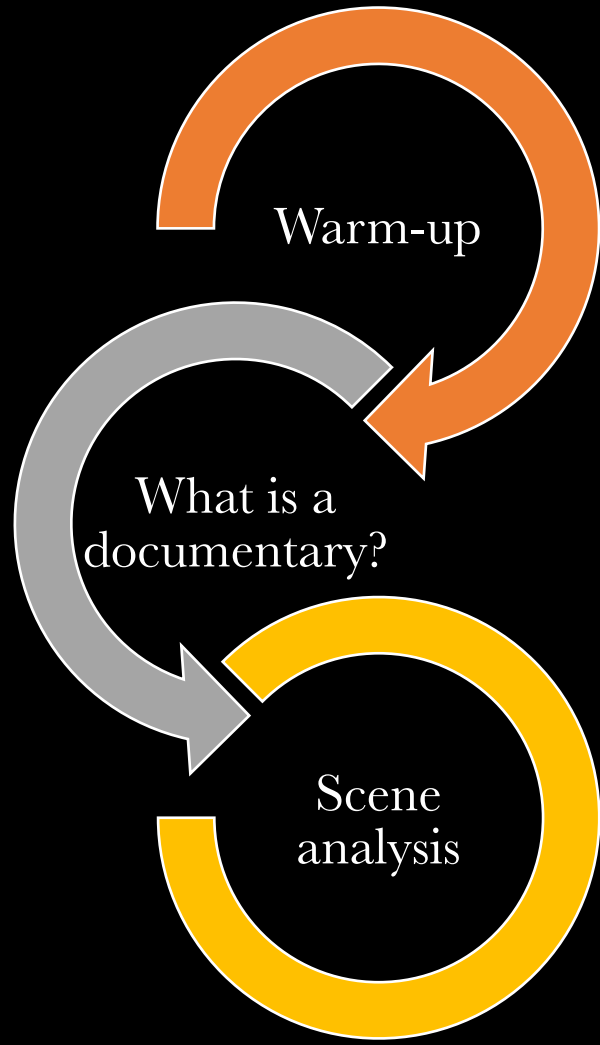


*El Grito / The [Mute] Cry*  
(1968)

Leobardo López Aretche



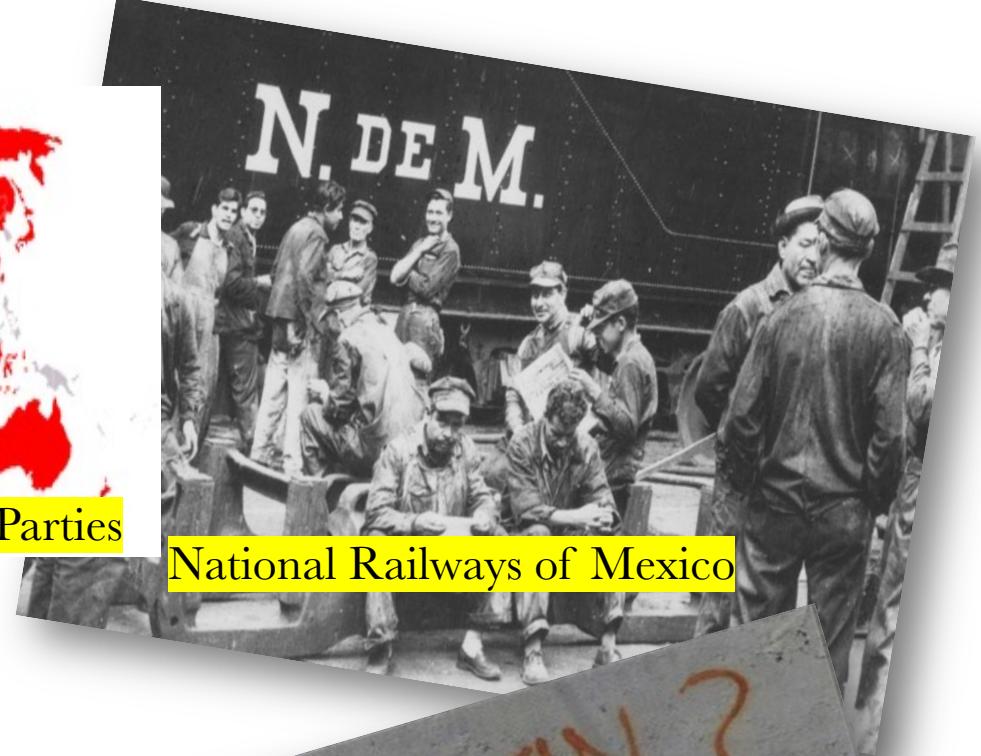
What's on for today?



The death of Che Guevara

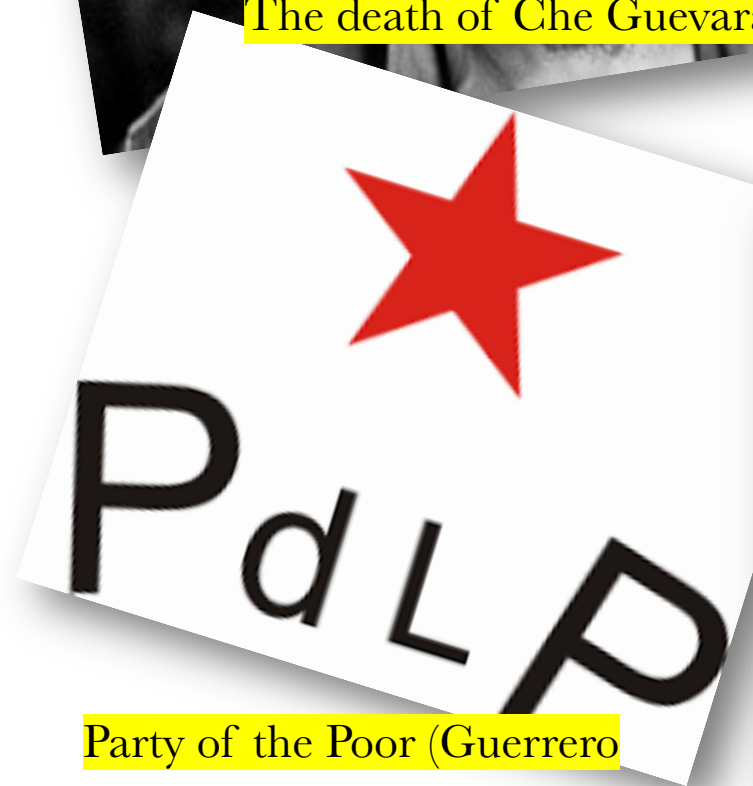


1960 Meeting of Communist Parties



National Railways of Mexico

# Why?



Party of the Poor (Guerrero)



The beginnings of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua...



Mexican Dirty Wars  
(Killings, disappearances, secret service, guerrilla war)

Now that we have seen the title of the documentary (and hopefully the first part of it), take a look at the documentary covers on the next slide.

Which one best corresponds to the title and events portrayed?

Why?

*Warm-up:* First  
impressions



# el grito

de Leobardo López Arretche

Producción: CUEC-UNAM



# el grito

méxico 1968

un film de Leobardo López Arretche



Secretaría  
de Cultura



# el grito

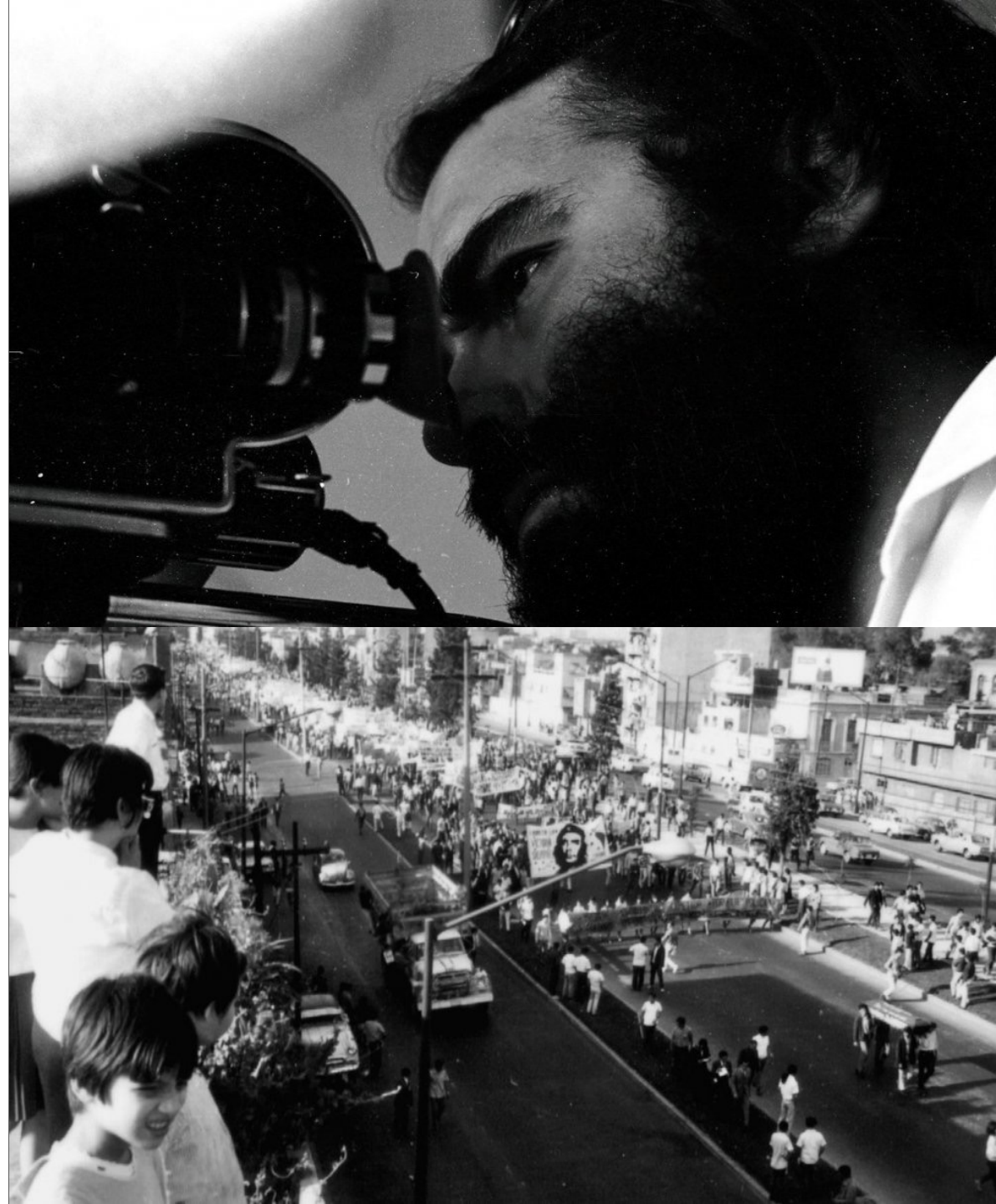
méxico 1968





# Leobardo López Aretche (1942-1970)

- Delegate for the National Strike Committee
- Co-director of the film (along with Carlos González Morantes)
- He was imprisoned during the protests for months
- Upon his release, he brought together *El Grito* (1968)
- The film was banned until 1998, but now has achieved international fame and recognition.
- Aretche died in 1970.



# “Talking to the Streets”

*Elena Poniatowska*

”There are many. They come down Melchor Ocampo, the Reforma, Juárez, Cinco de Mayo, laughing, students walking arm in arm in the demonstration, in as festive a mood as if they are going to a street fair; carefree boys and girls do not know that tomorrow, and the day after, their dead bodies will be lying swollen in the rain, after a fair where the guns in the shooting gallery are aimed at them, children-targets, wonder-struck children, children for whom every day is a holiday until the owner of the shooting gallery tells them to form a line, like the row of tin-plated mechanical ducks that move past exactly at eye level, click, click, click, “Ready, aim, fire!” and they tumble backward, touching the red satin backdrop.

[...]

These youngsters are coming toward me now, hundreds of them; not one of them has his hands up [...] there are no sudden blows, no clubbings, ni ill treatment, no vomiting after being tortured; they are breathing deeply, advancing slowly, surely, stubbornly; they come round the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and stop at the edge of the square, where there is a drop of eight or ten feet, with a view of the pre-Hispanic ruins below; they walk on toward me again, hundreds of them, advancing toward me with their hands holding up placards, little hands, because death makes them look like children’s hands; they come toward me, row on row; though they are pale, they look happy; their faces are slightly blurred, but they are happy ones” (3-4).

4 observations in  
4 minutes.

Now, we will watch  
the first four minutes  
of the documentary.

Write down/think  
about four  
observations that  
you can make about  
these first few  
minutes of the film.



**What did you learn/observe?**

# What do we learn?

- **The origin of the Student Protests of 1968.**
  - **July, 1968:** Students from two rivaling schools (Vocational 2 and Isaac Ochoterena Preparatory) have a violent confrontation.
  - How is the police response to this confrontation of the two high schools?
- **This event initiates a series of protests between the months of July and October, 1968**
  - Involvement from the National Strike Committee
  - The Communist Party
  - Student representatives from different universities around Mexico City and beyond.

Listen (but don't watch)  
the next minute of the  
film.

What do you notice?  
What associations can you  
make with the sounds that  
you hear?

The sounds of  
*El Grito*

**What did you hear?**



Watch (but don't listen) to  
that same minute of the  
film.

Do the two narratives  
come together for you?

Why or why not?

What do/did you  
see?

7:54-9 minutes

What sights and sounds  
come together here?

Does Aretche use  
strategies to draw our  
attention to specific  
people/situations/voices?

One more clip

# What makes a film a documentary?

We have already (perhaps  
prematurely) categorized  
this film as a  
documentary.

*What makes a film a  
documentary, in your view?*

*Do the first five minutes of  
“El Grito” correspond to that  
vision? Why or why not?*

“A documentary film purports to present factual information about the world outside the film”

-David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*

“A nonfiction film about real events and people, often avoiding traditional narrative structures”

-Timothy Corrigan, *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*

“Documentary is the creative treatment of actuality.”

-John Grierson, *Cinema Quarterly* 2.1

“A practice of filmmaking that deals with actual and factual (and usually contemporary) issues, institutions and people; whose purpose is to educate, inform, communicate, persuade, raise consciousness or satisfy curiosity; in which the viewer is commonly addressed as a citizen of the public sphere; and whose materials are selected and arranged from what already exists (rather than being made up).”

-Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell, “Documentary,” *A Dictionary of Film Studies*

# Definitions of documentary film



# Documentary

- Based on these definitions, the documentary is a complex visual medium that combines fact and art.
- **The documentary...**
  - Represents actual/factual events, people, places;
  - Tells a story that may be related to a broader historical, social, political issue;
  - Produces a dynamic and often hybrid re-creation of events that may incorporate (stock) photographs, moving images and verbal and/or visual testimonies, etc.;
  - Requires an astute and participatory audience – a documentary, in a sense, is a call to action;
  - Sound, music, *mise-en-scene*, characters (real-people), timing, pacing, types of shots

# As you continue viewing the film...

- Pay attention to how Aretche's documentary represents/frames fact and art.
- Which story-lines/situations does the documentary seem to follow and why?
- Are there sounds/images/moments that stand out to you? Why?
- What is your role as a viewer? How do you engage with the documentary? What do you do/how do you react after you watch specific scenes? Why? Is the context/story presented easy/difficult for you to follow/understand?