quite a different meaning upon further reading. The collectivized farmer co-operatives of Yugoslav socialism, for instance, had quite a different social meaning to the Yugoslav peasants and society as a whole, when compared to the Mexican-government promoted *ejido* system, based on the ancient concept of community land. One more example would be difference in the schooling systems in both countries which made it hard to compare the age of participants and character of institutions inside the student protests. So, what may hold true for any comparison is important to acknowledge for my paper as well; namely that for any comparative analysis, as heuristically fruitful it might seem there are insurmountable, inherent limitations which must always be borne in mind.

Approaching Sources and Literature

My research, on the part of the comparison relating to 1968 in Belgrade, started in Vienna University library with attempts to find references to the 1960's student movement in staple books covering the history of Yugoslavia. Most of the newer titles dealing with the Yugoslav history are written from the perspective of the 1990's and disintegration of the country, therefore choosing to focus on the nationalist colored resistance to the Titoist regime, instead of the left opposition, which was much more articulate than the nationalists in the late 1960's. Hence, from my point of view, those titles fail to cover the meaning of 1968 for Yugoslavia. Books written before 1990's, on the other hand, often refuse to recognize the 1968 movement and its insistence on

self-management as something separate from the ruling state ideology and thus leave little space for its independent analysis. Dennison Rusinow's famous study of post World War II development of Yugoslav socialism, for instance, gives a superb overview of social and political developments in the 1960's, but when it comes to 1968 protests, it is eager to point out to the "mutually accepted ground rules"¹⁰ between the students and the government. Apart from occasional mentioning in the general history books, almost no specific research can be found on the topic; one notable exception being the book written by an Australian scholar, Ralph Pervan, in the 1970's. The research through periodicals did not bring much more success. The only article on the topic was an eye witness report published on the pages of the New Left Weekly a year after the protests.¹¹

This lack of resources in foreign languages led me to conclude that a research in Belgrade for more specific titles in Serbo-Croatian would be necessary in order to compile a representative sample. An important impulse, however, came already before I left Vienna in the form of a collection of essays on 1968 from a global perspective, edited by Jens Kastner and David Mayer.¹² This proved to be crucial for my research in two ways. First, I was able to recognize my own theoretical postulates in the framework provided by the editors of this book. Secondly, it contained an essay on 1968 movement in Yugoslavia written by a German scholar, Boris Kanzleiter, who currently based in Belgrade and finishing his doctorate on the 1968 in Yugoslavia.¹³ Apart from that, a two day conference organized by the publisher in an effort to promote this monograph in Vienna, in April 2008, presented me with the opportunity to get in contact with the aforementioned researchers. Most importantly, consultation and tips on literature from Boris Kanzleiter, who already conducted research on this topic in Belgrade, made it possible for me to work effectively and make the most out of my stay in Serbia.

¹⁰ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkley 1977, p.232

¹¹ D. Plameni c, *The Belgrade Student Insurrection*. New Left Review, 54, March-April 1969, pp. 61-78

¹² Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008

¹³ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische F deration Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, pp.98-114

The second part of my research, conducted in Belgrade, consisted of tracing the Serbo-Croatian titles that were scattered in libraries across town. Upon my arrival, I found the first part of Mihailo Marković's memoirs, dealing with the 1960's, was displayed in the front window of bookshops, raising hope that the approaching fortieth anniversary has motivated publishers and the media to produce some new sources on the topic in the meantime. Unfortunately, this was a false first impression. Marković's book soon proved to be a disappointing source with many inaccuracies and the main recent development on this topic inside Serbia proved to be the second edition of Popov's classic analysis, written in 1978.¹⁴

Disappointing news was also that the Serbian National Library was closed due to renovation. Time was thus concentrated on photocopying of materials that were scattered like pieces of a puzzle in various smaller libraries. I was very lucky to locate two crucial Praxis magazine issues which were missing in most of the libraries. One of them containing all the documents issued at the time of the protest and the other some of the key texts written from the Praxis school at its creative peak.¹⁵

In conclusion, the bibliography on 1968 in Yugoslavia is small in volume. Therefore, combining the crucial trip to Belgrade with internet search and Vienna University library enabled me to get hold of almost all the secondary sources in existence in English and Serbo-Croatian, creating a satisfactory and representative sample.

There is a dearth of material focusing primarily on 1968 in Mexico in English language also. Initial efforts, consisting of research through the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) archives¹⁶ at the Lateinamerika- Institut in Vienna,¹⁷ signaled such a state of affairs. Situated in Mexico at the time and dealing with the issue of education, not one CIDOC document addressed the issue directly. Keeping in

¹⁴ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008

¹⁵ Praxis Editorial Board (ed.), *Jun-Lipanj 1968: Dokumenti*, Zagreb, 1971 and Praxis Editorial Board., *Trenutak Jugoslavenskog Socijalizma*, in Praxis, 3-4, Zagreb, 1971

¹⁶ Lateinamerika-Institut is a research center in Vienna containing the library and document materials specialized in Latin America, <http://www.lai.at/bibliothek/cidoc>

¹⁷ CIDOC archives represent the material published by the Centro Intercultural de Documentación, (1961-1976) founded in Cuernavaca by the Austrian born philosopher and social critic Ivan Illich, <http://www.lai.at/bibliothek/cidoc>

mind the lack of Mexican writings all up until the mid 1980's and the described conditions of public discourse inside the country in various sources¹⁸; it became obvious that the stifling political climate made such direct analysis impossible to produce for a long time. On the other hand, the standard bibliography on the topic, published outside of Mexico, exemplified by Poniatowska's "Massacre in Mexico", focused primarily on auto-biographical respectively essayistic sketches of the hidden massacre instead of a more analytical approach.

Research through the journal section of the Vienna University history library proved equally futile. For instance, the entire Mexican Studies Journal collection, published in California, contains a single article on this topic.¹⁹ As a result of this, early on in the research phase, it became obvious that the topic will have to be, as one would say colloquially, approached through the back door, meaning going through the books on more general Mexican related topics and looking for 1968 references. This tactic proved to be time consuming because of the sheer number of titles one has to go through, but fruitful nevertheless.

Textbook titles on the general historical development of Mexico after World War II, found in the Vienna University's history library, proved to contain good sections on the 1968 movement, serving as an excellent introduction into the subject.²⁰ The same library proved to be quite a good source for the *back door approach* as further books on related topics were discovered that dedicated space to 1968. Political history works dealing with the biographies of Mexican presidents²¹, the Latin American labor

¹⁸ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 361, Enrique Krauze, *Mexico- Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, pp. 705-715

¹⁹ Diana Sorensen, *Tlatelolco 1968: Paz and Poniatowska on Law and Violence*, Mexican Studies Journal, No. 2, Vol.18, Summer 2002, pp. 297-321

²⁰ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an Authoritarian Regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 321-397, Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 573-673

²¹ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico- Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997

movement²² or the history of Mexico City.²³ The University of Vienna Contemporary History library contains two additional titles that came to be of great help in the research.²⁴

Using this indirect method to discover books and browsing through their footnotes and bibliography sections that refer to this particular timeframe - a selection of few titles- that focus entirely on the student movement and would form the backbone of this study was found.²⁵ Searches on the internet uncovered some unexpected but nevertheless very useful sources as well. One American university thesis written for the Bachelor degree at the University of Oregon found its way on-line; serving as an interesting example of renewed interest in the topic and containing a useful bibliography.²⁶

Describing the state of 1968 historiography, Kastner and Mayer warn of the growing trend of personal reflections and individualized narrations, encountered in many writings, which they find a hindrance to forming a proper historical perspective.²⁷ In the context of present-day Serbia, this danger, faced by the scholars in the West, is almost negligible. Pressed by its current historical moment, few, in the Serbian public, paid any attention to the coming fortieth anniversary of an event so important for country's history.

Since the introduction of the multi-party political system in Yugoslavia, only two new books based on the participant's recollections were published. The first one is a recently written memoir by a well known philosopher, politician and a former Praxis

²² Ruth B. Collier & David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Juncture, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991

²³ Jonathan Kandell, *La Capital: The Biography of Mexico City*, Random House, New York, 1988

²⁴ Tariq Ali & Susan Watkins, *1968: Marching in the Streets*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London 1998, p.109, Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005

²⁵ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005 and Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982

²⁶ Kara M. Borden, *Mexico 1968: An Analysis of the Tlatelolco Massacre and its Legacy*, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2005

²⁷ Jens Kastner, David Mayer (Hg.), *Weltwende 1968? Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, p. 8

group member Mihailo Marković.²⁸ Alongside this effort, a journalistic collection of remembrances and interviews with 1968 participants was published in 2003, but nevertheless remained virtually ignored by academia or the public.²⁹

These two books embody all of the potential shortcomings that Kastner and Mayer refer to. Most specifically Marković's account of the movement's demands and his personal involvement are formulated to fit the spirit of the current political climate inside Serbia.³⁰ A glimpse at the content found inside the original Praxis magazine articles and a comparison to present re-interpretations by the same authors clearly shows this tendency towards revision.³¹

Surprisingly enough, loosening of the censorship grip, previously exercised by the Titoist regime, encouraged almost no attempts to articulate new perspectives on this topic. The year 1990 brought to light two previously banned publications.³² This initial output remained isolated however, as no new efforts to produce a revised account of 1968 in Yugoslavia have been made in the years to follow. The year 2008 saw one of these studies re-published and accompanied additionally by a collection of documents following the case of the main student paper associated with the revolt.³³ Just how serious the lack of fresh resources remains is mirrored by the fact that two most serious and most often cited works on the topic in Serbo-Croatian were written back in the years 1978 and 1984.³⁴

In 1978 former *Praxis* member and social researcher Nebojša Popov compiled the most authoritative source on 1968 in Yugoslavia to that date. This sociological analysis locates the main actors of the conflict and provides an overview of key

²⁸ Mihailo Marković, *Juriš na nebo*, Prosveta, Beograd, 2008

²⁹ Ivan Miladinović, *1968: Tajna i opomena*, Draganić, Beograd, 2003

³⁰ See for example Marković's recapitulation of student demands, Mihailo Marković, *Juriš na nebo*, Prosveta, Beograd, 2008, p.40

³¹ Praxis Editorial Board (ed.), *Jun-Lipanj 1968: Dokumenti*, Zagreb, 1971 and Praxis Editorial Board., *Trenutak Jugoslavenskog Socijalizma*, in Praxis, No. 3-4, Zagreb, 1971

³² Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008 and Pavlović, Ž., *Ispljuvak pun krvi*, Dereta, 1990

³³ Popov's second edition and Ilija Moljković, „*Slučaj*“ *Student*, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008

³⁴ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008 and Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984

political consequences, placed in the historical context of industrialization of Yugoslav society.³⁵ The book was banned by the Titoist authorities, but the manuscript was widely read around the dissident circles until it was finally published openly in 1990 with its second edition coming out recently. The second publication is a journalistic account, published by Mirko Arsić and Dragan R. Marković in 1984, as a retrospective view of 1968 enabled by the liberalizing political atmosphere inside Yugoslavia in the eighties.³⁶

The state of literature in foreign languages is not much better. There are only a few titles written by left leaning researchers in the English language, with a personal interest in Yugoslavia in the late 1960's and 1970's. They consist of an informative article written by a Yugoslav scholar in the 1969 March issue of the *New Left Review* magazine³⁷ and a well-researched attempt to connect the 1968 movement to deteriorating social conditions of the Yugoslav student population, written by an Australian scholar in 1978.³⁸ Finally, a classic analysis of the development of Yugoslav socialism after the Second World War, written by Rusinow in 1977, also dedicates a few pages to the student revolt.³⁹

Despite the boom of titles on the history of the SFRY, published in the 1990's, few, if any, have dedicated time to the issue of the 1960's student movement. Sunić, for instance, connects dissidence in former Yugoslavia exclusively with nationalist opposition to the ruling ideology of pan-Yugoslavism.⁴⁰ England based scholar, Jasna Dragović-Soso, does dedicate a few pages to the New Left opposition circles, but

³⁵ It was followed by an account of the struggle over the expulsion of a group of Belgrade university professors associated with the 1968 movement written by the same author, Nebojša Popov, *Contra Fatum: Slučaj grupe profesora filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu 1968-1988*, Niro "Mladost", Beograd, 1989

³⁶ Another interesting contribution on the topic by Marković can be found in the publication commemorating the 150th anniversary of University of Belgrade, Dragan R. Marković, *Demonstracije 1968. godine*, in *Univerzitet u Beogradu 1838-1988*, Beograd 1988.

³⁷ D. Plamenic, *The Belgrade Student Insurrection*, *New Left Review*, 54, March-April 1969.

³⁸ Ralph Pervan, *Tito and the Students, The University and the University Student in Self-Managing Yugoslavia*, University of Western Australia Press, 1978

³⁹ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkley 1977, pp.229-239

⁴⁰ Tomislav Sunić, *Titoism and Dissidence: Studies in the History and Dissolution of Communist Yugoslavia*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1995

decides to concentrate on the nationalists.⁴¹ The logical question therefore arises: why has the period after the fall of the Iron Curtain failed to inspire a wave of new interest in 1968 inside Serbia, similar to that interest in other countries? Similarly, why did foreign researchers fail to unearth this occurrence during the general re-contextualizing of Cold War events in the 1990's?

According to Kanzleiter, the 1968 movement in Belgrade, with its clearly anti-nationalist stance and criticism of the ruling party policies from the left, stands at odds with all the dominant discourses in Serbia since the late eighties.⁴² No social force in the Serbian society today is capable or willing to include these events into its legacy and bring it back into the public memory. Robertson, on his part, compares the difference in treatment received by the Belgrade June and the Prague Spring in contemporary historiography of 1968. He claims that, as opposed to Prague, a pro-socialist program was so well articulated in the Belgrade case, that any attempt to incorporate the event into a mainstream "liberal-utopian narrative"⁴³ proves futile. The summer of 1968 in Belgrade can hardly be presented as a factor that has led to the fall of communism. As a result, 1968 in SFRY is often constructed as being friendlier to the ruling structures in comparison to other movements, or that it functioned according to the logic of Stalinism, thus rendering it historically obsolete.

This void was taken advantage of by a new generation of young non-Yugoslav scholars who only recently started to rediscover the 1968, "between East and West"⁴⁴ and explore it anew in the spirit of comparison and global historical perspective. The graduation thesis, written by an Australian James Robertson, lucidly compares the student movements in 1968 and 1997 in Belgrade, overcoming the lack of secondary sources by conducting a series of interviews with the former participants of both

⁴¹ Jasna Dragović-Soso, „Spasioci nacije“-*Intelektualna opozicija Srbije i oživljavanje nacionalizma*, Fabrika Knjiga, Beograd, 2004, pp.48-58

⁴² Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische Föderation Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, p.112.

⁴³ James Robertson, *Discourses of Democracy and Exclusion in the Streets of Belgrade, 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, 2006

⁴⁴ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische Föderation Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, p.106

movements.⁴⁵ German scholar, Boris Kanzleiter, on the other hand, takes advantage of the opened state archives in Belgrade and produces one of the most well rounded accounts in an article form as a prelude to a full pledged dissertation.⁴⁶ This thesis attempts to connect itself to these recent reexaminations of 1968 in Yugoslavia and its meaning from the global perspective.

Events that took place in Mexico City in the summer of 1968 also remained relatively untouched by academic research until recently. Inside Mexico, the governmental cover up of the Tlatelolco massacre and the continuous rule of Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), all up until the year 2000, made it hard for journalists and scholars to venture into the matter and question the official presentation of the events. On the other hand, researchers outside Mexico concentrated their efforts mostly on the revolutionary period between 1910 and 1930 or the so called democratization period in the 1980's; thus skipping the presumably not so challenging decades between 1945 and 1970 of state led development when economic and political system seemed extremely stable.

Those who chose to explore the 1968 phenomena however, too often got caught up solely in the act of Tlatelolco massacre itself and the hidden facts surrounding this tragic event. This is itself an understandable trend as the event and its manifold victims belong to those traumatic ruptures in the historical course of a society that lead activists and journalists to demand recognition, justice and the persecution of the perpetrators of crimes against humanity.⁴⁷ The consequence of such a legitimate approach, however, might be that the more general historical context of the movement is underrepresented.⁴⁸ Only a few attempts have been made, outside of Mexico, to connect the massacre and the movement to broader historical trends, among those a

⁴⁵ James Robertson, *Discourses of Democracy and Exclusion in the Streets of Belgrade , 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p.90

⁴⁶ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische Föderation Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektiv*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, pp. 98-114.

⁴⁷ See for example the activities of the 1968 remembrance committee in Mexico: <http://mx.geocities.com/comite68ac/frames/began.html>

⁴⁸ See for example: Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*, University of Missouri Press, Missouri, 1992

Marxist interpretation of Judith A. Hellman⁴⁹ and Donald J. Mabry's often cited history of movements in Mexican universities.⁵⁰

Since the year 2000, and the resurface of the Tlatelolco controversy in the Mexican politics and the media⁵¹, there seems to be a new wave of interest for 1968 events and literature on the topic exemplified by an analysis of Carey which takes a feminist perspective⁵² and that of Borden.⁵³ However, in the spirit of post-structural writings, many of these books, articles and exhibitions concentrate on the individual experiences, cultural influences, literature discourse analysis or gender.⁵⁴

Never before had scholars access to such an abundance of data, about this turning point in Mexico's history, at their reach. Nevertheless, there is a real danger that by focusing on various particularities and narrow aspects of the movement, such as: personal biographies, agents of power, executor's confessions, gender roles, media presentations, foreign element etc. the more general historical narrative will get lost in the sea of new specialized information. The prime task of this thesis would therefore be to try and utilize the information coming out in public recently and try to synthesize and connect them into a more traditional theoretical framework of societal dynamics in developing countries in general and Mexico's experience in particular.

Furthermore, unlike many of the previous attempts to shed light on 1968 in Mexico, the paper will try to escape "the trap of Tlatelolco" — meaning reducing the movement that lasted for months to one afternoon. In other words, for the sake of

⁴⁹ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher Inc., New York, 1983

⁵⁰ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982

⁵¹ Tim Golden, Mexico City Journal; *1968, Soaked in Student Blood, Refuses to Fade*, The New York Times, Monday, July 28, 2008,

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE6D91E39F935A35753C1A965958260>

⁵² Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005

⁵³ Kara M. Borden, *Mexico 1968: An Analysis of the Tlatelolco Massacre and it's Legacy*, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2005

⁵⁴ See: Diana Sorensen, *Tlatelolco 1968: Paz and Poniatowska on Law and Violence* in: *Mexican Studies Journal*, No. 2, Vol.18, Summer 2002, pp. 297-321, Victoria Carpenter, *Tlatelolco 1968 in Contemporary Mexican Literature: Introduction* in: *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 2005, pp.476-480 or Herbert Braun, *Protests of Engagement: Dignity: False Love, and Self-Love in Mexico during 1968* in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 39, No.3, July 1997, pp. 511 – 549

broader perspective, not much time will be spent trying to uncover the exact number of deaths, army units involved in the killings, the chain of command or search for personal responsibility inside the government. The massacre will be dealt with only as the last stop of a long process with many twists and turns on the way that might have influenced the final outcome. The same principle applies to the examination of the role of the approaching Olympic Games to which authors often dedicate much space in their research and commonly use it as the decisive factor sealing the fate of the movement.⁵⁵

Unlike the older works, that have the tendency to pick one outside factor that in return determines the movement as a whole (government brutality or the Olympic Games to take but two examples) or the newer ones, which show no ambition to construct certain causality and simply map all the factors in one plane, this thesis will try to locate dependent and independent variables inside the movement itself and bond them to more general dynamics of the Mexican society at that time and the global phenomena of 1968 student movements.

⁵⁵ See for example: Kara M. Borden, *Mexico 1968: An Analysis of the Tlatelolco Massacre and its Legacy*, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2005, pp. 19-25

Chapter 1: Debates and Positions

The international dimension of 1968 is commonly shaped in a particular fashion. According to Horn and Kenney, “the larger the net is cast, the more prominent become the feature of 1968 as youth rebellion and/or cultural revolt at the expense of any serious discussion of radical politics, or, even more so, the element of working-class revolt”⁵⁶ This cultural approach often focuses on the role of media and sees the changes in music, fashion, lifestyles and artistic trends heading the agenda. There is nothing wrong in this approach by itself. Still, as Immanuel Wallerstein points out, the 1970’s have shown that it is very easy to dissociate counterculture from political activity and socio-economic transformations and turn it into the consumption oriented lifestyles.⁵⁷ Another dominant tendency is to frame the historical experience into the destinies of single actors and their intimate descriptions, thus providing a multitude of different interpretations and meanings to events.⁵⁸ Again, this approach, robs the 1968 of its radical edge and transformation potential. It leads to a detaching of the narrative from any major consequences or larger meanings.

As an alternative model for the study of 1968, Kastner and Mayer propose four maxims: (1) broaden the limited focus on the Western metropolises, (2) move away from the students as the single participants, (3) displace the narrative from the 1968 calendar year and look at the longer lasting cycles instead and, (4) disassociate from individualized memories of the participants and continue towards a critical historicizing.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Gerd-Rainer Horn, *The Working class Dimension of 1968*, in Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney (ed), *Transnational moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2004, p. 97

⁵⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 71

⁵⁸ Juliane Schumacher & Sherin Abu Chouka, *Erinnerungen im leeren Raum*, Lateinamerika Nachrichten, 406, April 2008, p.44

⁵⁹ Jens Kastner & David Mayer, *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive* Zur Einführung, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, pp. 7-21

This thesis attempts to apply these maxims in practice by picking out two developing countries on the semi-periphery of the world capitalist system and placing their 1968 movement in a broader perspective of national liberation, industrialization, urbanization, state structures, rise of the New Left and the ruling ideologies. In the modern era, political and cultural movements, even as they are still rooted within the frame of a nation state, consciously or unconsciously embrace similar experiences or express similar aspirations across national borders.⁶⁰ 1968 is a good example for these phenomena. This study recognizes the global character of 1968 by drawing parallels between Yugoslavia and Mexico and identifying socio-economic structures and processes that are supranational in essence. In this way the factors that are considered crucial in the local framework might turn out to be incidental when placed next to other similar experiences elsewhere⁶¹, at the same time, comparison, as a method, offers an opportunity for full appreciation of national distinctiveness by bringing the contrasts the fore.

In order to understand the political outlook, demands and achievements of the movements, the paper will look at key peculiarities of the Mexican bourgeois corporatist state and the Yugoslav self-management brand of socialism and explore how these macro frames influenced the dynamics of various social classes. Special attention will be given to the labor movements, the rising middle layers and differentiations taking place within the seemingly monolithic ruling elite. In this way, more light will be cast on the meaning of 1968 for the countries on the semi-periphery of the world system and synthesize their experiences. This is crucial if one wants to establish these movements as autochthon occurrences with their own genesis and background, instead of mere echoes of the events in the West.

According to Donatella della Porta, communication of social movements over national borders in the 1960's, did not develop within organized networks of

⁶⁰ Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney, *Introduction: Approaches to the Transnational*, in Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney (ed), *Transnational moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2004, p. x

⁶¹ Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney, *Introduction: Approaches to the Transnational*, in Gerd-Rainer Horn & Padraic Kenney (ed), *Transnational moments of Change: Europe 1945, 1968, 1989*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2004, p. xiii

exchange.⁶² The contacts did not follow any rational structure. Contrary to this assessment, done with much more intense contacts of later-on social movements in mind, it might be pointed out that direct contact, exchange of patterns in organizational forms and experiences was common already in 1968 between the neighboring countries such as Italy and France or well connected industrialized societies as it was the case with Germany and the United States for example. As we will see, these types of direct contacts played a role inside the countries with relatively closed regimes, such as Yugoslavia and Mexico as well.

This mutual exchange has to be reflected in the light of the role played by the mass media, political and philosophical literature, decolonization, anti-imperialism, socialist humanism, fiction, music and political turning points, such as the split between Yugoslavia the Comintern or the Cuban Revolution. Specific historical, cultural and political structures, like the traditions of the organized left in each country, also played an important role here, influencing the local movements to engross and stress on certain aspects of the global 1968 and marginalize others.

In an effort to establish a dividing line between the 1968 movements in the periphery and the center, the dominant assumptions about the ultimate outcomes of the 1968 have to be challenged as well. Despite the obvious failure of the 1968 movements to change political status quo, many authors insist on the eventual triumph of its legacy in the form of changing personal relations, dominant gender roles, liberalization of everyday life, modernizing economy, changing mentalities etc.⁶³ However, it is important to keep in mind that these views come from a narrow North American and West European perspective. As Kastner and Mayer note, not only that many of these aspirations of 1968 still remain unimplemented, but one must also state clearly that the majority of the world never profited from these reforms ascribed to 1968 in the West.⁶⁴ In this sense, the hypothesis that 1968 somehow automatically lead to socio-

⁶² Donatella della Porta, „1968“- *Zwischennationale Diffusion und Transnationale Strukturen. Eine Forschungsagenda*, in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *1968- vom Ereigniss zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1998, p. 149

⁶³ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World-System*, Cmbridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 74

⁶⁴ Jens Kastner & David Mayer, *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive* Zur Einführung, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, p. 21

economic changes in Yugoslavia and Mexico in the early 1980's has to be re-examined. This study therefore aspires to reinvigorate the emancipatory potential and political meaning of 1968 by inspecting the concrete forms of organizing from below and their successes/failures to influence history. There is no natural, straight-line progress of history from 1968 to the present, what this paper offers in exchange is the sketch of the battle of the living forces in the context of changing local and global structures.

Chapter 2: Converging Systems

2.1 Great Transformations

A glimpse at the topography behind Yugoslav and Mexican 1968 movements reveals a striking similarity of environments in which they arose. Le Corbusier-inspired student dormitories in New Belgrade⁶⁵ and Tlatelolco housing blocks, located in the center of modern Mexico City, served as road signs for a seemingly unstoppable road towards modernity that both countries had embarked upon. In a bipolar global order, where majority of peripheral countries were forced to choose between two rival concepts of development, the Yugoslav path to socialism and Mexican Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) represented two mavericks on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Yugoslavia was the first country in the Soviet sphere of influence to defy the powerful grip of Stalinism and awaken the hope for alternative roads to socialism. Mexico seemed to be one of the foremost Latin American countries capable of partly escaping the century old political and economic dependence from the United States by building powerful sovereign political system and nationally responsible protectionist economy. Both cases were looked upon as success stories of the time. They were seen by many as living proofs that an underdeveloped society can bypass economic and political subordination and try catching up with privileged industrialized world by rallying its internal forces and choosing its own independent path.

2.1. (1) The Balkans Transformed

A unified state, created after the World War I, encompassing various South Slavic people in the Balkans under a Serbian monarch, was a rural society believed to be lagging far behind modern West-European standards of its days. In 1938, per capita

⁶⁵ New Belgrade was the most ambitious project of the post World War II Yugoslav authorities to expand the old Belgrade to the left bank of the Sava river by turning the swamp terrain into a modern representative capital of the new socialist state. Over 100,000 volunteers organized from all over the freshly liberated country took part in the building process.

national income has been estimated to stand between US\$60 and \$70.⁶⁶ Society was dominated by subsistence farming peasantry which made up 75 percent of total population. Agriculture occupied a central role, contributing over 50 percent to Yugoslavia's GDP in all the decades up until the World War II.⁶⁷ Manufacturing accounted for mere 25.9 percent of the national income. Trade structure reveals a typical underdeveloped economy. Yugoslav exports, limited to a few specialized agricultural products and raw materials such as cattle, fresh fruits, tobacco and timber were directed towards the country's Western European neighbors, while industrial products were imported in return at highly unfavorable terms of trade.⁶⁸ Small domestic industrial sector was dominated by foreign capital which held over 60 percent of industrial shares in Yugoslavia in 1939.⁶⁹ Only 30.1 percent of children of the primary school age were attending school, while 40.6 percent of the population was illiterate.⁷⁰

By the end of 1960's, the proportions described had been turned upside down. The year 1971 saw the National Income per capita achieving the level of \$870, while the average Real Social Product⁷¹ growth of 9.3 percent positioned Yugoslavia among the world's fastest growing economies in the period between 1953 and 1960.⁷² Part of the population engaged in the agriculture had decreased from 70 percent in 1948 to 39 percent of total population in 1970. By 1970's, the volume of industrial output increased six times over and industrial products amounted for 86 percent of total

⁶⁶ In comparison, that same year U.S. per capita national income level was \$521, Germany's stood at \$337 and France's at \$236.

⁶⁷ Dragutin V. Marsenić, *Ekonomika Jugoslavije*, Beograd 2000, pp.78-83

⁶⁸ Germany, Austria and Italy constituted the prime markets for imports and exports

⁶⁹ Radovan Kovačević, *Ekonomski odnosi Jugoslavije sa insotranstom*, Ekonomski fakultet Beograd, 2003, p.60

⁷⁰ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p.xviii

⁷¹ It is important to note here that the Yugoslav definition of the Social Product differed from the standard definition of GDP in the market economies by excluding the value of 'non material' services such as education, health, culture etc. The difference between these two aggregates therefore depended on the change in accounting classifications, the number of people employed in these excluded services and their pay. Lydall estimates that in the 1970's this difference went little over 10 percent of the Social Product, then gradually falling in the 1980's. Despite this differentiation, the Real Social Product can indicate the main trends and proportions in a comparison with the Mexican data and this paper uses it interchangeably with the GDP figures. See: Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p.42 and Dragutin V. Marsenic, *Ekonomika Jugoslavije*, Beograd 2000, p. 29

⁷² Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 127

exports. Almost all of the population between the ages of 7-14 was included into primary education and already by the mid 1960's only the United States and the USSR could claim a larger share of students per 10,000 inhabitants in the world.⁷³ Total student population rose from 15,505 at the outbreak of the Second World War to 140,647 in 1968.⁷⁴

2.1. (2) Mexico Transformed

Mexico's transformation was equally impressive. At the beginning of the 20th century, various attempts to modernize the society, under the rule of Porfirio Díaz, by opening up the economy to foreign capital investment, produced a distorted social and economic landscape. The ruling laissez-faire ideology created capital intensive export enclaves as poles of growth while at the same time there was no internal market able to accommodate the vast majority of artisans and peasants uprooted from the traditional economy.⁷⁵ By 1900, foreign investors⁷⁶ held around 90 percent of incorporated value of the Mexican industry and some 150 million of the country's 485 million acres of farming surfaces.⁷⁷ Mexico engaged in liberal international trade, with the railroad system constructed to take the raw materials such as oil, rubber, sugar and henequen out of the country while, at the same time, it became dependant on the import of the finished products. All the way up until the end of the 1930's, more than 65 percent of the workforce toiled in the countryside, while illiteracy index stood at 66.59 per cent of the population.⁷⁸

By the end of the 1960's, the Mexican government could look back and proclaim its achievements as a sovereign state with one of the most advanced economies of the developing world. In 1971, per capita income has reached \$700. Between 1940 and

⁷³ The United States were first with 210.9 students per 10 000 inhabitants, the USSR second with 107.7, Yugoslavia third with 85.1, see: Veljanovski Rade, *Komparacija Studentskog Pokreta 1968-1991/92 godine*, Fakultet Političkih Nauka, Beograd, 1995, p.30

⁷⁴ Ralph Pervan, Tito and the Students: *The University and The University Student in Self-Managing Yugoslavia*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1978, p.69

⁷⁵ John M. Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution*, University of California Press, Berkley, 1987, pp. 176-186

⁷⁶ Some 70 percent of these investments came from the U.S.

⁷⁷ John M. Hart, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p.436

⁷⁸ Jamie B. Torres, *Education in a Young State (Mexico) With an Ancient Culture*, CIDOC Cuaderno, No. 38, Vol. 3, Cuarnevaca 1964, p.3

1970, the GDP grew by an average annual increase of 6.4 percent.⁷⁹ During this time, the agricultural share in the national economy fell to 11.6 percent, whilst industry became the cornerstone of growth with its output amounting to 34.4 percent of the national GDP.⁸⁰ Less than half of Mexicans were agricultural workers and the majority of the population was employed in industry, commerce, finance and services.⁸¹ In 1968, enrollment in Mexican universities nationwide reached 350,000—a sevenfold increase since the 1930's. Illiteracy index was down to 28.9 percent of the population whereas Mexico had 82.6 students per 10 000 inhabitants by 1970.⁸²

2.2 Revolutions and the States

The roots of both of these transformations can be traced back to the revolutionary movements whose victories against the old orders cleared the way for the ensuing reforms. The Yugoslav and Mexican Revolutions were processes of epic proportions. They would eventually become historical benchmarks against which all economic, social and political policies would be measured up in these two countries until the very end of the 20th century. The Yugoslav Revolution⁸³ took place during the course of World War II, in the struggle of national liberation against the fascist occupation and domestic collaborators. Between 1941 and 1945, the country had suffered 1,700,000⁸⁴ dead, amounting to 11 percent of total prewar population; a proportionate

⁷⁹ John W. Sherman, *The Mexican "Miracle" and Its Collapse*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p.582

⁸⁰ Miguel D Ramirez, *Mexico's Economic Crisis: Its Origins and Consequences*, Praeger, New York, 1989, p.54

⁸¹ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher, New York, 1983, p.56

⁸² Torres, J.B. , *Education in a Young State (Mexico) With an Ancient Culture*, CIDOC Cuaderno, No. 38, Vol. 3, Cuernavaca 1964, p.3

⁸³ In the Yugoslav post-World War II historiography, the term 'revolution' became the norm when referring to events taking place between the years 1941 and 1945. Many foreign scholars also choose this term in order to indicate the sharp discontinuity with the past social institutions, mass mobilization and the sheer level of social, economic and political changes in such a short time. See for instance: Bogdan D. Denitch, *The Legitimation of a Revolution: The Yugoslav Case*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976, p. 2 or Paul Shop, *The Yugoslav Revolution: The First of a New Type*, in Thomas T. Hammond (ed.), *The Anatomy of Communist Takeovers*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1975, pp. 244-273

⁸⁴ New studies tend to show that this figure, published by the Yugoslav authorities shortly after the World War II, was exaggerated, proposing instead that the number of casualties was closer to 1,014,000 people. See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties#endnote_Yugo

loss second only to that of Poland.⁸⁵ Starting in 1910, as an uprising against the dictatorship of General Porfirio Díaz and spanning over ten years with the death toll of approximately 1,500,000 people, the Mexican Revolution was about to become one of the bloodiest conflicts ever witnessed in the Americas.⁸⁶ Whether through family history or institutional framework, there was hardly any Yugoslav or Mexican citizen, in the 1960's, whose social existence was not connected, to a certain degree, with this revolutionary period.

The main consequences of these historical watersheds were mirrored in the achieved level of economic and political sovereignty, land reform, nationalization of resources, industrialization, separation between the church and the state, eradication of illiteracy and construction of national unity. All of this was undertaken with an ever increasing role of the state in society. A firm state, substituting the narrowness of private interests in the laissez-faire market, was seen as the sole agent capable of pushing the revolutionary project further in a hostile environment and advancing the society as a whole. Both movements were eventually institutionalized through single political parties which managed to exercise their monopoly over the state apparatus for decades.

2.2 (1) Tito's Partisans

In the Yugoslav case, the revolutionary process was lead, from the very beginning, by the Communist Party as the only political force capable of uniting the population across national and religious borders and effectively fighting the fascist occupiers.⁸⁷ Formed in 1921 and consequently molded in Stalinist fashion in the 1930's, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia⁸⁸, lead by Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980), helped organize a successful resistance to fascist occupation and eventually came out of the war as the strongest political force in the country. With the old monarchist state

⁸⁵ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1977, p.19

⁸⁶ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher Inc., New York, 1983, p.1

⁸⁷ Ann Lane, *Yugoslavia: When Ideals Collide*, Palgrav Macmillan, New York, 2004, p.81

⁸⁸ Since 1920, the official name of the party was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. In 1952, after a break with Stalin, the party changed its name to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY). Both names are used interchangeably in this paper.

apparatus either in exile or discredited through collaboration with the fascists, the communists had no serious problems in radically altering the old social order.

Enjoying unmatched prestige and popular support, the Partisans immediately proclaimed a republic, conducted an agrarian reform and confiscated all industry formerly controlled by the German capital and large entrepreneurs who collaborated with the occupational regime. As a result, even before the official nationalization laws were passed, the old possessing class was divorced from its economic power with close to 80 percent of the industry passing into the hands of the state. By 1947, all industries of national importance, banks and the retail sector, including cultural and health institutions, were nationalized. Private property was limited to agrarian holdings up to ten hectares, handcrafts and some trade. The groundwork was prepared for elimination of the market and introduction of planned economy based on the five year plans.⁸⁹

The Communist Party introduced a political monopoly over the state. Pre-war parliamentary parties were marginalized, actively sabotaged and eventually outlawed. All political power was centralized and distributed internally, according to the place occupied in the Party hierarchy. The Yugoslav state began to resemble the Soviet model by turning into a single gigantic monopolistic trust encompassing all spheres of society. A new structure was established with single, upward channels of social mobility which was accomplished mainly through mechanisms of cooptation. On the top of the party pyramid, stood the powerful figure of Josip Broz Tito, as the supreme arbiter over different wings of the nomenklatura.⁹⁰

Forced collectivization of small peasant holdings was attempted through introduction of state-owned agricultural collectives. On the other hand, the working class, in the state run enterprises, was incorporated into a single trade union confederation which behaved like a transmission belt for the government plans with little or no independence.⁹¹ Soviet educated economic planners insisted that industrial production

⁸⁹ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p.19

⁹⁰ Ann Lane, *Yugoslavia: When Ideals Collide*, Palgrav Macmillan, New York, 2004, pp. 95-97

⁹¹ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p.114

demands an army-like control with a single line of communication from top to bottom. With the royal court and the entrepreneurial class out of the frame, the new government was supposed to represent the working class and the peasantry. However, with no democratic channels for expression and poorly organized, their participation in the new organs of power was blocked by the bureaucratic layer growing out of the Communist Party and the Partisan army.

In 1952, shortly after the split with Stalin, one of Tito's closest collaborators, Milovan Đilas (1911–1995), theoretically condemned Soviet system for being dominated by a ruling caste standing above society. According to Đilas, this layer lived off the surplus value produced by the workers but, unlike the capitalist class, it does not own the means of production and therefore reproduces itself through political privileges. Hence, this caste has no historical perspective and will be eliminated once the working class takes political control.⁹² Just a few years later, Djilas would be purged from the Party as he publicly proclaimed that, despite its exceptionalism, the so called Yugoslav road to socialism represents the same type of undemocratic deformation.⁹³

2.2 (2) Land and Liberty

One of the main features of the early phase of Mexican Revolution was a lack of organizational and ideological coherence in different parts of the country. A number of rival armies, consisting of poor peasantry and the workers were led by merchants and industrialists, whose economic and political advancement has been thwarted by the Diaz dictatorship. They fought for dominance within the movement against the organized peasant armies in the South. The goal of the movement was envisioned in different terms depending on the social layer participating in it. Northern middle and upper class liberals called for political reforms, the peasant farmers in the south

⁹² Milovan Đilas, *Diskusija između Stanovnika, Kristla i Đilasa: klasa ili kasta*, Komunist, 3-4, 1952

⁹³ By this time Đilas modified his theory somewhat and started to consider the party bureaucracy as the new ruling class, see: Milovan Đilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego, 1957

demanded radical land re-distribution, while the urban proletariat fought for more control over the process of production inside the factories.⁹⁴

Without a unified leadership, the overthrow of the Diaz dictatorship served as an interlude into fractional bickering between rival armies while the revolutionary dynamic was oscillating back and forth, from highly radical to more conservative periods. Mobilization of the popular masses, demanding radical discontinuity in the socio-economic conditions, prevented the landowners and industrialists, whose goals were limited to the realm of political and constitutional changes, from stabilizing their rule and renewing the state. This pressure from below was reflected in the drafting of the 1917 Constitution – widely considered as one of the most progressive in the world in its time, especially in the parts dealing with the separation of the church and the state, nationalization of natural resources and agrarian and work legislations.⁹⁵ In its struggle against the radical agrarian movement, the revolutionary elite was forced to forge an alliance with the workers in the cities by giving out concessions to them. The stage was set for the birth of, what would later often be referred to as, the Mexican corporatist state – a situation where the state bureaucracy, seemingly standing above class conflict, serves as the sole guarantor of reconciliation and arbitration between various social interests.⁹⁶

With the defeat of the rural movements and consequent suppression of the working class, it was not until the 1930's and new mobilizations from below that some of the basic revolutionary demands were pushed through when the radical wing of the bureaucracy and the masses found expression in the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940). Distribution of the land, a demand that stood at the heart of the Revolution, was finally enforced by Cárdenas in 1934. The communal right on the

⁹⁴ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher, New York, 1983, pp. 2-11

⁹⁵ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 9

⁹⁶ The concept of a Bonapartist state rising above social classes was first used by Karl Marx in order to describe France under Louis Bonaparte after the 1848 Revolution. Historians have often used this concept to describe the outcome of the Mexican Revolution, see for instance: Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution: A People's History*, New Press, New York, 2006 or Juan F. Leal, *The Mexican State 1915-1973: A Historical Interpretation*, Latin American Perspectives, 1975, pp. 48-63

land from the colonial times was brought back in the shape *ejidos*, where the state handed land over to the poor peasants who had an unalienable right to work these lands and even pass it on to their children. Working class gained exceptional union rights and wage increases. The economic role of the state was boosted in order to create a sovereign capitalism beneficial to the nation as a whole. Cárdenas nationalized the oil industry and put the railways under the control of workers' administration. It was under his presidency that the Mexican state finally stabilized itself and the revolution became effectively institutionalized through a one party system that would prove to be amazingly stable in the following decades.⁹⁷

Political power was based on a number of clientele networks directed towards a single, dominant political party, which ruled through manipulation of revolutionary symbolism, plebiscitary legitimation and mechanism of co-optation. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)⁹⁸ was formed as a hegemonic block that incorporated interests of various social layers organized into separate mass organizations. A dominant labor union confederation, *Confederación de Trabajadores de México* (CTM), organizing majority of the workers, became one of the main pillars of stability for the new regime. Apart from the CTM, the peasants and *ejidatarios* were organized and attached to the party through the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (CNC) while the so-called popular sector (CNOP) incorporated many skilled workers, professionals and business.⁹⁹ All of them were connected to the party and stood in a client-patron relationship to the highly centralized state and the powerful institution of presidency. Existence of antagonistic social classes was thus openly recognized and incorporated into the state as a seemingly independent conciliatory body.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Judith A. Hellman, , *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher, New York, 1983, p.68, Miguel D Ramirez, *Mexico's Economic Crisis: Its Origins and Consequences*, Praeger, New York, 1989, p.32-34, Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1982, p.12

⁹⁸ It was founded in 1929 as the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), renamed to Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM) under Cárdenas and finally established as Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) after the World War II. This paper uses the common abbreviation PRI for all the periods.

⁹⁹ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher, New York, 1983, pp. 40-50

¹⁰⁰ Ruth B. Collier & David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, p. 578-582

2.3. Beginning of an End

Economically, 1968 is generally seen as the peak of the state-led development era in both countries. Mexico, developing through the ISI¹⁰¹ coupled with strong corporatist features in the political sphere and Yugoslavia, with its one party political system and command socialist economy¹⁰² combined with market influences, began exhibiting similar features as they became more integrated into the world market.

By the mid 1960's, general optimism and faith in the ability of the revolutionary leaderships to take the emancipation project further began to fade. Parades of mass support for the government on national holidays and political turning points were still filling the city squares. Still, by now, these were not signs of spontaneous popular mobilizations but well rehearsed legitimizing showcases organized top to bottom. Former enemies of the Revolution now seemed to be its closest allies. The picture of Tito as a fierce partisan guerrilla leader now got replaced by the image of elderly statesman shaking hands with heads of states and royalty in his flamboyant uniforms.¹⁰³ In Mexico, the years when Lázaro Cárdenas used to tour the countryside without bodyguards seemed like far away history. New presidents were now usually seen opening luxury hotels and playing golf with the business elites.¹⁰⁴

Political stability and economic growth were the highest value of both regimes. Social peace was achieved through co-optation while repression was usually the very last resort. System's integrity however, depended mainly on their ability to continue distributing material rewards and integrating dissatisfaction by balancing between

Juan F. Leal, *The Mexican State 1915-1973: A Historical Interpretation*, Latin American Perspectives, 1975, pp. 48-55

¹⁰¹ Import Substitution Industrialization implies state measures to secure the realization of government favored companies' products on the protected national markets. These measures would allegedly give them space and time to develop to a sufficient level to be able to eventually compete on the world market.

¹⁰² Unlike the market economies, where economic decisions are made by the private owners of the factors of production following their own interests in the market, the planned economy implies conscious organization of the economic process whereby planners decide what should be produced and direct the enterprises to produce those goods

¹⁰³ Richard West, *Tito and The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia*, Sinclair Stevenson, London, 1994, p. 197

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Kandell, *La Capital: The Biography of Mexico City*, Random House Inc., New York, 1988, p. 487

different social groups constituting the party pillars. State driven capitalism and centrally planned socialist economy were approaching their limits of growth and once seemingly monolithic ruling bureaucracy started to show open signs of internal strife. The economic growth, now achieved through an increasing role of the market, made it extremely difficult to unite different parts of society developing with different dynamics and opposing interests. Disparity between the revolutionary ideals and pragmatic practice became too obvious. The student population found itself in the middle of changing times and felt the responsibility to summarize and express these general concerns in a political program.

2.3 (1) *Laissez-Faire* Socialism¹⁰⁵

After breaking relations with the Soviet Union in 1948 and the early economic breakthrough, based partly on the post war enthusiasm of the population, the Yugoslav state soon felt all the shortcomings of bureaucratically planned economy. National Income, which had grown by 23 percent in 1948, rose by only 9 percent in 1949 and then declined in each of the following three years.¹⁰⁶ Post revolutionary “heroic communism”¹⁰⁷ could only take society that far and now, it was argued, material incentives, including profit, should be introduced as drivers of growth.¹⁰⁸ As an answer, a new economic system was introduced which would decentralize decision making process by giving more power to direct producers and their enterprises. The system of worker’s self management combined *de jure* worker’s control and indirect state planning along with increasing autonomy of the companies and introduction of market incentives.

In order to prevent the collision of economic and political system, institutional reform soon followed. Transformation of bureaucratically planned society towards a self-managing one was perceived as the dismantling of centralized federal political

¹⁰⁵ This oxymoron, coined by Denisson Rusinow, best describes the contradictions in the Yugoslav Communist Party policies and theoretical postulates during this period.

¹⁰⁶ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p. 40

¹⁰⁷ Heroic communism is a term used in the Yugoslav literature of the time to refer to the post World War II Stakhanovite-type push to rebuild the country through mass mobilizations of the voluntary work force

¹⁰⁸ Mirko Arsić and Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 13

structure. Democratization was seen primarily as decentralization, thus creating an array of local centers of power based on the national key. This process has led Rusinow to conclude that the Yugoslav political system had mutated from a “centralized Party oligarchy into a kind of multi-storied polyarchy of particular and institutionalized regional and functional interests”.¹⁰⁹ Now there were four rival centers, each backed up by shifting coalitions of social groups and ideologies, filling in the vacuum left after de-Stalinization. The federal state apparatus in Belgrade, republican and provincial parties, managerial elite, coming out of the autonomous enterprises, and the theoretically ruling class; the self managing workers.¹¹⁰

The fundamental assumption of this model was that scattered self-managed collectives would, somehow naturally, harmonize their particular interests through market openings and indirect influence of conscious Marxist workers within the workers councils.¹¹¹ By the late 1960’s, it became obvious the model was producing many unwanted outcomes: lack of strategy of development for the economy as a whole, outbreak of localizing and technocratic tendencies, rising inequality, duplicated production capacities, unemployment, growing deficit of foreign trade, differing technologies etc. Tito’s Yugoslavia started to exhibit some of the worst characteristics of systems on both sides of the Iron Curtain. It combined bureaucratic mismanagement and resource wastage with growing social polarization and dominance of narrow interests over the general well-being.

A good illustration of these tendencies is given by Pervan on the example of the system of higher education. He points out that university expansion was often irrational and arbitrary with considerable fragmentation, lack of co-ordination and wasteful duplication. There was no relation between university enrollment and the society’s future manpower needs. University departments were scattered on different sites throughout the city and each provided its students with all the subjects needed

¹⁰⁹ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p. 192

¹¹⁰ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p. 193

¹¹¹ Ralph Pervan, *Tito and the Students: The University and The University Student in Self-Managing Yugoslavia*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1978, p. 9

for a particular degree with little cooperation between them. University of Zagreb, for example, had 12 separate mathematics departments in 1971.¹¹²

Autonomous, self-managed enterprise, which was supposed to empower the working class, served as a launching pod for a new technocratic layer of managers pushing for more liberalization. Aligned with the growing middle class and small entrepreneurs in the countryside, this layer found its expression in the so called liberal wing of the ruling party standing in opposition to the old partisan political cadres.¹¹³ Between the early 1950's and late 1960's, a series of economic reforms ensued, which shaped the system referred to as "socialist commodity production"¹¹⁴. Yugoslavia became entangled in a series of rhetorical and practical paradoxes.

The economic growth of the public sector fell from 9.6 percent between 1954 and 1965 to 6 percent in the second half of 1960's.¹¹⁵ Simultaneously, the private sector was on the rise. The government gave up on collectivization of the countryside already in 1953. In 1965 and 1966 some 12,000 new small workshops were opened in Serbia. In Croatia, 17,000 private truckers accounted for four fifths of the goods carried on the republic's roads.¹¹⁶ Although 75 percent of investments were still coming from the state and the self managing sector in 1972, private sector was up and coming with a quarter of total investments in the country.¹¹⁷ In 1967, legislation was passed which allowed foreign firms to enter into partnerships with domestic enterprises and repatriate their profits.¹¹⁸ Banks were starting to replace the state and its monopoly over investment policy. They could now be formed jointly by

¹¹² Ralph Pervan, Tito and the Students: *The University and The University Student in Self-Managing Yugoslavia*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1978, p. 70

¹¹³ Ann Lane, *Yugoslavia: When Ideals Collide*, Palgrav Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 130

¹¹⁴ The frequent political U-turns of the party apparatus inside Yugoslavia were followed by similar oscillations in economic and legislative theory. The initial thesis that commodity production was not incompatible with socialism, that appeared in the 1950's, soon developed into an idea that commodity production is indeed necessary as any administrative negation of the law of value would lead directly into Stalinism. There was no official definition of the socialist commodity production, although it became a common place in domestic economic writings by mid 1960's. For the best synthesis of these views see: Branko Horvat, *Towards a Theory of Planned Economy*, Yugoslav Institute of Economic Research, Belgrade, 1964

¹¹⁵ Mirko Arsić and Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 13

¹¹⁶ R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, Longman, London, 2002, p. 126

¹¹⁷ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 127

¹¹⁸ Ann Lane, *Yugoslavia: When Ideals Collide*, Palgrav Macmillan, New York, 2004, p. 133

enterprises and extend credits, often engaging in lending relationships with related industries in more underdeveloped republics.¹¹⁹

One of the major grievances of the liberal faction was what they called the fiscal seizure of accumulation, meaning a strong re-distributional role performed by the federal state in its dealings with the republics. They were referring to the subsidies, which after being taxed away from the more successful companies and regions, were redistributed to unprofitable factories and less developed regions. In this drive for economic authority, the local bureaucracies often played with nationalist sentiments to rally popular support and use it as a pressure tool in negotiations with the central authorities.¹²⁰

Results of the economic reform were widely perceived as a failure by the end of the 1960's. The average yearly growth at the height of the reforms, between 1964 and 1967, amounted to 2.9 percent compared to almost 10 percent between 1961 and 1964 and 12.7 percent between 1957 and 1960.¹²¹ The employment rate decreased from 5.9 percent between 1954 and 1965 to only 1 percent in the second half of the 1960's. In 1965, the unemployment rate stood at 8.8 percent or some 326.800 people unemployed in total despite the encouragement of massive immigration policy towards Western Europe.¹²² At the early years of planned economy, wage differentials were kept in ratio of 1:3.5. In 1967, they reached the scope of 1:20 inside Serbia. Rising social inequality was also expressed in the fact that an average worker had 2.5 m² of housing space per family member while directors and highly qualified personnel at the same time had 35 m².¹²³

The working class was carrying the brunt of the reforms on its back and yet the space for its political expression was shrinking. The rise of middle layers and technocracy erased whole social groupings from political representation inside the Communist Party. Once dominating the Party ranks, peasantry was now down to 7.4 percent of

¹¹⁹ R.J. Crampton, *The Balkans Since the Second World War*, Longman, London, 2002, p. 126

¹²⁰ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p. 252

¹²¹ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p. 202

¹²² Dragan R. Marković, *Demonstracije 1968. godine* in: *Univerzitet u beogradu 1838-1988*, Beograd, 1988, p. 980

¹²³ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p.166

the membership. Between 1946 and 1967, the number of workers inside the Party has risen for 392 percent while at the same period that of administrators for 1.460 percent. In 1966, around half of the party membership consisted of people employed in the administration while 33.9 percent were workers. The number of youth members declined as well from 40 percent in 1950 to 12.6 percent in 1965.¹²⁴

The working class interpreted the formal move towards decentralization of economic decisions and more self-management literally, as an increase in their power in comparison with the former times.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, rising competition between the companies and integration into the world market had for a consequence an atomization of self-management to the firm level and an increase in the power of the managers.¹²⁶ The first national congress of the self-management workers' councils, held in 1957, also proved to be the last one, leaving the self-management idea limited to the factory circle.¹²⁷ Considered a taboo until the late 1950's, labor strikes intensified and rose up to around 2,000 between 1960 and 1969.¹²⁸

Initially, the unions supported the greater autonomy of the production units; a demand identified with the liberal fraction. However, as Popov points out, the first signs of attempts to formulate an independent political program came during the 6th Congress of the Yugoslav Federation of Trade Unions when worker representatives openly raised their voices against the overblown bureaucratic layers at the federal and republic levels, demanded confiscation of the property acquired by corruption and illegal means and stressed on the necessity for the working class unity across Yugoslavia. Similar initiatives were raised in the republican congress of the Croatian League of Communists that same year with the workers insisting that the majority of places in the party organs should be reserved for blue-collar workers.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Mirko Arsić and Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 20

¹²⁵ D. PlameniĆ, *The Belgrade Student Insurrection*. *New Left Review*, 54, March-April 1969, p. 62

¹²⁶ Diane Flaherty, *Self-Management and Requirements for Social Property: Lessons from Yugoslavia*, http://www.nodo50.org/cubasigloXXI/congreso/flaherty_15abr03.pdf, p. 8

¹²⁷ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 139

¹²⁸ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 163

¹²⁹ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, (second edition), Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 226

At the same time, a split with Stalinism and general liberalization of political climate opened the space for a new generation of critical thinkers within academia which based its views on the humanist Marxist thought¹³⁰ and established contacts with the New Left thinkers in the West. The search for theoretical justification of a break with Moscow in the early 1950's opened the door for critical re-interpretations of Marxism and developed rapidly, from superficial criticisms of personality cult towards more complex search for the reasons of revolutionary deformation in the Soviet Union and socialist countries in general.

For these scholars, the official call for more self-management stood in contradiction with the growing role of the market and bureaucratization. 1964 marks the launching of the *Praxis* magazine and the first summer school on the island of Korčula, both of which became the focus points for critically inclined left-wing Yugoslav scholars. *Praxis* organized Korčula Summer School brought the leading Marxist intellectuals of the time to the country and initiated translations of their works.¹³¹ Positions held by *Praxis* contributors, as assistants and professors at the universities of Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo brought these scholars into close contact with the student population.

Praxis was just the best known example of the burgeoning intellectual activity among the students and intelligentsia inside Yugoslavia in the 1960's.¹³² New tendencies in the filmmaking, popular music, theoretical magazines, youth journals and open forums in the universities challenged the ideological monopoly of the ruling party. In December 1966, the first public protest against the war in Vietnam was organized in Belgrade. This event also launched the first clashes of students with the police. By that time, a nucleus of critical students was already created at the University of

¹³⁰ These scholars based their views on the early writings of Marx, taking the concept of 'alienation' as the cornerstone of their theory as opposed to more vulgar deterministic interpretations of Marx championed by the official Communist parties.

¹³¹ Among others, Korčula was visited by Ernst Bloch, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Ernest Mandel etc.

¹³² Mirko Arsić and Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 154

Belgrade ready to openly question Yugoslavia's role in the world system and domestic reforms.¹³³

2.3 (2) Revolution Betrayed

Balance of forces within the PRI started to change dramatically after the World War II. Through increased co-optation, labor and peasantry lost their positions, enjoyed under Cárdenas, of relatively autonomous state partners whose loyalty had to be won through concessions and political influence.¹³⁴ While the working class was beginning to find itself in an increasingly submissive relationship to the patron party, the increasing weight of domestic and foreign monopolistic capital, outside of the traditional state sector, signaled the rising autonomy of the entrepreneurial class and its channels of dealing with the state bureaucracy.¹³⁵

Call for social equality gave way to ideas of trickle down economics — according to which the wealth accumulated by the private sector champions will eventually reach the masses. After appropriating the U.S. Cold War rhetoric towards communism and purging the left wing of the Cárdenas years, the PRI opened political space for a changing role of the state in the economic life. The public share of total investment fell from the high levels of almost 50 percent between 1940 and 1952 to 31.7 percent during the remainder of the 1950's. Nevertheless, the State retained its function as the most important collective entrepreneur, but its task was now reversed and confined primarily to supporting private sector and preventing bottlenecks by investing in infrastructure with long economic pay off and benefits for what Ramirez calls the “free drivers”.¹³⁶

¹³³ Tamara Skrozza, *Strast bez ostrašćenosti*, Vreme, No. 888, p. 22

¹³⁴ Ruth B. Collier & David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, p. 574

¹³⁵ Juan F. Leal, *The Mexican State 1915-1973: A Historical Interpretation*, Latin American Perspectives, 1975, p. 60

¹³⁶ Miguel D Ramirez, *Mexico's Economic Crisis: Its Origins and Consequences*, Praeger, New York, 1989, p. 49

Government was contributing to private accumulation by subsidizing fuel, electricity and transportation services below the prices created on the free market. On the other hand, the collectivized *ejido* agricultural sector was subsidizing basic foodstuffs, therefore enabling the urban population to access to these goods, while at the same time, maintaining the working class wages levels low, from the standpoint of the entrepreneurs. This policy has lead the state sector to operate at a constant deficit and made it harder for it to invest and expand.¹³⁷ Cautious not to interrupt the private capital accumulation by an increase in corporate taxes and fearing inflation at the same time, the government turned to private deposit banks as the only alternative for financing public deficits. Between 1950 and 1970 the share of credits provided by these intermediaries increased in total financing of the state budget from 15.8 percent in 1955 to 42.4 percent in 1970. Apart from domestic investors, a liberalization of monetary policy also attracted considerable inflows of foreign financial capital.¹³⁸

It was not only the financial sector that pushed for integration into the world market. Ironically, the very protectionist policies, which originally helped put domestic industry on its feet, were now causing import dependency. Increasing complexity of Mexican capitalism required import of hi-tech capital goods.¹³⁹ Between 1950 and 1966, U.S. direct investment in Mexico grew from \$286 million to almost \$1.2 billion.¹⁴⁰ The ISI strategy was running out of steam as the unequal distribution of wealth within society limited internal demand for durable goods. On the other hand, overpriced domestic production had caused the Mexican products to be uncompetitive on the world market.¹⁴¹ The only successful enterprises seemed to be the ones that managed to swim around the protectionist barriers and find a foreign partner.

This growing influence of finance capital and big enterprises connected with foreign multinationals was bound to cause dissatisfaction among smaller capitalists and artisans who depended on the state and traditionally formed the backbone of support

¹³⁷ Wayne Olson, *Crisis and Social Change in Mexico's Political Economy*, in Latin American Perspectives Issue 46, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 1985, p. 12

¹³⁸ Miguel D Ramirez, *Mexico's Economic Crisis: Its Origins and Consequences*, Praeger, New York, 1989, pp. 64-66

¹³⁹ David Barkin, *Distorted Development: Mexico in the World Economy*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1990, p. 90

¹⁴⁰ Judith A. Hellman, , *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher, New York, 1983, p. 64

¹⁴¹ Philip George, *The Mexican Economy*, Routledge, London 1988, p. 27

for the PRI. The 1965 Industrial Census recorded that in Mexico there were 2,100 large industrial plants, employing more than 100 people, attracting more than 75 percent of investment in the branch and producing 70 percent of the output value. On the opposite side stood 133,600 small establishments, with less than 100 employees, attracting 25.3 percent of total investment and producing 30 percent of industrial products.¹⁴² This duality expressed itself on top with mounting enmity between the so called *políticos* and *técnicos* inside the ruling party.¹⁴³

Factionalism on top was matched by rising polarization within society. The Gini coefficient had risen from 0.55 to 0.58 between 1963 and 1969.¹⁴⁴ Favoring private accumulation as a tool of growth meant keeping wages low. Despite the rising productivity, real wages in the industry grew at extraordinary modest pace of 1 percent annually from 1939 to 1975. Until the late 1960's the real wages for industrial workers still remained lower than in Cárdenas years even as the worker productivity nearly doubled in the same period.¹⁴⁵ Suppression inside the trade unions combined with the abandonment of land distribution and shifting agrarian policy towards large scale private farming provoked challenges from below to the corporate model.

Workers and peasants started to fight the co-opted and corrupt leaderships in their organizations while many decided to abandon the official structures and founded rival confederations. It is estimated that by the end of 1950's nearly one third of the workforce was organized in what can be termed as independent trade unions.¹⁴⁶ The working class offensive has been cut off brutally with suppression of a railway strike in 1958 and now it was only a question of time before it jumped back into the political arena. In the meantime, the growing middle class has expanded its share in the appropriation of national income but, it was increasingly frustrated for being unable to

¹⁴² Juan F. Leal, *The Mexican State 1915-1973: A Historical Interpretation*, Latin American Perspectives, 1975, p. 61

¹⁴³ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 335

¹⁴⁴ Wayne Olson, *Crisis and Social Change in Mexico's Political Economy*, in Latin American Perspectives Issue 46, Vol. 12, No. 3, Summer 1985, p. 10

¹⁴⁵ John W. Sherman, *The Mexican "Miracle" and Its Collapse*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 584

¹⁴⁶ Ruth B. Collier & David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, pp. 597-604

turn this economic strength into political influence. It was becoming more cosmopolitan in its outlook and along with the intelligentsia it strived for political liberalization inside the stifling one party system.¹⁴⁷

Crucial event in this process took place in the winter of 1958 when the railway workers national strike successfully resisted the government pressure for months, earning the reputation of the most important proletarian social movements in Mexico since the 1930's.¹⁴⁸ Initial demand for wage increases soon turned into a movement for general democratization of PRI controlled CTM unions, attracting other dissident unionists and acts of solidarity from different industrial sectors. The movement was eventually crushed by force with the army occupying the railways and thousands of unionists arrested.¹⁴⁹

Finally, the events outside of Mexico also contributed to the changing collective consciousness. Victory of the Cuban Revolution caused a remarkable echo all over Latin America. More than anywhere else, it was in Mexico, a country in which the discourse of revolution was regarded so highly, where Cuba sparked the hope of revival in popular politics. The Cuban example broke the ideological monopoly of the old left which, according to the theory of stages promoted by Moscow since the 1930's, held that there is no alternative but to deepen the capitalist transformation of Mexican society by supporting the progressive wing of the bourgeoisie.¹⁵⁰ In practice, this meant pushing the PRI as far as possible to the left and waiting for capitalism to create necessary preconditions for the proletarian revolution.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ John W. Sherman, *The Mexican "Miracle" and Its Collapse*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 597

¹⁴⁸ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 203

¹⁴⁹ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 207

¹⁵⁰ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 153

¹⁵¹ See for example the analysis of PRI written in 1964 by one of Mexico's most prominent labor leaders Vicente Lombardo Toledano in Luis Suarez, *Mexico, Presidential Elections: What is P.R.I.? (Partido Revolucionario Institucional)*, in CIDOC Cuaderno, No.38, Vol. 3. (CIF Reports, June 1 to June 15, 1964). (Cuarnavaca) 1970, pp. 3/1-9.

In the 1960's, the revitalization of the revolutionary project seemed to be on the agenda, with or without the PRI. The University campuses in Mexico City became hotbeds of left wing student politics with a myriad of active groups influenced by Maoism, Trotskyism and the guerilla enthusiasm of the Cuban Revolution.¹⁵² Soon, there was a crystallization of demands for revitalization of the revolution pushed through in the public consciousness. These included: agrarian reform, autonomy of trade unions and peasant collectives, Mexican control over natural resources, nationalization of certain industries, just division of wealth, freeing of political prisoners, solidarity with Cuba and opposition to U.S. imperialism.¹⁵³

Carr also notes the emergence of a new generation of writers such as Carlos Fuentes and a series of journals, comic books, alternative coffee houses, salons and bookstores in Mexico city during the 1960's, all of which contributed to the rise in critical consciousness. This new wave of political thought and cultural production demystified the ruling structures and official interpretations of the Mexican history. At the same time, the rural intelligentsia started to organize Cuban influenced guerilla movements in the countryside, triggering brutal government interventions.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth –Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 229

¹⁵³ Ruth B. Collier & David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, p. 593

¹⁵⁴ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth –Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, pp. 232-242

Chapter 3: 1968

3.1. The Rise and Fall of the Movements

Until the summer of 1968, both Mexico and Yugoslavia gave impression of self-confident, stable political systems capable of dealing with instances of dissent behind closed doors, far away from the eyes of its citizens and the international media. Two seemingly trivial incidents sparked off a chain of events that exposed the vulnerability of both regimes. In Belgrade, the movement lasted for seven days and rarely got the chance to step out of the walls of the university buildings. Nevertheless, its sharp political analysis and orientation towards the working class scared the ruling circles and revealed their manipulative ways. In Mexico City, the political unrest went on for more than two months, within which, three distinct phases will be recognized. The movement won over hundreds of thousands of ordinary Mexicans who joined the students in protest marches through the Capital. It ended with one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the country with hundreds of students massacred by the Mexican army.

3.1 (1) 1968 in Belgrade

On Sunday evening, 2 June, a group of students from the Student City¹⁵⁵ in New Belgrade attempted to enter a musical show organized in the honor of a volunteer youth brigade stationed in the area.¹⁵⁶ After a prolonged scuffle between the students and security at the entrance gate, the *militsiya*¹⁵⁷ used batons and water cannon to disperse the crowd. A rumor spread that one of the students was killed. Some 3,000 enraged Student City residents gathered on the square outside the dormitories, pushed

¹⁵⁵ Student City in New Belgrade was the largest student residence in the Southeastern Europe built originally between 1949-1955 to accommodate nearly 5,000 students.

¹⁵⁶ Work brigades, with volunteers gathered from different parts of the country, were used extensively in the building of New Belgrade as the showcase of Yugoslav unity and its achievements

¹⁵⁷ This was the official name of the police forces in the Eastern Bloc countries and Yugoslavia. It originates from the early Soviet history when the Bolsheviks tried to differentiate these new forces from the old police. Considering the etymology of the term and the specific local features, the *militsiya* should be considered a distinct kind of regional policing system, not just a translation of the English term "police".

the *militsiya* forces back, overtook the water cannon, and spontaneously decided to march downtown to the Federal Parliament, chanting slogans: ‘Work Places for All!’, ‘Workers-Students!’, and ‘Tito-Party!’¹⁵⁸ At the nearby juncture, the students were intercepted by a stronger *militsiya* squad forcing them to retreat to the dormitories. Once back inside, the aroused population of the Student City agreed to organize an assembly the next day and march downtown to express their grievances in front of the government buildings. The first Action Committee of the demonstration was elected, whereas the Student Federation members were not allowed to candidate, as they were accused of sabotaging the student radio inside the dormitories that night.¹⁵⁹

The next morning, a marching column took off from New Belgrade towards the city center. This time, the number of protesters was higher and they were better organized. Party and national flags were carried in the front, as well as banners such as: ‘We are the sons of the workers!’, ‘Freedom of press and demonstrations!’ and ‘Down with the red bourgeoisie!’ A few hours earlier in the city center, the university Student Federation functionaries met with deans of all the faculties and the University League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) members. Together, these official University organizations condemned the *militsiya* violence and declared solidarity with the protesting students. The protest march was therefore joined by professors and university functionaries whose motivation, according to Marković, was “partly to express their solidarity and partly to channel the flow of events in order for things not to run out of control”.¹⁶⁰ Halfway towards the center, the marching students were met by a blockade of thousands of militsiyamen gathered from all over Serbia.¹⁶¹ A group of high ranking Communist Party officials, headed by Veljko Vlahović (1914-1975)¹⁶², also appeared on the scene with the aim to address the crowd and convince them to cancel their march and send a delegation instead. However, the students were

¹⁵⁸ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p.79

¹⁵⁹ Dragan R. Marković, *Demonstracije 1968. godine*, in *Univerzitet u Beogradu 1838-1988*, Beogradski Univerzitet, Beograd 1988, p.984

¹⁶⁰ Mihailo Marković, *Juriš na nebo*, Prosveta, Beograd, 2008, p.33

¹⁶¹ D. Plamenić, *The Belgrade Student Insurrection*. *New Left Review*, 54, March-April 1969, p.62

¹⁶² Veljko Vlahović was one of the leaders of the student movement at the Belgrade University in the 1930's, volunteer in the Spanish Civil War and Partisan propagandists during the World War II. He was one of the most popular Party functionaries among the Belgrade University students in the 1960's, often participating in open forums and student meetings.

determined to continue their protest and reach downtown.¹⁶³ In the middle of negotiations with the Party officials, the *militsiya* suddenly charged with batons and tear gas. The crowd dispersed chaotically, running back in direction of the dormitories.¹⁶⁴ In the clashes that morning and the night before, one hundred and sixty-nine people had been injured altogether, twelve of which were hospitalized.¹⁶⁵

Back in the Student City, the demonstration Action Committee together with *The Student* magazine¹⁶⁶ editorial board and representatives of the University Student Federation drafted the first official demand list. Initial demands of the Student City assembly consisted of: release of the students arrested the previous night, indemnification of the ones injured, ban on the breaching of the university autonomy and punishment for those responsible for attacks on the students.¹⁶⁷ These demands were now expanded and summarized in the so called Proclamation (*Proglas*), which dealt with the recent incidents, and the Resolution (*Rezolucija*), which presented the more general views of students in protest on contemporary problems in the Yugoslav society. These two documents were then forwarded to faculties downtown, where students had gathered to discuss the New Belgrade incidents and adopted them collectively in assemblies.¹⁶⁸ The assemblies also decided to occupy the faculties and elect their own Action Committees. The students attempted to turn the open space of the Student Square, in front of the Faculty of Philosophy, into the focal gathering point for all the students in strike. However, the *militsiya* pushed the gathered crowd inside the Philosophy Faculty campus, which from that point on turned into the central organizing place for the city wide student strike¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Vlahović was greeted with chants 'Veljko, Remember Spain!' and 'Lead us-Tito Would Have Lead us!'

¹⁶⁴ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, pp. 81-84

¹⁶⁵ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 39

¹⁶⁶ *The Student* was one of the platforms for expression of critical student thought in the liberalizing political climate in the Yugoslav society in the 1960's. During the student protest, the issues were often banned as the striking students used it to bypass the official media and communicate their demands to the public

¹⁶⁷ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p.81

¹⁶⁸ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 86

¹⁶⁹ James Robertson, *Discourses of Democracy and Exclusion in the Streets of Belgrade, 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p. 17

The assemblies (*zborovi*) were the basic organizational structure of the 1968 student movement in Belgrade. All students and employed staff of a respective faculty had the right to participate and to vote in the assembly. The assemblies elected the Action Committees as the main coordinating bodies and various other committees for political agitation, preparation of food, security etc. Mandates of all the Action Committee members were limited to 48 hours. Furthermore, they could be recalled at any moment if their actions went against the decisions of the Assembly.¹⁷⁰ Another organizing form, unique to the Faculty of Philosophy, was the Convent (*Konvent*). This was an open discussion forum in which a speaker would engage in a free, question and answer, spontaneous communication with the crowd.¹⁷¹ Free from all formality and taboos, these sessions could go on for hours debating everything from philosophy and culture to current political themes.¹⁷² Action Committees from the various faculties never managed to form an independent coordinating body for the entire university. This role was taken over by the traditional structures such as the University Committees of the Student Federation and the University League of Communists which were opened up to include representatives of the protest Action Committee and *The Student* editorial board.¹⁷³ It is estimated that around 60,000 students participated in the strike during those seven days.¹⁷⁴

On 4 June, the Ministry of Interior formally banned all public demonstrations, thus limiting the protest to the occupied university buildings.¹⁷⁵ The official media projected the picture of the student actions as acts of vandals, destroying public property.¹⁷⁶ Student newspapers, on the other hand, rarely found their way out of the printing premises due to government censorship. Solidarity protests were organized by students in Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Sarajevo, nevertheless none of these evolved into a university strike of the scale seen in Belgrade. Isolated from all sides, the students focused their efforts on finding allies outside of the university walls. Strike

¹⁷⁰ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p.83

¹⁷¹ Speakers were usually professors from the Philosophy faculty, although students, public figures and ordinary citizens often took the floor.

¹⁷² Ivan Miladinović, *1968: Tajna i opomena*, Draganić, Beograd, 2003, p. 80

¹⁷³ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p.119

¹⁷⁴ Ivan Miladinović, *1968: Tajna i opomena*, Draganić, Beograd, 2003, p.100

¹⁷⁵ Dragan R. Marković, *Demonstracije 1968. godine*, in *Univerzitet u Beogradu 1838-1988*, Beogradski Univerzitet, Beograd 1988, p. 986

¹⁷⁶ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 88

delegations attempted to reach the factories and establish contact with the workers and numerous appeals were made for Tito to visit the students and hold a public meeting with them.¹⁷⁷

The establishment responded by ordering the Party cells inside the factories to form workers' guards at the gates in order to prevent the students from reaching the employees.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, a smear campaign of the student actions was orchestrated by the government, in which the various self management councils, from all corners of Yugoslavia, sent public letters condemning the students "selfish impatience and destruction of social property".¹⁷⁹ The Communist League was divided over its tactics in confronting the student movement. The hardliners did not shy away from using the army as the means for dispersing the crowds from the university buildings. The others, expressed conditioned support and understanding for student demands, however strongly condemned the movement's methods and urged them to re-orient their actions towards the institutional self-management channels.¹⁸⁰

Caught in the web of dismissals and reservations, the focus of student efforts switched from outward general critique of society to inward justification of the movement itself. In this situation, the traditional university organizations were able to impose themselves as transmitters between the students and the government. On their initiative, a new program was drafted, which toned down the minimal demands from the Proclamation, thus creating the preconditions for ending of the blockade and continuation of discussion of the longer term demands inside the official institutional framework.¹⁸¹ Once presented to the assemblies, this compromise draft was however attacked for being too mild and got rejected by all the main assemblies.¹⁸² By 9 June, the militsiya encircled the faculties and the media attacks started to heat up. The

¹⁷⁷ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 61

¹⁷⁸ D. Plamenic, *The Belgrade Student Insurrection*, New Left Review, 54, March-April 1969, p. 63

¹⁷⁹ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p.102

¹⁸⁰ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, pp. 49-58

¹⁸¹ James Robertson, *Discourses of democracy and exclusion in the streets of Belgrade, 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p. 22

¹⁸² Ralph Pervan, *Tito and the Students, The University and the University Student in Self-Managing Yugoslavia*, University of Western Australia Press, 1978, p. 31

Faculty of Arts was invaded with the students beaten up and arrested.¹⁸³ The government started to send clear signals that it was considering the usage of armed forces.¹⁸⁴ That same night, it was announced that President Tito would address the nation. Since the beginning of the student revolt, Tito had remained silent, letting different factions bicker over the appropriate response to the student movement. Now, both the Party and the student assemblies anxiously expected the verdict of the supreme arbiter.¹⁸⁵

At the surprise of many, Tito fully supported the student grievances in his speech. He assured the students that he would personally look after that the problems get solved and called upon the students to help him in this task. In addition, he also stated that if he proved to be incapable of engineering their demands, he should step down from the office.¹⁸⁶ Upon hearing this confirmation of their efforts, the students broke out of their school buildings and paraded the streets in a victorious mood.¹⁸⁷ The immediate result of Tito's address was de-activation of the movement. The majority of the students understood that they had won and therefore there was no reason to continue with the strike. In front of 10,000 students gathered in the Student City, the head of the University Communist League characterized Tito's "words of trust" as "our biggest victory"¹⁸⁸. The Belgrade University rector stated that the students should now justify the trust given to them by comrade Tito and return to classes.¹⁸⁹

On 26 July, Tito spoke about the recent events in quite a different tone, warning about the infiltration by various hostile elements of the student movement with the aim of introducing the multi-party system and negating the working class as the most important factor in the society. He categorically stated that there was no place in the

¹⁸³ D. Plameni , *The Belgrade Student Insurrection*, New Left Review, 54, March-April 1969, p. 65

¹⁸⁴ Ivan Miladinovi , *1968: Tajna i opomena*, Dragani , Beograd, 2003, p. 136

¹⁸⁵ James Robertson, *Discourses of democracy and exclusion in the streets of Belgrade, 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p. 24

¹⁸⁶ Dragan R. Markovi , *Demonstracije 1968. godine*, in *Univerzitet u Beogradu 1838-1988*, Beogradski Univerzitet, Beograd 1988, p. 991

¹⁸⁷ James Robertson, *Discourses of Democracy and Exclusion in the Streets of Belgrade, 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p. 25

¹⁸⁸ Mirko Arsi , Dragan R. Markovi . '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 124

¹⁸⁹ Mirko Arsi , Dragan R. Markovi . '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 123

university for “this type of people with these ideas”.¹⁹⁰ The purges had started already six days earlier with the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Sociology Committees being expelled from the League of Communists. In September 1969, the Student Union of the Philosophy Faculty published an open letter pointing out to series of detentions, hearings and arrests taking place in the previous months against the students identified as the leaders of the 1968 strike movement.¹⁹¹ In 1972, three participants of the 1968 movement were put in court and convicted as a “Trotskyite group conspiring against the people and the state”.¹⁹² Finally, in 1975, eight professors connected with the *Praxis* group, were discharged from their positions in the Philosophy Faculty as “politically and morally unsuitable” teachers.¹⁹³

3.1 (2) 1968 in Mexico City

Los granaderos was a name given to special anti-riot police formed by the Mexican government in order to suppress acts of dissidence. Mabry notes how they were infamous for their willingness to “obey commands without question”.¹⁹⁴ Since the 1940’s, these units were most often used as an instrument in crushing labor strikes.¹⁹⁵ On 23 July 1968 however, the *granaderos* were dispatched to handle a street fight between two groups of students from the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) and private preparatory schools in Mexico City. Clashes of youth gangs were a known occurrence in the Capital and this particular incident had no political background. Nevertheless, a sharp intervention from the *granaderos* awoke the anger of Poly students all over the city.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 214

¹⁹¹ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 156

¹⁹² Jelka Kljajić-Imširović, *Disidenti i Zatvor*, Republika, 196, 1998, p. 16

¹⁹³ Nebojša Popov, *Contra Fatum: Slučaj grupe profesora filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu 1968-1988*, Mladost, Beograd, 1989, p. 412

¹⁹⁴ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 238

¹⁹⁵ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 40

¹⁹⁶ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 258

The National Federation of Technical Students (FNET), a PRI affiliated student organization, attempted to co-opt the stirring inside the schools by channeling it into a peaceful protest march. On 26 July, some 30,000 students walked down the city center. Despite the fact that one part of the protesters expressed desire to present their grievances to the president the organizers explicitly avoided to lead the march towards the Zócalo square in front of the National Palace — a symbolic space reserved exclusively for Presidential addresses and government organized rallies.¹⁹⁷ FNET demonstration took an unexpected turn however, when the marching column came across a smaller protest in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution¹⁹⁸ organized by the rival left wing Center of Democratic Students (CNED) campus group. Part of the demonstrators decided to join forces and try to reach the nearby Zócalo square. They were intercepted by a tough police action.

What ensued were violent street battles between the police and the students throughout the night. Students built barricades and took cover inside the IPN preparatory schools in the area.¹⁹⁹ Occupied schools were utilized for holding a series of assemblies by the students to discuss their next moves. A decision was made for the barricades not to be lifted until all of their peers arrested in last night clashes were released from the police custody. The Economics Preparatory School assembly went even further, demanding abolition of the *granaderos* corps altogether and expulsion of government affiliated FNET organization from schools.²⁰⁰ In an effort to reestablish control over these institutions, the government invaded them, using force once again.

By blowing up a historic wooden door of the preparatory school, associated with the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the police infuriated the public and pulled yet another major university into protest. Under the normal circumstances

¹⁹⁷ Strike Committee of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Mexico, *The Mexican Student Movement: It's Meaning and Perspectives*, in Jeremi Suri, *Global Revolutions of 1968*, W.W. Norton, London, 2006, p. 186

¹⁹⁸ On this day in 1953 Fidel Castro and a group of revolutionaries attacked the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba in a failed attempt to overthrow the regime of Fulgencio Batista. Since the victory of the Cuban Revolution this date is commemorated as the start of the Revolution inside Cuba and by its supporters in other countries.

¹⁹⁹ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 259

²⁰⁰ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 241

it would have been unimaginable for these two schools to collaborate. In contrast to the IPN, which was located in the working class barrios and recruited students from skilled workers and emerging middle class families, UNAM was considered the most prestigious institution in the country with a long tradition of autonomy.²⁰¹ This incident suddenly brought the two rival systems of higher learning together into a strike over a unified cause.²⁰² Moreover, the university administration could not remain passive any longer. On August 1, in reaction to this violent breach of autonomy, the UNAM rector Javier Barros Sierra, lead a united march of more than fifty thousand students through the city.²⁰³ What only until the day before seemed like a scuffle between a group of adolescents and the police had now turned into a student strike with rising momentum.

The forming of the National Strike Council (CNH), on 2 August, marks the beginning of the second phase for the movement. The one in which students built an organizational infrastructure capable of spreading the strike and mobilizing ever increasing numbers of people in the streets. During the first week of the movement, the so called Committees of Struggle (*Comités de Lucha*) emerged spontaneously as an organizational pattern, independent from all existing student bodies. Struggle Committees from each faculty on strike elected their representatives to the CNH as the main coordinating organ of the strike. Delegates were subject to recall at any time if they failed to account for their actions to the respective faculty assembly.²⁰⁴ Representatives inside the CNH were rotated weekly. There was a conscious effort not to promote any identifiable student leadership or individuals which could be exposed to repression or co-optation by the government.²⁰⁵ As the strike spread, the

²⁰¹ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 48

²⁰² Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 244

²⁰³ Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, p. 64

²⁰⁴ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth – Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 260

²⁰⁵ Judith A. Hellman, , *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher Inc., New York, 1983, pp. 132-134

CNH grew to 150 delegates representing some 150,000 students from more than seventy secondary and preparatory schools²⁰⁶ as well as the university faculties.²⁰⁷

While the CNH was responsible for coordinating and setting the general tactics line for the movement, on the other end of the organizational ladder, the so called student brigades were the ones doing most of the daily practical work on the ground. The brigades were groups of five to ten people organized in accordance with their skills. Students of law and medicine established legal counseling and medical clinics in the neighborhoods. Students also ran their own radio station.²⁰⁸ The central role was played by the political brigades who had the task of building bridges with other sectors of society by distributing leaflets, holding speeches and collecting donations for the strike.²⁰⁹ By the mid-August there were around 150 such brigades operating in all of the institutions on strike.²¹⁰

Throughout August, it seemed that students had taken over the initiative and forced the government into a defensive. President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964–1970) had offered his “extended hand”²¹¹ to the students after the initial, rector lead protest march. A week later, this gesture was made more concrete with an offer presented by the government, through the official university structures, suggesting the appointment of a joint commission, composed of students, government officials and others, that would investigate the charges and come up with solution proposals. The students declined this offer, suspecting it as a trap which would result in a commission being “bogged down in trivia and eventually disappearing without anything concrete being

²⁰⁶ In the Mexican educational system, preparatory schools offer upper secondary education and are often tied to respective university systems. Therefore the movement in Mexico City included, apart from the students, a significant participation of secondary school youth between the age of 16 and 20.

²⁰⁷ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p.254 and Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 254

²⁰⁸ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher Inc., New York, 1983, pp.136

²⁰⁹ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico—Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, p. 698

²¹⁰ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 83

²¹¹ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico- Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810–1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, p. 697

done except to kill the movement”.²¹² Instead, the students insisted on open negotiations with the CNH, as the only legitimate body of the protest, in the presence of the media and the spectators.²¹³

The other side of government’s tactics consisted of efforts to discredit the students’ movement as an act of foreign provocateurs trying to destabilize the country.²¹⁴ The CNH responded to these attacks two times in a row during August, by organizing massive rallies reaching up to 400,000 participants at the Zócalo square.²¹⁵ These protests, taking place on 14 August and 27 August, mark the golden period of the movement. They showcased the power of students to rally the support of the citizens behind them, moving well beyond any mobilization the government could organize as a counterbalance.²¹⁶ Backed by this public showcase of solidarity, the students set the tempo of events and appeared to be winning.

Nevertheless, the Mexican government still held control over the main levers of power within the state.²¹⁷ President Diaz Ordaz’s address to the nation on 1 September, revealed the government is ready to “go as far as it has to”²¹⁸ in order to restore order. This speech opened the way for final stage of the movement, in which the government abandoned further attempts at co-optation and focused on violent intimidation instead. The counterattack started with heightened media propaganda against the students, pressure on the official university organs and violent provocations on the ground.²¹⁹

²¹² Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p.254 and Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 257

²¹³ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 99

²¹⁴ Jonathan Kandell, *La Capital: The Biography of Mexico City*, Random House Inc., New York, 1988, p. 521

²¹⁵ Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, pp. 66-67

²¹⁶ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 259

²¹⁷ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 119

²¹⁸ Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, p. 68

²¹⁹ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 259

On 9 September, rector Javier Barros Sierra issued a call for a return to classes. Professor's associations followed his lead.²²⁰ As a response to the created climate of hostility, the CNH decided to tone down its rhetoric and organized yet another mass rally of 200,000 people marching down the streets of the capital in complete silence with tape over their mouths.²²¹ The movement kept calling for a dialogue, with one part, now even prepared to consider dropping the demand for a public exposure and conducting negotiations on paper instead.²²² However, unlike one month before, now there was no hand extended from the president's side.

On 18 September, the army forces invaded the UNAM campus. CNH members were arrested in the streets. In the following days, armed *porras*²²³ attacked preparatory schools all over the city and beat up students. By September 23, the IPN campus was invaded as well, thus leaving the movement without its last organizing headquarters. The climax came on October 2, at the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Tlatelolco. A large student gathering was surrounded by the army which, at one point, began to shoot indiscriminately at the crowd. Around 5,000 soldiers fired fifteen thousand rifle rounds.²²⁴ The CNH activists who survived were arrested and executed the very same night or taken into custody. Officially, fifty-seven people were killed while 2,000 were arrested. Until today, the exact number of victims is not known; Mabry estimated the body count to be close to three hundred²²⁵. The openings of the military, police and intelligence files in 2002, by the Vicente Fox government, however, indicate the number of casualties could be lower than previously assumed.²²⁶

²²⁰ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 261

²²¹ Jonathan Kandell, *La Capital: The Biography of Mexico City*, Random House Inc., New York, 1988, p.524

²²² Enrique Krauze, *Mexico – Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, p. 711

²²³ *Porras* were student gangs originating in the political clashes between the leftists and the traditionalists at UNAM in the 1930's. They were often affiliated with and organized by various political parties or personalities in the university or the state hierarchy. See: Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 99

²²⁴ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico–Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, 720

²²⁵ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 265

²²⁶ Kate Doyle, *The Dead of Tlatelolco*, IRC Americas Program, October 2006, <http://americas.irc-online.org/am/3600>

The massacre de facto broke the movement that night. The strike officially ended on 21 November, with none of the student demands being granted by the government.²²⁷

3.2 Political Outlook and Demands

Neither Mexican, nor Yugoslav students had illusions about their role as agents of change within society. They both looked to other social classes for guidance, although none of them managed to build firm alliances and spread the strike towards the working class or the peasantry. Both movements walked the thin line of supporting the historical processes started a few decades earlier but negating the current sclerotic structures in power, claiming to represent the continuation of this revolutionary legacy. Such an orientation allowed their message to have a powerful resonance in the popular consciousness, but at the same time, made it more open for government cooptation. In Belgrade, this role was played by the living embodiment of the Yugoslav Revolution, Josip Broz Tito, who used his prestige to single handedly separate the student mass from the activist nucleus and demobilize the movement. Mexico had no such charismatic figure on top. There, the students cut the umbilical cord with the system early on, by organizing a parallel organizational structure, thus challenging the PRI's claim on political monopoly and placing themselves, perhaps unconsciously, outside of the negotiation arena.

3.2 (1) Down with the 'Red Bourgeoisie'

From the first day of strike, Belgrade students made careful distinction between their minimum-short term demands (*Proglas*) and the more general political orientation of the movement (*Rezolucija*). The list of minimum demands included:

1. Immediate release from jail of all the arrested colleagues;
2. Resignation of those functionaries responsible for ruthless behavior of the militsiya;
3. Parliament convention in order to discuss the student issues with university and student representatives;

²²⁷ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 264

4. Resignation of the directors and editorial chiefs of Belgrade newspapers, radio and the press agency for having deliberately falsified the events of 2 June.²²⁸

The Resolution on the other hand, stressed the following points as major weaknesses of the system they referred to as “our socialist society”²²⁹ and recommended certain steps for its improvement:

1. The emergence of great social inequalities in the community. In connection with this, the students demanded: systematic application of the socialist principles of distribution according to work, energetic actions against the accumulation of private property in a non-socialist manner with immediate nationalization of improperly gained private property, abolition of all the privileges in the society etc.
2. The rising unemployment. To this end, the students proposed: abolishment of honorary and overtime work, introduction of measures for employment of young qualified workers, introduction of a long range development concept for the economy based on the right of work for all people in the country etc.
3. The existence of strong bureaucratic forces in the society. Measures required in combating these are: democratization of all socio-political organizations – especially the League of Communists, democratization of the media, freedom of assembly and demonstration.
4. The worsening conditions inside the university. The students demanded: better material conditions on the faculties, the right of students to participate in all decision making processes important for the society in general and student issues in particular, democratic election of the entire teaching staff, free admission for all applicants etc.²³⁰

The general direction of the political program of Belgrade 1968 movement is therefore clear. As Arsić and Marković point out, it favored conscious directing of economic reproduction in contrast to the market impulsiveness, democratic control over the organs of power and means of public communication as opposed to

²²⁸ Praxis Editorial Board (ed.), *Jun-Lipanj 1968: Dokumenti*, Zagreb, 1971, p. 61

²²⁹ Dragan R. Marković, *Demonstracije 1968. godine*, in *Univerzitet u Beogradu 1838-1988*, Beogradski Univerzitet, Beograd 1988, p.986

²³⁰ Praxis Editorial Board (ed.), *Jun-Lipanj 1968: Dokumenti*, Zagreb, 1971, p. 62 and D. Plamenic, *The Belgrade Student Insurrection*, *New Left Review*, 54, March-April 1969, p. 63

bureaucratic voluntarism and manipulation, social equality based on socialist property and distribution in contrast to capital relation and self-management reorganization of the educational system in opposition to its dominant bourgeois character.²³¹ In essence, this program sought to reform the old bureaucratic structure of the system and at the same time escape the reintroduction of the market as the only possible framework for this task.

The accusations, coming from the top, about the movement being anti-working class and in favor of exchanging the self-management political structure with the multi-party system could easily be discarded by looking at the strike slogans and documents. In open letters to the Yugoslav working class and president Tito, the students insisted on the fact that they have no particular interests apart from those of the working class. The workers were seen as the only social layer which carries universal interests of the society as a whole, in contrast to the bureaucracy which endangers the further development of socialism with its particularistic views.²³² Similarly, the students proclaimed that they have no program separate from that of the League of Communists and the Yugoslav Constitution. The problem in their eyes was not the system as a whole, but the bureaucratic layer standing in the way of what the students called “true socialism”.²³³ The government should therefore apply its own program in practice.²³⁴ Slogans on banners hung from the Faculties express this orientation in a precise manner: “The Revolution is still not finished!”, “We had enough of the red bourgeoisie!”, “Self-Management from bottom to the top!”, “Bureaucracy hands off workers!”, “Political work-Free work!”, “No to the restoration of capitalism!”, “Long live the unity of workers and the students-the precondition of true self-management!”, and others.²³⁵

²³¹ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 115

²³² Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 61

²³³ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 61

²³⁴ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 121

²³⁵ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 97

The LCY observed the student strike as a serious threat. The movement faced the governing nomenklatura, for the first time, with political mobilization outside of the official social institutions and openly called upon the working class to join them by doing the same. The main task of the Party was therefore to prevent any ties with the workers and return the majority of the students into the framework of institutionalized self-management.

The extent of fear inside the ruling circles from a French scenario, of workers-students alliance, had been recognized by Tito in his speech, when he described the crisis had shocked many comrades in the Party and made them realize what could had happened if the working class was “less conscious and undertook steps not in harmony with relations in our socialist society”.²³⁶ Many researchers point out that, despite the government repression, contacts between students and the workers have been established in many instances.²³⁷ Nevertheless, the majority of the workers remained skeptical towards student actions or opted for passive support or apathy in the face of increased pressure inside the work places.²³⁸

The second challenge for the government, namely reaffirming the validity of traditional institutions, was achieved gradually. As Robertson notes, during the student protest, two radically different discourses of self-management emerged. The official one, represented by the LCY and government backed institutions inside the University and the oppositional one, transmitted by the student activists and radical professors and expressed through the spontaneous Action Committees.²³⁹ Organizationally, there was never a clear cut line between these two tendencies, as many of the student activists and radical professor were members of the Party structure inside the faculties and these organizations opened up to the Action

²³⁶ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkley 1977, p.235

²³⁷ See for example instances of factory delegations at various student assemblies in: Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 44 or acts of refusal to sign anti-student declarations by workers self-management councils in Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković. '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 104

²³⁸ Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p.87

²³⁹ James Robertson, *Discourses of Democracy and Exclusion in the Streets of Belgrade , 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p. 17

Committees early on, in order not to be left behind by the course of events.²⁴⁰ As the movement became more isolated, the official structures gained strength as the only channel of communication with the government. The crucial act which reintegrated students into the orbit of institutionalized self-management however was Tito's historical address.

For the majority of students, Tito never ceased to be the embodiment of the Yugoslav Revolution. Throughout the strike one of the slogans was "Tell Tito the truth!"²⁴¹ According to Pervan, the aim of his speech was to conciliate the mass of students and to isolate and discredit the more radical element among them.²⁴² The focus of Tito's speech was on the justification of student grievances. This recognition from the highest political authority proved to be a magnet which took the power away from the Action Committees. There seemed to be no further need for exhausting activism, since the students now had the most powerful figure in the country working on their side. At the same time, Tito clearly limited his support to "90 percent of the honest youth...not poisoned by various Đilas and Mao Zedong theories"²⁴³ Thus, he left a grain of suspicion upon which the government would later reconnect and repress the radicalized nucleus in silence once the movement had lost steam.

3.2 (2) Fulfillment of the Revolutionary Program

Starting as a student protest against police brutality, the strike of the Mexican students soon transformed itself into a broader social movement and took up more general political themes. Demands of the initial assemblies were limited to local grievances of Poly students, asking for immediate release of colleagues arrested in clashes with the police and firing of police officials responsible for the usage of force.²⁴⁴ By 2 August,

²⁴⁰ It was exactly this mixing and the tendency of radicalized student activists to view the LCY structures as rightfully theirs which lead to the disbanding of the LCY chapter at the Faculty of Philosophy a month later

²⁴¹ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 97

²⁴² Ralph Pervan, *Tito and the Students, The University and the University Student in Self-Managing Yugoslavia*, University of Western Australia Press, 1978, p. 11

²⁴³ Ivan Miladinović, *1968: Tajna i opomena*, Draganić, Beograd, 2003, p. 87

²⁴⁴ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 241

the CNH came up with six official demands of the movement, thus summarizing various demands from the schools in strike. The students called for:

1. Liberation of political prisoners;
2. Dismissal of police chiefs responsible for the usage of force against the students;
3. Abolition of the *granaderos* corps and prohibition of the creation of similar corps;
4. Abolition of Articles 145 and 145 of the Penal Code;²⁴⁵
5. Indemnification of the families of the dead and injured who had been victims of aggression since 26 July;
6. Clarification of the responsibility of officials for the acts of repression and vandalism committed by the police, *granaderos* and the army.²⁴⁶

Demands one and four immediately catch the eye of any researcher of 1968 in Mexico, as they have little or no direct connection with what had happened to the students. Mabry points out that no student had been or would be arrested under the provisions of Article 145 and that these laws were commonly associated with the imprisonment of trade union leaders in 1958.²⁴⁷ Carr labels these particular demands as “long-standing obsession of leftist trade unions, peasant movements, and political parties”.²⁴⁸ Carey notes that demands one, three, and four had their legacy in the workers struggles of the fifties and quotes one of the CNH members describing the strike as a “student movement that did not really have student demands”.²⁴⁹

In a political vacuum created by the corporatist Mexican state, the students became bearers of the demands put forward by the suppressed movements of peasants, workers and leftist opposition parties in the preceding decades. Moreover, the student’s tactic was to inspire these groups to join them and lead the movement. In a

²⁴⁵ Article 145 of the Federal Penal Code was introduced under the Presidency of Manuel Avila Camacho as a part of anti-subversion laws in the 1940’s as a tool against those who criticized the regime. It was invoked in 1958 in the case of the railroad trade union leader Demetrio Vallejo.

²⁴⁶ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 252

²⁴⁷ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 243

²⁴⁸ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 265

²⁴⁹ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 96

document issued on 3 August, analyzing the meaning and perspectives of the movement, the Strike Committee of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the UNAM stated:

*“It is difficult, at this stage, to overcome the lack of a cohesive, revolutionary organization; it is nonetheless possible to lay down some tactical and strategic guidelines indicating form of action and goals...the student action, however important, is not socially definitive...future action will be determined, in the last analysis, by the position adopted by the working masses.”*²⁵⁰

On 12 September, the CNH drafted a political program to be presented to the workers and peasants as a common platform for what they defined as the “nation-wide, long term, joint struggle”.²⁵¹ Workers-related demands included: wage increases in accordance with the rise in the costs of living, fighting of unemployment by reduction in the hours of work, workers control to ensure a just distribution of profits, independent and democratic trade unions as well as formation of *Comités de Lucha* inside factories, connected on a federal level as the working class equivalent of the CNH. In the countryside, the students proposed the introduction of easy and low-interest farm loans to small landholders and *ejidos*, elimination of the middle-men and forming of the peasant *Comités de Lucha* independent of government control.²⁵²

The proposals stated above represent clear ideological continuity with the radical ideas present inside the Mexican Revolution which found expression inside the Constitution of 1917 and were put in practice shortly under the presidency of Cárdenas. According to students, the existence of *granaderos* corps and Article 145 had to be canceled because they were unconstitutional. Arguments for the introduction of workers control inside the factories were also based on the Article of

²⁵⁰ Strike Committee of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Mexico, *The Mexican Student Movement: It's Meaning and Perspectives*, in Jeremi Suri, *Global Revolutions of 1968*, W.W. Norton, London, 2006, p. 196

²⁵¹ The National Strike Committee, *For a Worker/ Peasant/ Student Alliance*, in Jeremi Suri, *Global Revolutions of 1968*, W.W. Norton, London, 2006, p. 205

²⁵² The National Strike Committee, *For a Worker/ Peasant/ Student Alliance*, in Jeremi Suri, *Global Revolutions of 1968*, W.W. Norton, London, 2006, pp. 202-205

the 1917 Revolutionary Constitution which entitles workers to profit-sharing.²⁵³ Adler-Hellman notes that portraits of Emiliano Zapata, Pancho Villa, Benito Juarez and the imprisoned workers' leader Demetrio Vallejo²⁵⁴ were carried in preference to those of Mao or Ho Chi Minh, as a symbolic call for the "fulfillment of Mexico's own Revolution".²⁵⁵ Similarly, Krauze mentions the marchers often sang the Mexican national anthem.²⁵⁶ This claim on the traditions of domestic revolutionary heritage proved to be a double edged sword for the movement. On the one hand, it helped to repudiate allegations of foreign influence and gain public support. At the same time, it also made the movement more prone to engage itself in paternalistic relationship with the PRI, a party that was still seen by many as the main bearer of the revolutionary tradition inside Mexico.

Even though some dissident labor groups supported the students, the official labor sector of the PRI, still organizing majority of the workers in the country at that point, officially distanced itself and condemned the movement claiming that students have been manipulated "by subversive agents of the left and right in order to create an atmosphere of chaos".²⁵⁷ Reaching rural workers was even harder given the urban character of the student movement and the political isolation of the rural people.²⁵⁸ The Conquering of the Zócalo, with hundreds of thousands of protesters, two times in a row in August, showed that the population was responsive to the student cries. Nevertheless, judging from all the accounts, the nature of this support was passive. People would greet the students from the balconies, contribute food or pass covers to the protesters marching in rain. This support was never institutionalized. The calls by the left wing activists inside the movement for orienting the brigades towards the factory zones went unheeded by most of the students.²⁵⁹ Instead, the protest was

²⁵³ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 9

²⁵⁴ The main leader of the 1958 railway workers strike

²⁵⁵ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher Inc., New York, 1983, p. 137

²⁵⁶ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico – Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, p. 696

²⁵⁷ Judith A. Hellman, *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher Inc., New York, 1983, p. 137

²⁵⁸ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth – Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 266

²⁵⁹ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth– Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 266

aiming at symbolic public spaces in the city center in order to win the sympathy of the broad public. The slogan *unete pueblo* (People unite), heard from thousands of throats during the protest marches, therefore remained an abstract call. The mobilization of the masses was conducted not with the intention of building concrete alliances, but putting up the pressure on the government to engage into negotiations.

Regardless of the hostile tone exhibited towards the President, the students effectively recognized his authority and demanded government's attention. Until the night of the massacre at Tlateloloco, the students hoped to hold a dialogue with the president, but they also feared co-optation and exploitation.²⁶⁰ Conscious of the traps the previous movements have fallen into and encouraged by the success of their own strike, the students insisted on the transparency of negotiations with the government. This stubborn demand from their side went against the very nature of the system used to strike deals behind closed doors. Krauze quotes one of the participants, saying that if the president had made a gesture on 27 August, despite the insults, and addressed the masses gathered in the Zócalo, "he would have won over many of the comrades".²⁶¹ At this point however, it was already too late. The movement had exhibited amazing potential for mobilization outside of the official channels and therefore stepped out of the cooptation arena.

For the government, it was of crucial importance to maintain its image as the defender of the values of the Mexican Revolution.²⁶² Because of this, it was necessary to start asserting immediately that the strike was a deed of foreign agitators wanting to embarrass Mexico in front of the approaching Olympic Games.²⁶³ Simultaneously, the president made hints that he is ready to negotiate.²⁶⁴ The co-optation machinery was put in motion through FNET and university personal close to PRI, trying to insert

²⁶⁰ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 96

²⁶¹ Enrique Krauze, *Mexico- Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, p.708

²⁶² Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 75

²⁶³ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 96

²⁶⁴ See for example President Diaz Ordiaz's first public comment on August 1st, Enrique Krauze, *Mexico- Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico 1810-1996*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1997, p. 697

itself at the front lines of the protest.²⁶⁵ It was expected that the dialogue would take place in secrecy within the official PRI channels. By mid August, it became clear that the movement spilled out of the boundaries of typical student protest against school fees or police brutality. The ostracizing of FNET, the forming of independent CNH, mobilizations in the streets and connections with other layers within society scared the establishment. The PRI started to consider physical suppression of the movement as the last option at hand while the students kept clinging for negotiations. Few hours before the Massacre on 2 October, the CNH representatives met with government officials in hope of some kind of breakthrough in talks.²⁶⁶ Obviously, the government had already reached a decision to end the strike by any means necessary.

²⁶⁵ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 256

²⁶⁶ Jonathan Kandell, *La Capital: The Biography of Mexico City*, Random House Inc., New York, 1988, p. 524

Chapter 4: Legacies of 1968

4.1. Dismantling of Revolutions

The year 1982 symbolizes yet another turning point in the history of Yugoslavia and Mexico. The pressure of altered international environment and rising contradictions of internal social and economic factors contributed to a halt in the further development of Yugoslav socially planned economy and self-management as well as the Mexican Import Substitution Industrialization and the corresponding corporatist state structure. The free flow of petrodollars throughout the 1970's enabled the developing countries to survive the 1973 oil crisis and the ensuing recession in the Western markets. However, the sudden increase in the interest rates on U.S. dollars, in 1979, pushed the developing world into a debt crisis and economic depression.²⁶⁷

In 1982, the "Mexican Crisis" became a paradigm for this weakened position of developing countries as Mexico officially announced it was no longer being able to meet debt obligations.²⁶⁸ That same year, political changes inside the Yugoslav Communist Party, after Tito's death in 1980, cleared the way for the government to apply for a three-year standby loan with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the face of depleting foreign reserves, failing exports and mounting foreign debt.²⁶⁹ Both countries practically gave up a part of their economic sovereignty by agreeing to the IMF conditions for renegotiation of the debt. Outside demands for economic reforms strengthened forces which, within both societies, had been pushing the economy in the direction of liberalization since the 1960's.²⁷⁰ The weight of the reforms was put on the social classes considered to be the building blocks and main beneficiaries of

²⁶⁷ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1995, p. 47

²⁶⁸ Peter A. Smith, *Mexico Since 1946: Dynamics of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico since independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 382

²⁶⁹ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1995, p. 48

²⁷⁰ See Chapter 2

the post-revolutionary societies. The complex state structures, nurtured for decades, now stood in the way of full integration into the world market.

The year 1982 thus marked the end of the path of evolutionary changes the Yugoslav and Mexican society had undertaken since the Revolutions, and opened the doors of transition towards a qualitatively different models of development. The end costs of this transformation in the Yugoslav case, I will argue among many others, proved to be the break-up of the country and the series of bloody civil wars in the 1990's.

Despite the high social costs and instances of civil unrest,²⁷¹ Mexico had gone through its transition phase peacefully and the regime managed to maintain continuity through reform, culminating in the first loss of presidential election by the PRI in 2000.²⁷²

4.1 (1) Prelude to a War

Recognizing the student revolt of 1968 as an early sign of things to come, if nothing was changed, the top of the Yugoslav Party pyramid set out a new course in the 1970's. Once the left opposition was dealt with, the beginning of the decade was marked by purges of the "nationalists" and "liberals" in the Party structures and the reinvention of self-management in practice.²⁷³ As a response to self-serving monopolistic and technocratic forms coming out of the market reforms in the 1960's, a new left rhetoric was launched predicting a conservative backlash. However, the system did not swing back to increased centralist control. Quite the opposite, the new Constitution, implemented in 1974, attempted to fight the released centrifugal forces and weaken local interests by further decentralization on the micro level. All enterprises were broken down into the smaller self-managed units as the central legal entity of the economic system.²⁷⁴ The idea was that these smaller units would be forced to cooperate to survive thus promoting national stability. In practice, this

²⁷¹ The most famous one being the insurrection in the southern state of Chiapas, staged by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, in 1994, see Redaktionsgruppe Topitas, *¡Ya basta!: der Aufstand der Zapatistas*, Libertäre Assoziation, Hamburg, 1994

²⁷² The winner was Vicente Fox from the conservative National Action Party (PAN).

²⁷³ According to Popov, approximately 419 functionaries either resigned or got fired under the criticism of nationalism between 1971 and 1973. A year later, after the attacks on 'liberalism' were launched, additional 1,319 functionaries lost their positions. See Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 216

²⁷⁴ Denisson Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkeley 1977, p. 329

reform only re-arranged the stage for a new wave of tendencies already seen in the 1960's. Competitiveness between companies and particularistic view of self-management operating in the market frame resurfaced again, this time around.²⁷⁵

The atomization of investment decision to the level of republics, provinces, companies and independent units within the companies, coupled with the opening up toward the international market, lead to an unconstrained borrowing spree and duplicated or mistaken investment projects.²⁷⁶ Dependence on imports for industrial branches, low competitiveness in the international arena and difficulties in export, thanks to global recession, all lead to a deteriorating balance of payment and net foreign debt which reached more than \$17 billion by the end of 1980.²⁷⁷ The servicing of foreign debt took a huge toll on the Yugoslav economy and its social system in the following decade. The IMF inspired austerity measures, which, according to Lydall, Yugoslavia pursued with "relentless determination"²⁷⁸ put a freeze on new investments in social services, infrastructure and government projects.

Annual percentage change in gross fixed investments was growing steadily from 1974 to 1979 at the rate of 8.8 percent, only to gain a negative trend of - 7.5 percent between 1979 and 1985 with social services picking up the un-proportional part of investment cuts.²⁷⁹ In the same period, the Real Social Product decreased by the annual average rate of 0.9 percent. The government sought every possible way to limit domestic consumption and cut the costs of exports. The real net personal income for a worker employed in productive state sector rose at an average rate of 6.8 percent per annum in 1960's, 2.1 percent in 1970's and fell at the annual rate of - 4.7 percent between 1979 and 1985.²⁸⁰ Unemployment reached 14 percent nationwide in 1984 while in the more underdeveloped regions it went up as high as 27 percent. The living standard of working class families was pushed back to the level of early 1960's.²⁸¹

²⁷⁵ Diane Flaherty, *Self-Management and Requirements for Social Property: Lessons from Yugoslavia*, http://www.nodo50.org/cubasigloXXI/congreso/flaherty_15abr03.pdf, p. 10

²⁷⁶ Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 53

²⁷⁷ Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 67

²⁷⁸ Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 53

²⁷⁹ Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 47

²⁸⁰ Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 44

²⁸¹ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, *The Brookings Institution*, Washington, 1995, p. 51

Discussing the future of Yugoslavia in 1976, Denitch, pointed out to industrial working class as the vital layer for stability of the country as it was “uprooted from its traditional particularist background and therefore least responsive to separatist ethnic nationalism and least likely to be hostile to the institutions of self-management or to social system as a whole”.²⁸² Yet, as Flaherty notes, the 1974 reforms slowed down the process of internal migration between republics and forming of a unified Yugoslav working class. Once given the autonomy over investments policy, the imperative of profit for enterprises built barriers of entry for the new workforce by firms focusing on capital intensive growth instead.²⁸³ By the mid 1980’s, Woodward describes the emergence of a new underclass of unemployed, unskilled workers and youth in the urban centers. Among those still holding their workplaces, a tendency towards absenteeism, in order to work on second jobs, was recorded as well as the rising significance of the black market in the everyday life.²⁸⁴ Decline in the purchasing power and swelling unemployment caused the resurfacing of social characteristics thought to be left behind after the revolution, or considered to be reserved for rural areas, such as: ritual kinships, old stereotypes, ethnic bias, religious revival etc.²⁸⁵ The urban industrial working class, as the social bedrock of the self-management system, was disintegrating fast under the changed circumstances.

On the other hand, there was a part of the bureaucracy within various republics and federal government which welcomed the coming changes. The reforms shifted the economic policy in favor of those firms, sectors and areas that already had links and experience in doing business with the Western markets and access to hard currency.²⁸⁶ Liberal faction within the Party was divided by regional interests however and it was growingly hard to distinguish it from the nationalist opposition. In order to implement the prescribed reforms effectively, the authority of the federal government had to be

²⁸² Bogdan D. Denitch, *The Legitimation of a Revolution: The Yugoslav Case*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976, p. 5

²⁸³ Diane Flaherty, *Self-Management and Requirements for Social Property: Lessons from Yugoslavia*, http://www.nodo50.org/cubasigloXXI/congreso/flaherty_15abr03.pdf, p. 8

²⁸⁴ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1995, p. 54

²⁸⁵ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1995, p. 56

²⁸⁶ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1995, p. 58

reinforced. This move was viciously opposed by republican elites which blamed the inefficient economic allocation and political choices of the central government for bringing the economy to collapse in the first place. In the words of Woodward, those whose views might seem more liberal and Western were in fact the most nationalistic.²⁸⁷

Everyone in the political machinery now however agreed that if the reform was to be successful, the country needed to dismantle the complex networks of negotiated redistributions in the economy and the set of political institutions that administered them, such as: workers councils, the army and various party affiliated umbrella organizations of workers and youth. With no cohesive force holding the country together, apart from the synchronized austerity plan of the federal bureaucracy, the Yugoslav Communist Party began to fall apart. Former functionaries left the Communist Party declaring themselves as open nationalists and channeling general dissatisfaction away from the option of unified Yugoslavia by blaming the neighboring republics for deteriorating living standards. Each of the republics held multi-party elections in 1990 with nationalist parties coming to the front. What followed was a prolonged and bloody breakup war between and within former republics, which lasted for a decade.

4.1. (2) Change and Survival

The Mexican state also appeared to be responding to 1968 by a return to the Revolutionary orthodoxy. After clamping down hard on the student movement, the system began to integrate many of the former dissidents in the 1970's by taking on leftist rhetoric in international and domestic politics.²⁸⁸ During the presidency of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976), official Mexico spoke against the growing power of the multinationals, opposed Washington over Latin American issues and posed as a

²⁸⁷ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, *The Brookings Institution*, Washington, 1995, p. 58

²⁸⁸ Yoram Shapira, *The Impact of the 1968 Student Protest on Echeverría's Reformism*, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol.19, No.4, 1977, p. 568

champion of the developing world.²⁸⁹ Internally, there was an attempt to regain the popular support by expanding the state intervention and redistribution measures.²⁹⁰

This tactic was also made easier by a discovery of substantial oil reserves in 1976 and readiness of international private banks to extend credit based on the surplus of petrodollars. Oil allowed Mexico's exports to increase, however the ISI expansion and bulky government infrastructure raised the level of imports even more.²⁹¹ By 1981, the rise in the interest rates on dollar nominated loans and a drop in the price of oil put strain on Mexico's Central Bank reserves. Recession in the U.S. and the world market made it increasingly difficult for Mexican industry to export and tourist sector to attract hard currency.²⁹² In 1982, the new president Miguel de la Madrid (1982–1987) finished his first year in office with - 4.6 percent growth rate.²⁹³ At the same time, the national debt jumped from around \$30 billion in 1977 to over \$80 billion by 1982.²⁹⁴

Starting with the presidency of De La Madrid, the Mexican state fundamentally changed its economic orientation by agreeing to provisions of the international financial community for renegotiation of the soaring debt. Mexico obliged itself to open the economy and decrease the budget deficit from 18 percent of GDP in 1982 to 3.5 percent in 1985.²⁹⁵ By the end of De La Madrid's term, through selling, closing down, restructuring and merging, the government managed to dismantle some 706 state owned companies from the 1,115 ones registered in 1982. It is estimated that these companies accounted for some 25 percent of the value of non-petroleum

²⁸⁹ Most notably severing diplomatic relationships with Chile after the 1973 coup and retaining friendly relationships with Cuba.

²⁹⁰ Yoram Shapira, *The Impact of the 1968 Student Protest on Echeverría's Reformism*, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1977, pp. 571-574

²⁹¹ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamcis of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 380

²⁹² Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamcis of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 381

²⁹³ Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 613

²⁹⁴ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamcis of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.380

²⁹⁵ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamcis of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.384

manufacturing and 30 percent of the nation's total employment.²⁹⁶ The next presidential term under Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) managed to cut the state ownership of companies down for additional 67 percent.²⁹⁷ Share of wages in total GDP fell from 40 percent in the 1970's to 31.74 percent in 1996.²⁹⁸ With the galloping inflation and the abolition of price controls, it is estimated that the purchasing power of the working class was declining at the rate of 15 to 25 percent per year during the austerity measures of the 1980's.²⁹⁹ Public expenditure on social welfare such as health and education decreased from 7.3 percent of the GDP in 1981 to 3.2 percent in 1988. In 1992, the state ended the *ejido* as a form of land ownership.³⁰⁰ Apart from seriously disrupting social relations in the countryside, this act was symbolic as it put an end to an important ingredient of Mexican sense of historical uniqueness and the continuity of the Revolution.³⁰¹

The PRI was much less determined to recreate the state-society relationships than it was to transform the economy. Nevertheless, pressure from the private sector and mobilizations from below as well as the lack of alternative slowly pushed the PRI in the direction of political reforms. Peters mentions the founding of Consejo Coordinador Empresarial (CCE)³⁰² in 1975 as the beginning of the process of abandonment of the PRI by the private sector and its increasing hostility towards the political legacy of the revolution.³⁰³ The government was unable to provide

²⁹⁶ Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 629-630, Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamcis of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 389

²⁹⁷ Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 631

²⁹⁸ Enrique D. Peters, *Polarizing Mexico: the Impact of Liberalization Strategy*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2000, p. 160

²⁹⁹ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamcis of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 385

³⁰⁰ Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 615

³⁰¹ Merile S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Pres, Cambridge, 1996, p. 87

³⁰² CCE was formed as a top entrepreneurial interest group in a wave of proliferation of private business organizations, see: <http://www.cce.org.mx/cce/home.htm>

³⁰³ Enrique D. Peters, *Polarizing Mexico: the Impact of Liberalization Strategy*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2000, p. 47

macroeconomic stability any longer and the sclerotic ISI was becoming a straightjacket for further business growth of many inside the entrepreneurial class. This changing relationship was expressed in the rising importance of PAN and the pressure for electoral reform in 1977 which opened the door for increased political plurality.³⁰⁴ Inside the PRI itself, the presidency of De La Madrid, according to Ai Camp, marked the rise of a new breed of politicians.³⁰⁵ The so called technocrats distinguished themselves sharply from the old guard of PRI *políticos*. Born in the 1940's and 1950's, they had no connection to the revolution or the years under Cárdenas, obtained high educational degrees from private universities in Mexico or the U.S. and saw the integration into the world market as the only solution for Mexico's economic stagnation. The crisis of the political monopoly became obvious in 1988 presidential elections, when the PRI candidate Salinas de Gortari, came out as a tight winner among widespread accusations of electoral fraud.³⁰⁶ Upon proclaiming victory Salinas stated that the country is entering "a new political stage".³⁰⁷

It was under Salina's term that the elites within the PRI started to consider modernization of the PRI by internal reorganization or complete elimination of the membership by sector in favor of individual participation. Significantly, the new social program entitled National Program of Solidarity (PRONASOL), aimed at mending the wounds of neo-liberal reforms, was implemented independent of the traditional PRI structures.³⁰⁸ The World Bank was pressuring the Mexican government to do away with, what they called, "labor market rigidities"³⁰⁹ as the best cure for international competitiveness and unemployment. Apart from the weakening of institutional support for the state-labor alliance, which was now seen as an obstacle

³⁰⁴ Federal Law of Political Organizations and Political Process (LOOPE) liberalized the procedure for party registration, expanded the Chamber of Deputies and the number of seats reserved for the oppositional parties and offered the opposition greater approach to the media

³⁰⁵ Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 619

³⁰⁶ Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 615

³⁰⁷ Peter H. Smith, *Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an authoritarian regime*, in Leslie Bethell, *Mexico Since Independence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.396

³⁰⁸ Enrique D. Peters, *Polarizing Mexico: the Impact of Liberalization Strategy*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2000, p. 166

³⁰⁹ Enrique D. Peters, *Polarizing Mexico: the Impact of Liberalization Strategy*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2000, p. 147

to further labor flexibility, the changing nature of the economy also partly undermined the old organized working class. The privatization process liquidated some 400,000 unionized jobs.³¹⁰ Peters shows that the new workplaces, created in export oriented economy, were concentrated mostly in non-manufacturing branches such as construction, trade, restaurants and hotels, educational services and other services, which generated some 68.7 percent of the new jobs in the period between 1988 and 1996.³¹¹

In 2000, after 70 years of unbroken PRI rule, the power transfer went on smoothly as all the political actors recognized Vicente Fox, from the oppositional PAN, as the new president of Mexico. However, as Gonzalès points out, many Mexicans did not consider Fox's government as the first of a new politico-economic era, he rather represented the fourth president of an extended period of deep economic liberalization that was laying to rest the social principles of the Mexican Revolution.³¹²

4.2. Reclaiming the Movements' Autonomy

The short term effect of 1960's mobilizations was taming of the liberal forces by the state bureaucracies in both countries during the 1970's. However, in what relation do later transformations in 1980's and 1990's stand to the student movements of 1968? The dominant interpretations are different in Yugoslavia and Mexico. The fact that Yugoslavia did not survive the transformation process makes the distinction line between the slogans of the 1960's and the political tone accompanying civil wars in the 1990's seem very clear. Replying to the question of what remains today from the 1968 movement in Yugoslavia, Kanzleiter concludes that traces could be located in film and theater but not in any concrete political manifestation.³¹³ By comparing the

³¹⁰ Francisco E. Gonzalès, *Dual Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Institutionalized Regimes in Chile and Mexico, 1970-2000*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2008, p. 183

³¹¹ Enrique D. Peters, *Polarizing Mexico: the Impact of Liberalization Strategy*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 2000, p. 163

³¹² Francisco E. Gonzalès, *Dual Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Institutionalized Regimes in Chile and Mexico, 1970-2000*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2008, p. 213

³¹³ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische Föderation Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Wien, 2008, p. 111

1968 movement with the anti-Milosević student protests in Belgrade in the 1990's, Robertson clearly presents stark differences in values and demands between the two.³¹⁴ Finally, Ali and Watkins make the contrast between the 1968 aspirations and the outcome of the crisis of Yugoslav socialism even sharper by suggesting that if the structural reforms the students had demanded had been implemented, the citizens of Yugoslavia might have been spared of the traumas inflicted on them after Tito's death.³¹⁵

In Mexico, on the other hand, the successful transition and survival of the establishment opened the doors for different historical interpretations. Analysis of the movement towards export oriented economy and liberal-democratic political system in the 1990's is often connected with the 1968 student revolt in a straight line. Kastner and Mayer point out to the term "pyrrhic defeat" employed by the Mexican author Carlos Fuentes to describe this continuity.³¹⁶ The existence of viable left wing political option in Mexican politics, willing to identify itself with the 1968 legacy, also contributes on its behalf to this reading. Contrary to these tendencies, I will attempt to establish the 1968 movements as historical narratives in their own right whose meaning can be appreciated primarily in the context of their time.

4.2. (1) Unwanted Legacy

The idea of continuity between the 1968 movement in Yugoslavia and the above described process of transition finds itself far from the mainstream discourses in Serbia of today. Reflecting on the interviews conducted with students, journalists and scholars in Belgrade in 2006, Robertson notes the presence of a widespread conviction that the students in 1968 "demanded more communism".³¹⁷, and therefore having little connection with the opposition movements building up before and

³¹⁴ James Robertson, *Discourses of Democracy and Exclusion in the Streets of Belgrade*, 1968 – 1997, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, pp. 90-93

³¹⁵ Tariq Ali & Susan Watkins, *1968: Marching in the Streets*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London 1998, p. 109

³¹⁶ Jens Kastner & David Mayer, *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive* Zur Einführung, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, p. 20

³¹⁷ James Robertson, *Discourses of democracy and exclusion in the streets of Belgrade*, 1968 – 1997, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p. 41

around the fall of the Iron Curtain. This point of view is not new. It had been dominant since the initial reaction of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1968, at that time dominated by the liberal wing, which characterized the ideas behind the protest as remnants of defeated conservative Stalinist tendencies inside the Yugoslav society.³¹⁸ Arsić and Marković do a great job in describing the media frenzy inside Yugoslavia launched against the students who were labeled as “our Chinese” and accused of “the philosophy of equal bellies”.³¹⁹

On the other hand, ever since the initial accusations of the multiparty political agenda by Tito and the more conservative fraction of the Party, there are cautious but persistent attempts to rehabilitate the 1968 movement by integrating it into the contemporary liberal discourse of democratization. In an introduction to the 1990 edition of the previously banned 1968 events diary³²⁰, a well known Belgrade publisher, Miroslav Dereta, argued that the time distance and the changed outlook of the post Cold War world present an opportunity to revise the attitude towards 1968 and recognize it as the starting point of the changes taking place at that moment.³²¹ Dragović-Soso makes a point, by citing the former Praxis member, Nebojša Popov, that the lasting contribution of the 1968 student revolt is not reflected only in its left wing ideas, but also in its inherent demand for freedom of the press, protest and gathering of different streams of critical intelligentsia.³²² Marković’s recent revisionist account of the 1968 political orientation which includes “equality of different forms of property rights” and “regulated market economy”³²³ should also be seen in this context.³²⁴ None of these attempts had much success in altering the prevailing notion of 1968 as a regressive move on behalf of ideologically blinded youth.

³¹⁸ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković, '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 136

³¹⁹ Mirko Arsić, Dragan R. Marković, '68. *Studentski bunt i društvo*, Beograd, 1984, p. 171

³²⁰ It is the diary of one of the most prominent film directors of the Yugoslav 1960's “black wave” film school, Živojin Pavlović, banned in 1984.

³²¹ Živojin Pavlović, *Ispljuvak pun krvi*, Grafički Atelje Dereta, Beograd, 1990, p. 8

³²² Jasna Dragović-Soso, „Spasioci nacije“-*Intelektualna opozicija Srbije i oživljavanje nacionalizma*, Fabrika Knjiga, Beograd, 2004, p. 56

³²³ Mihailo Marković, *Juriš na nebo*, Prosveta, Beograd, 2008, p. 40

³²⁴ The latest example of this tendency and the controversy surrounding it could be seen at the 40th anniversary commemoration of the of the 1968 movement, taking place on in June 2008 on the grounds of Belgrade University, when the meeting was interrupted by the protesting students claiming that those who participated in the nationalist break up of the country in the 1990's do not have the right to claim the legacy of 1968 any longer. See:

Tracking the origins of both of these interpretations back to the days of their conception, in the late 1960's, helps in establishing the well deserved autonomy for the movement's agenda and its proper relation to the transformation processes of the 1980's and 1990's. Rusinow remarks that, at their time, the 1968 protagonists were equally rejected by the more liberal party politicians and intellectuals, who were hostile to student's anti-market attitude, as well as Tito and the older Party leaders who took the movement's cries against the lack of democracy as a serious threat.³²⁵ At the heart of this argument lays the way in which the students viewed the Party bureaucracy as the common source for both streams relevant in the Yugoslav political scene to this very day- liberalism and nationalism. The political monopoly, according to Popov, was defended by all the sections of the ruling nomenklatura for different reasons. The political bureaucracy used it as the cover for their social privilege and the usurpation of power, the rising technocracy for the slow privatization of socialized means of production and the small but strengthening business class for classical entrepreneurialism.³²⁶

For Robinson, in the perspective of a country torn down by ethnic conflicts in the 1990's, the most interesting and refreshing aspect of the 1968 movement is the fact that it was a pan-Yugoslav one.³²⁷ Unlike all the post-1968 movements inside Yugoslavia, the student protest successfully defended itself against challenges of division along national lines.³²⁸ So, in 1971, a ten day, nationalist inspired, student strike erupted in Zagreb in solidarity with the Croatian republican leadership's clash with the central authorities demanding more sovereignty based on the full control of tax revenues collected in Croatia, recognition of Croatian as the sole official language

http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=06&dd=20&nav_category=11&nav_id=304674

³²⁵ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment, 1948-1974*, University of California Press, Berkley, 1977, p. 317

³²⁶ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji.„Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 255

³²⁷ James Robertson, *Discourses of Democracy and Exclusion in the Streets of Belgrade , 1968 – 1997*, University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006, p. 41

³²⁸ Students from Belgrade and Zagreb maintained regular communication during the protest and exchanged delegations and speakers. In Belgrade, the students were vigilant not to let the nationalist minded oppositional figures join the blockade. In Zagreb, any attempts of speakers to introduce nationalist sentiments were cut off with chants “Zagreb-Beograd” and “Brotherhood-Unity”

and more control over the flow of foreign currency.³²⁹ As a response, the faculty of Law in Belgrade organized open discussions which united Serbian nationalist leaning dissidents in opposition to further decentralization of the country.³³⁰ According to Popov, the defeat of the 1968 movement encouraged the technocracy and the entrepreneurial class to intensify its attacks against Tito and the old guard which was worn off in fights with the left opposition.³³¹ After 1968, the question of the fundamental democratization of society was pushed back into the frame of balancing between the federation and national statehoods on the one side and the bureaucratic control and freedom of the market on the other.

In 1971, the Praxis group contributor Ljubomir Tadić discarded the alternatives this frame offers as fictitious and located the roots of burgeoning nationalism in the “suffocation of spontaneous action of the masses”.³³² To these tendencies he counterpoised the Yugoslav working class as the only social layer whose genuine interests are connected with further implementation of self-management and survival of the unified state. Kanzleiter defines the 1968 movement as the proof that Yugoslav Revolution managed to anchor a significant layer of society to the ideas of unified Yugoslavia and communism, thus dismissing the idea of inevitable break-up of the country.³³³

The students marching under the parole “We are the sons of the working people” in 1968 in Belgrade, could therefore be interpreted as maybe the last cry of this section of the Yugoslav society retreating in front of the rising pressure from other classes favored by the liberal reforms.

³²⁹ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment, 1948-1974*, University of California Press, Berkley, 1977, p. 305

³³⁰ Jasna Dragović-Soso, „Spasioci nacije“-*Intelektualna opozicija Srbije i oživljavanje nacionalizma*, Fabrika Knjiga, Beograd, 2004, p.76

³³¹ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 266

³³² Ljubomir Tadić, *Da li je nacionalizam naša sudbina?*, Gledišta, 7-8, 1971, p. 1.058

³³³ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische Föderation Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Wien, 2008, p .104

4.2 (2) Contested Legacy

The significance of 1968 movement in today's Mexico can not be overstated. The persistent evocation, re-examination and fight over the legacy and the meaning of 1968 confirm this. One year before becoming the first non-PRI elected President of the state, Vicente Fox did not miss the opportunity to include the 1968 events into his autobiography and condemn the government repression, even though he admittedly never took any interest in them at the time.³³⁴ In "Opening Mexico: The Making of a democracy", Preston and Dillon set up 1968 as an episode in progressing democratization that found its "decisive step towards completion of democratic transition" in PAN's presidential race victory.³³⁵ Borden takes a similar stance, indicating that even though the movement had been defeated, millions of young Mexicans, touched, in one way or the other, by the protest, continued to contribute in their individual ways until the election in 2000 "changed the course of Mexican politics".³³⁶ Putting aside the obvious problem of drawing a straight line between the 1968 movement and the presidential victory of a conservative candidate with neo-liberal agenda, the question remains how justifiable it is to connect the social movements in the 1980's and 1990's to the 1968 heritage?

In describing the grass root responses to neo-liberal attacks in the last two decades of the 20th century in Mexico, many scholars focus on the emergence of the so-called new social movements in which citizens with common agendas transcend traditional categories of class, interest, or clientelism, coalescing around alternative identities such as community membership, ethnicity, environment or gender.³³⁷ The declining capability of the state to push the modernization project further and satisfy the basic needs of its citizens witnessed the creation of parallel markets, black markets and informal economy in response. Similarly, the loss of leverage of official trade unions and peasant organizations in negotiations within the PRI re-emphasized the

³³⁴ Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, p. 86

³³⁵ Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, p. x

³³⁶ Kara M. Borden, *Mexico 1968: An Analysis of the Tlatelolco Massacre and it's Legacy*, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2005, p. 44

³³⁷ Merilee S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 6

importance of ethnic communities, religious or voluntary non-governmental organizations, grassroots democracy, self government and autonomy.³³⁸

The failure of the government to respond adequately in the aftermath of the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City is often taken as the event which catapulted local self-help organizations to the forefront of political organizing from below. Citizens organized informal networks to aid those in need from the disaster and rescue the victims of the earthquake.³³⁹ By the mid 1980's, most cities developed similar community groups connected into a National Urban Popular Movement Coordinating Committee (CONAMUP).³⁴⁰ Borden points out how many 1968 veterans were struck by the similarities between these two movements at the time.³⁴¹ Preston and Dillon, on the other hand, contrast the practical nature of these new community politics to “shrill, abstract radicalism practiced at the UNAM in 1968”.³⁴²

While the political parties of the left and the trade union movement traditionally focused on the sphere of production and the work places, these newer organizations were concerned more with the sphere of consumption and were territorially organized. They concentrated on local issues such as access to land, housing, urban services, roads and power supply and were often skeptical toward political parties and older worker's movement traditions.³⁴³ Another aspect of this new activism was its alleged absence of ideology and diffusion across class lines. Preston and Dillon describe “people from all levels of life”³⁴⁴ participating in this endeavor: human rights observers curbing abuses of the security forces, grassroots communities blocking destruction of forests, journalists investigating corporate corruption, neighborhood

³³⁸ Merilee S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p.7

³³⁹ Kara M. Borden, *Mexico 1968: An Analysis of the Tlatelolco Massacre and it's Legacy*, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2005, p. 43

³⁴⁰ Merilee S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 158

³⁴¹ Kara M. Borden, *Mexico 1968: An Analysis of the Tlatelolco Massacre and it's Legacy*, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2005, p. 43

³⁴² Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, p. 115

³⁴³ Barry Carr, *Marxism & Communism in Twentieth –Century Mexico*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1992, p. 281

³⁴⁴ Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, p. x

groups mobilizing against criminal gangs etc. It leads them to conclude that Mexico went through a pluralistic transition with democracy not being “a victory of either left or the right, either liberals or conservatives”.³⁴⁵

New peasant movements mirrored these urban mobilizations in many ways. Distribution and the right to land was the basic demand in the countryside since the days of the Revolution. Since the 1970’s however, the peasants increasingly defined their interests in terms of their role as producers and consumers, negotiating prices of agricultural commodities and demanding access to markets, credit and basic services.³⁴⁶ In January 1994, a rural rebellion occurred in the southern state of Chiapas which also exhibited many of these new features. Unlike the traditional Marxist influenced guerrilla movements, the EZLN claimed it had no interest in taking over state power. Instead, it advocated new forms of non-hierarchical organizing, regional autonomy and indigenous rights.³⁴⁷

Another side of civic organizations was an attempt to channel the combined effort of these local initiatives into electoral strategy in order to get a more effective response from the regime.³⁴⁸ The strengthening of PAN on the right pulled the PRI in the direction of more determined liberal reform, therefore creating space for the left alternative on the political scene. A left fraction within the PRI took advantage of this situation and together with civic groups successfully ran its own candidate in 1988 presidential elections. This political initiative was later formalized in Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD). In spite of delivering a strong punch to the reform course in the 1988 elections, the reluctance of civic organizations to incorporate themselves fully into the PRD slowed down the building up of the party as a nation-wide political force.³⁴⁹ A more serious problem for the left in this period however was

³⁴⁵ Julia Preston & Samuel Dillon, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2005, p. xi

³⁴⁶ Merilee S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p.160

³⁴⁷ Roderic Ai Camp, *The Time of Technocrats and Deconstruction of the Revolution*, in Michael C. Meyer & William H. Beezley, (eds.), *The Oxford History of Mexico*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 616

³⁴⁸ Merilee S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 161

³⁴⁹ Merilee S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 164

its apparent failure to present a clear alternative to the liberalization campaign. With the collapse of the Stalinist regimes around the world and the loss of appeal of the old corrupt corporatist state structures, the left had no effective counter course to the well defined program of macroeconomic monetarist stabilization.³⁵⁰

Petras points to the space, in the past occupied by socialist, nationalist and populist politicians as the breeding ground for ideas he labels as “post-Marxism”. According to him, some of the main characteristics of this train of thought are: negation of the entity of social classes with objective interests as too reductionist and introduction of diverse identities instead (race, gender, ethnicity, sexual preference etc.), substitution of the state and political parties as agents of social improvement with local struggles over local issues as the only democratic means of change, emphasis on self-help in attacking paternalism and dependence on the state etc.³⁵¹ If one compares these ideas to the political orientation of students in 1968 elaborated in their program and demands³⁵² the discontinuity, not denying the continuities on other levels, between these two eras becomes clear. The leadership of the 1968 movement accepted the struggles of the militant trade unions and the poor peasantry as the universal interest of the society as a whole and recognized the absence of an a unified political expression as one of the main deficits of the movement, not advantage.

³⁵⁰ Merilee S. Grindle, *Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 90

³⁵¹ James Petras, *A Marxist Critique of Post-Marxism*, Links, 9, November 1997, <http://links.org.au/node/189>

³⁵² See the CNH political program for workers, peasants and students alliance in the previous chapter

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Mabry makes a point out of a group of German leftist journalists, visiting Mexico at the time of the 1968 events, who were astonished how could a movement demanding the enforcement of the country's constitution be rendered revolutionary?³⁵³ Rusinow makes a similar assessment by writing about the “mutually accepted ground rules”³⁵⁴ between the students and bureaucracy in Yugoslavia. Both authors tend to deny the revolutionary edge to these two peripheral occurrences, a characteristic generally easily ascribed to 1968 movements in the center. A research taking this type of characterizations at face value might miss the essence of these mobilizations.

Unlike many 1968 movements in the West, which fed of the negation of the system in its entirety, the specific historical experience of Yugoslavia and Mexico contributed to the shaping of what Kanzleiter calls an “affirmative revolt”.³⁵⁵ The students in Belgrade and Mexico City extracted their militancy exactly from reaffirmation of the values formally pursued by their own regimes. These students came to age at the peak of the phase of unprecedented social development. The post-revolutionary system made it possible for them to count as the first generation in their families able to obtain higher education in the countries traditionally overwhelmed by low social mobility and economic hardship. Alongside this institutional connection, the intimate relation, through personal experience or family stories, to the revolutionary period, enabled the students to identify with the official rhetoric and believe in the possibility of progress along the same lines. Instead of emphasizing the movements' conciliatory attitude towards the regimes or connecting them with later liberalization waves in the 1980's and 1990's, one can interpret the 1968 in Belgrade and Mexico City as genuine attempts to salvage the state-led projects of development and take them further by criticizing structural limitations to future expansion.

³⁵³ Donald J. Mabry, *The Mexican University and the State: Student Conflicts, 1910-1971*, Texas A&M University, College Station, 1982, p. 255

³⁵⁴ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, Berkley 1977, p. 232

³⁵⁵ Boris Kanzleiter, *Die affirmative Revolte 1968 in der Sozialistische Föderation Jugoslawien (SFRJ)*, in Jens Kastner & David Mayer (eds.), *Weltwende 1968?: Ein Jahr aus globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2008, pp. 98-114

Another telling differentiation from the movements in Western Europe and the United States would be the less visible dividing line between the Old and the New Left in these two cases on the semi-periphery. While students in the Western metropolises openly discussed the possibility of other layers substituting the proletariat as the prime agent of revolutionary change³⁵⁶, their Yugoslav and Mexican colleagues remained much more orthodox in this matter, channeling the movements' efforts for contact and recognition toward the industrial working class and the peasantry. Neither of them succeeded in this attempt though. In both cases the working class remained contained within the official structures, thus limiting the movement to intellectual minority with no institutionalized links to other sectors in society. Then again, my research also detected obvious influences of the ideas circulating within the New Left in the West. For instance, the mandates of representatives inside Action Committees in Belgrade and the CNH in Mexico City were limited to 48 hours and one week respectively, reflecting the growing influence of anarchism and direct democracy in the global 1968.

This insistence on the organizational autonomy proved to be the biggest crime of these movements in the eyes of ruling bureaucracies. For the Yugoslav self-management institutions or the Mexican corporate structures, any example of political organizing apart from the established channels of co-optation, was a dangerous challenge and threat to the stability of the system. In confronting them, the regimes used the well rehearsed tactics of combined repression and integration. In the Yugoslav case, the presence of a political figure with strong revolutionary integrity was used to co-opt the movement initially. This act was followed by repression against individual movement leaders in the years to come. In Mexico, the government used terror, shooting indiscriminately at the masses, in order to break the movement and then proceeded to integrate the individual dissidents during the next presidential term.

The congruency of 1968 in these two cases is not coincidental. The climax of Cold War confrontations, marked by the Cuban missile crisis in the Western hemisphere

³⁵⁶ Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert & Detlef Junker, *1968: The World Transformed*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 24

and the Prague Spring in the East, was met by a particular sensitivity inside the countries like Yugoslavia and Mexico which were carefully balancing on the edges of superpowers' borders. Besides the fragile geopolitical environment, both countries were influenced by the economic processes spreading over the borders of nation states. It did not take long, after the initial post-revolutionary models of autarchic development, for these regimes to realize that participation in the world market is something that can not be avoided. Consequences of economic opening were similar in both cases, stirring up social contradictions which eventually found an outlet in the described revolts.

My examination concentrated on the epicenters of 1968 in the two central cities. Of course, even though these movements had a strong urban character, their reach went far beyond the limits of the capitals. The deliberate spatial restriction of this thesis suggests the opening up of the narrative to other areas as a logical next step in the future research. In Mexico, the strike spread to schools and universities throughout the Republic as the students in the provinces undertook solidarity actions with their colleagues in Mexico City.³⁵⁷ At the same time, the Mexican countryside peasant population to whom the students primarily oriented politically, besides the working class, was informed about the content of the strike demands primarily through the government media and therefore often appeared hostile towards the students.³⁵⁸ In the Yugoslav case, the thesis only briefly touches upon the interaction between the University of Belgrade and the University of Zagreb, thus leaving plenty of space for looking at the intensity and nature of the recorded contacts with the students in the other republics.³⁵⁹ The interplay between the events in Belgrade and the solidarity actions in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Ljubljana present a potentially refreshing approach in examining the Yugoslav national question.

In the same vein, the conscious focus of this thesis on the political aspect of the 1968 movement helped emphasize the discontinuity between these movements and the

³⁵⁷ Judith A. Hellman, , *Mexico in Crisis*, Holmes & Meier Publisher Inc., New York, 1983, p. 136

³⁵⁸ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power and Terror in 1968 Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2005, p. 66

³⁵⁹ Nebojša Popov, *Društveni Sukobi-Izazov Sociologiji: „Beogradski jun“ 1968*, Second Edition, Službeni Glasnik, Beograd, 2008, pp. 65-80

transformations taking place in the 1980's and the 1990's as well as the new social movements arising in response to these changes. The inclusion of other aspects of 1968 such as the new cultural patterns, empowering of women and the minority social groups or the reawakened insistence on the individual instead of the group would certainly make the presented divide seem much narrower.

Summary

This thesis focuses on the mobilizations that shook Mexican and Yugoslav societies in 1968. An attempt will be made to place both movements in the historical context of developing countries on the semi-periphery of the world system, developing through different, but converging socio-economic systems. Mexico, developing through Import Substitution Industrialization model alongside a political system with strong corporatist features, and Yugoslavia, with its one party political system and command socialist economy which included market incentives. The genesis of these 1968 movements, in contrast to similar protests in the Western metropolises, are analyzed against the background of late rapid urbanization, limits of state led economic growth, strong revolutionary discourses present inside both countries as well as the influences of 1968 as a global phenomenon.

In order to understand the political outlook, demands and achievements of these two movements, the paper looks at key peculiarities of the Mexican bourgeois corporatist state and the Yugoslav self-management brand of socialism and explores how these macro frames influenced the dynamics of various social classes within them. Special attention is dedicated to the labor movements, the rising middle layers and differentiations taking place within the seemingly monolithic ruling elite. The 1968 movements are considered as surface expressions of deeper tectonic shifts taking place within these societies under the authoritarian façade of the Mexican/Yugoslav state and discover the nature of connections between 1968 movements and the profound changes these systems will go through two decades later- mirrored in the neo-liberal economic turn and political liberalization in Mexico and the breakdown of planned economy and the state system in Yugoslavia. The thesis also re-examines the nature of the often assumed connections between the 1968 movements and the profound changes these two systems would go through in the 1980's and 1990's, which are mirrored in the neo-liberal economic turn and political liberalization in Mexico and the breakdown of the planned economy and the unified state in Yugoslavia.

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit konzentriert sich auf die Mobilisierungen im Jahr 1968, welche die mexikanische und die jugoslawische Gesellschaft erschüttert haben. Der Versuch wird gemacht beide Bewegungen in ihrem historischen Kontext von Entwicklungsländern an der Semiperipherie des Weltsystems zu analysieren, sich entwickelnd durch unterschiedliche, aber konvergierende Sozio-ökonomische Systeme. Mexiko- sich entwickelnd durch ein Importsubstitutions-Industrialisierungsmodell einhergehend mit einem politischen Modell mit starken korporativen Merkmalen, und Jugoslawien- mit seinem Einparteiensystem und der sozialistischen Planwirtschaft kombiniert mit Marktanzügen. Die Entstehung der 1968er Bewegungen in diesen beiden Ländern wird, im Unterschied zu ähnlichen Protesten in den westlichen Metropolen, analysiert vor dem Hintergrund der späten Urbanisierung, der Begrenzungen von staatlich gelenktem wirtschaftlichen Wachstum, starker revolutionärer Diskurse präsent in beiden Ländern, sowie auch der Einflüsse von 1968 als globales Phänomen.

Um die politische Orientierung, Forderungen und Errungenschaften dieser beiden Bewegungen zu verstehen, betrachtet die Arbeit Schlüsselbesonderheiten des mexikanischen bürgerlich- korporatistischen Staates und der jugoslawischen Marke des Sozialismus der Selbstverwaltung, und erforscht wie diese Macro-Rahmen die Dynamiken der verschiedenen in ihnen existierenden sozialen Klassen beeinflusst haben. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird den Arbeiterbewegungen, der aufsteigenden Mittelschicht und den Differenzierungen innerhalb der scheinbar monolithischen herrschenden Elite geschenkt. Die 1968er Bewegungen werden gesehen als oberflächliche Ausdrücke tieferer tektonischer Verschiebungen, welche in diesen Gesellschaften unter der autoritären Schale des mexikanischen und des jugoslawischen Staates stattfanden. Die Arbeit stellt außerdem die Annahme eines Zusammenhangs zwischen den 1968er Bewegungen und den späteren tiefen Veränderungen, sprich die neoliberale Wende und die politische Liberalisierung in Mexiko, und der Zusammenbruch der Planwirtschaft und des Staatssystems in Jugoslawien, in Frage.

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