

Dictatorships of Right and Left Thrive in

By George Natanson
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MEXICO CITY — Recent years have found military dictatorships and de facto governments of both the extreme right and left appearing in Latin America.

While the Organization of American States debated Fidel Castro's Communist dictatorship in Cuba, an increasing number of right-wing de facto governments rule with impunity. They apparently will continue to do so.

One attempt has been made to outlaw these regimes which have been described as "political banditry." For almost two years Venezuela, which brought charges of aggression against Cuba, has tried without success to bring Inter-American regional action to counter the threat of military coups.

Among other things, it was

hoped some measure of protection would be offered to constitutionally elected governments.

Support Lacking

However, the Betancourt Doctrine, so named for Romulo Betancourt, former President of Venezuela, has failed to win sufficient support among OAS member states, including the United States, to bring the issue before the regional body.

The principal reason why the Betancourt Doctrine can make no headway is that of the 20 Latin-American countries, eight are presently under the thumb of dictatorships understandably hesitant to legislate against themselves.

Three governments legally elected hold their mandates subject to military pleasure. In another three, armies stand ready to move if the civilian presidents show signs of "weakness."

Only in six — Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay — is there relative political freedom. Due either to stiff civilian control won through a hard fought social revolution, a long history of democratic tradition or because the armed forces are small or non-existent.

But elsewhere, the story is different.

Military Increases Power

In Bolivia a revolutionary government responsible for a measure of economic progress and political stability since 1952 has recently been forced to add an air force general as its vice president to "gain the support" of a rapidly growing military power.

In Nicaragua, a civilian president must contend with the two Somoza brothers whose father ruled this Cen-

tral-American country for more than 30 years.

Peru and Argentina present a hope for the future, but the military in both countries within the past four years have overthrown constitutional governments.

Outright dictatorships exist in Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Ecuador, Paraguay and Cuba.

In the Dominican Republic the pattern was changed a little. The military threw out the legally elected government and then established a civilian triumvirate which has a difficult time holding together. However, its military overlords are never far away.

President Ousted

Brazil presents today's most perplexing enigma. The military there disposed of an inefficient president accused of Communist ties. However, the Brazilian generals quickly reverted to type, employing fac-

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tics common to both right-wing extremists and Communists, denying others their political freedoms.

In Haiti the most oppressive, hated dictatorship in the hemisphere exists without even a moral condemnation from the Americas.

Ironically, dictatorial governments have increased or are threatening at the very time when the Alliance for Progress has become the hope of the America's vast underprivileged.

They are beginning to see in the Alliance the opportunity for release from long centuries of serfdom and poverty. It represents escape not only to economic betterment but to the freedom which the example of the United States and U.S. propaganda efforts have led them to expect.

Schools, health centers, decent homes, suitable clothing,

sufficient food and work which will help them obtain these basic necessities is now coming within the grasp of many.

If the majority of Latin Americans are awakening to this realization, there is also a growing understanding and respect for the vote together with an awareness of their government and an opportunity to participate in it.