

# final thoughts

I faced several challenges in creating this Zine that I would like to adress.

First, I want to clarify that I do not intend to speak for the experiences of those who live in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Venezuela, Brazil, or any other Latin American country. I simply aim to raise awareness about the political instability that exists throughout the region and introduce readers to movements and organizations who have direct experience with these issues.

Second, as is characteristic of Zines, the space I had to explain extremely complex issues was limited. To sum up political environments and landscapes of three separate countries in 16 short pages is unrealistic. That being said, there exists an extensive body of literature about this topic, and I urge my readers to seek more information about these issues as they seem more simple in this Zine than they actually are. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope your curiosity carries you beyond this page.

In the space below, write about one thing you intend to educate yourself about or another way that you can help that was not listed previously:

[A large rectangular box with a pink border, intended for writing, is currently empty.]



## DEFINING A REFUGEE

# What's The Difference?

What feelings or ideas do these words invoke for you?

REFUGEE:

IMMIGRANT:



# Immigrant Vs. Refugee?

REFUGEE: According to the UNHCR, a refugee is, "someone who has been forced to flee [their] country because of persecution, war, or violence." Religion, political opinion, and race (among other components of identity) can be causes of persecution and force people out of their countries.

IMMIGRANT: According to Merriam-Webster, an immigrant "comes to a country to take up permanent residence."

Dominant media representation fails to call many Latin American migrants what they are: refugees. Terministic screens\* act to paint those who migrate to the U.S. from Latin America as strictly economic migrants. All migrants are positioned as "the stranger"\* in dominant rhetoric, but refugees are further other-ized when they are robbed of their voices and their experiences are trivialized.



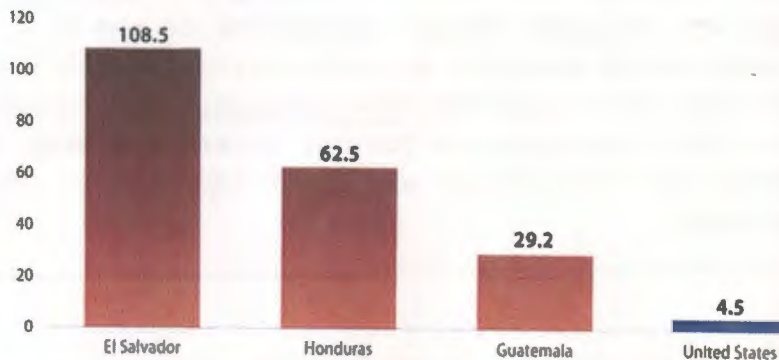
\*Terministic Screens- Selection, deflection, and reflection of realities  
\*The Stranger- meant to be feared and misunderstood

# THE NORTHERN TRIANGLE

## THE NORTHERN TRIANGLE:

This refers to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, collectively. The U.S. has received tens of thousands of refugees from this region, "seeking asylum from the region's skyrocketing violence. Their countries...were rocked by civil wars in the 1980s, leaving a legacy of violence and fragile institutions. The region remains menaced by corruption, drug trafficking, and gang violence despite tough police and judicial reforms." All three countries have among the highest homicide rates in the world, with only Guatemala showing improvement in this metric.

Homicide rate by country, Northern Triangle and United States  
Homicides per 100,000 people\*



\*Note: The most recent data available for the United States are from 2014. Data for the Northern Triangle countries are from 2015.  
Source: David Gagne, "InSight Crime's 2015 Latin America Homicide Round-up," Insight Crime, January 14, 2016, available at <http://www.insight-crime.org/news-analysis/insight-crime-homicide-round-up-2015-latin-america-caribbean>; Federal Bureau of Investigation, "2014 Crime in the United States," available at <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s-2014/tables/table-1> (last accessed February 2016); World Bank Group, "Health Nutrition and Population Statistics: Population estimates and projections," available at <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=Health-Nutrition-and-Population-Statistics:Population-estimates-and-projections> (last accessed February 2016).

Two things these countries share in common is a history of colonial abuses at the hands of Spain, and more recently, civil war in the 1960s-1980s.



# HONDURAS

## MILITARY COUP OF 2009:

President Zelaya was forced to step down by the military after he tried to remove presidential term limits and alter the constitution. The exile of the president was highly controversial and sent the country spiraling into protest. Though there was no violence as an immediate outcome of the events, the militarization that occurred caused some to doubt the legitimacy of the government. Honduras holds the third highest murder rate in the world with 62.5 homicides per 100,000 people.



# Guatemala

## BORDER CONFLICT:

Along the Guatemalan-Honduran border is a place of intense violence, even earning itself the nickname "Corridor of Violence." Gang violence across the border has pushed both governments to militarize the region. However, their efforts do not extend beyond security, and the media is greatly inhibited and education is inaccessible to most.



## NATURAL DISASTER:

In addition to political instability, Guatemala has been plagued with natural disaster. After experiencing frequent eruptions from Volcán de Fuego and a 6.8 earthquake in 2017, natural disasters only amplify any instability that already exists in the region.

# el Salvador

## GANG VIOLENCE:

El Salvador is the murder capital of the world. Outside active war zones, its homicide rates are rivaled by none, at 108.5 out of every 100,000 people. With over 30,000 gang members, most of whom are at large, violence in El Salvador is largely a result of gangs. For many, gangs are an inevitable part of life, even for non-members. Many neighborhoods are controlled by gangs and the Salvadoran government lacks the power, legitimacy, and reach to push back against them.



# implications

The fact that people who flee the aforementioned conditions are not recognized as legitimate refugees by the U.S. media and often government, is an egregious act of systematic racism. These migrant bodies of color are already forced to carry metaphorical borders with them, even after they have crossed physical ones, and by assuming the experiences they have had, their situation is only worsened.

# The good news

Fortunately, despite violence and oppression, many resistance movements continue to rise throughout the region. People are uniting against their oppressors, especially women and the queer community.

## VOICES FROM THE RESISTANCE:

"The coup regime had not anticipated that the people would become united." -Gay activist from the Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (Honduras)

"To know that one is not alone" -Paula Barrios, Mujeres Transformando el Mundo (Guatemala)

"Women of all political stripes are struggling for our right to participate" -Lilian Coto de Cuellar FMLN National Secretariat for Women (El Salvador)



# el poder De una

## VOZ

ROQUE DALTON:

Both a poet and the inspiration for the Salvadoran student movement "Frente Universitario Roque Dalton." He spent a substantial portion of his adult life in political exile for his radical views and poetry. He was eventually assassinated in 1975, but his message lives on through the student activism and dialogic collaboration\* that he inspired.



\*the act of learning  
through dialogue



# El Salvador será

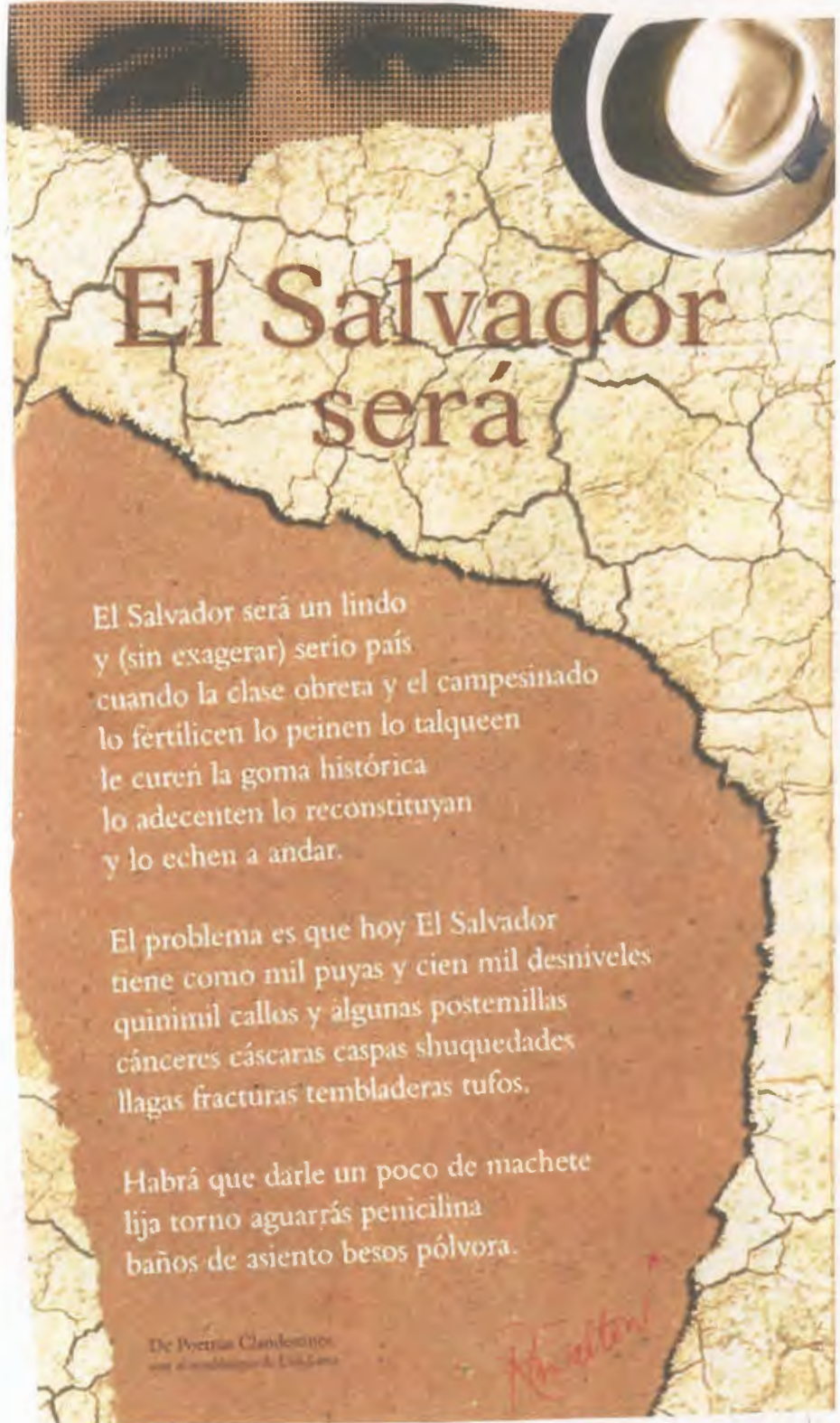
El Salvador será un lindo  
y (sin exagerar) serio país  
cuando la clase obrera y el campesinado  
lo fertilicen lo peinen lo talqueen  
le cureñ la goma histórica  
lo adecenten lo reconstituyan  
y lo echen a andar.

El problema es que hoy El Salvador  
tiene como mil puyas y cien mil desniveles  
quinimil callos y algunas postemillas  
cánceres cáscaras caspas shuquedades  
llagas fracturas tembladeras tufos.

Habrá que darle un poco de machete  
lija torno aguarrás penicilina  
baños de asiento besos pólvora.

De Poemas Clandestinos  
con el sello de la UCA

*Roque Dalton*



# our role

1) EDUCATE: Read more. Educate yourself and others about the politics and living conditions in this region. Consult international news coverage from different countries, and do so frequently.

STARTING POINT: Latin American Post

2) VOLUNTEER/DONATE: Many nonprofits that work to advance the rights of asylum seekers and refugees worldwide. Some specifically help refugees integrate into society in their new countries while others focus on policy reform and legal empowerment of asylum seekers.

STARTING POINT: Asylum Access

3) GIVE A VOICE: Find websites and articles published by activists from the region. Their written or spoken lived experiences are an essential element of political transformation. Sharing their work on social media or verbally expands their audience and gives a voice to those who know these issues personally.

STARTING POINT: Mujeres Transformando el Mundo



# Quiz

Draw a line from the reason for migrating to the type of migrant

REASON FOR MIGRATING

TYPE OF MIGRANT

Natural Disaster

Lack of financial stability at home

Political Persecution

Religious Persecution

War/Violence

Family in a different country

Desire to experience another culture

REFUGEE

ASYLUM SEEKER

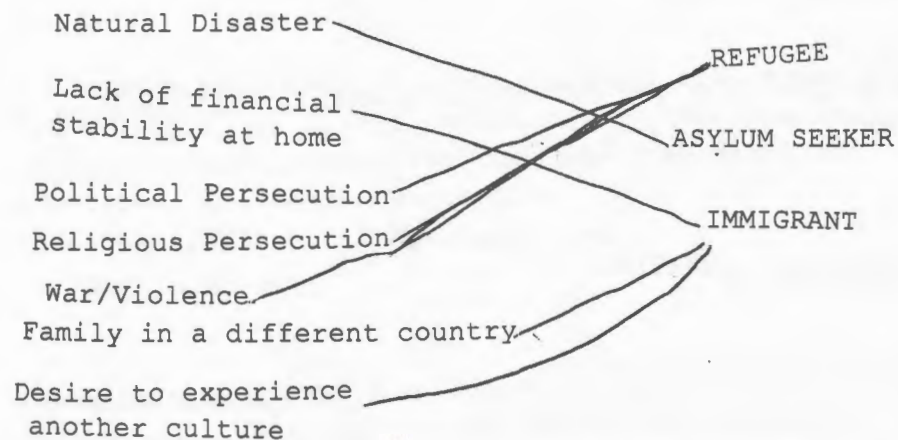
IMMIGRANT

# #HERETOSTAY

# Answers

## REASON FOR MIGRATING

## TYPE OF MIGRANT



Refugees are asylum seekers whose claims have been evaluated and approved. The U.N. does not recognize those who have fled their country on account of natural disaster as refugees. However, violence, persecution, or anything else that would lead one to feel unsafe in their own country is considered a valid basis for being a refugee.

Asylum Seekers are essentially refugees whose claims have either not been evaluated or have been rejected. They can migrate for any of the same reasons as a refugee, the only difference is whether or not they have been recognized for the trauma they experienced.

Immigrants move to another country by "choice." They may be forced in a sense by economic or social factors, but their primary reason for moving is not that their safety is threatened.

# The Scope

It is important to remember that this is far from a comprehensive analysis of Latin American refugees and asylum seekers. Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador are far from the only countries whose conditions create refugees. From dictatorship in Venezuela to crime and police brutality in Brazil, there are many reasons and many places that Latin American migrants might be refugees.



Additionally, it is essential to recognize that not all migrants from Latin America are, in fact, refugees. Many have other reasons for migrating, such as economic opportunity or family connections. The biggest takeaway is that you should avoid *assuming* the reason that someone moved to the U.S. based on where in the world they are from.

