voices of MEXICO

News, Commentary and Documents on Current Events in Mexico and Latin America

ISSN 0185-3511

Of All the King's Men... Who'll Be Next President?

War on the Welfare State

Democracy is not Enough

Stabilization Policy Rocks the Boat

Community Effort Makes Carnival Fun

$ 3.00

March - May 1987 Number 3

GUANAJUATO

Contents

Cover photo by Goby Stromberg

"Dance of the Serpents" in Taxco, Guerrero

Design: **Juan Escareño**

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MARCH - MAY 1987 NUMBER 3

This Issue

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All editorial correspondence should be sent to VOICES OF MEXICO, Filosofía y Letras No. 88. Col. Copilco-Universidad, 04360 México D.F. Tels. (905) 658-5853 and (905) 658-7279. Allow 2 weeks for delivery.

VOICES OF MEXICO is published quarterly. Subscriptions are $10.00 per year and $14 for those other than in North America. Single issues are $3.00 each.

This is a key year for Mexican politics, as the upcoming presidential succession will be resolved over the next few months. The process evolves according to precise, specific rules and procedures involving Mexican society as a whole, and has caught the attention of political analysts and commentators the world over.

On this particular occasion, the proceedings will be taking place in the midst of one of the most complex and difficult situations our country has had to face in decades. Caught up in one of the most severe economic crises in our history, faced with the increasing threat of generalized warfare in Central America and subjected to a diversity of international pressures, Mexicans must decide who are the presidential candidates best qualified to guarantee the country's institutional life, and what's more, the national project we have built throughout our history. Thus, the coming months will be a time of intense political activity in which the country's organized forces will put forth their demands, as well as their alternative options for the Mexico of the future.

VOICES means to cover this process through articles and commentaries illustrating the complexity of Mexico's situation. We will also include the opinions of some of our most distinguished intellectuals on subjects such as the relationship between democracy and the respect for human rights in our country, the economic stabilization program undertaken by the current administration and its consequences for Mexico's future, as well as the complicated and difficult relations with our neighbors both to the North and to the South.

In this issue we are also opening up a new line of analysis: Mexicans' ideas on North American society and history.

Given that the possibility of all-out war in Central America is widely feared in Mexico, our section on **Latin american issues** is centered on the regional situation, analyzing the outlook for intervention, the situation in the countries most involved in the regional conflict and the existing possibilities for peace.

At the same time, following the editorial policy set out in previous issues of VOICES, we continue to publish articles and essays on cultural matters, emphasizing our country's ethnic and regional plurality. Our aim is to illustrate the wealth and variety of our traditions, idiosyncratic expressions that point both to the Mexican people's tremendous potential and to the difficulty of adjusting to simplistic stereotypes that come to us from afar.

Mariclaire Acosta

High Tech and Helicopters Persecute Wetbacks

The new Simpson-Rodino Law threatens nearly two million Mexicans who live illegally in the United States.

Crossing the border is to sense the helicopters searching nervously among the shadows scurrying under the dust, to hide in the caves and bushes, to slip away from the muggers who roam these craggy hillsides, to travel through the desert's infinite solitude, to swim across the river and wet your back with that undefined water, half Mexican, half American.

And it's not only the border crossing, itself. Once on the other side, people find themselves face to face with another economy, another culture, another history. It means working in a country where undocumented workers face segregation, discrimination, criminalization due to the prevailing ideas about them in the new society.

Some 1.8 million Mexicans live clandestinely, pursued in U.S. territory. They cross the border in automobile trunks or hidden in box cars, constantly on edge, knowing that the Border patrol could arrive at any time, breaking into Latin homes, factories, stores, restaurants and neighborhoods.

Meanwhile U.S. forces assigned to detect and apprehend the undocumented are growing all the time, and the federal budget for controlling illegal immigration is climbing geometrically.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Law —better known as the Simpson-Rodino Law— was signed by President Ronald Reagan just at a time when protectionist trade measures, drug traffiking and the traditional "wetbacks" problem have made bilateral relations between Mexico and the U.S. even more difficult and complicated than ever.

Four months have gone by since the Simpson-Rodino project received final approval. The new legislation was born in the midst of a major polemical discussion in U.S. society and passed despite the voices of protest raised by the most important Mexican-American civil and labor associations.

When he signed the bill into law in a November 6th, White House ceremony, President Reagan denied that the measure was descriminatory, saying. "This should not be seen as a problem between the American Union and its neighbors." Rather he maintained that it should be seen as a great step forward toward facing the challenge of defending national sovereignty.

Nonetheless, U.S. Congressmen of Latin origin do not agree. They argue that the measures to penalize employers will lead them to discriminate against all hispanics, even when they are legal residents of the U.S.

On this side of the border, Mexican political leaders, union representatives and businessmen concurred that the Simpson-Rodino Law does not represent a true solution to the problem of undocumented migration.

Senate leader Antonio Riva Palacio said that the law is an unilateral response from the United States and that those kinds of measures do not help resolve the problems of neighboring countries like Mexico and the U.S. "Any attitude that causes friction," he added, "will affect the already complex relation between Mexico and the U.S." What is needed is dialog based on mutual respect.

In any poor neighborhood in major Mexican border cities, there are always dozens of workers willing "to go to the other side" on any given day. And now there is a virtual siege mentality along the 3,000 kilometer border.

The U.S. Border Patrol has gone from 3,700 men to 5,600. Its technological growth has also been impressive. In the past three years, the traditional patrols have been outfitted with modern equipment to stem the flood of undocumented workers. The border police are now well armed. The use of armored helicopters piloted by men trained in military-type incursion techniques has led Mexicans to believe that the U.S. is militarizing the border. Thermal and infrared sensors, telecommunications equipment and special weapons are part of the U.S. solution to stop "the biggest wave of people that has ever crossed our southern border," as Alan C. Nelson, Director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, describes it.

Nonetheless, this "gigantic wave" could be an illusion. Mexican and U.S. researchers agree that INS detention figures are not representative of the real situation. Detainees are sent back to Mexico the same day they are aprehended. Some, no sooner than they're off the bus, begin to plan how to cross back over again, explaining that "I've got to get to work tomorrow."

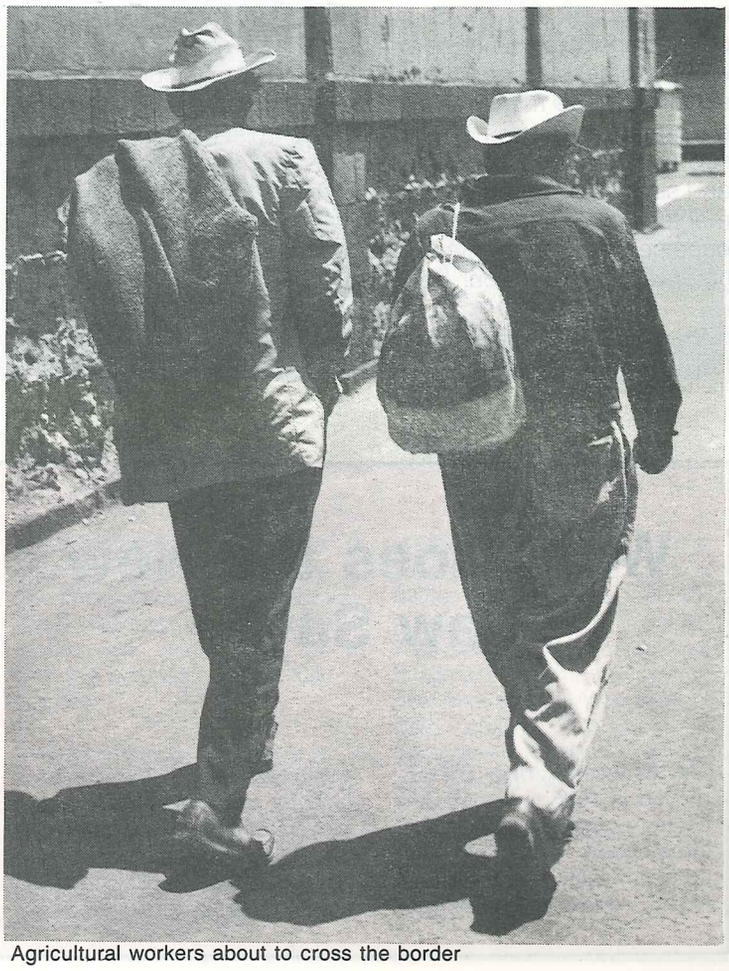


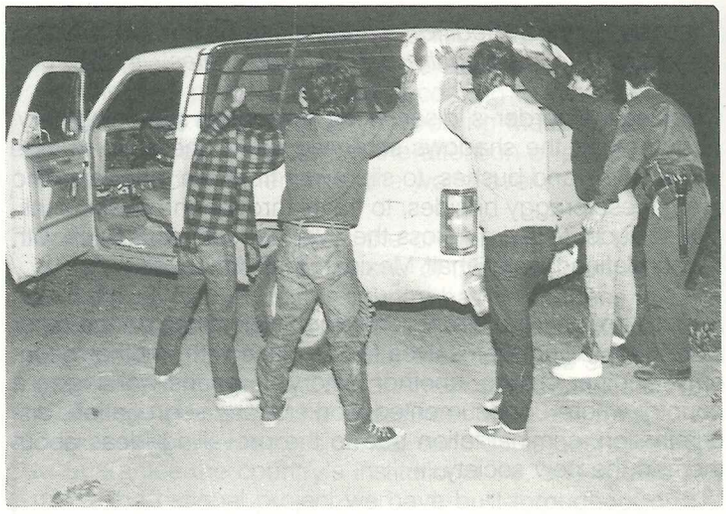
Photo by Archivo Novedades

Agricultural workers about to cross the border

The same undocumented worker may be deported two or three times before managing to evade immigration authorities successfully. So the statistics on detainees grow and grow, while the undocumented population stays practically the same. At any rate, the figures on detainees only show the effectiveness of INS methods and the intensification of the persecution against the undocumented, but says little about the real number of people who make up the phenomenon.

Voices interviewed Jorge Bustamante, President of the College of the Northern Border* and considered to be Mexico's outstanding authority on the issue. "We shouldn't exaggerate the consequences of the Simpson-Rodino Law for our country," he states. He explained that the immigration Reform and Control Law was conceived in the context of rapidly rising unemployment in the U.S. in 1980. "They associated the increased unemployment," he argues, "with the presence of undocumented Mexican workers in the U.S. This coincided with the so-called Mariel migration in 1981, when thousands of Cubans emigrated en masse to the country. This provoked a very strong political reaction by the end of the Carter administration and strengthened the prevailing views in the U.S. on undocumented workers. These two factors later came together in what became the Simpson-Rodino supporters' classic phrase, 'We have lost control of our borders.' "

Photo by Sergio Dorantes



Capture, and an end to dreams for a better life

* An independent research institution created in 1982 to study border phenomena resulting from the interaction between the peoples and environments of the two countries.

This phrase illustrated their conviction that the undocumented immigration problem is basically caused by external factors. In this same vein, shortly before the Reagan-De la Madrid meeting in May 1986, Joe Aubin, head of the INS Statistics Service in El Paso, Texas, met with Mexican correspondents and explained that the exodus of Mexican workers to the U.S. continued to grow because of Mexico's critical situation, in which too few new jobs are being created, and there is the attraction of earning dollars.

Dr. Bustamante believes the U.S. position that Mexican migration is caused by factors external to the United States is wrong. "This migration is the product of the interaction of factors operating on both sides of the border, in the context of the international labor market with its real demand for Mexican labor and to which the supply of Mexican labor responds."

"Passing the Simpson-Rodino Law is a sovereing decision of the United States," explains Dr. Bustamante. "But the presence of illegal workers in the U.S., of foreign workers and particularly of Mexican workers, is not strictly an immigration issue; it is a matter of importing labor. The problem is that the U.S. can't have its cake and eat it too. That is, on the one hand, they want cheap labor, and on the other, they want to punish it and keep Damocles' sword poised over the heads of the undocumented. They want the labor force, but not the human being. They want the productive capacity, but not human or labor rights for the people who produce."

What Does the New Law Say?

The Simpson-Rodino Bill approved in 1986 to reform and control inmigration, contains three basic provisions that concern highly sensitive areas of U.S. —Mexico relations. The control of illegal immigration calle for sanctions against employers who knowingly, and after the law was passed, hire, employ, recruit or issue payment to any foreigner not authorized to work in the United States.

Both Mexican and U.S. experts on border problems believe the law allows a certain leeway to employers in avoiding responsibilities for contracting illegals. But on the other hand, the new provisions put greater pressure on Mexican workers to avail themselves of false papers to shore up their legal situation, thus exposing them to even more serious violations of U.S. laws.

The legislation calls for a six-month education period during which time the law will not be applied; however, the Mexican border area is not included in this provision. This has led to mounting concern as the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service increases its activities and, with it, the chances of violating the rights of undocumented workers.

There is only a minimal chance that the Simpson-Rodino Law will be applied to the letter, according to Bustamante. He gives two main reasons. First there are already twelve states whose labor codes stipulate penalties for employers hiring undocumented workers, and they've never had any impact on immigration. Second, U.S. immigration policies respond more to political and ideological factors than to economic factors, while the behavior of immigrants and employers responds to the dynamics of economic relations.

This means that the way the U.S. government has chosen to deal with the matter is not only unilateral, but also imprecise. *El Nacional*, the newpaper that most closely reflects Mexican government positions, wrote in its editorial pages, "The demand for cheap, foreing labor and the supply of Mexican workers in search of jobs is the real cause of the flow of undocumented workers. The fact that a large number of Mexican workers are ilegal reinforces that situation and permits the employers to pay salaries below the minimums established by law. The Simpson-Rodino Law will only mean that Mexican migrants will work under even worse conditions" (10-29-86).

In the interview for Voices, Jorge Bustamante warned that anti-Mexican attitudes by Border Patrollers may actually get worse. Simpson-Rodino establishes a waiting period prior to deporting detainees not eligible for leagalization, but excepts the Mexican border area. "It's a threat," he explains, "but it is likely that there will be an increase in police activities along the entire border. This is the central issue for Mexico in the Simpson-Rodino legislation and represents a Damocles' sword over the economic, social, and political stability in our border cities."

Thus, Mexicans will continue to be the "sacrificial lamb" for U.S. unemployment problems, will continue to be "responsible" for all the crime, increases in taxes and pollution; their expulsion will calm the waters with unemployed U.S. citizens. The is only one possible situation that could favor the undocumented. The Mexican government must make the consequences of the Simpson-Rodino Law a subject for presidential-level discussions and then convince the United States that the problem has its roots in economic and labor issues and that it must be resolved bilaterally. Only then will "wetbacks" have some hope of respect for their human and labor rights. ★

Jorge Luis Sierra Guzmán

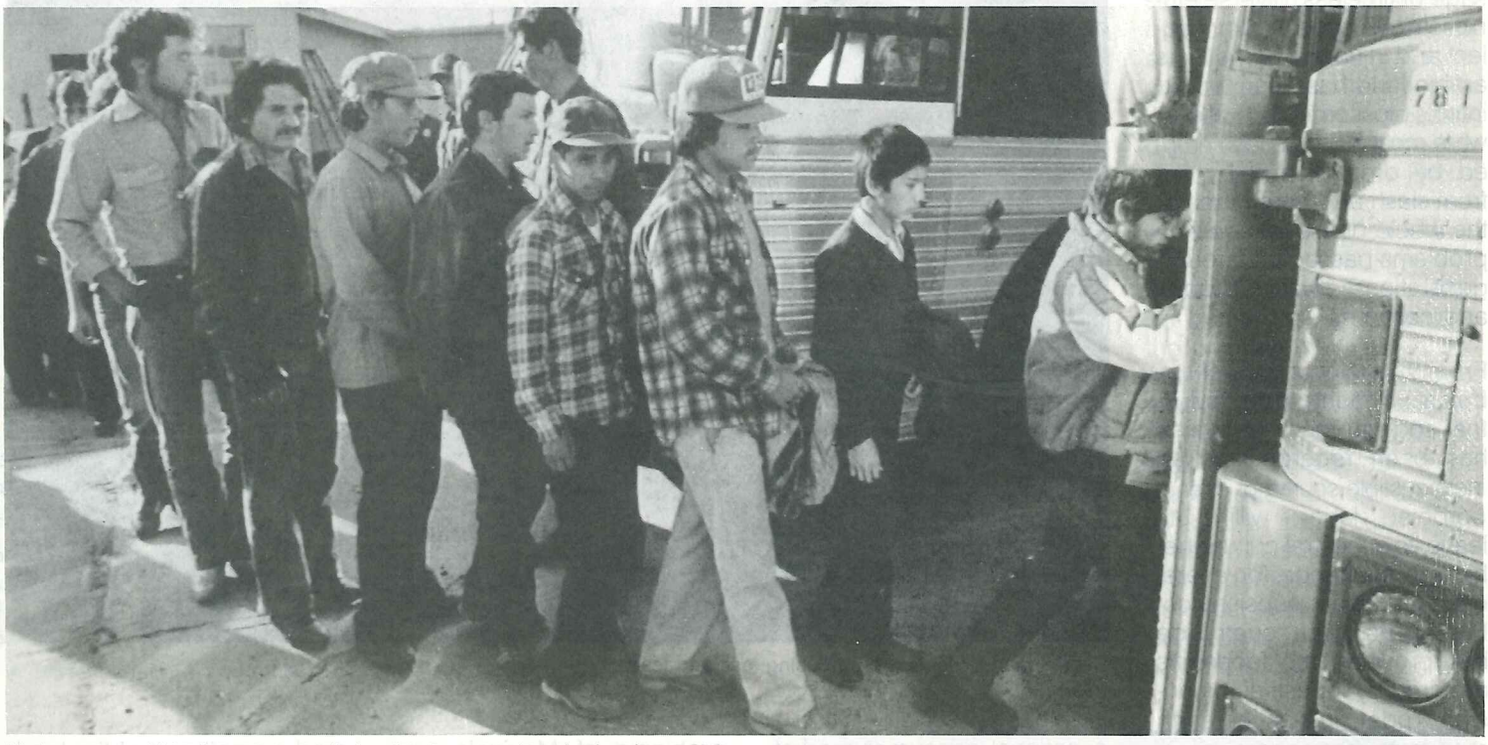


Photo by Archivo Novedades

Undocumented Mexicans arrested shortly after crossing the border

On the other hand, the law grants foreigners, who have resided uninterruptedly in the United States since January 1982, the chance to legalize their immigrant status. People meeting the necessary requirements will be given temporary residency, with permanent residency granted after 18 months of temporary status and after having shown a basic understanding of the English Language and of U.S. history.

Yet none of the illegal residents who manage to change their migratory status (with the exception of "Cuban and Haitian exiles") will have access to federally funded public-assistance programs until five years have elapsed.

Simpson-Rodino also sets up legal procedures for the temporary immigration of agricultural workers by having employers process their requests with the Labor Department 60 days in advance. Analysts believe that strict compliance with this provision will depend to a great extent on the conditions of the U.S. economy at the time the law begins to be fully applied.

In recent visits to Mexico, U.S. government officials have stated their commitment to avoid massive deportations of illegals and to mantain constant communication with Mexican authorities on the issue. This leads to the hope that in the future both countries can agree on bilateral strategies to deal with a problem whose roots are on both sides of the border, that imaginary line that divides not only one geographical territory from another, but also two completely different cultures and economies.

Jorge Luis Sierra Guzmán

Farmers Go Hungry as They Produce Food for Export

Due to decades of neglect, poverty and injustice characterize the Mexican countryside.

Vast, rural, agricultural Mexico seems to exist on the fringes of modern Mexico. Its visage of timeless, diverse ethnic features is marked by neglect and injustice. Some of its arable land has been turned into blossoming valleys, while most of it has been eroded by drought and by fire from slash and burn farming; the whole of it is plagued by problems passed on through generations over decades and centuries.

From the point of view of turbulent, modern-day industrial society, the countryside has been regarded as an inexhaustible source of cheap, uprooted labor, willing to leave its ancestral culture behind in exchange for a precarious urban subsistence. For years the countryside has provided the foodstuffs required by industrial expansion. Today, just as the earth resorts to barrenness in response to the irrationality of single-crop agriculture, agricultural output has fallen to such an extent that the country now faces the grave situation of being incapable of feeding itself.

The countryside has fallen way behind the development of the rest of the nation. The development model based on rapid industrialization that as of the 1940s spearheaded economic growth, allowed Mexico to recover strategic industries previously controlled by foreing-owned firms. Likewise, the development of a national consumer market proved essential to economic development. On the social and political level, the shaping of the nation's own institutional fabric guaranteed the possibility of sovereignty and autonomy. Yet Mexican industry and urban life eventually fell out of step with the countryside, which gradually began to slip into backwardness.

Basic health, education and housing services concentrated in the cities. Most of the resources resulting from economic growth were used to further industry, to the detriment of the needs of agriculture. Cities became privileged hubs of wealth and culture and centralized the most important political and administrative decision-making processes. Thus, it can easily be understood why towards the end of the 60s agriculture began to show signs of the stagnation and inflation still present today. In fact, agriculture soon became one of the main structural problems of Mexico's current economic crisis.

Industrial development also led to a new kind of inequality in the countryside. A capital-intensive sector developed in farming, cattle raising and forestry on the basis of modern technology and irrigation systems, with broad fiscal and financial prerogatives. This sector is in stark contrast to the mass of landless peasants and small landowners whose crops depend on seasonal rains, who lack equipment, machinery and the financing that would allow them to go beyond the level of subsistence agriculture.

The *ejido* was instituted in the late 30s and early 40s, during the presidency of General Lázaro Cárdenas, as a form of land ownership that could offset the power of large landowners, break down their holdings and distribute them in a way that would benefit the broader community. Thus, peasant families recovered a small part of the land that had been wrested from previous generations.

The **ejidos**, set up as a collective form of production based on family property, are undermined by an inefficient and corrupt marketing system. Speculation and hoard cult into the earnings of **ejidatarios**, communal and small landowners who for lack of an adequate marketing system are forced to sell their crops to middlemen.

On the other hand, government-controlled marketing facilities are incapable of pro-

Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar

Cacao beans. Fields are producing less and less

viding adequate profit margins for small farmers. Peasant protests have become widespread in the last few years because of the low price-guarantees offered by official institutions, mainly for corn, sorghum, barley, soy beans, wheat and coffee.

Yet this lack of encouragement toward agricultural production is not limited only to *ejidatarios*, small landowners and communal farmers. For almost 20 years now public investment in agriculture has had a negative growth rate, meaning that since 1967 the gross agricultural growth rate has been inferior to the growth of the gross national product. The percentage of the national budget assigned to agriculture in 1987 will be 3.99%, while at the same time, the percentage allotted to servicing the foreign debt is 55.1%. Additionally, at the end of last year Congress increased taxes on agricultural production when it approved reforms to the *Ley de Ingresos* (Income and Tax Law.)

These events have led to concerned outcries from peasant organizations, saying they expect an even worse year ahead for the countryside and its inhabitants. The National Union of Fruit and Vegetable Producers (Unión Nacional de Productores de Hortalizas y Frutas) issued a statement to the effect that the agricultural sector cannot be expected to generate a greater contribution when it is burdened by inflation, a rigid price structure and high production costs. Thus, said the farmers, the sector has been incapable of rendering Mexico self-sufficient in food production.

For its part, the Independent Farm Workers and Peasants' Central (Central Independiente de Obreros Agricolas y Campesinos) made public their disagreement with the new indirect taxes being levied on peasants through increased prices and tariffs of goods and services provided by the government.

The country's current economic woes are considered to be one of the worst crises in our history, yet the peasant population has been living in a similarly critical situation for decades now. Immigration from rural areas to the city has practically become a way of life. On the other hand, the supremacy of powerful regional *caciques* (local political bosses) in the countryside constitutes another serious impediment for the well-being of peasants.

Peasants have ample reason to express their desire for a dignified and just way of life. Not since the large peasant movements of the 1970s, which led to the expropiation and redistribution into *ejidos* of large landholdings in the northern part of the country, has the rural population so continuously and systematically expressed its discontent. In Oaxaca, for example, Indian communities have earned the right to elect their municipal officials according to the region's traditional democratic customs. Peasants in Veracruz, Oaxaca and Chiapas have gone on hunger strikes demanding the suppression of legal shelters that protect large landowners who've pushed out peasant farmers and taken over their plots. Likewise, peasant organizations in Puebla, Veracruz and San Luis Potosí have protested the murders of several of their leaders.

A new factor has appeared on the scene in addition to the ones we have been discussing. The Mexican Confederation of Labor (Confederación de Trabajadores de México), considered to be the strongest organization of its kind in the country, expressed its support for peasants' demands by setting up direct marketing channels between producers and consumers through a network of

Photo by Ana García

A peasant family. A world that is disappearing

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Two *campesinos* from the Puebla mountains

union outlets and by providing larger incentives for agroindustrial firms managed by workers.

As far back as August 1985, the Confederation had proposed setting up training programs for peasants to improve farming techniques, linking associations of *ejidos* to study and research centers, providing consultantship in management for cooperatives and *ejidos*, as well as peasant participation in processing, distribution and marketing of their produce.

Labor's proposals are a clear symptom of the social concern over the plight of the peasants, who themselves have demanded that the state take a greater role in dealing with the situation. Peasants are seeking subsidies in the form of agricultural inputs and improved seeds; easily available and greater amounts of credit; cutbacks in the cost of irrigation services; the setting up of state-owned storage and transportation facilities and government intervention to put an end to political imposition and repression in **ejidos** and municipalities.

These men and women whose hands are chapped from sun and hard work will never forget that their demands have been ignored despite the fact that they played a decisive role in the 1910 Revolution. Mexico will be unable to resolve its crisis as long as there are young men without land or work, or while entire families huddle in Mexico City's railroad station, or as long as crops are lost to the forces of nature, and small farmers and peasants lack credit and government support or are further impoverished by middlemen. The problem is not merely to achive selfsufficiency in food production. It's also a matter of restoring dignity to agricultural workers, the men and women who are currently living on the fringes of modern Mexico.★

Jorge Luis Sierra Guzmán

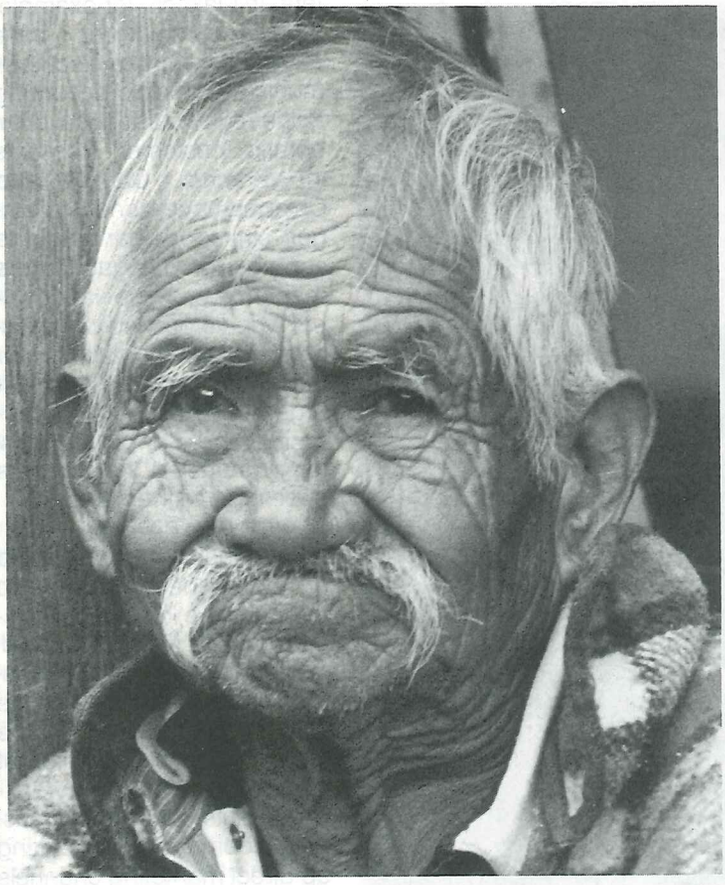


Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Lost illusions for the old folk

Governments Choreograph Dance of Indifference for Central American Migrants

Hundreds of thousands of Central Americans leave their countries to look for work and peace in the north: many remain in Mexico.

Mexico's southern border has its "wetbacks" too —although nobody calls them that— who illegally cross the Suchiate River from Guatemala into Chiapas.

Most of them arrive in Mexico with the intention of reaching the United States, fleeing armed conflicts, military repression and ever-increasing economic stress in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. An estimated two million people have been displaced by the Central American conflicts, and perhaps half a million of these are now living in Mexican territory.

Nonetheless, only 42,000 receive official aid from international organizations and the Mexican government: these are the Guatemalan Indian peasants who fled their country during the military governments headed by General Romeo Lucas (1978-1982) and General Efraín Ríos Montt (1982-1983). Most of these refugees arrived in Mexico between 1981 and 1983. Approximately half of them still live in Chiapas in crowded refugee camps, while the other half have been resettled in the states of Campeche and Quintana Roo, in self-sufficiency and integration projects. This latter group has received the migratory status of "temporary workers," while those still in Chiapas are in the country as "border visitors." In all cases, the children born in Mexican territory are entitled to Mexican citizenship.

Sergio Aguayo, professor and researcher at the Colegio de México's School of International Studies, says there are some 400,000 "forgotten Central Americans" in Mexico. Like the illegal immigrants in the U.S., they are subject to exploitation by employers and extortion by corrupt officials; they have no access to state health facilities and even have difficulties getting the kids enrolled at school, since they often lack the necessary documents. They also risk arrest and deportation; according to Dr. Aguayo, some 40,000 Central Americans were deported through the border crossings over the Suchiate River, near Tapachula, Chiapas, in the first ten months of 1986.

The great majority of illegal immigrants in Mexico are from El Salvador, and they do not generally remain in the southern border areas, but move north immediately to try and reach their main objectives: work, dollars and safety from the guns and bombs made in U.S.A.— which make life impossible at home. The interrelationship between the United States and Central America is easily detected by observers. U.S. intervention and military involvement in the area have caused millions of displaced persons to leave their homes. More than one million Salvadorans are now estimated to live in the U.S. For these people, Mexico is but a stepping stone to the "American Dream".

The Salvadorans who remain in Mexico assimilate into the local population and usually manage to survive with the help of relatives, friends and charitable or political organizations. Only 5,000 Salvadorans in Mexico City receive help from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR): supplementary food hand-outs and medical assitance.

The Salvadorans are recognized as "refugees," it is possible for them to seek asylum in a third country. Both the Canadian and Australian governments have representatives in Mexico who interview and approve a limited number of persons for their refugee resettlement programs. For example, since 1983, Australia has received 1,000 Salvadorans each year, some directly from El Salvador and others from Mexico.

Most of the Central American immigrants who remain in the southern border area of Chiapas are from Guatemala. They look for work in the coffee, cacao, cotton and banana harvests in the Soconusco area. As in the United States, these transitory "illegal" workers from the south are badly treated and overexploited. Tapachula, the biggest city in the Soconusco, reportedly has plenty of Central American women who despair of their economic situation at home and who travel north to earn money from prostitution.

Analysts of Mexico migratory-political problems say that Mexico is in the middle of the sandwich: from the south apparently never-ending floods of people who can no longer tolerate the political, social and economic deterioration in their countries; from the north, pressures from a super-power with an increasingly militarized border.

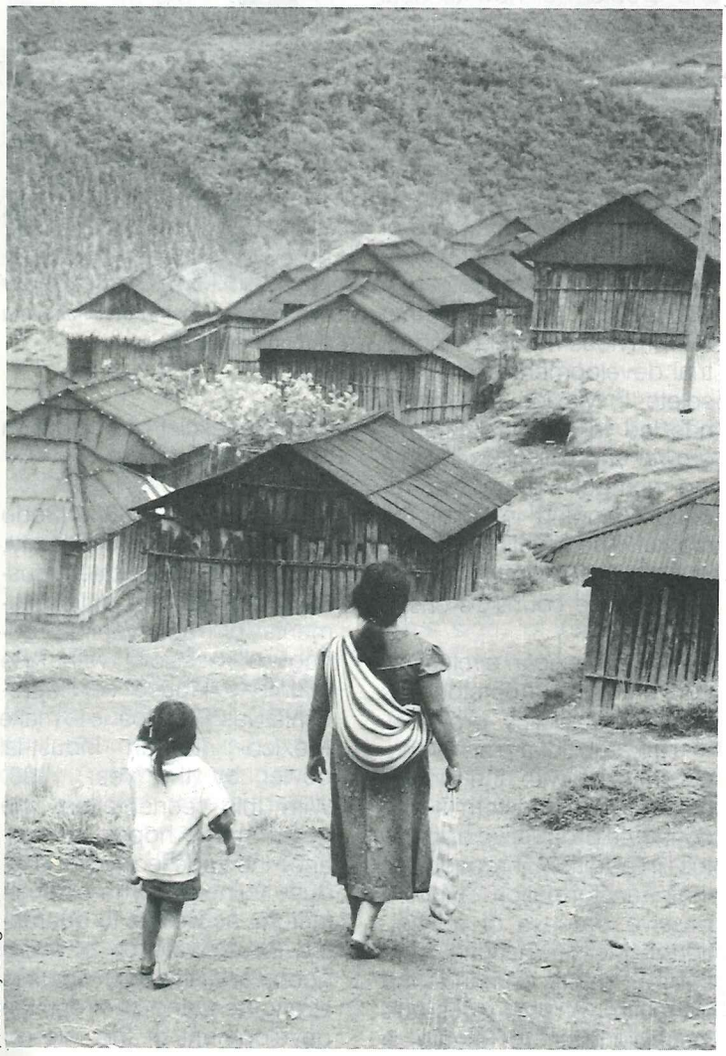


Photo by Sergio Dorantes

Refugee camp in Montebello, on the Mexico-Guatemala border

A Catholic priest in Guatemala recently told me that 150 to 200 people leave his parish each week to go north; a nun from the Good Shepherd Order, working in the border town of Mexicali from 1981-1983, said that during that time some 4,000 Central Americans would pass through town each month with the intention of crossing into the U.S. Sister Bertha told me she used to work in Mexicali's prisons and that two buses would leave each week with illegal immigrants on board, bound for the southern border at Tapachula.

María, a woman imprisoned along with her 4-year-old son in Mexico City in 1985 for not having her papers in order, told me the immigration Detention Center was full of Central Americans awaiting deportation. In this unending cycle of journeys deten-

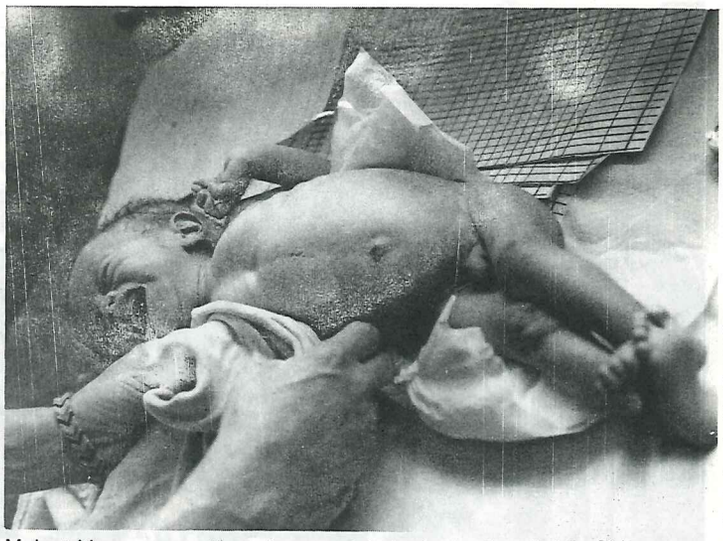


Photo by Jackie Buswell

Malnutrition ravages the refugees. A baby in the hospital in Chiapas

tions, deportations, escapes and new attempts, families disintegrate and people lose each other; but the tide continues. The search for the American Dream is seen by some as the only escape valve for Central America.

The "forgotten Central Americans" in Mexico and the United States are unusally termed "economic immigrants". Those who are forced to leave their homes because of war or internal violence, but who remain in their own country, are called "displaced persons." Those who flee to another country because of a well-founded fear of losing their lives if they remain, are termed "refugees" by the UNHCR. While Mexico has a tradition of receiving exiles from other countries —from Spain in the 1930s and Latin America in the 1970s— only the 42,000 Guatemalan peasants under the care of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) are actually considered refugees.

Economic immigrants have no rights; they are left to fend for themselves. Displaced persons seem to have no rights either; at least in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, they are totally dependent on their own efforts and local charity for their survival. A refugee, however, who has crossed a border for fear of political persecution, does have some rights; they may receive aid from the UNHCR to remain in the country of first asylum or be resettled in third countries, such as Sweden, Canada or Australia.

The situation in Central America is of such political violence and instability, that Mexico and other countries in the region —except the United States—have proposed another definition of the word refugee: "those persons who have fled from their countries because their life, liberty or security has been threat-

ened by generalized violence, foreign agression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have gravely affected public order'' (Cartagena Declaration, November 1984).

Dr. Aguayo criticizes both Mexico and the U.S. for their ''dance of indifference'' with respect to the human drama of Central American migration. However, he says that Mexico has the best policy in the region and a more humane approach to the problem. In a way, he says, Mexico has tried to ignore the problem, while at the same time seeking a regional solution. In fact, many of those deported from the U.S. as undocumented Mexicans are Central Americans. Officers don't bother to ask where the ''wetback'' is from, for the simple reason that it is

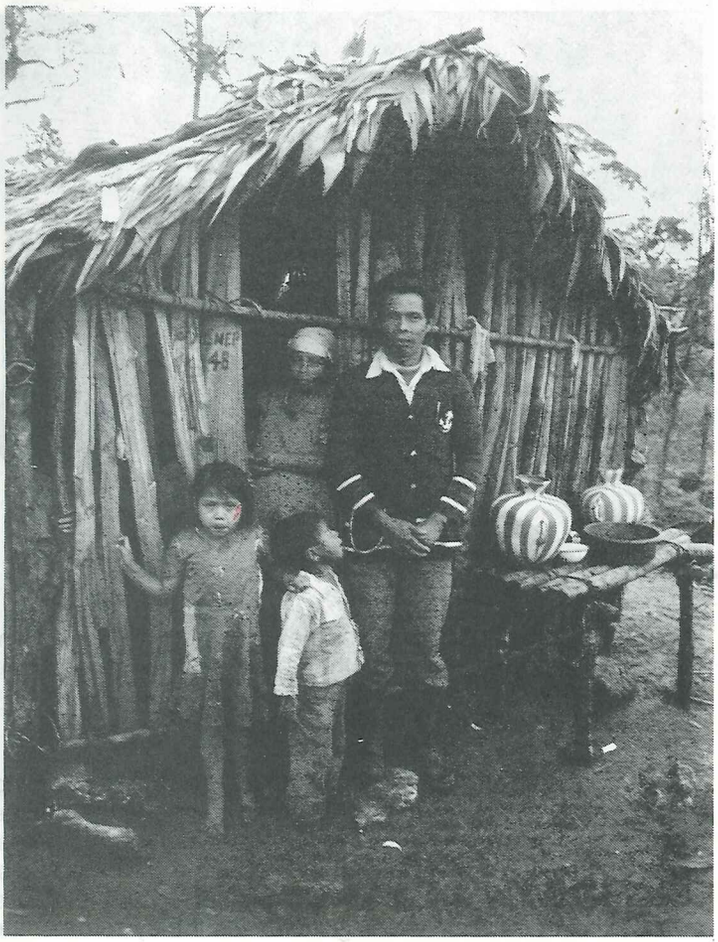


Photo by Sergio Dorantes

Hoping someday to return to their land and country

more costly to deport someone to Honduras or El Salvador than to Mexico. Dr. Aguayo says the United States does not recognize any Central Americans as refugees or asylum-seekers, yet accepts that two of its allies, Canada and Australia, interview Central American refugees in Mexico.

Mexico, in its current economic crisis, cannot afford to be too generous or too humanitarian with the floods of migrants, says Aguayo. Thus, one can explain the Mexican government's apparently ambivalent attitude: a certain leniency and tolerance towards the illegal immigrants in its territory, coupled with arrests and deportations.

Mexican Foreign Minister, Bernardo Sepúlveda, has repeatedly stated that Mexico needs peace in Central America, since an ''increase in the region's armed conflicts would bring very grave consequences for Mexico''. ★

Jackie Buswell

Shifting Gears in Mexican Industry

A bold plan to modernize Mexico's aging industrial plant has been proposed.

Numerous countries around the world have found themselves confronted with the need to transform their productive plants in order to survive and compete in the international marketplace. Since the 1960s, the rules of industrial production have been gradually changing to the point that today countries like Mexico are faced with the problem of how to deal with increasingly outdated installations and technology.

This situation has given rise to a new concept: industrial reconversion, also called modernization, readjustment or simply the restructuring of the industrial plant. When people speak of industrial reconversion, they imply that the previous model of industrial development is now obsolete. In Mexico, that model has led to irrational internal growth and difficulties in staying competitive on the rapidly changing international market. The situation is clearly compounded by the severity of the country's crisis.

In official Mexican circles, reconversion is understood as a strategic policy proposal. It is an ambitious plan intended to deal with the urgent need to transform the country's productive apparatus. In addition, it recognizes that transformation is not a passive process of reinsertion in the international market, but rather demands the correction of past vices and insufficiencies to create a new dynamic style of growth and beneficial participation in the marketplace.

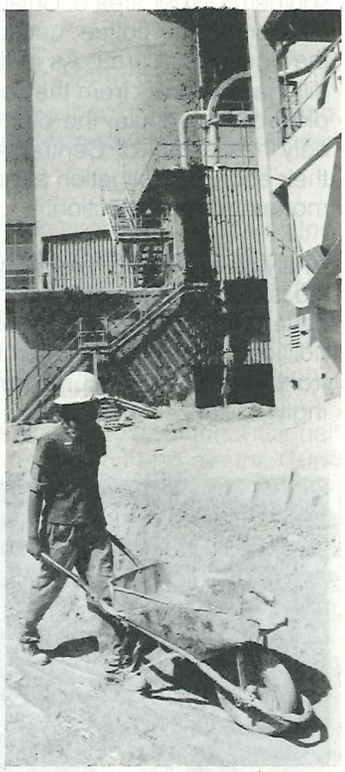


Photo by Rogelio Cuellar

Workers few losing their jobs through reconversion

In November 1986, Alfredo del Mazo, Minister of Energy, Mining and Para-State Industries, outlined the major elements of reconversion during a session with the country's House of Representatives. The goal is to make Mexico into an industrial power by the year 1990. With this reorientation, the government hopes to balance the trade ledgers and reduce vulnerability to external factors, as well as to guarantee the production of basic goods and strategic inputs to strengthen and redirect the development of the internal market.

THE NEED FOR RECONVERSION

Reconversion has been universally applied by the current government as a stage of structural industrial transformation in both the private and public sectors. This complex process involves three major strategic tasks: financial order, increased labor productivity and administrative modernization. Because of Mexico's current socio-economic reality, reconversion will nonetheless, imply a series of political and social costs.

Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar

Workers worry about losing their jobs or being transfered to far-off provincial sites

The most outstanding features of Mexico's overall development situation include the following: more than $100 billion in foreign debt, an unprecedented increase in underand unemployment, an increase in the federal deficit, three-digit annual inflation (more than 100% last year), a drop in investment and an important reduction in the availability of foreign exchange due to greatly lowered oil export earnings.

Other characteristics of the national productive plant must also be added to the panorama, since they both motivate and challenge the reconversion process. Among these is the fact that the current administration has sought to remove some 438 companies from the public sector. 269 are being liquidated, 101 haye been put up for sale (by October 1986, however, only 34 had been sold), 58 merged with other companies and 30 transferred to state governments.

An August 1986 survey carried out by the Private Sector Center for Economic Studies further adds to these clear signs of instability. Reduced demand, scarce credit, uncertainty about the economic future and extreme dependence on foreign sources for new technology are all factors, according to the survey, that make necessary the transformation of the country's productive plant.

As if all that were not enough to make the task a difficult one, the situation is further complicated by problems of unequal development in the productive plant. This means that new technologies can only be absorbed slowly and unevenly. It also will produce predictably traumatic effects on the country's capacity to generate new jobs. And finally, if the catalyst for this whole process is supposed to be new investment, it's not at all unreasonable to ask, just where is the investment supposed to come from.

The state, with its overwhelming foreign debt, an economic policy designed to control inflation and plans to make important cut-backs in its investment programs, can hardly be expected to provide the resources needed to make reconversion work. The private sector, on the other hand, also faces serious problems given the extremely high, prevailing interest rates. In addition, temptations are strong to go after the faster gains of financial speculation or to keep profits in foreign dollar accounts, instead of investing in national production. Given this situation, then, foreign investment is the only possible source for the large amounts of capital required by the reconversion program.

But there are also problems attached to that possible solution, and a whole series of factors make it unlikely that Mexico will soon be flooded with foreign capital. In the first place, the country's political traditions have jealously guarded against all kinds of foreign involvement in national affairs; a rather natural protectionism characterizes some sectors and legal procedures are complicated and confusing. In the second place, the internal market is highly depressed by the severity of the crisis and offers neither guarantee nor incentive for the investor.

In addition, while Mexico-U.S. relations are always quite complex, including geostrategic concerns, there are some very important things

El Fisgón

"We are wondering if we should get involved in GATT"

happening right now in that regard with potential implications for reconversion.

First, it is clear from President De la Madrid's recent trip to Japan and China that Mexico is turning to the Pacific Basin as an invaluable ally in its efforts to work its way out of the crisis. It could be an important new source of credit and investment to modernize the nation's product-

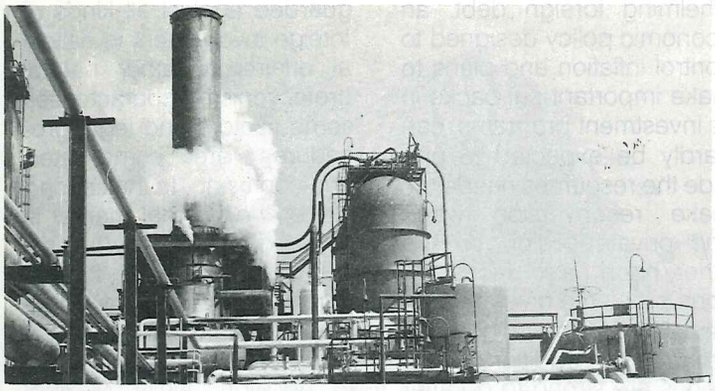


Photo by Archivo Novedades

Industry must leave the city

ive plant. And there could be important benefits from introducing Mexican products into the huge Chinese market. From Japan's perspective, the relationship could also be valuable to the extent that it allows them even greater access to the world's largest market, the United States. Mexico's cheap labor and its 3000 km. long border with the U.S. make it particularly attractive in this respect.

Second, while the U.S. market has unquestionably been a major factor in the Pacific Basin economic boom, the nation is not exactly in a period of expansion now. To the contrary. the U.S. is beset by trade problems, with an extremely high deficit that's led to new solutions more focused on the net transfer or resources from foreing sources than on internal corrections.

This scenario makes it unlikely that the U.S. will look kindly on the prospects of close cooperation between its neighbor to the South and the two giants of the East. Rather, it should be expected that geostrategic considerations will continue to color U.S.-Mexico bilateral relations and that they may actually heighten sensitivity to such issues as foreign investment. In fact, the U.S. has already begun to set limits around its "priority areas." For example, when Japan showed open interest in making important investments in Mexico in information technology, the U.S. responded by opening an IBM assembly plant in Guadalajara; when there were rumors in the Orient that there could be new investment from that part of the world in the Mexican automobile industry, Ford announced plans to open a modern, semirobotized plant near Hermosillo. Something similar happened with investments in secondary petro-chemical industries. While it would be simplistic to conclude a direct causal link between these events, the coincidences are nonetheless hard to ignore.

Unless it wants to be a mere spectator to a duel between giants, Mexico will have to make major efforts of its own to open the way to modernization. And so long as the internal and external factors that gave rise to the crisis are not eliminated, or at least brought under control, no matter how opportune or rational it may be in theory, industrial reconversion will simply be another term relegated to the list of good intentions. ★

Rodrigo Morales M. and Ernesto Rojas

Feminism in Mexico, an Underground Stream

Women from different classes have contributed to Mexico's feminist movement.

Mexican women share with their Latin American sisters a common history of poverty, political repression, economic crisis and the constant put-down of their attempts to develop and assert their cultural identities. This heritage has clearly had specific implications for Mexican women, whose oppression also comes from a combination of religious influences, cultural traditions, social values and stereotypes, and machismo.

Today Mexico has an egalitarian legislation which establishes legal equality between men and women, with some protective laws covering mothers and minors. Nonetheless, this is a mere formality which has had little effect upon the daily lives of most people. For example, formal education is beyond the reach for much of the general population, but even more so for women, whose illiteracy rate tends to be much higher than for men.

Statistics relating education and fertility are revealing. At the

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Feminism is well-received on campus

age of eleven, when few girls are menstruating, approximately 792 out of 1,000 females attend school; by the age of 12, some 700 attend; but at 13, when most girls have their period, only 502 out of 1,000 go to school. This trend continues throughout the years. By age 15 only 171 out of every 1,000 go to school, and 34 have already given birth to their first child. By age 19 only 32 young women are studying, while 234 are mothers of one or more children. It's obvious that in this society motherhood is still considered the most appropriate occupation for women. Additionally, the number of single mothers is very high. A recent study carried out in Mexico City revealed that 30% of the households were headed by women.

Many government programs have been aimed at childcare and related services, but this continues to be one of the biggest health care problems in the country. On the other hand, nearly 3 million women have illegal abortions every year, and some 90,000 die as a result of the terrible conditions under which most of them are performed.

Working women face discrimination in terms of access to certain jobs and training, as well as in their wages. To this must be added the burden of the double work-day, often 100 or 120 hours a week, with its repercussions on women's health, personal relations, overall productivity and possible political participation. Female employment is basically limited to domestic services, clerical work, nursing and work in the garment and electronics industries, in addition to the more traditional trades of prostitution and street *vending*. Yet, in terms of numbers, domestic service is still the most important female occupation in Mexico, one out of five gainfully employed women is a maid.

Statistics compiled during the 1980 show that only 27.75% (6,141,270) of the total female population over 12 years of age (22,128,930), is economically active. Women make up only 27.8% of the labor force. Between 1930 and 1970, total employment in Mexico grew by 252%; the male labor force grew by 214% while the female force increased by 1034%, that is to say, by four times. This means that basically the same proportion of men work now as in the thirties, but there are four times more women working than there were 50 years ago. The majority of women in the 50-60 age-bracket have never worked outside the home.

I could go on and on, but the point I want to arrive at is that, given these conditions and more, why has the feminist movement in Mexico remained so small, and why hasn't it been able to movilize around this situation? Why is it that after 17 years of activity the movement is still barely visible in the Mexican political arena?

A correct understanding of the dynamics of the Mexican feminist movement must take into account the nation's peculiar political development. In a country without strong and independent political organizations, with few non-government controlled unions and with a very limited democratic tradition, the appearance of an autonomous feminist organization has been a feat in itself. It has taken a long, hard struggle for this to happen, and a small core of women has been basically responsible for the achievement.

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Evangelina Corona, leader of the seamstress' union, speaks at a rally commemorating the 1985 earthquake

However, I think that the overwhelmingly middle class composition of the movement is one of its biggest problems. In Mexico, differences between the middle and the working classes are very marked; even the middle class itself draws important distinctions between lower, middle and higher middle class. And the daily life of middle class Mexican women is very different from that of their North American or European counterparts. One of the mobilizing forces of the feminist movement in the United States and in Europe was the awakening of women to their domestic oppression. Thousands of housewives began questioning their roles in the family, the isolation and the burden of housework, etc. The factor that motivated them was their confrontation with the daily housework.

Middle class Mexican women, even lower-middle class and sometimes working class women, don't experience this oppression in the same way that housewives elsewhere do. For one thing, they can avoid the problem of housework and evade the internal tensions this brings into family life, especially

Women and Work in Mexico

According to the IX and X Population and Housing census, the economically active female population went from 20.6% in 1970 to 27.8% in 1980. The percentage distribution of women in the work force was heaviest in the terciary sector (commerce, services and transportation), followed by concentration in manufacture, electricity and construction, and with female employment the lowest in the primary sector (1980 data, see Table).

The percentage of women employed in transformation industries went from 20.6% in 1970 to 26.3% in 1980, an average annual growth rate that was greater for women that for men. This would seem to sustain the idea that there is an ongoing substitution of male labor by female workers.

Nonetheless, feminine employment tends to concentrate in small and light industry, whereas large-scale industry still hires relatively few women. Thus, what we find is a type of employment whose main characteristics, among others, are unstable employment, technological backwardness and persistent financial woes.

On the other hand, export-oriented draw-back industry registered the highest levels of female employment. Work in the *maquiladoras* has helped many women escape unemployment, although not poor working conditions; wages paid in Mexico's draw-back factories are usually lower than those paid for equivalent work in other countries.

Jacinta Patricia González Rodríguez

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION BY SECTOR AND SEX, 1980

Totals	E.A.P	Men	Women
All of Mexico	22,066,084	15,924,806	6,141,278
Economic Activity			
Agriculture	5,699,971	4,957,340	742,631
Mining	477,017	322,464	154,553
Manufacture	2,575,124	1,897,522	677,602
Electricity, Gas and Water	115,932	91,883	24,049
Wholesale and Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels	1,729,296	1,137,568	591,728
Construction	1,296,337	1,082,634	213,703
Banking, Insurance, Real Estate, etc.	405,754	308,998	96,756
Social and Personal Community Services	2,418,114	1,159,249	1,258,865
Insufficiently Specified Activities	6,552,037	4,284,704	2,267,333
Idle Workers	124,391	85,534	36,857

Data from the X General Population and Housing Census, 1980, as published in the *Resumen General Abreviado* in 1984 by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e informática.

the confrontations between husbands and wives. These women have a kind of shock-absorber, a buffer, in the form of another woman who takes on the household load.

Mexican feminists are middle class, most of them are either university students or professionals. There are few secretaries or teachers, and you never find a factory worker or a maid in their ranks. Everyone has a maid, or at least a cleaning woman who comes some days a week.

Mexico, as foreign women say, is a paradise. You can have live-in help for as little as $40 a month. Good salaries run up to $100 a month in Mexico City; in the provinces wages are lower, and sometimes servants receive only room and board. In exchange for their meager wages, maids are expected to work 14-16 hours daily, with one free day a week, usually leaving their work done before going out. They accept miserable working conditions because they know that many others, even less fortunate than they are, will work for less. They are usually in a very weak position to bargain.

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

A mother in the Puebla mountains; peasant women are the hardest-off

So, generally speaking, Mexican middle class women avoid the housework. This helps them avoid the sort of conflict middle class women in the U.S. and Europe have to confront, like

who minds the children if both husband and wife have a meeting to go to. Middle class Mexican women don't need the growth and development of the feminist movement in order to have certain demands covered, like for example having someone who cares for their children, childcare centers, etc.

Not needing an organized struggle to improve one's own living conditions has resulted in a very theoretical movement. This is revealed by the fact that being a feminist in Mexico is basically an intelectual position, with little effect on our daily lives. This characteristic also probably determines our incapacity —as a movement— to connect up with women from other social sectors. This trend has changed somewhat following the earthquake in Sept. 1985, but generally speaking, even

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

In the front line of feminist struggles, seamstresses at a demonstration

though some feminists are undeniably committed (especially Socialist and Christian feminists), the movement as a whole is far removed from the needs of most Mexican women.

Yet despite these limitations, what Mexican feminists have done is to place women's issues on the political agenda. Over the past years we have been struggling on two different levels, the ideological and the more specific day to day organizing and work. Given the reasons we've been discussing, we may have done more work on ideological aspects. Yet not only have we had to confront conservative forces, but also progressive and leftist ones as well.

Often ridiculed and charecterized as sectarian, we've had to fight for the political recognition of our position, and in doing so, we have led other political forces to revise their concept of what is and what isn't political. In this way many organizations have started to discuss such would-be personal (i.e. trivial) questions as sexuality or housework. In turn, the discussion has highlighted the existence of power relations between the sexes, relations which permeate all social classes and cut across class lines.

What results has the struggle yielded? Answers vary according to the criteria we use. If we make a quantitative evaluation of our development, our gains appear to be meager: there are few feminist groups and some of them have fewer than a dozen members. But if we measure the movement's cultural, intellectual and political impact on society, the results are really wide reaching.★

Marta Lamas

Of All the King's Men... Who'll Be Next President?

Mexico's political parties are preparing for next year's presidential elections.

"Selecting the new president of Mexico is an historical occasion in a very peculiar sense: the future is history a long time before the voters actually go to the polls." This statement appeared in Newsweek Magazine last January, causing widespread concern in Mexican political and journalistic circles.

Political parties throughout the country have been growing in number and in votes and are already in a turmoil over the upcoming presidential succession. Both party activity and shifting positions within the parties seem to indicate a breakdown in normal Mexican political traditions. Old taboos and archaic practices in the presidential succession are being criticized. Thus, we might say that Newsweek's elegant —though somewhat hasty— statement is probably untrue.

None of the country's political forces, however small or eroded they may be, is resigned. The ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, began its preparations for the presidential succession with changes in key positions in its National Executive Committee. Neither Jorge de la Vega Dominguez nor Humberto Lugo Gil, the new party President and Secretary General, are notorious for their closeness to any of the figures considered possible candidates to succeed President Miguel de la Madrid. Apparently the PRI decided it was convenient to place qualified, experienced politicians on its Executive Committee in order to maintain party unity in the difficult months ahead, and they saw fit to do it before the struggle between the different presidential hopefuls is unleashed.

President De la Madrid himself demanded mutual respect and cooperation from his cabinet members, among whom his successor will most probably be chosen. His call came at a very pecul-

Photo by Rogelio Cuellar

Miguel González Avelar

Photo by Rogelio Cuellar

Alfredo del Mazo

iar time for the PRI. Far from being a monolithical party, it is made up of a wide range of currents. Some believe the presidential succession should be conducted by the president himself. Others insist it is a matter that concerns the political community as a whole and that it should be open to social participation before the elections.

The change in the presidency every six years (Mexico has no reelection) sets all of the political forces in motion. The succession is front-page news for almost two years before the actual elections are held. The process seems to create an illusion of progress and power in those who think it is the right time to "climb aboard" the future presidential team. Hopes are high for the solution of historically accumulated problems, often made worse by the outgoing government. All forces are on full alert throughout this period.

The most alert of them all is the main opposition party. January and February have been months of struggle and divisiveness for the conservative National Action Party, PAN. The controversy concerns both the election of a new party president and disagreements over political strategy and possible future government projects.

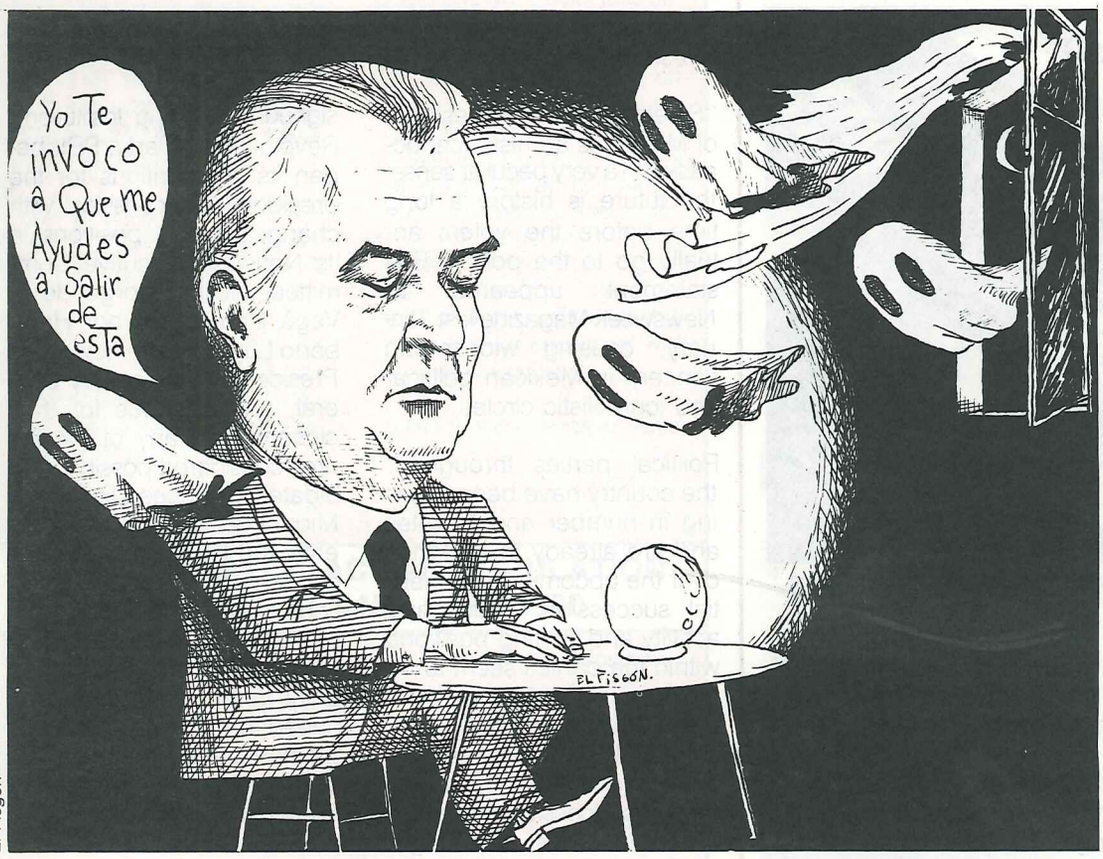
The "neo-Panista" current —so-called because of the recent resurgence of this decades-old party— is composed of and headed by businessmen and supported by ultra-rightist civic groups. It gained new strength internally and among voters during gubernatorial and municipal-level elections last year in some of the country's northern states, mainly Chihuahua, Sonora and Nuevo León. The renewed PAN confronted the PRI's candidates with unusual methods such as border-crossing shut-downs, the boycott of businesses belonging to goverment officials, the printing of opposition slogans on paper-money and a hunger strike by one of the PAN's main ideologues, Luis H. Alvarez, in protest over alleged electoral fraud.

The PAN's revival, nonetheless, has been undercut by the fragility of its own internal unity. Although the party has overcome the critical situation that kept it from fielding a presidential candidate in 1976, the ongoing conflict surrounding Luis H. Alvarez' candidacy for party president could either disrupt or polarize the growing internal discussion.

On the left the situation is different. Fed up with the sectarianism that for decades has kept the left from uniting and gaining ground, five political groups have decided to form "a single party (in an attempt to) change Mexico's political regime and to open broad avenues so that workers and the people in general may take part in national affairs, and in order that the country may recover from the 'historical breakdown' it has been led into." The Unified Socialist Party of Mexico, PSUM, the country's third electoral force, will fuse with the Mexican Workers' Party, PMT, the Patriotic Revolutionary Party, PPR, the People's Revolutionary Movement, MRP, and the Unity of the Communist Left, UIC, to form a new, unified party whose name has yet to be defined and whose platform is being discussed by the different parties' representatives.

The plurality of political parties and currents makes it increasingly difficult to continue with the practice of *tapadismo*, the popular name for the process of designating the presidential candidate without any social participation. The *tapado* is the PRI's official candidate, and his identity is kept a secret, giving rise to all sorts of rumors and speculation, outbursts and bitterness among those who believe they have the right to aspire to the presidency. The practice of *tapadismo*, as some politicians and analysts believe, cuts the presidential succession off from open public debate among the main contenders for the nomination of the country's most powerful political party. The practice almost amounts to a prohibition for party members to even discuss the succession before the higher-level officials unveil the party's formal position.

These faults and anachronisms have been brought to question in the ruling party, and politicians experienced in both the party and government formed the "corriente democratizadora", a movement to further democracy within the PRI itself by, among other things, propos-



El Fisgón

"I implore you to help me get out of this one"

Photo by Rogelio Cuellar

Manuel Bartlett Díaz

ing an end to *tapadismo* through the public registration of aspiring candidates, open discussion of the issue, and a separation from public office to avoid use of government funds in the pretenders' campaigns for nomination.

These stirrings of renewal also touched on the president of the PRI in the Federal District (Mexico City), Jesús Salazar Toledano, shortly before he was replaced by former governor of the state of Puebla, Guillermo Jiménez Morales. Mr. Salazar told a group of 20 newspapermen that, "talking about the presidential succession is not taboo, and there's no reason for its being taboo," and then went on to add: "I will not shirk giving names... in my opinion an eye should be kept on colleagues such as Manuel Bartlett (Secretary of the Interior), Carlos Salinas de Gortari (Secretary of Programming and the Budget), Alfredo del Mazo (Secretary of Energy, Mining and Para-State Industry), and Miguel González Avelar (Secretary of Education). Their merits, the paths they have followed and their current level of national exposure, make them all *compañeros* that both PRI-members and citizens in general should pay close atention to, analyze criticize and evaluate, so that when the right moment comes we can make the decisions that correspond to the institutional political process we are in the midst of."

No traditional PRI-member would have ever dared say such things. The PRI's newly elected National Executive Committee President immediately told the press that Salazar Toledano's opinions were "personal." Nonetheless, Salazar's daring gesture was not merely a run-of-the-mill *destape* (unveiling), but rather a sign of the need to free the nation from some of its archaic customs.

Arturo Romo, Political Education Secretary to the Confederation of Mexican Workers, CTM, the country's most powerful and influential labor central, stated last January that what Mexico needs is, "an authentic leader rather than a chief executive," and that "the president's decision" is not enough to designate this person. He added that, "Political consensus should decide who the new leader shall be, (a person) morally capable of facing the country's social and economic problems."

José Carreño Carlón, a subdirector of the daily *La Jornada* wrote in the weekly journal *Punto*: "It's hard to deny the revolutionary regime (in power) since 1917 its vanguard role in modernizing the country. But it is also obvious that the rigidity imposed by the culture of *tapadismo* has ended up by mutilating political rights, those of PRI-members in the first place, forced into silence or insiders' gossiping about the (presidential) succession."

It would seem that the political system's continuity and the means of choosing the next Mexican president necessarily imply the end of *tapadismo.* This is why the outlook for the presidential succession is a far cry from being a decision that is already history before the voters actually go to the polls. We have yet to see not only the results of the 1988 elections, but more to the point, the vast social mobilization expressed through the political parties, their discussions, ideas and work programs.★

Photo by Rogelio Cuellar

Carlos Salinas de Gortari

Jorge Luis Sierra Guzmán.

Stabilization Policy Rocks the Boat

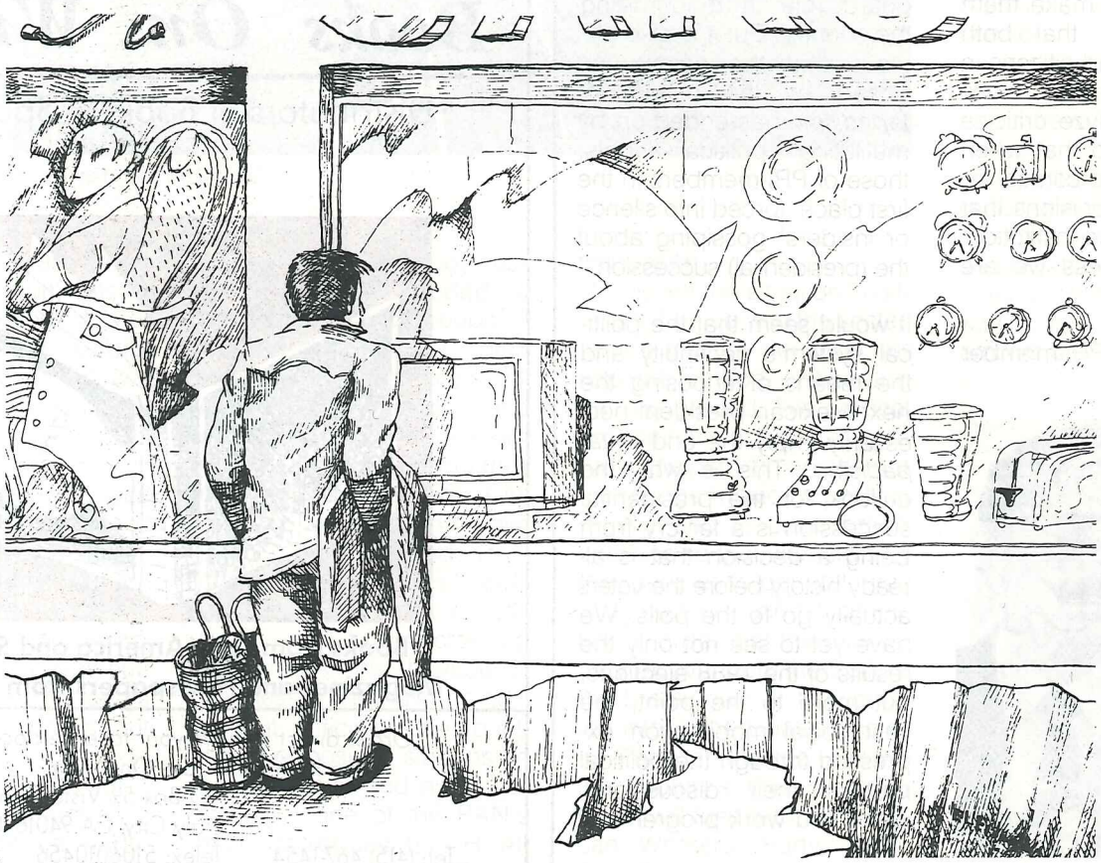
Economist demands a new approach to solve the crisis.

Mexico's economic policies have accelerated the country's integration into the international community. At home, however, stabilization policies have led to inflation and greater social inequality. Economist David Barkin argues that the country's present economic strategies are unsustainable and proposes new alternatives. A professor of the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Xochimilco campus, Barkin is also research director of the Ecology Development Center, an independent institution in Mexico City. His views:

Mexico is opening its economy to the world and the government is reducing its participation in the management of affairs and production of goods. However orthodox these goals might appear in international financial circles, the steps being taken to implement them are exacerbating the profound structural imbalances which are the root causes of the present crisis. If the strategy is not modified, the country will become increasingly less well prepared to meet its international obligations and to face the internal demands of its population in the coming years.

THE IMPACT OF STABILIZATION

Stabilization programs are an important part of this approach. They propose to control inflation by restraining wage demands, reducing government spending, and raising prices for public sector goods and services.



El Fisgón

The breach between prices and consumers is getting steadily larger

Policy makers also intervene to guide the peso's decline against the dollar and the interest rate. These measures are expected to strengthen investor confidence in the government's capacity to manage the economy and provide greater scope for private investment activity.

The lower and middle income groups are the main victims. Wage policies have substantially reduced labor's purchasing power in Mexico. Even the dramatic fall in the real value of the minimum wage (Figure 1) understates the real deterioration in wage earners' incomes: by focusing only on the periods when wages increased, the table shows the high points of this pattern and, more significantly, most organized workers received even smaller proportionate increases than these minima. Real wages fell dramatically (40%) during the 1982-1987 period to a level approaching that of 1965!

Similar or even greater declines occured in the real earning power of the majority of peasants. Mexico's growing food deficit is a reflection of discriminatory policies making it unprofitable for millions of smallholders to farm their own lands: billions of dollars have been spent on imports in spite of the availability of vast areas of idle land already opened to cultivation and severe un- and underemployment among growers. When maize prices were raised in 1981, production increased 19%, providing vivid testimony of their willingness to work when there are adequate incentives; in spite of its unprofitability, many still sow maize for their own use because they do not have the cash to purchase grains.

Finally, the stabilization policies have led to an important increase in unemployment. One respected study (Boltvinik and Torres 1986) calculated that open unemployment increased from 5.3% in 1981 to 14% in 1985, on the basis of Labor Department data. At the same time, other indicators of underemployment like the massive abandonment of cultivation of peasant lands, declines in construction activity, and increases in the number of formerly employed people who are now no longer looking for work (discouraged workers) —suggest that the hardship imposed by a decline in earnings is compounded by fewer members in each family having a productive source of income.

FIGURE 1:

FEDERAL DISTRICT (MEXICO CITY)

Index of the Variation in Real Wages

1960	0.43	
1961	0.42	
1962	0.51	
1963	0.51	
1964	0.63	
1965	0.61	
1966	0.69	
1967	0.66	
1968	0.73	
1969	0.72	
1970	0.77	
1971	0.74	
1972	0.83	
1973	0.79	
1973	0.97	IX
1974	0.90	
1974	0.97	X
1975	0.91	
1976	0.99	
1977	1.08	
1978	1.02	
1979	1.01	
1980	1.00	
1981	1.00	
1982	1.02	
1982	0.79	IX
1983	0.85	
1983	0.71	VI
1984	0.71	
1984	0.68	VI
1985	0.71	
1985	0.68	VI
1986	0.67	
1986	0.64	XI
1986	0.57	X
1987	0.61	

Note: Wages are those in effect on Jan. 1 and price indices are for the end of the preceding year (both for Mexico City); 1980 = 100.
Sources: Comisión Nacional de Salarios Mínimos
Banco de México, *Carpeta de Indicadores Económicos*. 1986.

Photo by Sergio Dorantes

Workers' real wages have fallen, and so has industry's competitive edge

There are several indirect indicators of the unequal impact of these policies on the nation's welfare. At the lowest end of the income spectrum are the substantial declines in per capita consumption of milk and other dairy products, meat, eggs, and even beans, as real incomes declined. As regards the middle strata, the production of many consumer durables declined precipitously while automobile production for the rich rose (Table 1); but the rich could not sustain this demand and auto sales also declined sharply in 1986. Capital flight increased dramatically from an average of about US$1.5 billion during the 1973-1979 period to more than US$10.2 billion a year in the 1980-1984 period (Ros 1986). Aggregate data show that from 1981 to 1985 workers were stripped of one-quarter of their share of national product (which fell from 35.4 to 28.3%) by government (30%) and capital (70%); in 1985 capital captured 46.5% of the total! (Boltvinik and Torres 1986). In conclusion, then, the prosperity of a small group of industrialists, commercial farmers, and rentiers has come at the expense of the poor and middle income groups.

THE ORIGINS OF THE CRISIS

The seeds of the present crisis were sown during the heady years of rapid industrialization of the early post-war period. The growth strategy of the period was based on several fundamental (but erroneous) assumptions about the nature of the development process. First, the import substituting industrialization scheme presupposed the desirability of the market driven demand structure reflected in the income distribution and the derived consumption and production patterns for industrial products at the time. Second, it assumed that once given control of some land, the peasants would somehow transform themselves into passive producers of the nation's food supply and would not be profoundly transformed by the market economy into rational decision makers. Third, investors' demands for protection and subsidies which would guarantee them high rates of profitability for their new ventures were met; the public sector produced those basic goods and services which required large or risky investments. Finally, international capital and transnational firms were accepted as essential ingredients in the development process.

THE NATURE OF STABILIZATION POLICIES

Until recently Mexico attempted to accommodate itself to the demands of the International Monetary Fund and the world banking community. In the 1983-1984 period Mexico was hailed by these groups as the example of a responsible and well-behaved participant in the international community. It refused to be part of the regional efforts to create a debtors club and it rushed to Argentina's rescue to ease pressure on both that nation and many private American banks during particularly difficult negotiations. It was well rewarded for these efforts on several occasions with attractive packages for restructuring its own international debt to a longer payment profile with lower interest payments; the banks also accepted foregoing their normal commissions, which amounted to a savings of several hundreds of millions of dollars. With the precipitous decline in petroleum prices, a new form of accommodation for the outstanding debt is still being defined.

The liberalization program and austerity measures which produced the elitist redistribution of income and economic activity prompted this favorable international response. By slashing the public sector deficit (from 17.6% of national product in 1982 to 8.9% in 1983 and 5.7% in 1984), reducing real wages substantially, and curtailing bank credit, inflation was drastically reduced from almost 100% in 1982, to 81% in 1983, and 59% in 1984; when the deficit rose to 9.5% in 1985 inflation only climbed to 64%, but it took off again in

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

A magician on a city street; unemployment leads to all sorts of occupations

1986 to exceed 100% when government spending could not be cut further as oil revenues shriveled. While the internal market eroded and the peso repeatedly devalued, the balance of trade was also transformed from a deficit of almost US$6 billion in 1982 to a surplus of $5.3, $4.0, and $0.5 billion in the following three years. Economic growth, which had been —0.5% in 1982 and —5.3% in 1983 rose to 3.7% in 1984 and 2.7% in 1985, occasioning fears that the country's public managers had in fact once again lost control of the situation, this time by permitting things to become too exuberant! These were quickly dissipated by the events in 1986 which once again occasioned negative growth.

Policy makers have long been convinced that the solution to the country's problems lay in the hands of the international market. They believe that the country needs more credit and easier terms, foreign investment, and better access to international markets. The obvious prescription for resolving these problems was the neo-liberal approach to policy formulation which would open the national economy further: accession to the GATT; better terms for the debt; new international credits and foreign investment; diversification of oil exports and a reduction of prices below prevailing levels posted officially by OPEC.

Little attention was directed towards production for internal markets. Bank credit was severely restricted, more so in the rural areas where only the most affluent of the commercial farmers were able to obtain needed financial resources. Credit restrictions and the contraction of the domestic market caused a sharp fall in manufacturing output during 1982-1983 and a slight recuperation in 1984-1985, led by special incentives which singled out automobile production as a unique beneficiary. Mass consumption production for workers and smallholders stagnated while export oriented agriculture and industry thrived.

Perhaps the most important impact of the stabilization policies, in the final analysis, was their inability to instill a measure of confidence in the regime's capacity to manage the economy. Its outward orientation and the very favorable international press about the Mexican stabilization program did not carry forward into the domestic arena. Pressures from workers and peasants were to be expected, but throughout the whole period the government was unsuccessful in evoking a positive response from Mexican entrepreneurs.

The lack of cooperation from the wealthier groups was quite significant. It extended far beyond the simple explanations of a poor investment environment mentioned in short-term evaluations of economic policy. By the 1980s, the upper crust of Mexican society was making a massive assault on Mexico, demonstrating with transfers of wealth its lack of confidence in the government's capacity to effectively manage the crisis; from 1983 to 1985 the *whole* of net private savings was being invested abroad, and it is probable that there was a real drawing down of previously accumulated domestic assets for expatriation (Ross 1986). The *Wall Street Journal* reported an international banker's estimate "that Mexican businesses squirreled away as much as $5 billion during the first six-months of (1984) alone by this method" (October 11, 1985). If this capital flight had been available for domestic investment during the period in question, it would have been possible to more than double the historically recorded rates of capital formation while also reducing net foreign indebtedness; instead capital formation fell while the country's foreign debt rose!

THE DESIGN OF THE NEW ECONOMY

The liberalization policies of the past several years have accelerated Mexico's integration into the international economy. The country has moved beyond the narrow confines of past development strategies which promoted import substituting industrialization and job creation via the *maquila* (draw-back) program: dynamic industries are reshaping production, with more automation and fewer workers in production. New consumption patterns include more animal proteins and processed foods, but these are out of the reach of the majority.

The Mexican government hoped to resolve some of its profound social and economic problems with oil. It set out to use the newly potential. But in the process, we can see with the benefit of hindsight, it over-invested in infrastructure for this industry and selected a poor mix of complementary industries on which to construct a basis for future growth. Of course, it also misjudged the impact of international competition on prices. The heritage of debt, inflation, and greater social inequality resulting from misguided petroleum industry plans weighs heavily on the country. Official attempts to adjust to the strains of past growth have further heightened the contradictions. As a strategy for overcoming the crisis, the goverment chose to emphasize the international, and to respond to the consumption demands of the rich. Most Mexicans have less real income and there are fewer jobs and opportunities than five years ago. The economy is less capable of producing the basic goods and services required even at its presently depressed levels. Stabilization has not even achieved its short-term objetives, while it has moved the society further away from dealing with the fundamental necessity of attending to the country's basic social needs. The polarization of Mexican society, reflected in the various indicators reviewed in this essay, only portends a further heightening of social struggle, which up to now has been held in check by the creative mobilization of the entire panoply of policy tools available to the government. In this sense, stabilization is destabilizing.

The present strategy of development is unsustainable. It creates disequilibria which must be corrected. The country is not capable of simply opening itself to a world economy in which Mexican workers must compete directly with the lowest paid workers in the Third World and the subsidized industries of the rich countries. Austerity programs and debt crises are ubiquitous; the Mexican workers have a long history of real gains in their living standards, obtained after long struggles; regardless of the success of the attempts to roll back some of these achievements, it seems difficult to believe that other governments in the Third World cannot be more successful in extracting greater productivity at a lower cost than is possible in the Mexican setting. The tradition of active reaction to repression since the Mexican Revolution and years of highly organized labor activity is much more developed in Mexico than elsewhere.

Photo by Sergio Dorantes

Current economic policy has led to a steady increase in food prices

A new orientation towards a viable economic development strategy must be based on mobilizing the country's own resources and its labor force. The only meaningful way to conceive stabilization in the present world scene is to design a development program that offers the possibility of further development. Given Mexico's relative affluence, its abundant natural resources, and its diversified economy, it is not necessary to limit current activities in order to promote new ones. What the present regime is doing by accelerating the move towards Mexico's integration into the world economy is eroding the possibility of using the country's inherited productive potential for resolving the most immediate productive and employment needs. New programs for 'modern' economic development will not create sufficient employment or generate sufficient demand to affect the depressed consumer sector.

An alternative approach based on revitalizing Mexico's smallholder economy could create about 3 million direct jobs with sufficient levels of income to permit these producers to become consumers.The induced demand in light industry, construction, and services would create additional jobs in industry and services while further strengthening a different development strategy based on the massive mobilization of the country's working population. The resources needed for such an approach are presently available. They could come from a redistribution of existing subsidies, and from the use of resources now used to import the goods which would no longer be needed because of greater domestic production. Such an approach would also give the peasants much greater visibility and importance in the Mexican political scene. It would require bold new leadership and broad participation. Perhaps this is why the approach is not yet on the agenda, but given the present unraveling of the Mexican economy it is essential to continue to air alternative strategies for their public consideration and evaluation.

David Barkin

War on the Welfare State

Military spending has a high cost for the poor.

Right-wing governments have gradually lessened social protection for the poorer classes while they have increased spending on weapons that threaten the very existence of the planet. Given that such a shift affects not only industrialized societies but also the developing nations who are their dependents, certain Mexican intellectuals are concerned about the repercussions of this trend. Well-known writer and political analyst Sol Arguedas, political science professor at Mexico's National Autonomous University, examines the decline of the Welfare State and the upsurge of savage capitalism. Her views are extensive, and here we present some of them:

These would not seem to be the best of times to be writing about the welfare state. I realize I may appear to be either naive or indulging in wishful thinking when I predict a comeback of reformist capitalism just as the whole edifice built on Keynesian economics and liberal humanism is being torn asunder by economic neo-liberalism and the philosophy of social Darwinism.

Skepticism regarding the welfare state's survival would seem well grounded when the self-assurance and efficiency with which Reganomics advances everywhere —be it against partners or subordinates— is compared to the hesitancy and ambiguities of Social Democratic governments and even of the political parties that make up the Socialist International. These traits seem to show up in socialists when they come face to face in the arena of international realities with the champions of a contemporary neo-fascism based on the symbiosis between corporations and government and on the predominance of speculative financial capitalism.

No doubt an experienced actor's effective use of the most popular means of mass communication today can be considered and important reason for why North Americans vote for Ronald Reagan (his irresistible smile). Yet this is not the case with the British when they vote for the graceless Mrs. Thatcher, nor is it true of the French and their un-charismatic Jacques Chirac, not to mention the support of the PRI's masses for the hapless Miguel de la Madrid.

The disconcerting phenomenon of great masses of people freely casting their votes for economic and political projects that favour large-scale capital, and are therefore contrary to popular interests, is an outstanding sign of our times. If it's wrong to try to explain this phenomenon on the basis of the success of the more or less seductive characters who personify these reactionary projects, it is equally wrong to atribute it exclusivley to the absence of political criteria in the voting masses and their inability to discern the true sequence of cause and effect of the social and economic ills that burden them.

It is therefore necessary to look for more valid reasons. No doubt these are to be found in the decline and eventual deteriotation of the form of social organization that flourished under the general term of Welfare State (*Estado de bienestar, Wohlfahrt Staat, Etat Providence*) during the largest and longest period of expansion capitalism has ever known: the period covering the post-war 50s up until the onset of the crisis in the early 70s. The incapacity of the controller of welfare state which took on patriarcal or populist features among us in the Third World— to find ways out of capitalism's great global crisis, appears to be a better explanation than Ronald Reagan's smile —or the charisma of any other leader, for that matter— when trying to understand the voters' preference in elections in democratic capitalist countries.

A state that was (is) increasingly forced to meet greater obligations in services (because of population increases or the growing apetite of those already benefiting) should have had (or should have) access to *all* of the national economy's income. This was not (is not) the case. This is not the time and place to explain how monopoly capitalism has managed to *socialize* its periodical deficits, not to mention the *so-*

cialization of expenditures in overall economic infrastructure. Rather, we mean to reach the core of the problem, and we believe this to be the capitalist contradiction that arises between increasingly socialized production and the growing private appropriation of its benefits, all of which comes about through the private ownership of the means of production. Precisely because of this private appropriation, the controller state —whatever its good intentions— is doomed to fiscal bankrupcy.

We would like to point out in passing how the above process implicitly describes what could be considered social democracy's basic contradiction (and generally valid for the social democrat proposition): socialism cannot be achieved unless at some point the logic of capitalism and its structures are *broken*. Obviously, social democrats have no intention of doing this, at least not in the short or medium terms. Thus, democratic socialism which is their mainstay is certainly democratic (in a capitalist sense), but it is not socialism. What they try to achieve —and have in fact done so— is a society with a high degree of security, a degree which is probably the highest that capitalist structures will allow. Yet this whole edifice tends to come tumbling down when its real source of financing —a booming economy— dries up, and the welfare state's fiscal crisis sets in.

The fiscal crisis eventually evolves into total bankrupcy. The following step in the catastrophe is the enthronement of the conservative reaction, *on the basis of popular consensus*. This has been the case recently in various countries.

Yet "savage" capitalism's present dubious triumphs (because they lead to greater imbalances) are precisely one of the basis for the hypothesis of the necessary comeback of capitalist reformism. In other words, the return of a new welfare state whose present day major vices have been corrected and which will be adequate to meet new historical circumstances in an undetermined future. Neither progressive economic paralysis in the poorer countries nor massive unemployment in wealthy countries, resulting from neo-liberal policies, can last indefinitely or for very long periods of time. The world economy can't stand it.

But the comeback of capitalist reformism cannot happen overnight. The world-wide crisis of capitalism in general, as well as the foreign debt crisis in particular, complicate the development of these trends in Latin America. On the other hand, the revolution in science and technology and the unstoppable transnationalization of capitalism are determinant factors of the complexity with which these trends will develop in the advanced capitalist countries.

A study of the changes taking place in the development of Latin American societies stated that, "Just as the experiences of Portugal, Greece and Spain show, fascism (in a certain sense) is a premise for the rapid growth of social democracy during the period in which fascism is being sent to its grave by the blows of democratic forces. It is not out of the question for this variable to occur in Latin America." This was published in 1981. Since then, the prediction has been confirmed in the South American nations that have shaken off military rule. In these countries, a political phenomenon of increasing "Europeanization" of traditional Latin American populist currents is taking place in the sense that they are moving toward classical social democratic ideas. Of course, the economic maturation of capitalism in the region, even if it is dependent, is no stranger to this phenomenon.

On the other hand, besides the fact that to a good extent it meets the philosophical expectation of bourgeois humanism, the Welfare State is the most highly developed product of capitalism as a social, political and economic system. In other words, the Welfare State *justifies* capitalism, which is another way of saying that it *legitimizes* in the eyes of the majority, and in those of certain intellectual minorities as well. The political democracy that accompanies the Welfare State in today's advanced capitalist society is what usually inspires these minorities to defend "democracy" in the abstract vis a vis gross right-wing dictatorships as well as controversial leftist dictatorships.

It is important to bring to mind how the New Deal in the United States and social democracy in Europe sprung up and flourished on the basis of economic policies that appeared as saviours in the midst of the great shipwreck of liberal capitalism in 1929 and the following years (with a fascist interregnum in Europe.) According to Arthur Schlesinger, "When the bubble bursts, and it will, the public will turn to the affirmative government of Franklin D. Roosevelt, not to Ronald Reagan's free market." In other words: it will be necessary to put more money in the workers' pockets (which is to say, apply an economic policy that emphasizes *demand*) and no longer, as has been the case up until now with the "right-wing" revolution, continue to pour money into the pockets of capitalists (the economic policy that stimulates *supply*.)

This is where the cyclical nature of capitalism's problems comes into view. Capitalists basically resorted to supply-side economic policies (the conservative revolution's neo-liberal economic foundation) in order to stop spiralling inflation caused by the growth of demand (the Keynesian Welfare State's economic basis.) Now that inflation levels have been reduced, developed capitalist societies face massive unemployment and falling living standards for the majority of the population, brought about by supply-side economic policies. Solving these problems will eventually require increasing the real purchasing power

of wages, which is to say, "expanding" demand. That is the point when the Welfare State's edifice will rise again, both structurally and superstructurally.

The New York Times columnist Leonard Silk wrote that, "Some economists have realized that the greatest threat comes from the fact that many political and economic leaders in the main industrial countries have forgotten the lesson learned during the Great Depression —namely, John Maynard Keynes' doctrine— to the effect that in order to cure economic depression and massive unemployment, the government should act to increase the demand of both goods and labor."

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

"For that future which we desire, save in Bancomer (Commercial Bank)"

Nonetheless, the matter of *what* economic policy is or should be applied is no simple one. In an apparent paradox, the Reagan Administration not all too surprisingly has abandoned rigid neo-liberal economics. "The only country that can be said to be applying the remedies for tax cut-backs, spending increases and huge budget deficits is the United States under the presidency of Ronald Reagan," adds Leonard Silk in the same article we have been quoting.

But we in turn must ask, toward what end are these measures applied? Unlike the case of the social or Welfare State, the Reagan administration has substituted a lot of social expenditures (on health, housing, education, recreation) for an exorbitant increase in military and arms spending, thus shaping a totally different way of using surpluses. This is not to say the Welfare State doesn't use surpluses for armaments, but rather that it is a matter of the emphasis or intensity with which this political-economic phenomenon occurs.

All of this brings to mind capitalism's inexorable need to destroy wealth in order to perpetuate its own structural economic inequality and class diferentiation (for otherwise it would find itself moving toward socialism.) Capitalism needs for all workers *to continue to be workers* and for all "salaried" countries *to continue to be on the payroll*.

At this point we could boldly conclude that in Ronald Reagan's United States, social expenditures are not cut back in order to increase military spending but rather, on the contrary, military spending is increased in order to hinder social expenditures. (According to this hypothesis the specter of the USRR would merely be and effective ideological means of justifying the huge growth of armamentism in the eyes of the North American people. In the same vein, it would also serve to legitimize the U.S. government's interventionist conduct in the Third World.) This can be said without at all diminishing the ferociously militaristic spirit that inflames Reagan-style capitalism.

On the other hand, the determination to cut back social expenditure as much as possible —in other words reducing social protection of

the weak— is a conduct congruent with the philosophy that justifies the victory of the strongest, the fittest, the best adapted to a society that means, once more, to govern itself by savage capitalism's laws of the jungle. Today the conservative socio-economic revolution, destroyer of the Welfare State, is spreading far and wide, and it is perfectly coherent with its own philosophical and ideological fundaments.

Of course, the United States' profoundly egotistical conduct toward the tribulations of Third World countries today —tribulations no doubt due to the imperialist relationship that joins both parts together— finds it rock-bottom and timeless justification in 'the spirit of capitalism and the protestant ethic.'' But it can only really be explained in contemporary terms by the United States' pressing need, expressed in Reaganomania, to reestablish its economic and military hegemony over the rest of the world *at whatever cost*. Basically as of the early 60s, this hegemony was damaged by a complex series of economic and political phenomena affecting the imperial power. Reaganomania has certainly managed to reestablish the country's economic might, though it has done so on such weak and unstable foundations that many economist believe it to be an artificial recovery. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, would have to say the final word in regard to military supremacy.

It has already been said that the activity of reformist capitalism (social democracy) seems to have a cyclical nature and to be determined by the ups and downs of capitalism's periodic crises and transformations. We could say its effects are felt by both sides: it has a conjuncturally beneficial effect on the labor and grassroots movements that are periodically crushed and put down, which is precisely why they are defended and strengthened by social democracy (i.e. capitalist reformism); it also has a permanent beneficial effect for the ruling classes because it favours the system's perpetuation by correcting capitalism's course and returning it to the great evolutionary mainstram of history.

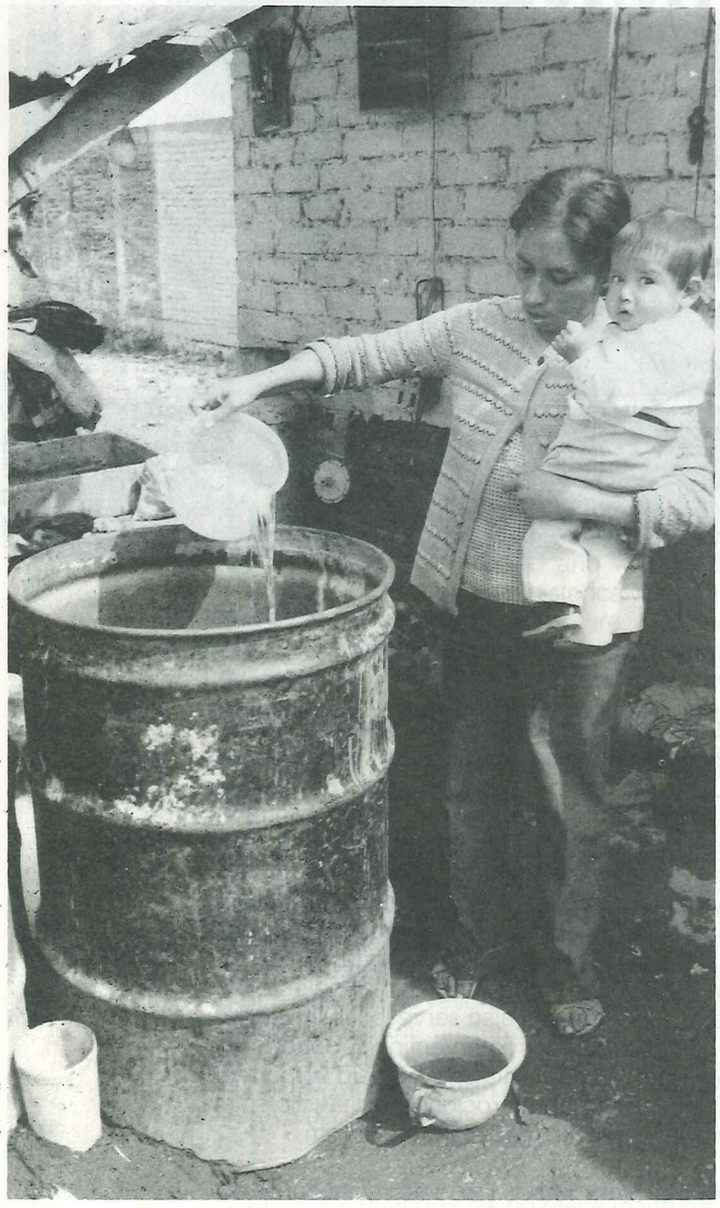


Photo by Sergio Dorantes

Getting water from a barrel; who would take care of public services if not for the welfare state?

Photo by Sergio Dorantes

In times of crisis the work load increases and social benefits diminish

But before we continue we must take a stance on a very basic concept. We're referring to an old hypothesis which no longer requires formal justification because so much spontaneous evidence has accumulated in its favor. Few would disagree with the statement that the negation of the Welfare State —its deterioration, the ideological struggle against it, the imposition of antipodal economic policies in capitalist countries— is at the very core of capitalism's overall present crisis. There is room for doubt regarding whether the deterioration of the Welfare State is an effect or rather is a cause of the greater crisis. At any rate, taking notice of the conflict beetwen the Welfare State or reformed capitalism, and "savage" (or unleashed) capitalism, constitutes an effective guideline through the maze of capitalism's global crisis.

The search for the machanisms to procure so-called social welfare within the capitalist structures, the putting into practice and eventual rejection of the different mechanisms applied, is perhaps one of the most revealing characteristics of contemporary political societies. This is most visibly so in industrialized countries, and it appears in a more confusing form in backward capitalist societies such as those of Latin American. In other words: whoever sets out to analyze capitalism's global crisis should start out by examining the objective and subjective circumstances of the welfare state in the current situation. It should be kept in mind that this type of state expresses the changes that modern society has undergone before reaching its present-day condition.

The knowledge of the difficult objective circumstances in which the welfare state must operate at present, sheds light on the great economic changes that capitalism is undergoing, and on the ensuing social consequences. The subjective circumstances —or rather, the knowledge of them— will help understand the conservative ideological revolution —the "swing to the right"— taking place in the so-called Western world. And, we repeat the concatenation between these phenomena should yield the basis for stating that the appearance, peak development and downfall of the welfare state is a global phenomenon that appears cyclically and whose presense will alternate with various models of economic liberalisms accompanied by social Darwinism.

These will at least be the prevailing trends. The assumption that both models would influence and condition one another as they take turns in history, is also and assumption that must be made. It would seem obvious that neither can the welfare state completely put an end to neo-liberal capitalism's savagery, nor will this type of state, itself, be completely dismantled by the right. It must be agreed that reformism has achieved irreversible gains, and this explains why it is difficult for Reagan, despite his best efforts, to completely dismantle the welfare state in the U.S.

Moving on to a somewhat different train of thought, it may be stated that the financial resources for today's great technological transformations and the resulting industrial reconversion or redeployment in advanced capitalist countries —particularly in the United States— has required and continues to demand a financial "revolution" capable of generating an increasingly greater concentration of capital. This, in turn, is facilitated by a new model or pattern of accumulation, and all of it is possible only if the welfare state is broken down. This type of state's social and political organization, its economic foundation and its moral philosophy (ethics), prevent the excesses of unbounded exploitation of labor —unbounded in conventional terms, not in terms of the surplus value which today is ever so necessary for the further development of capitalism.

Thus it can be understood how enacting liberal economic policies requires either previously or simultaneously weakening the labor unions and anything that expresses the force of organized labor which, as we know, even though it may be manipulated, is the Welfare State's bastion.

Wage war, then, on the Welfare State! Precisely what is taking place at this very moment: the defeat of unions, of the working class, of the forces of labor who in this process are losing a battle in the endless history of class struggle.

As we said before, a multiplicity of phenomena interrelate among themselves and to the global phenomenon known as the walfare state. It can be demonstrated how certain phenomenae of contemporary capitalism —let's call it "Reagan-capitalism" — are converging in a harsh attack on the social gains *conquered* through the struggles of labor and grassroots forces (and *tolerated* by reformist capitalism whose interests these gains responded to at certain points in history.)

The difficult, slow and irregular development of the welfare state within U.S. society and its political and economic system, should be of special interest to us, since we should not deal only with the known ideological barriers being opposed to it. Why didn't social democracy flourish in the United States, as it did in Europe? Or better yet, why is there no *democratic* socialism in the U.S.? The conditions do apparently exist there for the appearance of democratic socialism: great economic development, social complexity and a longstanding democratic practice. But in addition to the North American labor movement's specific characteristics, there must be something intrinsically native-born, steming from the country's national evolution, which sets the United States of North America apart from other advanced capitalist countries.

Sol Arguedas

Just Pure Rhetoric?

Experts wonder about Washington's legitimate concern for human rights.

Ex-president Jimmy Carter has argued that Washington's concern for human rights is not "pure rhetoric". Dr. Rosario Green, specialist in foreign affairs and director of the Matías Romero Institute of Diplomatic Studies, affiliated to this country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, argues that United States policy in human rights has lacked credibility and consistency. Her views:

Three main areas of concern and interest have been consistently on the agenda between the United States and Latin America: economic, military, and political issues, the last of which have often been dealt with in the form of promoting democracy or, even more specifically, human rights. This is not to say that U.S. attention has always been focused on these three aspects or particularly on the latter one, nor do we mean to insinuate that this sort of attention has always been directed at our countries.

To the contrary, we know that for better or for worse, the United States' interest in Latin America has traditionally been rather erratic. The distinctive mark of the relationship has been a sort of crisis-rapprochement-indifference cycle.

Whenever the United States has perceived a world-wide or regional -level crisis, or a critical situation in a specific country in the area that either threatens or endangers its national security —in whichever form it is being understood at a given time, be it threats from

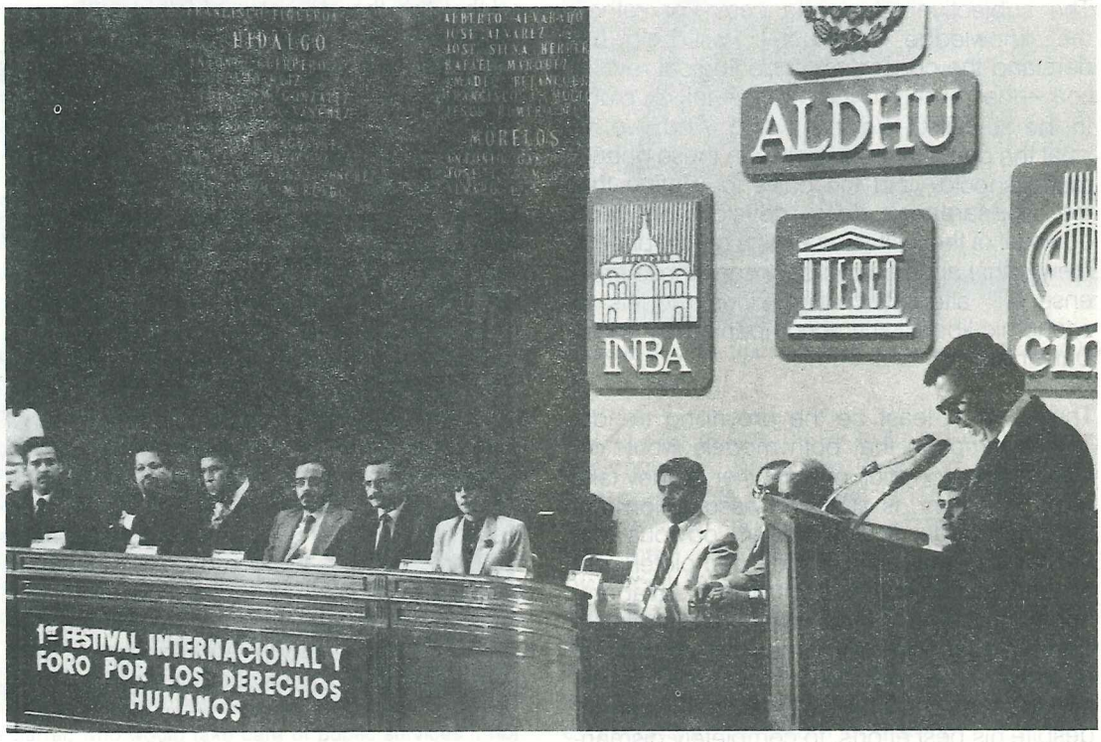


Photo by Jesús Carlos

The First International Human Right Forum and Festival, in Querétaro, México.

extra-continental powers of from certain hemispheric situations— it has sought to redefine its relations with Latin America, the region the U.S. has always wanted to count on as an unconditional ally.

We should keep in mind that for many years Latin America, as seen from the Unites States, was limited to Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, the area regarded as a security belt. It wasn't until the United States entered the Second World War that the alliance with all of Latin America, including more or less reluctant countries such as Argentina and Brazil, gained in strength. This also resulted in advancing the goals of international cooperation the region had been expounding since the beginnings of the Panamericanist Movement at the end of the XIX Century. New programs for economic and military cooperation appeared to complement the previously existing political collaboration.

Once the critical wartime situation was over, the rapprochement between the United States and Latin America once again slipped into indifference and remoteness. Programs for political, economic and military cooperation with Latin America seemed to fall behind as another region, Asia, appeared to pose greater security risks for the United States. The understanding became that it was necessary to contain the "advance of international Communism" in Asia. Latin America could bear being "abandoned", as most of its countries were ruled by "friendly enthusiastic allies" of the United States.

In effect, for years many of the countries in the region were governed by family or oligarchical-style military dictatorships that strongly defended North American values and interests. These governments were also profoundly anti-communist, all of which dissolved any concern the U.S. may have had concerning the direction Latin America was moving in.

This long period of indifference on the part of the United States didn't take place in a vacuum. Discontent was developing in many countries and being channeled not only against dishonest, repressive and un-patriotic rulers, but also against the country whose interest these men in power, and the *status quo* defended.

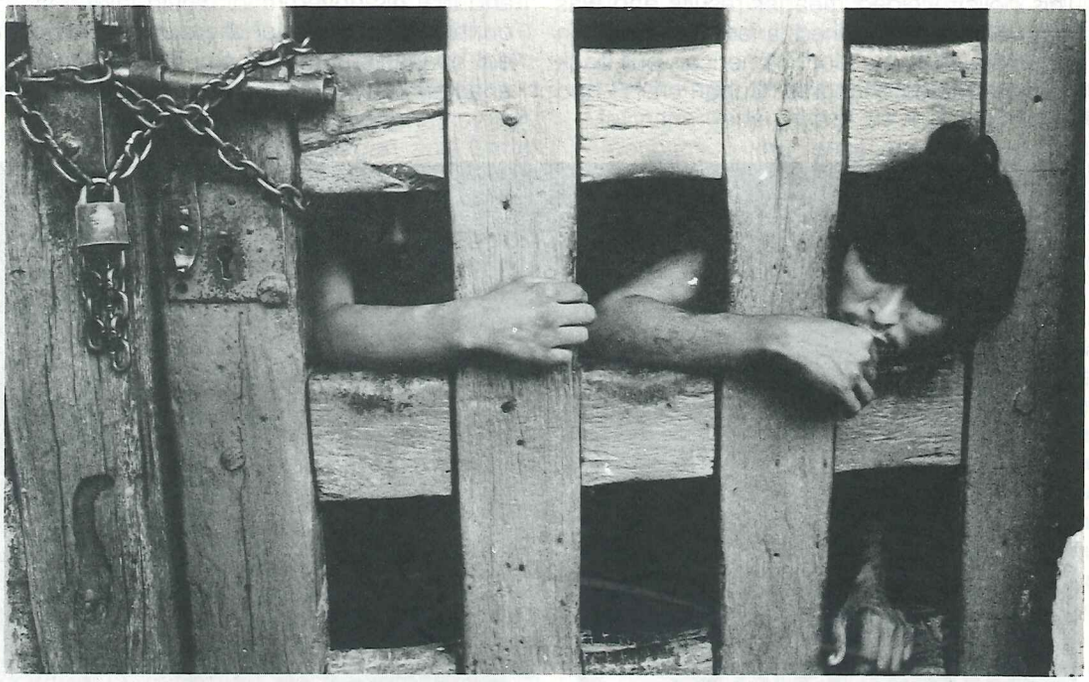


Photo by Marco A. Cruz/Imagen Latina

Campesinos **imprisoned over land struggles in Puebla**

Just as World War II had done earlier, the Cuban Revolution marked a breaking point and a new rapprochement. Political, economic and military cooperation programs were again set up. On the one hand, they were framed by the Alliance for Progress, whose political goal of "avoiding another Cuba at all costs" was dressed up in promises of assistance that never completely came true. On the other hand, Civic Action and Counterinsurgency programs were successfully put into effect, using the army to carry out civilian activities such as vaccination and literacy campaigns in rural areas. Their purpose was to detect guerrilla groups and their bases of support, as well as their ongoing strategies, arms caches, etc. and also to contain discontent and insurgent activity in urban areas.

The goal was to provide arms and training for Latin American armies and police forces, thus enabling them to detect and prevent the development to movements that might lead to "a Cuban style" revolution.

The strategy was complemented by President John F. Kennedy's ideas on the causes of revolution and by his insistence on promoting

democracy and social justice in our countries.

Yet the instrument he used for this purpose proved to be inconsistent. Even though he tried to rely on the practice of recognizing governments and providing them with aid programs associated to their legitimacy, he finally ended up recognizing *de facto* governments that had sometimes even supplanted *de jure* governments. This came about according to the U.S.' convenience at a given moment, subordinating specific interests to any effective regard for democracy and human rights in Latin America.

This policy yielded meager results and was thus virtually abandoned, a familiar attitude in the midst of a new North American pull-back from the region once the "Cuban crisis" had been overcome. Furthermore, the region's destiny seemed secure because of strengthened anti-communist alliances. In fact, during the 60s military dictatorships were fortified or reinstalled in many of our countries, making any kind of promotion of the defense of human rights by the U.S. government unthinkable both in practice and as policy.

Years later the Democratic administration of James Carter tried to rescues a degree of moral legitimacy for the United States both within its own borders and abroad. During his campaign for the presidency, Carter insisted that the human rights issue was not mere rhetoric and that his government would take a stand on this whenever and wherever it was deemed convenient to do so. This policy was enacted early on in the administration's term

Photo by Jesús Carlos

The mother of someone who has disappeared in the struggle so that all may turn up alive

when Secretary of State Cyrus Vance announced on February 24, 1977, that Uruguay Ethiopia and Argentina would be censured for their repeated violations of human rights. Yet in practice, policy remained conditioned by specific interests and by U.S. national security, both of which help explain why aid to South Korea, for example, never ceased, nor were ties broken off with any of the region's southern-cone dictatorships.

The Reagan Administration also took up the subject of human rights, although in a less direct manner than Carter had done. Its emphasis has been on censuring and combating what the administration defines as totalitarian regimes, or totalitarian traits of certain regimes, rather than addressing human rights violations per se. Nonetheless, the results have been basically the same: incongruency and lack of credibility. Both Reagan and Carter blamed some and exonerated others while conditioning censure and sanctions to North American interests and security. Their hand was weighted against countries like Grenada and Nicaragua which were perceived as greater threats because of the internal processes they were undergoing, and both were even accused of being totalitarian and thus, of shunning or violating human rights.

Curiously enough, the list of those censured by the Republican administration and by different sectors of the U.S. public (and which, naturally, include the two mentioned above), comprises countries regarded as "constitutionally established" by the international community because of the existence of a working system of guarantees and human rights. This, of course, contradicts the peculiar North American point of view.

Besides recognizing the fact that the protection of rights is always perfectible, we must also realize that many opinions for or against protecting rights are value judgements entailing interpretations that favor some rights over others. This is particularly the case with mutually limiting rights, such as those of the individual vis a vis collective rights. But above all, many criticisms can be considered unilateral judgements because they are not properly reported to the institutions that take notice of and oversee the protection of human rights. Rather, this type of censure distorts the image of states that have not been marked by the international community as particulary persistent violators of human rights.

As we have to a certain extent pointed out, this is the type of situation that exists between the United States and Nicaragua, as an example. When the U.S. unilaterally determines that the Sandinistas violate all kinds of human rights, it should be kept in mind that this view of things has not been backed up by the international community.

In the same vein and to give an example that is closer to home, the immense freedom of expression enjoyed in the United States has often entailed harmful consequences for Mexico, a situation supported by the existing power relations. This is the case for what we in Mexico perceived as a contemptuous and deceitful campaign unleashed in the U.S. press against our country. Although it didn't always seem to be supported by the U.S. government, nothing was done to limit or put a stop to the campaign, and this took place precisely in the name of freedom of expression. No wonder the Mexican Ambassador to the United Nations called the week of October 19-25 1986, the "Week of Infamy", referring to articles that appeared in *The New York Times*, and to which we may add the equally slanderous pieces in the *Chicago Tribune*.

This example of things is as injurious to the Mexicans under attack as it is to the North Americans being deceived. Among other things, it illustrates the difficulties involved in interpreting human rights from the different angles that each culture sees them. These difficulties seem to fall into two main orders of things.

The first order, which we can call *jurisdictional*, has to do with relations among states as well as with relations between states and international organizations. In this vein it is worth pointing out that powerful states that pass judgement on others for not respecting human rights are not always exemplary in respecting the norms of international law nor the resolutions and agreements that the community of nations has created for itself in order to deal with this and other issues.

We might call the second order of difficulties *substantive*, and it deals with the material, cultural and political heterogeneity between states that we touched on before. Although this factor doesn't prevent general adherence to declarations and conventions on human rights, it does limit their being understood in the same way or their being fully respected, even if the political intent to do so is present.

More to the point. Under what set of values can we define the right to an adequate lifestyle? How can the necessary levels of welfare be guaranteed under critical circumstances or when at an historical disadvantage vis a vis the levels considered desirable? How can a state maintain certain types of guarantees when it's being attacked or threatened by others? Where do you draw the line when freedom of expression is confronted with the right not to be deceived, provoked or abused, or when it is framed by certain communal customs handed down through history?

These are some of the questions that must be answered, both in general and in the context of relations between the United States and Latin America. ★

Rosario Green

Democracy Is Not Enough

Citizens have to make a concerted effort to guarantee their own human rights.

In the name of democracy, freedom and human rights, almost anything can and has been done to abolish exactly those three values. Dr. Carlos Pereyra, a leading expert in human rights issues and professor at the College of Philosphy and Literature of Mexico's National Autonomus University, explains how government use these concepts to justify contrary policies. His views:

In the discussion of human rights, people often have the idea that they are a set of "natural rights", that is rights conferred on all individuals by the simple fact of birth. According to this view, a person's existence, in and of itself, should automatically confer certain rights on them. This kind of discourse is actually an aplication of jusnaturalism to human rights, often accompanied by ideas taken from the personalist metaphysical tradition.

This is not really the place to discuss the deeper assumptions of these philosophical positions. But it is important to note that despite their admirable intentions, people who use these doctrines to defend human rights are left with a rather weak defense. There is, in effect, an unavoidable tension contained within the very notion of "natural right." The concept of "right" always refers to a social pact that is eventually codified. There is no such thing as a "right" prior to and independent of a specific juridical order.

Defenders of jusnaturalism and personalism hold that if the above were true, then there would be no arguments for rejecting specific positive legislation not recognizing one or another of the human rights. If people do not have certain *natural* rights, or if a person's very existence is not sufficient to guarantee them certain prerogatives, then there is no basis for fighting against legislation or political practices that ignore those rights. Thus, either "natural right" is recognized or there is no theoretical basis for demanding respect for human rights.

But this line fo reasoning loses sight of the central problem. It's useless to invoke imaginary "natural rights" with governments and groups that violate or don't even recognize human rights. Changes in such situations don't depend on being able to show that the exercise of power goes against the dictates of

Photo by Francisco Mata

The endless struggle to free political prisoners

supposed natural right. Rather, improving the human rights conditions in places where they are denied can only be assured by reorganizing the social and judical order. In other words, respect for human rights is not a product of more or less rigorous respect for the imaginary norms of natural right, but rather the creation of a political order in which such rights have some place. It is, then, the product of building a democratic order.

A society will function according to rules contemplating respect for human rights to the same degree that it manages to build a democratic order. Natural right has no meaning since it doesn't help speed this process. And it is important to emphasize that it is just as irrelevant to use natural right as an argument in defense of human rights, as it is when it comes time to make the list of such rights. The contents of the list depend on historical conditions and not some arbitrary table given prior to specific social orders.

Photo by Jesus Carlos

In prison for attempting to demonstrate on Labor Day in Mexico City

What do we mean when talk about democracy? It's become fashionable lately in Mexico to use a definition that, while good for public relations purposes, doesn't help clear up the misunderstandings attached to the word *democracy*; rather it actually increases the confusion. It's the position that is expressed by the slogan "democracy without adjectives." Nonetheless, what we really need are more adjectives and deeper analyses to help reveal the deliberatly created misconceptions, often used to disguise polices violating the most basic rules of human co-existence.
It's enough just to take a look at U.S. policy, and not only during the Reagan administration, although he has carried things to insane extremes. One can conclude that just about anything can be done in the name of democracy, freedom and human rights even if it actually destroys democracy, freedom and human rights.

In effect, Washington's backing has been the main support for a number of dictatorships responsible for thousands of cases of murder, torture, imprisionment, etc. No one can ignore the fact, for example, that White House support for the Somozas was an elemental factor in the lack of democracy and the brutal assault on human rights that characterized Nicaragua for decades. No one can deny that Guatemala's infamous history during the past 30 years has it roots in the 1954 decision by the U.S. to crush the process of democratizations unfolding there. A similar situation exists in Chile since 1973, and it's not only the Chilean "Pinochets" who are responsible for the situation, but the Washingtonian "Pinochets" as well. The list of examples is almost endless and also, quite well known. Perhaps it's enough to point out the colossal incongruence between a policy that purports to defend human rights and the legally sanctioned decision to send millions of dollars to fight a "dirty war" against the relatively defenseless Nicaraguan population.

So, what do we mean when we talk about democracy? It may be inevitable that democracy takes a backseat among social concerns in those countries where inequality and social injustice take on alarming proportions. But that doesn't justify the confusion of democracy and equality or democracy and justice in theoretical discussions of the term. Unfortunately, some theoretical formulations introduce just such confusion. Tocqueville, for example, but also many conceptions developed from socialist revolucionary nationalist and populist perspectives, fall into this category. They have produced such erroneous notions as "social democracy" and "economic democracy" to deal with questions of equality and social justice even though they have nothing to do with the strict meaning of democracy, that is, with the problems of electing governments and leaders. Rigorously speaking, democracy is always *political* democracy.

It is important to avoid confusion in the use of concepts. Concerns about equality and social justice are unquestionably legimitate. There can be moves to eliminate private property (partially or totally), but it should be clear that an egalitarian society, without property owners, is not automatically a democratic society. Democracy, strictly speaking, is only an issue of how the led choose their leaders. It is question of the *form* of the relationship between rulers and the ruled. Thus, the conceptual pair, formal democracy-substantive democracy, has no real meaning. Democracy is *formal* democracy.

Both in society as a whole, as well as in society on a microlevel, that is, in each individual institution, there is always a division of labor in which some people lead the collective, administer decisions or represent the rest. Democracy is a kind of relationship between those leaders, administrators or representa-

tives and those who are led, administered and represented. Rejecting representative democracy in the name of who knows what kind of direct democracy means rejecting democracy out of hand and opting for mechanisms that can only lead to bossism, corporativism, paternalism, intolerance, etc. Democracy is simply *representative* democracy.

While it is possible to imagine social life without class struggle, it is not possible to imagine it without conflicts of interests, without divergent projects. Absolute homogeneity is inconceivable. It is absolutely necessary to

Photo by Jesús Carlos

Rally in protest over Brazilians who disappeared in Argentina during the military regime

acknowledge the presence of the other, that is, of that other with particular interests and specific projects. Democracy is always *pluralist*. Rousseau's theses, for example, against plurality, in the name of some direct democracy and supposed general will, only open the door to terror. There will always be someone who will act in the name of that single, general will with absolute power.

This is where the discussion gets quite bogged down. The four terms applied to democracy (political, formal, representative and pluralist) are taken by some to be necessary and sufficent conditions, while others, instead of discussing if they are sufficient, question whether they are necessary. The correct thesis, that they are necessary, but not sufficient conditions, has only been able to develop gradually. But this is not surprising since the question of democracy is really a recent issue in human history, raised decisively only in the past century.

They are, then, only sufficient conditions. And while related to the workings of the political system, their effective presence does not depend solely on the dynamics of that system, but rather on economic, social and cultural factors. Thus, political, formal, representative and pluralist democracy is not conceivable in every economic, social and cultural situation. In this sense, then, it is reasonable to ask what kinds of economic, social and cultural conditions are needed for a democratic order to work.

It's not possible here to go into a detailed analysis of the matter. But it is important to point out, that if all members of a society do not have minimal access to the distribution of the social product, minimal possibilities of finding a job, minimal conditions of social welfare, you can't get very far in creating a democratic order. Without a certain social framework, without the autonomy of social organization, without a margin of pluralistic confrontation in those institutions meant for negotiating interests and harmonizing different projects, there can't be much progress toward building a democratic order. And a certain level of education and culture, as well as the free exchange of ideas and information, are also necessary. Democratic order presupposes a tolerant and permissive democratic culture, in which dissidents are not automatically considered as enemies. To synthesize, then, the exercise of political citizenship also requires the exercise of economic, social and cultural citizenship.

If all of the above is correct, then it is possible to explain the unjustifiable nature of Washington's propaganda and military campaign, that its arbitrary conception of democracy and human rights actually give support to antidemocratic policies that deny elemental rights. Or we can take the Mexican example of how power changes hands and all the hubbub that surrounds the process. The possibility of political power moving from one party to another is necessary for democratic order; that's what is alluded to with the term pluralism. Whether this possibility is made real or not, depends on the will of the voters.

But the fact that in some bipartisan political systems power switches rather frequently from one party to another doesn't say anything about the maturity of its democratic order. To the contrary, switching power back and forth between the Democrats and Republicans in the United States actually shows the enormous limits of U.S. democracy. There the number of ideological and political options presented to voters has been restricted by a particular set of factors, one of the most important being the manipulation of mass media. It's no exaggeration to say that for a long time now in the U.S. a single party, with two different organizational structures, has ruled. What kinds of human rights is the U.S. defending when it tries to impose that type of democratic poverty on others? In truth, respect for human rights is a function of the maturity of a democratic order allowing variety, complexity and plurality in contemporaneous societies.★

Carlos Pereyra

Last Reel for Reagan's Nicaraguan Strategy

Latin Americans applaud the virtual defeat of the contras, and look forward a negotiated settlement.

In late 1986 the Reagan Administration considerably increased tension in Central America by spurring Honduran military operations against Nicaragua and even using U.S. transport facilities to rush Honduran soldiers to the conflictive border area, an obviously irresponsible provocation.

This sudden military escalade in the U.S. intervention took place in the context of the Democrats' victory in last November's congressional elections and in the midst of the highly conflictive Iran-Contra scandal. The specter of generalized warfare in Central America unleashed through the direct intervention of U.S. troops looms closer than ever even though a lot of factors seem to indicate that such a move on the part of the U.S. would be hard pressed to meet with success. We could even go as far as to say that it's becoming increasingly obvious to Mr. Reagan that an intervention of this sort has no chance of succeeding and is therefore not an in-depth and realistic policy option; this, in turn, may explain the increasing aggressiveness of his Central America policy.

Both the Democrats' electoral victory and the Iran-Contra affair have led the press to speculate on the possible end of the so-called Reagan Era. At any rate, the administration's loss of face and credibility over the Iranian affair and Democratic control of Congress, along with the fact that Reagan is now a lame-duck president, contribute to an overall weakness that cannot be significantly changed by trying to create certain effects and impressions.

The Reagan Administration has needed to show some force in politically sensitive Central America precisely because of the difficulties it faces. It has felt the need to demonstrate that neither the scandal nor the Democrats can tie its hands in matters of military policy, and this in fact seems to be the case. But rather than Central America policy being hindered by legal and political obstacles within the U.S., the real problem lies in the fact that the ongoing interventionist policy has little success to show for itself and seems headed toward an even dimmer future. In other words, reactions in the U.S. are basically dependent on the specific manner in which the intervention unfolds; if it's successful and promising it will surely enjoy Democratic support, and if it could take place without involving North American soldiers, the fear and rejection currently present in public opinion would disappear.

Yet the exact opposite seems to be true: the strategic defeat of the **contras** appears to be clearly outlined, as is the fact that the Reagan Administration has failed in its attempt to subvert the internal order of Nicaragua by either driving a wedge between the Sandinistas and the people or by gaining a politically and socially significant local ally. Nor has the administration managed to isolate the Sandinistas internationally. The bottom-line factor determining the overall situation is the impressive military strength of the Ejército Popular Sandinista (EPS,the Popular Sandinista Army) and the organization and arming of the masses. Nicaragua today is clearly in a condition to wage popular warfare, and the U.S. knows from experience rather than from any kind of "syndrome" (i.e. Viet Nam) what it means to try to reverse this kind of process. Conditions are such that no one in the Pentagon could even imagine the possibility of any kind of rapid decision in a war against Nicaragua, whatever the mode of intervention may be. Experience has also taught North Americans what to expect of prolonged warfare.

The Reagan government has made a permanent display of its military force, but this enormous factor of strength should not be allowed to mask underlying weaknesses. One of these is the lack of sufficiently effective or significant Central American allies.

The governments of both El Salvador and Honduras are willing instruments of Reagan's policy and they issue statements and carry out maneuvers of all sorts that include overt active support for the *contra* on up to Honduras' recent bragging provocation. Yet they seem incapable of going much further because neither government has the capacity to openly defy the Sandinista Army or the Nicaraguan people in arms. The Honduran army is the only available force in case of war, and it has neither

Photo by Archivo Novedades

A 19 year-old Nicaraguan soldier recovers from his wounds in a hospital in Wiwili

the means nor the social or political strength to become a significant contender. For its part, the Salvadoran army is pinned to its own territory by the local armed opposition —which, incidentally, has progressively defeated all of the army's strategic plans— and is thus in no position to involve itself in a war against Nicaragua.

As for Guatemala, despite recent statements by the military in the sense that the country's policy of neutrality "might change", reactions in the local press to the fighting and renewed tension last December pointed to reinforcing neutrality. A well-known local columnist, noted for his anticomunism and anti-Sandinista positions, argued pragmatically in favor of Guatemala's remaining neutral. He based his position both on the need to avoid the disasters of war and on the need to take into account Nicaragua's overwhelming military superiority. Neutrality is a convenient policy for the Guatemala state based on existing political, economic and military interests. Despite the fact that the army has issued some aggressive statements and maintains a certain level of involvement in the play of pressure and threats against Nicaragua, it does not seem to be inclined toward taking part in a regional war.

Photo Archivo Novedades

Honduran soldiers on patrol along the Nicaragua border

It's a well known fact that Costa Rica doesn't have an army, and despite the fact that President Arias has had no qualms about taking up a front-line position against the Sandinistas, he has taken care not to identify his political virulence with any kind of intention to increase involvement in military activities against his neighbor.

Given the situation, the Central American Defense Council, CONDECA (Consejo de Defensa Centroamericano), obviously doesn't exist as an effective military force, whether or not it is formally or institutionally revived. Thus, the U.S. cannot count on puppet armies to carry out an intervention or to at least take on the front-line fighting during a significant amount of time, meaning it would have to involve its own troops from the very beginning. The U.S. knows all too well what this means in terms of an ongoing intervention. President Nixon analyzed the shortcomings of the puppet force in Viet Nam as one of the main causes of defeat, and this despite the fact that the South Vietnamese army numbered over a million very well-armed men at the end of the war.

U.S. intervention in Central America is not going well, and this is the reason why the "Reagan Era" is nearing its end in the region, highlighting the intervention's failure. But this in no way means that intervention and military aggression will cease, nor that increased regional armamentism, with its damaging effects for the Central American people, neighboring countries and all of Latin America, not to mention the international community in general, will come to a stop. Yet the intervention seems incapable of achieving a conclusive outcome, and increasingly takes on the form of a prolongued, large-scale war of attrition aimed at obstructing the development of the Sandinista Revolution and at showing the Central American people the high price they would all have to pay for revolution.

The Reagan Era has been one in which the abusive use of force has gone hand in hand with a lack of proposals and solutions to the great problems confronting the modern world: the arms race, the foreign debt, world trade, liberation struggles, conflict among nations and many others. As this era comes to a close, it seems that survival prevails over the arbitrary and despotic use of force, that the strength of life tends to prevail over the force of arms.

History will tell whether future U.S. administrations will be capable of finding ways of living with Central America's revolutionary process and with liberation struggles and the demand for sovereignty posed by all nations. It will tell us if they are capable of going beyond today's narrow point of view, or whether they will persist in their obstinate attempt to oppose the advancement of people and nations. The outcome will no doubt be determined in part by Nicaragua's battle against intervention and, on a different level, by the development of the ongoing armed struggle in El Salvador. Key factors of the American Continent and of the world's future are at stake in tiny Central America.★

Gustavo Porras

Talking for Peace in Central America

Both the Organization of American States and United Nations join the popular demand to and military intervention in the strifetorn region.

After the constant threat of war that marked 1986, Central America moved into the new year with storm clouds still gathered thick overhead. The possiblity of war seemed to be gaining ground over efforts for a negotiated solution and greater integration in the region.

Central America, a stretch of territory covering only a little more than 400 square kilometers, is today the most conflictive region in all of the Americas. The panorama is serious: economic crisis, revolution and counter-revolution, a quick-paced arms race and foreign intervention. In addition, a large majority of the area's 23.5 million inhabitants live in the most precarious of conditions. Thus, the situation adds up to a breeding ground far more conducive to war than to regional integration. This is the challenge for the five small countries caught in the midst of struggles to achieve balanced economic and social development, to leave behind the old models characterized even today by remnants of pre-capitalist structures.

Two new presidents came to power in Central America in 1986, Oscar Arias Sánchez in Costa Rica and Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo in Guatemala. The former has moved his country slowly but surely to the right, and Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras now make up the major regional alliance opposed to the Managua government, the counterweight to Contadora's peace efforts.

The situation with Guatemala is rather different. Independent of the controversies surrounding Cerezo's domestic policies, the most important regional meetings of 1986 were held in Guatemala under the auspices of the country's new president. The Central America Presidents Summit was held in Esquipulas in May, and the OAS General Assembly met in the country in November.*

At the Esquipulas Summit, despite the obvious tensions between Nicaragua and the "Tegucigalpa Block" (Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica), agreements were reached calling for support for Contadora and for the creation of a Central American Parliament, as proposed by Cerezo. The latter project received a serious setback recently when a group of Honduran congressmen announced that they were establishing a Central American Parliament of Democratic Countries, with the obvious intention of excluding Nicaragua. While it is very unlikely that their plan will jell, it has sown yet another seed of discord in the region and achieved its underlying goal: to steal the thunder from Cerezo's original proposal, making it impossible to implement.

The OAS General Assembly took on new complexity and importance as it began to modify its traditional role as a mere appendage of Washington's inter-America policy. While its measures didn't go beyond making a renewed call for peace, there is clearly a new balance of forces building within the Organization of American States. Particularly noteworthy was the meeting's closing document which urgently called on Contadora "to prevent a war in Central America."

At the same time, emphasis was placed on revitalizing the process of Central American integration as a way to involve the region's dependent economies in a Latin American program of multilateral cooperation and assistance. Without a doubt, the major obstacle to this process is the polarization of political and ideological positions, with its militaristic overtones, that widens the gulf between the five nations.

Nonetheless, international pressures have made it increasingly clear to the Central American regimes that there will be no economic aid, especially from Western Europe or Latin America, if one or another country (Nicaragua, for example) is excluded from projects. Technical and financial aid packages are not being implemented to support the development of isolated countries, but rather of a region characterized by dependent national economies,

"You know what? All of a sudden I had an irresistible desire to stay here in Honduras"

Ayax

* The 16th Ordinary Session of the OAS General Assembly was held in Guatemala on November 10-15, with delegations representing 31 nations and others participating as observers.

traditional export schemes and the inequitable distribution of wealth.

There are currently two major economic aid projects for the region. The U.S. — designed, Caribbean Basin Initiative, which in principle excludes Nicaragua, is basically oriented toward meeting new demands in the U.S. market with nontraditional exports to be produced in Central America. The program would help the four countries overcome their competitive disadvantage in relation to countries like Japan and Taiwan, with much more developed technologies. Nicaragua's exclusion from the program is actually contradictory to the Kissinger Commission Report which stated that "despite the political differences diving the region, Nicaragua represents and essential element in the Central American economy."

The second major project, supported independently by the European Economic Community and the Latin American Economic System (SELA), promotes regional integration, without excluding any country, based on increased self-sufficiency, increased production of nontraditional export products and opening new markets outside of the U.S.

One of the most recent events with potential major implications for the region was the tour through the area by the "Group of Ten," made up of the Contadora countries, their "Support Group" and the General Secretaries of the U.N. and the OAS. The delegation visited the governments of all the Central American nations, ending its whistle-stop tour in Mexico City on January 20. Their purpose was to buoy up the possibilities for a negotiated solution to the political-military conflict besetting the region now for the past several years.

The foreign ministers of eight Latin American countries, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama (the Contadora Group), and Peru, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay (the Contadora Support Group or Lima Group), made the tour in search of regional peace. Together these countries represent about 90% of the population of Latin America and make up the so called "Group of Eight." The participation of the heads of the U.N. and the OAS was a significant addition to the peace effort.

The formation of the Group of Ten, a body with significant social, political and moral standing, has been a long time coming. The more independent positions assumed by the major Latin American nations in the OAS after the Sandinista triumph laid part of the groundwork. The creation of the Contadora Group in 1983 was another important step, as was the "Cartagena Consensus." The latter was established in a meeting in Venezuela as a Latin American forum to discuss possible solutions to the foreign debt problem and the need for a New International Economic Order. The process proceeded with the creation of the Lima Group and its subsequent merger with Contadora to form the Group of Eight. The official participation at the highest levels from the OAS and the U.N. in the recent Central American tour gave even greater international projection to the Group of Eight's efforts.

El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica gave cold receptions to the Group of Ten and tried to orchestrate a boycott of the tour that would have further isolated the Nicaraguan government. The boycott attempt failed when another key actor, Guatemala, distanced itself from the measure and asked the Honduran government to "listen to the Contadora Group."

In Nicaragua, on the other hand, the Group of Ten was warmly received by a crowd of some 20,000 people and presented with a 9 point proposal by the Sandinista government for the inmmediate signing of a regional peace accord. As a part of the results of the tour, the Sandinistas were able to broaden their audience with the principal Latin American countries, undoubtedly consolidating their positions in political and diplomatic terms.

Within the context of the Irangate scandal, the Group of Ten's tour and the efforts undertaken last year toward peace and regional integration represent a de facto challenge to the legitimacy of U.S. regional policy. They also represent an important trend toward a Latin American consensus against the politics of force promoted by the Reagan Administration.

Hopefully the masterminds of U.S. policy will take note of their increasing isolation in the Western Hemisphere. And hopefully the major Latin American countries will be able to continue forward in their gradual process of integration and thus, serve as a model for the tiny countries of the isthmus. ★

Haroldo Shetemul and Augusto Morales

Photo by Sergio Dorantes

A *contra* truck reads: "We are defenders of capitalism"

Guatemalan Priest Demands Land for the People

Tired of seeing the peasants die of hunger, Father Girón is now at the head of an important peasant movement.

A dynamic outspoken priest has become the leader of Guatemala's most numerous opposition group. He is Father Andrés Girón of the National Peasant Association (ANC), and the struggle is: LAND FOR THE PEOPLE.

On the last Sunday of November 1986, Father Girón, together with some 300 peasant farmers and their families, occupied the coffee plantation "Montellano" in the department of Chimaltenango. The occupation has been labelled "invasion" and "take-over", but it is not strictly either, as *Padre* Girón and the ANC plan to pay one million quetzales (some $400,000) for the 1,500 acre plantation.

"I believe there must be agrarian reform in Guatemala. And I know there will be, sooner or later, either peacefully or violently. We have tried to get land through legal means and I didn't 'take' the plantation; I talked with President (Vinicio) Cerezo about this seven months ago, and he promised me land.

"We went in last Sunday because we had an agreement, and the people were waiting for the President to come and hand over the land, but no one from the government showed up. So we moved in anyway, and legally we are in the right, the papers are drawn up and everything, and I hope to sign them soon.

"I am not seeking political power. I am sick and tired of people dying of hunger at my desk. I invite you to come and live with me for a month and you'll see that I'm telling the truth. The peasants live in a state of extreme poverty and hunger. That's why I fight for land reform, that's why I took the finca.

"The President has promised us land, and even if he wasn't serious about it, I'm going to make him serious. I'm ready for anything, because I believe in what I'm doing. I don't care if they fire me from my parish, I don't care if they kill me, I'm ready.

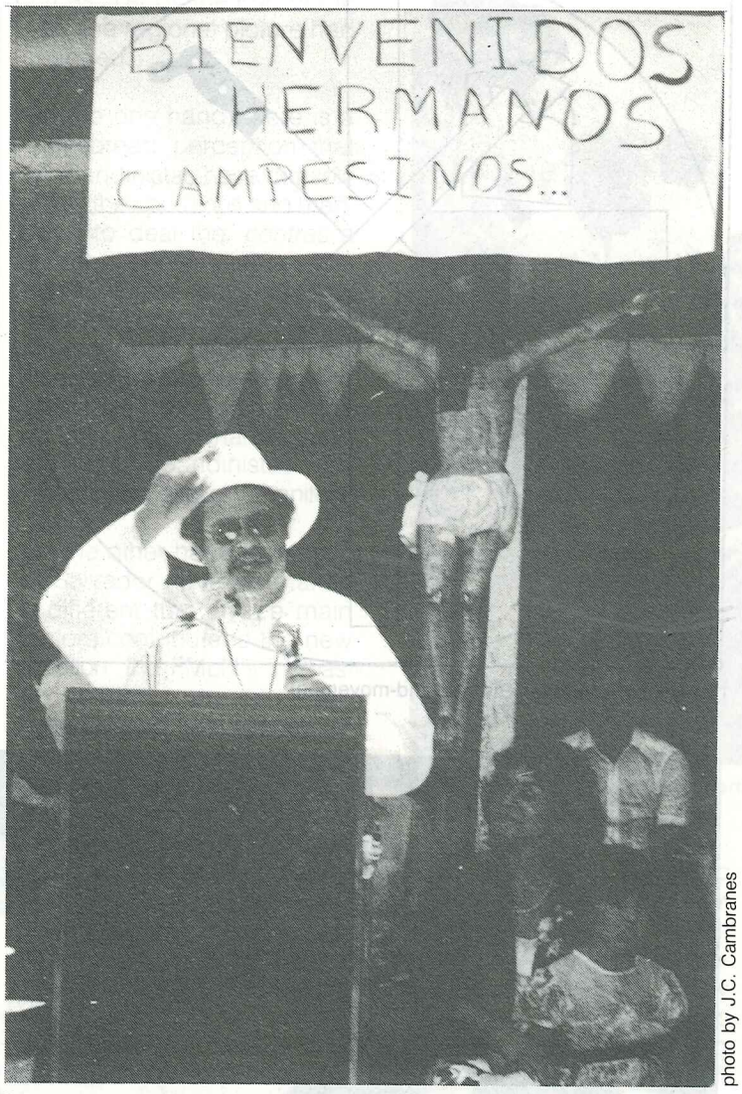


photo by J.C. Cambranes

Preaching on the need to purchase land

I'm very convinced we must have a new structure of government: the political and economic structure of Guatemala is in the hands of the rich, in the hands of a very few people. We are trying to change that."

According to Father Girón, politicians in Guatemala have been promising land reform for years, "but nobody believes them anymore."

He showed us a copy of a speech made in 1974 by René de León Schlotter, currently Minister of Development, where he proposed a re-distribution of land in Guatemala, accompanied by technical training and assistance for the peasant farmers. As minister in Vinicio Cerezo's government, Mr. Schlotter has not put any land reform programs into action, but he has inaugurated model villages, for example last Febraury in the northern Guatemalan department of El Quiché.

Father Girón says that in Guatemala, 70% of the arable land is in the hands of 1.2% of the population. He says that fair land distribution should not be a political issue, although it is necessarily an economic issue. Demands for land reform in Guatemala last year included organization in the departments of San Marcos and Alta Verapaz, and a march of some 16,000 peasants in April, led by Father Girón, from Escuintla on the south coast, to the capital.

Father Andrés Girón is a 42 year old priest who received his tertiary education in the United States. He told us that he wrote his thesis in Political Science, arguing that revolution was the only solution for Latin America. Later, he said, he worked with Martin Luther King, and learned that there was another way to achieve change, peacefully.

Currently, he is parish priest in two neighboring parishes, Nueva Concepción and Tiquisate, in the department of Escuintla located along southern Guatemala's Pacific Coast.

The coffee plantation of Montellano is in the neighboring department of Chimaltenango, near the town of San Pedro Yepocapa. The takeover of the plantation met with opposition from some local people, including some who said they were landless peasants who needed land

too, and had a right to that plantation. Local politicians also protested: the mayor of Yepocapa, Eulogio Coz Temal, reportedly told the press that he and local peasants were "indignant" that the plantation had been occupied by Father Girón and his group because they were outsiders.

The 1,500 peasants —some 300 families— who will work the plantation, are from the departments of Sololá and Totonicapán. They have belonged to the National Peasant Association since its beginning, and according to Father Girón, have been chosen from the best elements of the ANC, so that the farming project succeeds. "So that people won't say: 'the peasants are imbeciles'. We want this project to succeed."

"If the plantation had been handed over two months earlier, the coffee crop would have been ours. Instead, the coffee was lost. We were able to pick a little that was still good. But we lost a lot of money that the peasants urgently need at this moment."

The immediate problems for the peasants in Montellano are those of survival: food, water, housing, and the upgrading of the infrastructure of the plantation, which has been abandoned during the past four years, since it became property of BANDESA (the government-owned agricultural development bank.)

According to journalist Robert Rosenhouse, in the bulletin THIS WEEK: CENTRAL AMERICA & PANAMA of December 8, 1986, Montellano was once part of a larger property. The part now taken over by Father Girón and the ANC was used as collateral for a large loan from a private bank. Rosenhouse argues that the loan was "corrupt credit", as the loan received was worth much more than the property, and was never repaid, due to collusion between the borrowers and the lenders.

The news agency ACAN-EFE reports that there are some 16 *fincas* (farms or plantations) mortgaged by banks in Guatemala, and Father Girón certainly has his eyes on some of them as future farms for the landless peasants.

Another aspect of the agrarian reform envisaged by Father Girón is collective ownership and communal work processes; he is against the private ownership of parcels that become increasingly small with time and inheritances. The plantation Montellano will be a pilot project for these land reform plans.

The news agency ACAN-EFE also reports the following figures from the Guatemalan Statistics Institute:

547,547 small land-holders
49,137 medium sized holdings
13,365 large holdings or *latifundios*
110,501 landless peasants.

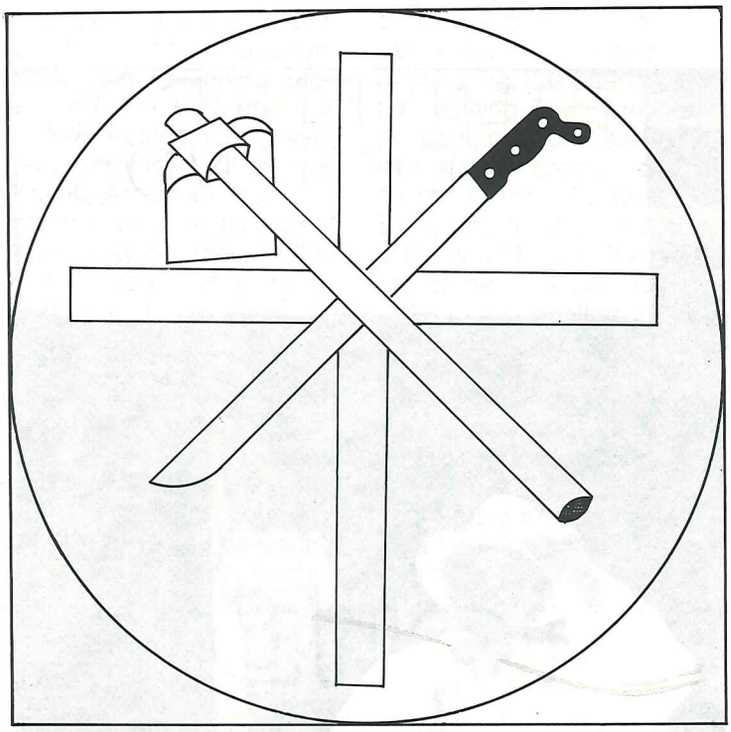
Furthermore, those 13,365 *latifundios* encompass 65.4% of Guatemala's arable land.

However, THIS WEEK: CENTRAL AMERICA & PANAMA reports a study by the Agency for International Development (AID) in 1980, which claims there are 420,000 landless peasants in Guatemala. This figure is probably correct —Father Girón says there are some 100,000 peasants just in the ANC.

I asked Father Girón if he, as a member of the Church, was not afraid of being manipulated in a political game between land-owners, government and the press.

"I'm already in it," he replied, "and I can't afford it, I'm going to fight political manipulation with the truth, and nothing but the truth."

"The Church is political too," he said. "Just look at the



The symbol of Father Giron's land-movement

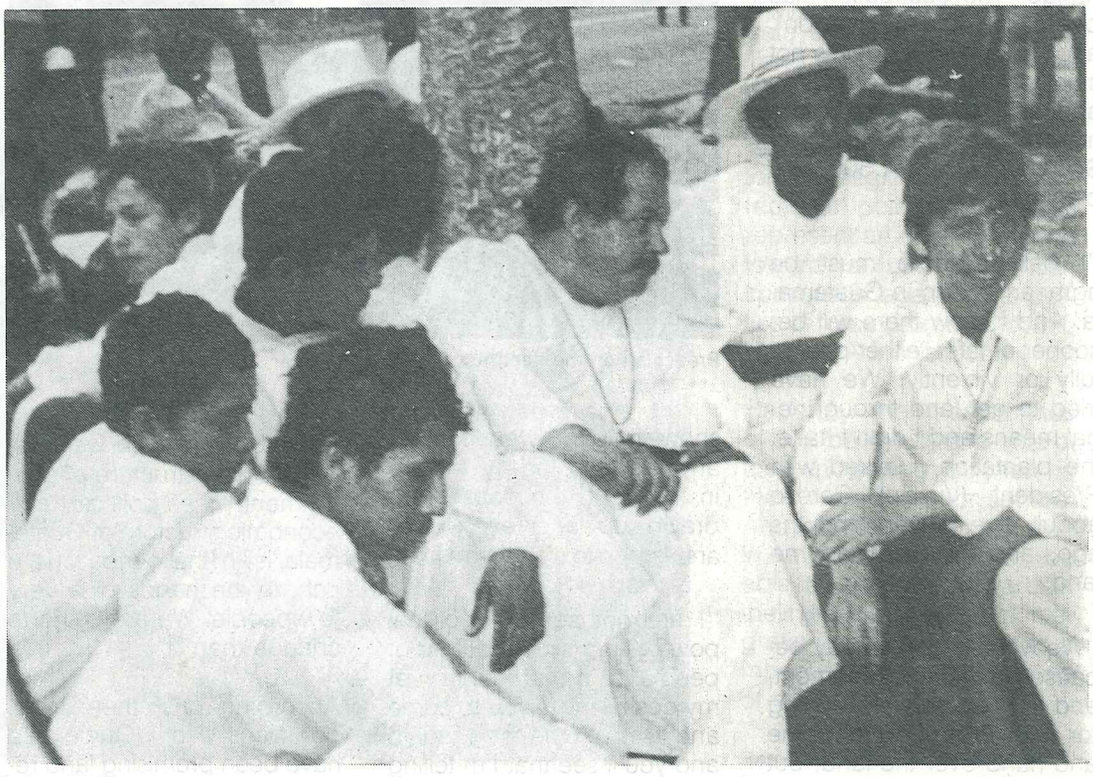


Photo by J.C. Cambranes

Father Girón and his peasant disciples

Pope: he is asking the Brazilian government for land reform, that was one of the main points of his visit to Brazil."

"Here in Guatemala, the Church has not backed me up. The Bishops have written some beautiful letters about social justice, but they don't act."

Monseñor Gerardi, head of the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala, told me that he personally supports Father Girón ("something must be done"), but that neither he nor the Church gives official support to the priest's agrarian reform projects. "I am not called to resolve agrarian problems," said *Monseñor* Gerardi. He added that he thought Father Girón should be careful: "It does not seem right to me that the government use Father Girón to implement its agrarian reform programs."

But, up to the present, the government of Vinicio Cerezo has announced no such program, nor has the democratically elected Congress passed any laws on the subject.

Father Girón is critical of the new democracy in Guatemala: "If the President's not serious, I'm going to make him serious." "The government has done nothing in the way of new schools or new hospitals —but it has opened new model villages, which I think are just concentration camps."

"Even though Cerezo won the election with a big majority, he does not have the power. Unfortunately, I don't think the President rules. The rulers remain the same: private industry and the military." Another problem for us, the priest continues, is financing: "the banks of the system are the big landowners, and it is almost impossible for us to get a piece of land from them. Guatemala still lives in a feudal system."★

Jackie Buswell

Phoenix Brings Bad Luck to El Salvador

War poverty and earthquakes made 1986 a long year for Salvadorans.

The general view of things in Central America in early 1986 was more or less as follows: Nicaragua is the main critical point, and the situation in El Salvador is relatively stable. According to many observers, the war in El Salvador was at an impasse between the armed opposition forces of the FMLN and the government's armed forces. Yet by the end of the year the regional picture had changed.

On the one hand, there is a widespread perception that the Sandinistas have consolidated their positions and managed to deal the *contras* a strategic defeat. Both aspects will be enhanced as the Iran-Contras affair makes it increasingly difficult for the Reagan Administration to continue supporting the counter-revolutionaries, and as the anti-Sandinistas' defeat is more explicity manifest.

On the other hand, events in El Salvador have also taken a different turn. Three main factors contribute to the new situation: the FMLN's increased military strength, the broad-based resurgence of mass struggles and the unfolding of a political crisis within the ruling block, meaning the increasing instability of the Duarte government. Unlike what may seem to be the case, the earthquake that shook San Salvador in Oct. 1986 is not the key factor leading to the crisis. The main components of today's critical situation were present before the earthquake.

FMLN Commander Joaquín Villalobos referred to the situation in El Salvador, in a document that appeared in the magazine ECA in April, 1986, published by the Central American University, UCA, in San Salvador: "It is not true the war is at a stalemate. In conceptual terms it is possible to speak of a phase of strategic equilibrium in a popular war, but it is wrong to say the war is at an impasse.

Photo by Francisco Mata/La Jornada

Burying the dead following the earthquake

The concept of strategic equilibrium has a different meaning in a popular war. It refers precisely to the moment when the revolutionary forces have left the strategic defensive and are nearing the possibility of a counteroffensive."

1986 opened with the most complex counterinsurgency operation launched by the Salvadoran military during the six years of war: Operation Phoenix. Its purpose was to recover the Guazapa Volcano, an FMLN bastion in the very heart of the country. Just 19 miles from the capital city, Guazapa is a strategic enclave in the military correlation of forces. By June the Salvadoran armed forces admitted that Operation Phoenix had not yielded the results they had expected; it has not been possible to dislodge the FMLN's fighters from the area, nor did the army gain a stable hold on the vital military position.

In sum, on the military front the FMLN has maintained its forces, consolidated its territorial control in the north and east of the country, and increased the operational mobility of its troops. It has also further developed internal unity among the five organizations that make up the revolutionary alliance and agreed on new programmatic foundations and margins of political independence with its allies in the Revolution-

ary Democratic Front, the FDR (Frente Democrático Revolucionario).

These factors are probably what has done away with the triumphalist tone the Salvadoran high command maintained during most of 1984 and 1985. Even U.S. military advisors stationed in the country have been forced to admit that the war has run into snags, and that "in the best of cases it will take 10 or 12 years to defeat the guerrillas."

But it would be wrong to try to analyze the war in El Salvador from the point of view of regular warfare, as a series of clearly defined military fronts and parties deciding the course of the conflict from one battle to another. Thus, for example, Villalobos states that, "...in 1983, despite the fact that the FMLN's military activity placed the government's armed forces in an extremely difficult situation, the absence of an upsurge in mass struggles kept our victories from leading to more significant changes in the relation of forces." An additional new factor that is present today is that, as of last year, there has been a continuous upsurge in mass struggles.

What has probably provoked this new wave of popular unrest and struggle is the government's decision early last year to impose a series of economic measures, known as the *paquetazo*, in an attempt to increase local financing of the war, given that over 50% of the national budget is currently provided by the White House. The measures included devaluation of El Salvador's currency, the *Colón*, by 100%, price increases and heavier taxes. All of this led to deteriorating living conditions for large sectors of the population, as well as to increased inflation and unemployment.

The *paquetazo* didn't turn the tide of the government's financial straits, but it unleashed popular protest in San Salvador, crystallizing several years of efforts to get the mass movement back on its feet. The Unión Nacional de Trabajadores Salvadoreños, UNTS (National Union of Salvadoran Workers), was formed during 1986, bringing together labor unions, peasant organizations, teachers, students, Indian groups and cultural workers. Throughout the year, tens of thousands took to the streets of San Salvador to protest Duarte's economic policy, and also demanding a stop to forcible conscription into the army, the renewal of peace talks with the insurgency and an end to U.S. intervention.

An idea of the dimensions of this new mass movement can be had from the fact that 40,000 people marched through the streets of the capital just a few days before the earthquake, and on Nov. 22, 50,000 people turned out. The recomposition of the Salvadoran mass movement in the capital city was the decisive new factor on the scene last year, and it is the main dynamic element in the present situation.

This is an experienced and politicized movement with a strong fighting spirit. It has

Photo by Francisco Mata/La Jornada

Refugee camp for earthquake victims in San Salvador

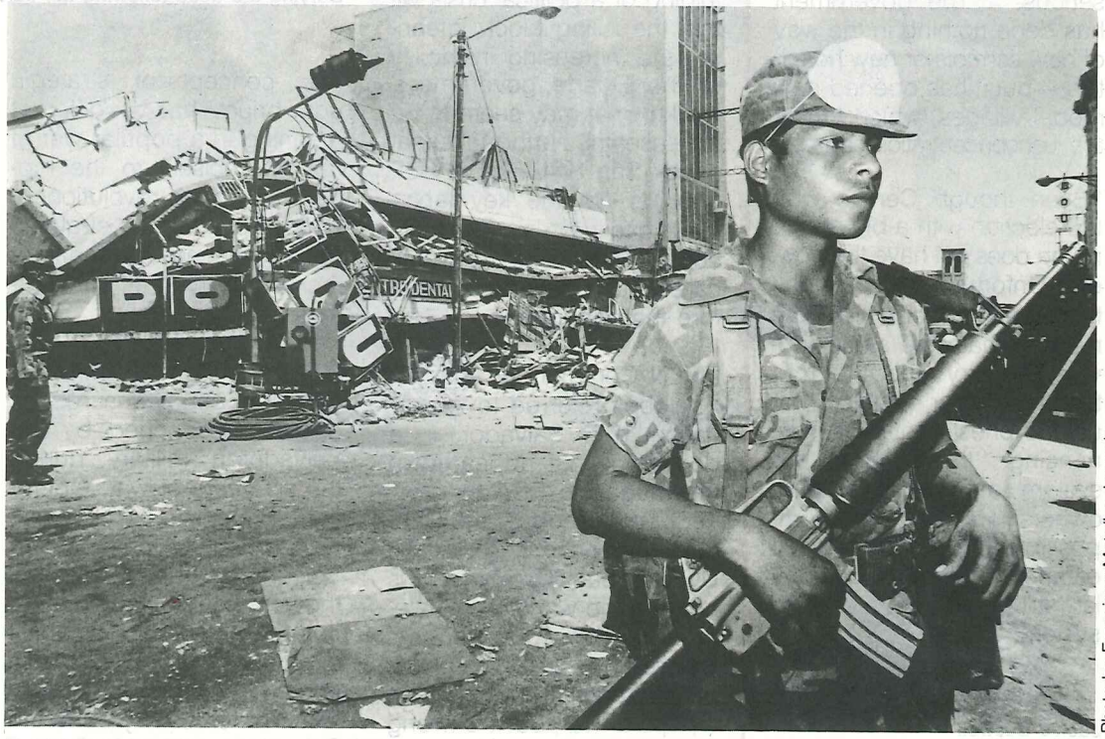


Photo by Francisco Mata/La Jornada

A soldier watching over the ruins of Hotel San Salvador after the earthquake

withstood eight years of near-genocidal efforts to destroy it, emerging undefeated and with many of its foundations still in place. These newly reactivated masses also constitute the main obstacle in the path of the counterinsurgency project designed by the U.S., namely, isolating the insurgency from the popular and workers' movement and building a social base in support of the dominant regime. Duarte, a sector of the Salvadoran military and North American strategists know that an irregular war cannot be won solely on the battlefield; winning requires the division of the popular forces and the construction of an alternate social base.

Duarte cannot seriously expect to build his own social base with the level of repression unleashed by his government, just as neither his economic or political policies contribute to that goal either. A U.S. journalist aptly summed up the situation in late December: "Duarte is losing control of the streets without having recovered control of the mountains."

And Duarte is also losing control of his own house. Right-wing political forces began 1987 with a destabilizing offensive against the government, a campaign supported by big business and some sectors of the military. Specifically, big business refuses to pay a new tax called, "For the Defense of National Sovereignty," that would be applied to income in order to finance the war. Businessmen refuse to pay for two reasons: first, they are pretty sure the money will end up in the pockets of government officials, and second, they believe the regime is losing the war. In order to manifest their opposition, the right wing has resorted to a parliamentary work stoppage, while large-scale private enterprise shut down their businesses.

But the right-wing forces don't have a better project to defeat the insurgency and the popular movement. Their only proposal is to unleash another round of genocide, a large-scale killing capable of restoring "social peace" to El Salvador. This means, in effect, resorting to the method applied over half a century ago in 1932, when over 30,000 people were slaughtered following a popular uprising.

At the same time, North American strategists know that El Salvador doesn't necessarily need more people killed, and that genocide will probably not turn the situation around. There are eloquent figures pointing to this, as the repression under Duarte has been one of the most severe in the country's history.

Today the regime is face to face with a popular movement that has overcome these past bloody years at a cost of some 20,000 dead. Under certain conditions mass repression can disarticulate a movement, but under others it only adds new energy to the struggle. This poses the greatest risk to the solution proposed by the extreme right forces. But however uncertain this option may be, many seem willing to resort to it if they have no other recourse.

Washington cannot allow the Duarte government and its counterinsurgency model to collapse, for it would means its own defeat. And for now the White House seems to have no better option than Duarte, at a time when its own political difficulties make it harder, though by no means impossible, for the U.S. to increase its own direct involvement in the conflict.

When Alexander Haig took office as Secretary of State in 1980 he chose El Salvador as the test case for the Reagan Administration's Central America policy. Now, toward the end of Mr. Reagan's second term, El Salvador may also become the test case for that same policy's failure.★

Augusto Morales

Freedom Is Not Built in a Day

This year will be decisive for Haiti as mass movements struggle to limit the powers of the military government.

It's been a year now since the Haitian people managed to put an end to 29 years of dictatorship by Jean-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier. It was front page news around the world. But when the dust died down after the last incidents related to Baby Doc's move to southern France, the whole world simply forgot about Haiti, as if overthrowing a dictator was all the country needed to solve its problems. But things haven't been that simple in Haiti's first post-Duvalier year.

In November 1986, there were three important events involving grass-roots participation. The first was a women's demostration against repression with some 30 to 40 thousand women marching. Right after that, there was a transport strike that paralyzed transportation, not

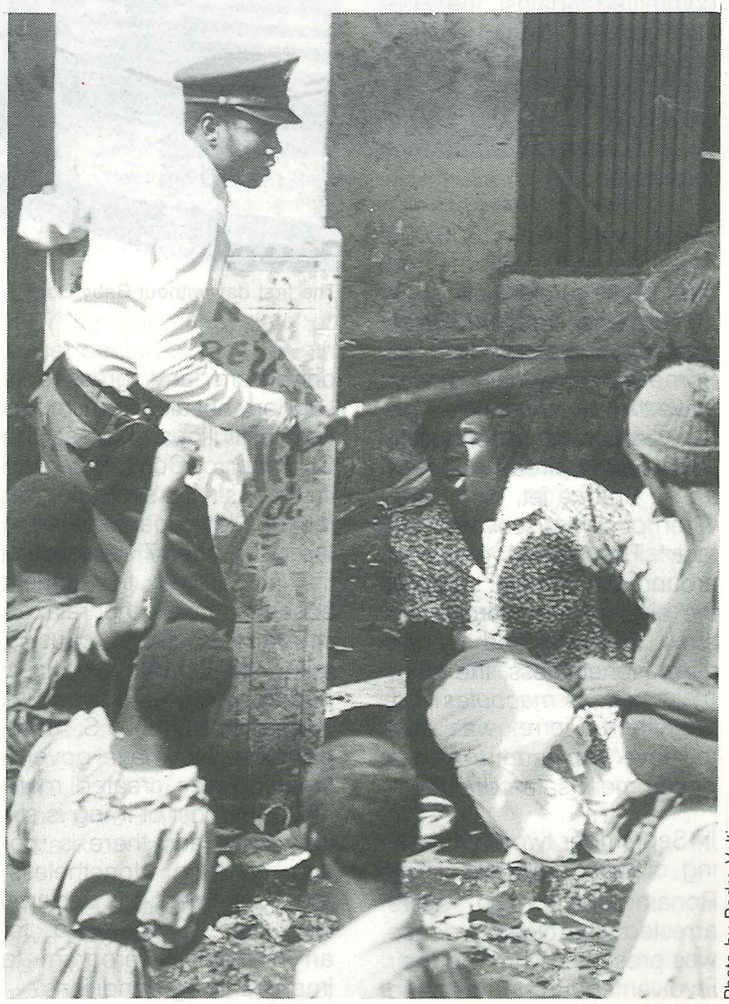


Photo by Pedro Valtierra

Even with Duvalier gone, repression continues

only in the capital city, but also in provincial areas. This strike was in response to the death, under "strange circumstances," of a member of the bus drivers' union, precisely when the union was involved in a labor dispute with the current government.

The third important event was a 100,000-person strong demonstration, without a doubt the country's largest protest march ever held. Its purpose was to show the strength of grass-roots discontent over the continued presence of Duvalier followers in the country and in the government itself. The march was people's response to an announcement made just a few days earlier that many important figures from the Duvalier regime were going to form a political party with the hopes of taking power. The announcement provoked a strong reaction from those who resent the fact that Duvalier and his associates were never punished for the atrocities they committed against the Haitian people. And it wasn't only that; the present government has actually supported Duvalier's old secret police force, the greatly feared *tontons macoutes*.

There were some 300,000 *tontons macoutes* by the end of Duvalier's reign, although the force was dissolved just a few days before his fall. Some were gradually able to leave the country. In late April last year, one of its former directors was already aboard an Air France jet, disguised, when people discovered the fact. Thousands gathered around the airport, stopped the airplane and forced the army to arrest and try the man. Nonetheless, the other major *tontons macoutes* leader, Albert Pierre, was able to leave the country with a government safe conduct.

In September two high ranking officers, Colonels Frank Ronain and Valve, were arrested after clear evidence was presented showing their involvement in torture and other crimes. A few weeks later, however, a military court decided in secret to release them, and they immediately left the country. The same month, disappearances began again. Charlotte Jacquelin, a monitor for the Church's literacy mission, was disappeared in one of the capital city's poor neighborhoods.

In addition, the current government is very isolated, not only from any grass-roots support, but also from important institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Association. In fact, the latter participated in the November 7 demonstration to protest the junta's economic policy that relaxed import restrictions, causing many nationally produced goods to be edged out of the market mostly by U.S.-made products. Nor have government policies created more jobs. The cost of living is still very high, and there is runaway inflation. Nonetheless, the government has declared that there's no need for an emergency program to improve living conditions.

Despite all this, however, it is important to emphasize that with Duvalier's fall, the Haitian people won their right to express themselves freely. Today, there is great freedom of expression; events and problems in Haiti are publicly discussed and debated on the radio and television and in the newspapers. Using this newly conquered freedom, people have been able to build a strong challenge to the government that sought to establish a kind of "Duvalierism" without Duvalier. And if the government hasn't been successful in its efforts, it's only because of grass-roots mobilizations, not only in the capital, but throughout the provinces as well. The entire society has been shaken by the mobilizations, a society held in the grips of terror for more than a quarter of a century.

The definitive split between the new government and the people came on April 26. All of the country's human rights organizations had called for a demonstration to convert the country's major torture center —where 10,000 skeletons of political prisoners had been found— into a monument to Duvalier's victims. The government refused to sanction the march and sent in the army to fire on demonstrators. Six people were killed and many more wounded. People understood this as an expression of the attempts to re-establish "Duvalierism." From that day on, people have firmly maintained their own demands and redoubled their efforts to keep the Duvalierists from achieving their goals.

The government decided to hold elections on short order, hoping to divert people's attention, dilute grass-roots organizing efforts and divide the popular movement around different leaders, representing a variety of different perspectives, who might be vying for office. But the movement didn't go for the bait. To the contrary, it intensified its efforts to have grass-roots demands met, demands focused on hunger, unemployment, environmental problems, health care and misery. Indifference spread, then, toward the

Photo by Pedro Valtierra

The first day without Baby Doc

electoral process that was to choose members for a constituent assembly. As a result, abstentionism was the overwhelming victor in the October 19 elections. Less than ten percent of the voting age population turned out at the ballot box, handing a clear message of disapproval to the military government.

At the same time, the Reagan administation's very obvious efforts to shore up the ruling junta have begun to generate widespread anti-U.S. sentiments among people for the first time. While still a new phenomenon, it has grown to such an extent that when U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz was in the country last October, there were large demonstrations to protest his visit. In addition, people protested against the presence of 11 U.S. military advisors, as well as the $4 million sent in direct aid to the Haitian army.

In order to provide some context for the above, it is important to note that under Duvalier, the army was not the main institution used for domestic repression. Rather that task was assigned to the *tontons macoutes*, which in addition to the 300,000-strong secret police, included a 45,000-man, active paramilitary force. The army had been relegated to a secondary position and had only 7500 men. According to the new Pentagon proposal, the Haitian army should grow to have some 25,000 troops.

The U.S. economic aid destined exclusively for the army is to be used to buy arms and to modernize its fighting capacity. That's why in the protests against Schultz' visit, people shouted, "We want bread, we want factories, we don't want arms."

The anti-U.S. demonstrations were the first of their kind in Haiti since the time when the United States occupied the country militarily from 1915 to 1934. And it is really quite symbolic that on the very same day that the largest popular protest in Haiti's history was being held, arms were being unloaded from a U.S. plane in Port-au-Prince, the country's capital.

This year there will be municipal elections in July and presidential elections at the end of the year. The new President-elect will take office in February 1988. Nonetheless, up until now, not only have people shown a marked indifference to the electoral process, but they actually regard the whole thing as "suspect" since there's no candidate with a platform addressing real grass-roots concerns. In addition, no candidate has been able to develop a political organization with the capacity to mobilize people around the elections.

There is also a widespread belief that the military government isn't really going to allow totally free elections and is actually cooking up a fraud to let the army keep its hold on power or looking for a civilian who would be willing to front for the armed forces. And many people think it's equally probable that given the strength of the popular movement, the army will simply decide not to hold elections, thus prolonging their de facto government.

At the same time, the leadership from a variety of different political movements deeply committed to democracy are thinking about joining together in a broad coalition of forces. They could, then, work more effectively toward the transition to genuine democracy in Haiti, based on meeting basic grass-roots needs and creating a new and lasting social pact.

But no matter what happens, 1987 will doubtless be a decisive year for defining the path to be taken by the Haitian state in this new period of the country's history. ★

Gerard Pierre-Charles

"Those Who Accuse Me of Hanging On to Power, Are Right"

Dictator Augusto Pinochet shows no sign of wanting to lift his military boot.

Photo by Archivo Novedades

A burial in Santiago following the September incidents; the banner reads: "How much longer will you go on killing, fascist beasts"

Augusto Pinochet began 1987 by lifting the state of siege declared for the nth time last September- and announcing that some 3500 exiles previously barred from returning to Chile could now do so. He justified these measures citing the strength of his government, now in its fourteenth year.

The opposition, on the other hand, claims that Pinochet has never been weaker than he was by the end of 1986, making his fall almost imminent. Both Pinochet and his opponents have arguments to back up their statements.

Pinochet doesn't claim to have grass-roots support for his administration or for the regime he heads; he doesn't have it and hopes to prolong it through the use of the force that brought him to power. That force is now joined by a new Constitution, written by and for Pinochet and approved in a rather questionable plebiscite in March 1980. He also has several other factors in his favor: a technically perfected and well— equipped repressive apparatus; the "monolithic unity" of the armed forces; the vacillations of the Catholic Church, which despite its defense of human rights in Chile, has not used its traditional capacity to exert pressure in a direct challenge to the dictatorship; and support from the United States.

The opposition is clearly in the majority, but it is still divided. It has yet to come up with a platform capable of unifying people around an alternative and truly national political project representing

the broad range of ideologies and democratic conceptions present in the country. There are two major opposition coalitions, the Democratic Alliance (AD) — made up of Christian Democrats, rightist Republicans, Radicals, moderate leftists and Social Democrats— and The Popular Democratic Movement (MDP) —made up of Communists, Socialists and the Revolutionary Leftist Movement (MIR). Reflecting a real division in Chilean society, they both recognize the need to put an end to the dictatorship, but differ on how to do it and on the project to be implemented after Pinochet's fall.

MILESTONE EVENTS OF 1986

Both the military government and the opposition can point to important events in 1986 that strengthened their respective position. On the opposition side, the successful national work stoppage on July 2nd and 3rd was particularly significant. It not only showed that the opposition could agree ahead of time on the activity, but also that it has the necessary mobilizing capacity to be able to move on to more difficult kinds of actions. Another important step was taken with the creation of the Civil Assembly, made up mostly of both MDP and AD members. It has proposed a "civilian occupation" of the country in response to the dictatorship's military occupation, and its goal is to make the country ungovernable through broad social mobilizing.

On the other side, the dictatorship has been able to capitalize on its discovery, supposedly with the help of U.S. military intelligence, of hidden arsenals in the northern part of the country. As a result it was able to alert the armed forces, center-right sectors and the United States to the possibilities of the "Central Americanization" of the Chilean conflict. Thus, it was able to strengthen its argument for continued support for Pinochet as the only guarantee that the situation won't get out of control.

A third major event was the failed attempt to assassinate Pinochet on September 7. A clandestine, political-military organization, the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPRM), thought to be backed by the Communist Party, claimed responsibility for the action. Curiously enough, both sides gained ground with the attempt. For that part of the opposition which favors the use of all forms of struggle (MDP), the action showed the FPRM's high degree of organization, as well as the vulnerability of the government security apparatus. The government, for its part, could reiterate the legitimacy of its hold on power, claiming once again to be the only force capable of neutralizing the "extremists."

Opinions on the action were varied. The opposition appeared to be divided once again. One part repudiated the use of violence as a means of struggling for democracy, and the other declared that the assassination of a tyrant is not only legitimate —as recognized even by an ancient Catholic theological tradition— but also possible. The Chilean Catholic Church, together with Pope John Paul II, both deplored the action and called on those responsible for it to respect the sacred value of human life. Neither the Chilean hierarchy nor the Pope issued a statement about the five political killings by government security forces that occurred immediately after the assassination attempt. The victims' names were simply added to the endless list of those eliminated by the regime during

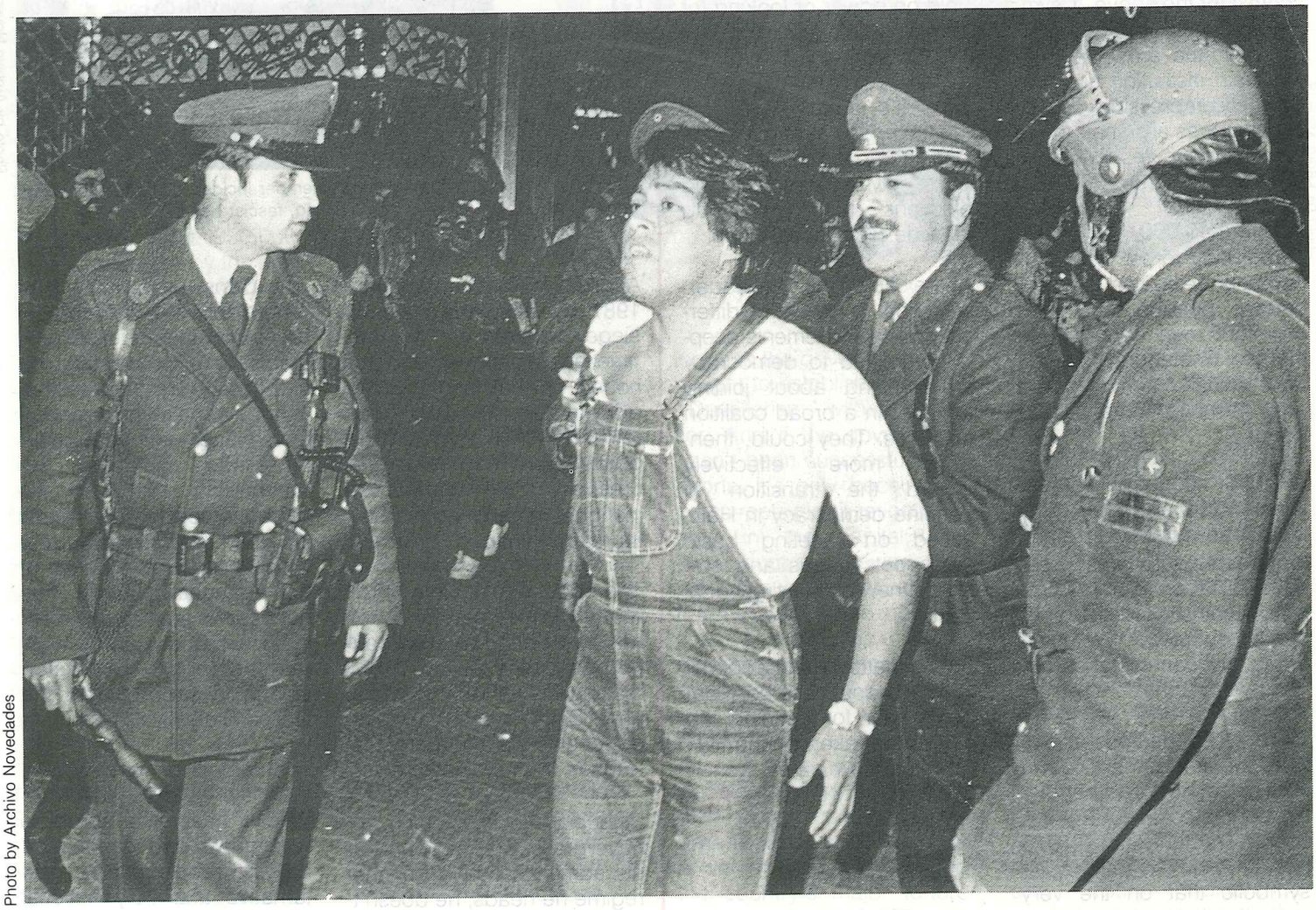


Photo by Archivo Novedades

A student being arrested during a demonstration

the past 13 years. The armed forces condemned the attempt and reaffirmed their unconditional support for their Commander-in-Chief, Augusto Pinochet.

THE UNITED STATES' REVOLVING COURSE

The United States has had a variety of policies toward the Pinochet dictatorship through the years. At first, it gave its open support to the regime. Later, it began a policy of "quiet diplomacy," using private channels to communicate its withdrawal of support and its commitment to democracy. Then, during the first part of 1986, the Reagan administration began to take a more active approach. Both Elliot Abrahms and George Schultz made statements to the effect that they would welcome a return to democracy in Chile. In addition, the U.S. voted in favor of a United Nations resolution condemning Chile for its flagrant, systematic and grave violations of human rights, and it voted against World Bank structural adjustments loans requested by the Pinochet government.

These last measures, however, only represent a tactical shift on the part of the U.S. It is not going to try to shorten Pinochet's self-proclaimed term in office or to speed up the elections slated for 1989 (at which time Pinochet will be the only presidential candidate and thus, able to extend his rule until 1997). While for the first time in 13 years the U.S. voted in the United Nations to condemn Chile, the vote must be viewed within a larger foreign policy context. The U.N. resolution came up just as Reagan was accusing the Sandinistas of violating human rights and pressuring the Congress to approve $100 million in aid to the contras. As one analyst pointed out, the vote against Chile was just a bit of "make-up" for the same old policy. In additon, Mexico and Cuba, among other countries, had proposed a much stronger condemnation than the one the U.S. supported in the final vote. In prior negotiations, the United States offered its vote in favor, if the original resolution would be exchanged for a softer one drawn up in Washington. That's what finally happened, and Pinochet came out the stronger from it.

In relation to the World Bank credits, the U.S. voted against them, once again citing human rights violations. But this was only after assuring that there would be enough votes from other countries to guarantee their approval, using "friendly" pressure in some cases to secure the votes. Even before the vote, Pinochet knew what the United States planned to do and what the final outcome would be. Robert Gelbard, Under-Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, made a special trip to Santiago in July to explain the situation to Pinochet and tell him not to worry.

But Gelbard wasn't the only emmissary Reagan sent to Chile in 1986. General John Galvin, head of the U.S. Southern Command, went in September and Nestor Sánchez, Under-Secretary of Defense, went in October. Galvin met with Pinochet and, among other things, offered his government's willingness to get Pinochet, his family and closest collaborators out of the country and to Hawaii in the case of an emergency. Sánchez also met with the Minister of Internal Affairs, with Cardinal Juan Francisco Fresno and with center-right leaders such as Juan Luis González, President of the Civil Assembly, and Gabriel Valdés, President of the Christian Democratic Party.

Reports from Gelbard and Galvin, together with those from Harry Barnes, U.S. Ambassador to Chile, made it clear that the center-right opposition in Chile had not been able to develop a viable alternative project. To the contray, the process of democratization had actually stagnated over the previous months. At the same time, the left had gotten stronger, the Communist Party had grown and the political initiative was increasingly in the hands of social organizations such as professional society, unions, student federations, slum-dwellers' associations and others.

Faced with this situation, the Reagan administration chose again to modify its tactics for dealing with Chile, deciding that it is necessary to back Pinochet, at least until the 1989 elections. The administration hopes, then, to buy time to be able to assure a favorable outcome in line with its own interests. Pinochet knows this and plans to take advantage of it. In a late December interview that appeared in Santiago, in the right-wing newspaper, *El Mercurio*, Pinochet stated, "Those who accuse me of hanging on to power are right." He added that some public figures in the U.S. make "illiterate judgements" about Chile.

In the meantime, there have been some changes in the opposition. The Socialist Party decided to leave the Democratic Alliance (AD) in hopes of building a single party uniting a variety of different socialist tendencies and recovering its own autonomy, both in relation to the Communist Party, as well as to the center-right. The Radical Party may also soon leave the AD in search of other alliances.

Finally, despite repeated efforts by the opposition and by progressive sectors in the Catholic Church to turn the decision around, the Pope has confirmed that he will travel to Chile in March of this year. Pinochet is already touting the visit as a sign of the Pontiff's "moral support."

At the same time that Pinochet announced the lifting of the state of siege and permission for 3500 exiles to return, he also added that new laws will be written and registration opened for the electoral process, in keeping with the country's calendar for its return to democracy.

Is this Pinochet's strength or his weakness? That remains an open question★

Ximena Ortúzar

Editor's Note: On issue no. 2, page 54, the painting "Dream and Foreboding" has been mistakenly attributed to María Izquierdo. In fact, it was painted by Remedios Varo.

Falklands or Malvinas: What's in a Name?

Great Britain and Argentina both insist on their claims over these islands in the South Atlantic Ocean.

Argentines suffer from an open wound that deeply troubles them: the British take-over of the Malvinas, or Falkland Islands, now further salted by the hundreds of young countrymen killed in 1982 during the war to recover the isles.

The 152 years of Argentine efforts to recover the lost territory are a long and painful story. For decades the issue was little more than a small note in the back pages of newspaper, usually concerning proposals or resolutions presented by Argentina in the United Nations. It became front-page news on April 2, 1982, and geopolitical analysts began to regard the conflict as a new critical point for world peace.

In an attempt to shore up its deteriorating political image, in 1982 the Argentine military rulers made the surprising decision to recover the Malvinas by force. The adventure ended up in total defeat and in a further loss of face for the dictatorship when less than three months after the initial assault on the islands, Argentina was forced to accept unconditional surrender. Hundreds of young men were killed and large numbers were maimed, mainly as a result of the bloody battles with Great Britain's powerful navy.

Many analysts believe this defeat sealed the downfall of the military regime, already deeply discredited because of the repression unleashed against the civilian population and the disappearance (kidnapping and usually murder) of thousands of people. Given the situation, and because of pressure by both Argentines themselves and world opinion, the military government was forced to hold democratic elections.

Once civilians returned to power under President Raúl Alfonsín, renewed use of diplomacy began to yield positive results in international forums such as the U.N. General Assembly. Yet in an interview with Argentine Ambassador to Mexico Roberto Tomasini, he told me that despite his government's efforts, Great Britain, "systematically insists on blocking any possible agreement and shields itself in an uncompromising policy that rests on the threat of military force."

STOKING THE FIRE

Last November 29, British Foreign Affairs Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe further opened the wound when he told the House of Commons that Margaret Thatcher's government had decided to set up a restricted area around the disputed islands in order to protect the region's animal life. The Argentine embassy in Mexico termed the decision "legally and politically unacceptable because it encompasses maritime space over which Argentina exercises rights of sovereignty and jurisdiction."

Before the war in 1982 England exercised its jurisdiction around the Malvinas over only three miles of patrimonial waters. After the conflict it set up a military "protection zone" of 150 miles, measured from the center of the archipelago. The prohibition was aimed only at Argentina; ships from all other nations were free to sail and fish in the area. Mr. Tomasini says this decision led to excessive exploitation of the area's fishing resources and has had a negative impact on the rest of Argentina's territorial waters.

A precedent was set for England's recent move when in mid-1985 the British government decided to regulate and control fishing in the area and presented a proposal to that effect to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO. "Under an apparently noble pretense, such as avoiding the depredation of marine life, (England) meant to bring the different countries with fishing interests in the area to the negotiating table, including Argentina," said Ambassador Tomasini. Yet this posed a dilemma for Argentina: if it refused it could be accused of being irresponsible and intransigent by blocking the praiseworthy intent to restrain fishing activity. On the contrary, accepting meant implicitly recognizing British sovereignty over both the islands and their territorial waters.

The Argentine government chose to denounce the proposal's implications and to leave research concerning the protection of marine life in the area to the FAO. Now, in an act of disrespect for the international community, Britain declared its "Administrative and Conservation Zone to Regulate Fishing" around the Malvinas, thus appropriating part of Argentina's territorial waters while at the same time discarding diplomatic

Photo by Archivo Novedades

Not all was war... students in Buenos Aires demanded a negotiated settlement

The Islands in Dispute

The Falklands or Malvinas are an archipelago centered around two main islands, Great Malvina and Soledad, separated by the San Carlos Strait. These two large islands, together with some 200 smaller ones, make up a total surface area of 7,324 square miles. They are located in the South Atlantic, off the Argentine Continental Platform, about 200 nautical miles east of the Patagonian Coast, at the level of the Gallegos River. The Malvinas are some 1,025 nautical miles south of Buenos Aires, and just 200 miles north-west of States Island, in the eastern end of Tierra del Fuego.

The archipelago was discovered by the Spanish ship San Antonio and incorporated into the kingdom's domains in 1526. Although they were attached to the crown, for years the islands remained uninhabited. French whalers landed on the isles in 1763, but Spain reclaimed its territory through diplomatic channels and eventually recovered the islands.

The British landed on the archipelago in 1766 and founded Port Egmont; under pressure from Spain, they shipped out in 1774. From that date on the Spaniards established a permanent settlement on the islands and exercised their jurisdiction. Following the Argentine revolution in 1810 and the country's independence in 1816, the newly formed native government succeeded Spain in exercising complete rights over all of the territory composing the Virreinato of Río de la Plata.

But a few years later, in 1833, the British frigate Clio forcibly occupied Port Soledad and dislodged the original population. The British Crown then set up its own colonial administration, and some 2,500 people were brought in to populate the islands. There are presently some 1,800 inhabitants in the Malvinas, all of them of British descent.

efforts to reach a negotiated settlement.

THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Gregorio Selser is a well known journalist and a professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM, who believes the British decision goes well beyond any mere philanthropic concern. For one thing, control over a considerable part of the Antarctic is involved. Mr. Selser's analysis is that, "If we keep in mind that the signatories of the Antarctic Treaty must meet sometime between 1989 and 1991, and include any other country permanently or intermittently occupying positions on the continent, we find that Great Britain has a powerful geo-political motivation, namely to assure itself a meaningful portion of the Antarctic. (It is probably) counting on the so-called "line of projection" which extends vertically from the Malvinas archipelago and the Shetland Islands, thus covering an enormous territory, perhaps the largest extension in the region."

Professor Selser is skeptical when speaking of Latin American solidarity, as he believes the issue "does not directly concern them because they have no interest in either the islands nor the Antarctic." But he believes there is another angle from which negative effects may be expected. Selser warns that the United States feigns neutrality —and calls on both countries to negotiate a solution— "when in fact the U.S. was by no means neutral during the Malvinas war," but rather supported Great Britain.

Mr. Selser also brought to mind the 1947 Rio Treaty, signed at the petition of the United States as a precaution against extra-continental attacks. Yet given another situation like the one in 1982, Selser believes the U.S. would again chose its European ally. "The real issue is the honesty and integrity with which the United States is adhering to the Rio Treaty, and this does affect relations with a good many Latin American countries."

SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS IF AND WHEN...

Both Ambassador Tomasini and Professor Selser agree that the main obstacle in the path of a negotiated settlement is Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. "So we must wait," says Mr. Selser, "until the inner workings of British politics remove her from power and a Labor government takes office. According to repeated statements by Labor Party leaders, it would then be possible to start talks that would allow a negotiated solution."

At any rate, it seems the enormous wealth that is believed to exist under more than 200 feet of ice, and the archipelago's strategic location from the military point of view, are both factors that make a solution to the conflict improbable in the short term. Thus, it is likely that the Malvinas, or Falkland Islands, will continue to constitute a risky issue for world peace. ★

Enrique Vargas Anaya

Overseas Development Council: Policy Advisor to Distant Neighbors

The ODC links policy-makers in the United States and Mexico

The U.S.-Mexico Project of the Overseas Development Council has worked to improve both communications and policy in U.S.-Mexican relations since its founding in 1979. Today, the Project serves as the major forum in Washington for policymakers from the public and private sectors of both countries for off-the-record discussion of critical bilateral issues.

This past June, Cathryn Thorup, U.S.—Mexico Project Director, and ODC Vice President, Richard Feinberg, were asked to testify at the Helms hearings on Mexico. As Mexico-bashing began to dominate the policy discussion in Washington, ODC stepped forth to stress the need for an enlightened, coordinated and farsighted U.S. policy toward Mexico. The dangers of a fragmented policy-making process were highlighted by the Helms hearings. As domestic and foreign policy issues become increasingly interwoven and as the stake increase, more actors —both public and private— demand a say in policy formulation. Certain domestic constituent interests may be well-served, but U. S. long-term interests in Mexico are not. President Reagan's invitation to President de la Madrid to meet with him in Washington was perhaps the clearest indication of the awareness in the aftermath of the hearings of the need to mend our southern fences.

While in Washington, President de la Madrid invited Victor H. Palmieri, Chairman of ODC's Board, John W. Sewell, President of ODC, Cathryn Thorup, Richard Feinberg and Guy F. Erb, Chairman of the U.S. - Mexico Policy Committee, to meet with him, expressing his support for the Council's extensive work on U.S. relations with Mexico.

With the return of Congress this fall, the U.S. – Mexico Project reinitiated the U.S.-Mexico Congressional Staff Workshop. In September, Stephen Lande of Manchester Associates, an international consulting firm based in Washington, spoke on U.S. Mexican trade relations. He pointed out the critical need for congressional staff members to be aware of the important implications of various legislative initiatives which, through not specifically geared red toward Mexico, could seriously affect the bilateral relationship. His presentation focused on H.R. 4800 —A Bill to Enhance the Competitiveness of America, which could have serious implications for Mexico's attempts to expand and diversify its exports and to liberalize its import regime. (For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Stephen Lande, "U.S. Omnibus Trade Bill—Future Damage to Mexico's Exporters", *Business Mexico*, August 1986).

The next Workshop will examine Mexico's recent debt relief package. Discussion will focus on the debate over whether this new agreement offers a real opportunity for sustained growth and reduced poverty in Mexico, or simply postpones the problem for the next two years, leaving the hard choices to President de la Madrid's sucessor. Dr. Norman Bailey of Colby, Bailey, Werner & Associates will be the speaker at this program.

As part of the U.S.—Mexico Seminar Series, Mariclaire Acosta, Executive Director of the Mexican Academy for Human Rights, spoke at ODC in late October. Controversy around human rights protection in Mexico has arisen in the United States during past years in response to certain highly publicized cases, but in general it receives insufficient attention despite its potential importance in the context of both Mexican domestic politics and U.S.-Mexican relations.

Tim Bennet of the Office of the U.S. Trade

Representative will be the speaker at the sixth U.S. - Mexico Congressional Staff Workshop in December. He will discuss the protection of intellectual property in Mexico, the impact of current laws on investment and technology transfer, and the pros and cons of newly proposed Mexican legislation. The protection of U.S. Intellectual property through patents, trademarks and copyrights is a concern of the Reagan administration with regard to many trading partners. The debate in Mexico focuses on pharmaceuticals and agricultural chemicals, both of which are currently non-patentable under Mexican law. The stated logic behind this is to allow Mexico to maintain control over inventions related to "priority" industrial sectors, generally considered to be any related to health and welfare. Current Mexican legislation is viewed in the U.S. as a disincentive for foreign investment, thus having a long-term impact on U.S. trade with Mexico.

In February 1987, ODC will publish a volume edited by Cathryn Thrup entitled *The United States and Mexico: Face to Face with New Technology*. The book will examine the impact of new development in technology on trade, investment and labor flows between the United States and Mexico. Ms. Thorup is also conducting research on bureaucratic structure and bilateral conflict which will culminate in a book entitled *Conflict Management in U.S. - Mexican Relations: The view from Washington.* Another addition to ODC's publications effort was the appearance in the April-June 1986 edition of *Foro Internacional* of "U.S. - Mexican Relations: The Issues Ahead", co-authored by Cathryn Thorup and Guy Erb, making this important analysis of the bilateral relationship much more accessible to the Mexican reader.

Beginning in December 1986, the project will examine domestic interest groups and their impact on the U.S. foreign policy process, focusing specifically on their impact on U.S. legislative initiatives affecting Mexico. Issues relating to Mexico are of concern to many different groups, each with its own agenda, often at odds with each other and with broader U.S. policy aims. This study will identify these groups and examine the mechanisms they use to influence U.S. policy towards Mexico.

ODC's U.S. - Mexico Project examines a broad array of issues affecting the bilateral relationship. If readers have suggestions for particular issues that they feel demand the attentions of a Washington-based policy-oriented audience, please contact us at 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., #501, Washington, D.C., 20036. ★

Aztecs Dance On in Modern Mexico

"Concheros" represent a vital link with Mexico's ancient culture.

The Aztec Dance is part of daily life in 13 states of the nation and in the Federal District. Dancers go from town to town on holidays, bringing with them living memory of the culture that flourished in these lands before the Spaniards arrived. Coordination exists among the groups of dancers and a kind of military hierarchy is still preserved.

The dance groups are waited on in a special manner by the townspeople they visit. A complex traditional form of social organization takes care of their lodging, food and drink, and sometimes even helps out with the expenses of their trip home. Their pilgrimage corresponds to fixed ritual dates that coincide with the traditional agricultural calendar, although they are often asked to dance at different places on non-traditional occasions.

The dancers use percussion, wind and string instruments. Among their percussion instruments are the ritual *huéhuetl* drum; the turtle shell that is struck with deer-horns; the *teponaxtle*, wood drums carved into animal shapes, and many different types of rattles. On their ankles the dancers wear butterfly cocoons sewn shut with pebbles inside that accompany the dance with a sound like a huge rattlesnake.

The wind instruments used include mandolins and the *conchas*, built from the shell of the armadillo, which is why the dancers are also called *concheros* (shell = concha). The two wind instruments played are the sea shell —used mainly to call or begin the ceremony— and the reed flute, which is used to accompany some of the dances.

Rather than being in danger of extinction, the Aztec Dance seems to be constantly renewed. In a seemingly continuous process, groups are formed that pick up new features, preserving tradition even though they are not born of an Indian community. Alfredo Ponce, who for ten years now has been part of the *Santo Niño de Atocha's mesa* (the dance group dedicated to the Child Saint of Antioch; each group is devoted to a different saint), is a good example of this. He's a mathematician specialized in computer science, dedicated for over 15 years to developing the different genres of traditional musical rhythms. With time he has earned the respect and affection of his fellow dancers and musicians, and "his words are starting to be listened to", as some of them said.

We interviewed Mr. Ponce on July 25, 1986, the longest day of the year, during a break in the dance taking place as usual every year on that date in the atrium of the Church of Santiago de Tlatelolco, at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (the Square of the Three Cultures: pre-Hispanic, colonial and modern) in Mexico City. His words are of special interest given that one of the main characteristics of the Aztec Dance is the jealously guared secrecy concerning the meaning of the ritual's different aspects.

THE ORIGINS OF THE AZTEC DANCE

The Dance of Conquest is a very old tradition. It is the Mexican zodiac in which each person contributes his effort and intent, his faith and caring so that these traditions are preserved, so that this message and humble inheritance handed down to us by our ancestors are not lost. Through these traditions we can come to understand how the world moves and how we ourselves move. Through these dances we have come to know our people and ourselves, and how to walk, sing, dance...

These are millennary dances, dances of work created to revere the elements; fire, earth, water and wind. Although they appeared as dances of work, they were eventually absorbed into the liturgy they are part of today, along with all the Catholic saints and rituals. These are *chichimeca* dances: *chichi* means red, and *mecatl* is the *mecate*, the blood-bond through which we have come to do these works, with the help and guidance of our leaders who have taught us the tunes, the steps and the meaning of each dance.

Following the Cholula Massacre[1], the dance sought refuge in the mountains. Father Hidalgo left the town of Dolores to unleash the struggle for independence with the dance as an insignia, an at the sanctuary he added the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Then the dance seems to have disappeared, and

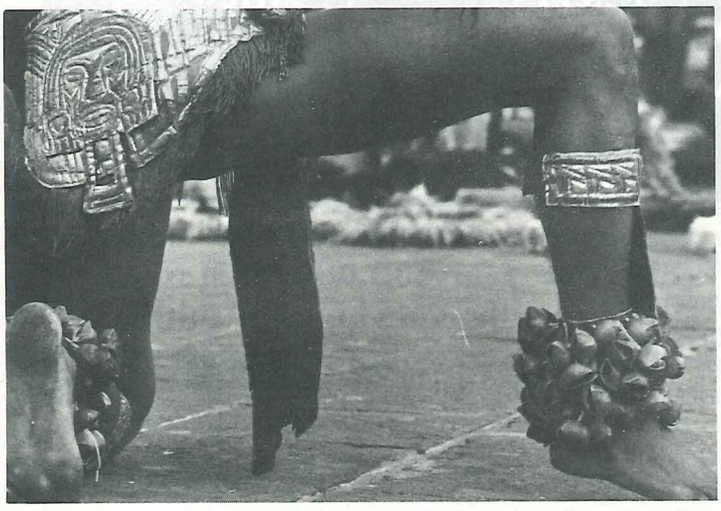


Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Rattles on their ankles are a distinguishing feature of the "concheros"

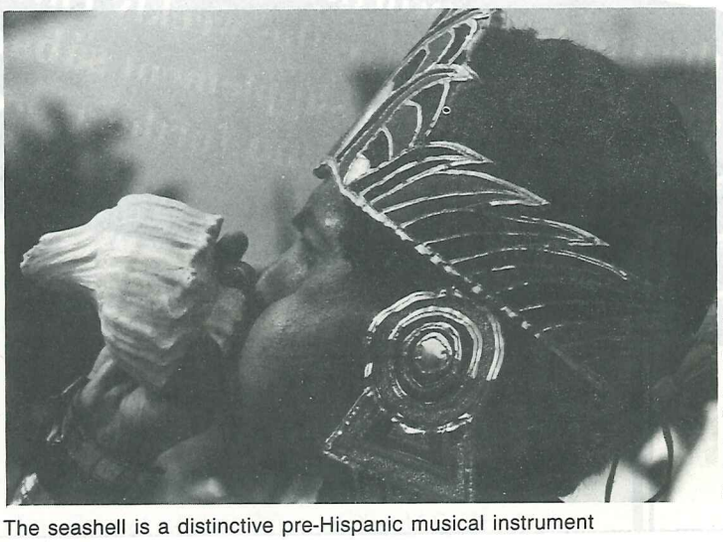


Photo by Rafael Bonilla

The seashell is a distinctive pre-Hispanic musical instrument

turns up again following the Reform Movement[2]. The dances surge forth once more in Tlaxcala, where the leaders held a meeting on the hill of La Malinche, and the word was heard again. A series of further persecutions still took place, when the Cristero War[3] raged. All of these things that old men have told us about don't appear in any book.

DECIPHERING A MUSICAL CODEX

The coreography of each of the dances is a constellation, enriched by the strenght of the dancer portraying it. This the solar rite, a very ancient one: the sun is at the center and perfumes the air with incense. Around the sun are the planets, and each one of us dancers is one of them. Each dancer has his own color, his own birth date, his profession, a town he comes from, forces that protect him.

The dance has taught us to "read". It is a musical language, a coreographical message. The remaining leaders —and we hope they will live for many years— have always taught us a way of being, a way of greeting we were formerly unfamiliar with. When I say, "How do you do?", it means "I come and present myself, and I am here to take orders, to work for this tradition, so that these Steps of Conquest are not lost."

The meaning of the dance varies from one dancer to another depending on his own field of work. The universal significance is that many of us with different ideologies, different beliefs and ways of struggling for survival, come together in a circle and join our strength to achieve a harmonious movement that at a certain point allows us to overcome fatigue —because group work or effort is the only thing that can really save us, isn't that so? We are worthless as isolated beings in the midst of humanity, lost in humanity.

Nobody pays us, nobody forces us to do what we do. The system of command for the dance, the way in which the orders are given is... —well, how would I say it— a very important inheritance that should be further studied to see how it can be helpful in meeting some of the problems we face today. For these are live traditions, not archaeological ones. Even though these traditions have been engraved in stone, they are alive because they have never ceased to be practiced, this work has never stopped, and we believe it never will. As you can see, over there are the children following in our footsteps and following in those of our grandfathers.

It is important that history be more than just a compendium of isolated events; we should see our country's live history. These traditions are closely linked to production. The people who have dances never go hungry, because they still respect the *tequio*, they still respect communal work and the images that are venerated. Even though the iconography has changed, the meanings remain the same: the four winds, the four elements. The numerology and mathematical information contained in the dance is incredible once you begin to study it. The coreography...there is much information in each of the dances... in the people who put them on, in the change of steps...it's an infinity.

PROBLEMS AND OUTLOOK

Most of the ancient leaders have disappeared, although there are still a few of them left. Not only must the dance struggle against financial hardship, it must also face up to the ignorance of many of our countrymen. Many people have helped the dance continue, but unfortunately, in our country the dance is mostly taken into account for folkloric events, and that is really not our intention. We are not artists. We are dancers of the Conquest. Our Indian world has been segregated mainly out of ignorance, and we still don't know ourselves today. The focus may be anthropological, archaeological or ethnological, but it is always fragmentary, it's never a broad focus. These are fragmentary focuses on our society which never truly encompass reality.

The people come together; when it is necesary to come together around a specific act or activity, they do so. We consider work a ritual, not a hardship or a drag. This is the concept of work, the idea of work that our countrymen —whatever ethnic group they may belong to— have preserved. We have seen how the people who have dances never go hungry because they always have work. And if you have a poor crop, or you lose your crop altogether, someone will help you out. Yet these are social interrelationships that can't exist unless our coexistence is kept alive. We believe the dance —even though our subsistence is precarious— is a still-burning ember of a brilliant culture, of a great culture we trust will rise again. ★

[1] The Cholula Massacre took place in 1559 and was ordered by Hernán Cortés, shortly after the conquest. Cholula was one of the main centers of pre-Hispanic life.

[2] The Reform Laws included, among others, the separation between church and state and the confiscation of church property. These laws were passed by Benito Juárez in 1859, when the civil war between liberals and conservatives came to an end. The leaders of the Dance held a meeting in San Luis de la Paz, Guanajuato, shortly after the Reform Laws were approved.

[3] The Cristero War took place during the 1920's between orthodox conservative Catholics and the revolutionary government that was trying to enforce the separation between church and state.

Photo by Jackie Buswell

Women also participate, both as dancers and musicians

Ricardo Montejano, TRABAJADORES DE LA COMUNICACION

Community Effort Makes Carnival Fun

Despite the economic crisis, music and festivities are still alive and well

Carnival in Mexico reflects the various cultural influences that make up the nation: Aztec, Mayan, Spanish, Moorish, African and modern. The Dance of the Moors and the Christians, dances that represent various animals and a variety of musical forms, illustrate this rich cultural blend that is today's Mexico. Gobi Stromberg de Pellizi is a U.S. -born anthropologist who has lived in Mexico for the last 15 years and has become an expert on the country's popular culture.

In Mexico, *Carnaval* is the time when daily life gives way to the celebration – the enacting and representation of the forces that emanate from the domain of the *carnal*, the flesh and the "material" world. Music, dance, spectacle, theatrical-type representations, costumes, masks, gestures, ritual enactment, staging, ceremony, procession, effigies, food, and drinks, all go into the production and ritual of Carnival.

As daily life is suspended, each entire village (and thus, the "universe") enters a special dimension of time and space —one of wildness, humor, nature, and the instinct, in which animals and strange beings make their appearance. Some are terrifying, others ludicrous and sardonic: men dressed as women, dancers covered with sheepskins, paint, costume, and a motley of incorporated materials, including shoeboxes and paper bags. The corresponding behavior and staging gives the environment of Carnival its particular character. Wild creatures stalk young maidens, splattering their victims with red paint; men dressed in female attire join male partners, engaging in humorous sexual and lewd behavior; others mount bulls, run over fire, climb poles and ropes, while the community merges with the excitement and suspense of the event. The objects that are utilized include material structures (platforms, ladders, poles), flags, fireworks, dolls, sticks, sugar cane, horses, animal figures, and the traditional ceremonial objects, among others.

Photo by Renzo Góstoli

The Tarahumara Indians of Chihuahua cover their faces with white paste

Not only is daily life put aside, but the legal, political and religious institutions are also subjected to theatrical representation, spoof, and mockery. The same is true for social conventions; not only the local ones (marriage, authority, ceremony, etc.), but also those of outsiders, their behavior, appearance, and "modernity."

The forms that these events take are as varied as the cultures and regions that comprise the broad mosaic which is Mexico. Likewise, the wide variation in the celebrations reflects this diversity, and is manifested in each community's particular blend of historical roots and contemporary elements, whether pre-Hispanic, Spanish, Moorish, or African, or the spontaneous incorporation of modern-day items.

For instance, the day-long passion play, *Moros y Cristianos* ("The Moors and the Christians"), a version of Charlemagne's campaign to christianize "pagan" Europe and evict the Moors, prevails in the Nahua communities. Among the Chamula in the Maya Highlands, the *Carnaval* culminates with hundreds of men in costume, decked with pointed hats and streams of colored ribbons and flags, running across fire. In others, ancient ceremonies are enacted in which the rites and behaviour are portrayed humorously and even ridiculed. Drawing on the vast repertoire of ceremonies, rites, music, and dances, each community represents its own. Usually, anywhere from 5 to 20 dances are included, some of which are specifically designated for this occasion. They might include for instance, dances of animals *(Tigres, Zopilotes, Venados*; meaning tigers, buzzards and deer), of old people *(Viejitos, Xochipisawa, Los ocho locos)*, of strength and valor *(Pescados, Vaqueros, Moctezuma)*, of young maidens *(Pastoras, Corona, Bola)*, of conquest figures and other outsiders *(Moros, Chinos, Cimarrones, Gachupines)*. All of the dances are imbued with an either overt or implied esoteric content, and are often delivered repetitively, for hours, evoking a trance-like state.

The stage of the Carnival is the entire village. The various events take place either sequentially or simultaneously at the home of the *mayordomo* (the fiesta's ritual sponsor), in the atrium or within the church, in the plaza, at the town-hall, at a ritual center, and in private homes. The Carnival is unremitting, never set in a single place; the crowds constantly move from one area to another.

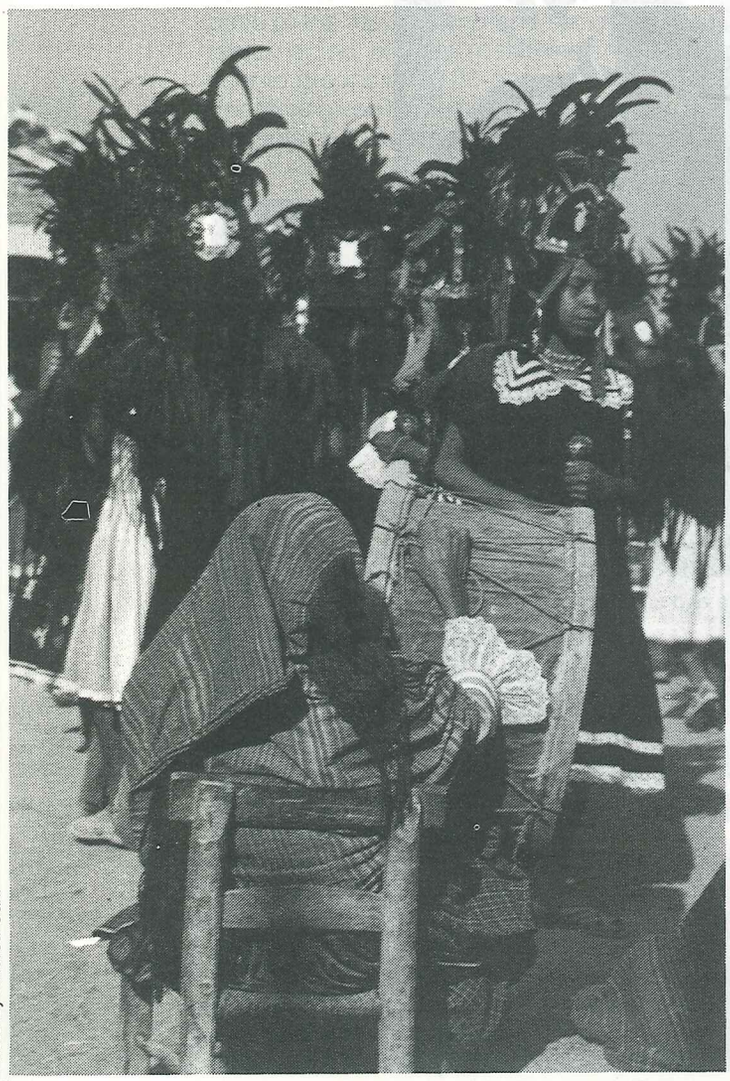


Photo by Andrea Carli

The Dance of the Crown

Photo by Andrea Carli

The local band plays continuously for days in Xalitla, Guerrero

As is the case of other *fiestas*, some elements of Carnival are European, brought to Meso-America by the missionaries who used them to further the conversion of the Indians, the endeavor considered by some to be the "real" beginning of the Conquest. However, its adoption by the Indians hinged on the existence of certain cultural affinities, a "predisposition", or a coincidence between the existing and adopted (or even imposed) elements; a requisite for the adoption and the persistence through time of *any* new form. Carnival in Europe, still considered to be a "pagan" fest, is pre-Christian; while tolerated, what remains still exists outside the ecclesiastical confines. It may have had its origins as an end-of-winter celebration, the termination of the darkness, although it coincidentally precedes the Holy Week Celebration of the Resurrection. Through the rituals of the *carnal*, it provides a bacchanalian catharsis or discharge prior to the Atonement.

In the case of pre-Hispanic and contemporary Mexico, the issue is much more complex. While in many places Carnival is celebrated at the same time that it is in Europe, it often takes place in Mexico on the 2nd of February, the Aztec and Maya New Year (according to Sahagún), or ar any time between the celebration of the Dead and of the Resurrrection. In a few Mexican villages Carnival is even held during Holy Week, and as in most Mexican celebrations, includes some of the Holy Week elements, particulary the fertility and purification rites.

Before the Conquest, each of the 20-day Aztec and Maya months was associated with a deity in whose honor a monthly *fiesta* was performed, as well as a myriad of moveable feasts. We have detailed accounts of these *fiestas* provided by Bernardo Sahagún and Fray Diego Durán, among others, that describe elaborate purification and fertility rites, including cleansing ceremonies with water, smoke, and fire, ritual dances, chants, offerings, and human sacrifice. What is now known as *Carnaval* can be associated with the five days that remain from the 260-day pre-Hispanic calender. Known among the Aztecs as the *nemontemi*, they were the superfluous, left-over days of bad luck and of non-being and coincide with the days between the 28th of January and the First of February. February 2nd marks the beginning of

Photo by Andrea Carli

Dancers wear black and emerald plume and colored ribbons for the "Dance of the Crown"

the Aztec New Year, and is also the *Díá de la Virgen de la Candelaria* and the day that the image of the Christ child, which many villagers keep in their homes, is taken by the image's owners and "godparents", to church to be baptized.

In spite of its spontaneous and wild appearance, Carnival does not just "happen"; it requires a singular, physical and economic effort by a large number of people. The preparations take place many months in advance. Certain elements, like the dances and the music, are learned and rehearsed on an ongoing basis and performed at other *fiestas*. Because of the dimension of the celebration, which includes not only the entire community, but many visitors, relatives and friends, the mere procuring of the necessary food and drink, aside from the music, fireworks, effigies, dolls, ritual offerings, flags, and the myriad of other items, represents an enormous effort by many.

Food represents one of the particularly ritual aspects. What is served adheres to the traditional and ceremonial prescriptions. *Mole* is the most commonly served ritual meal, although other ritual dishes also exist, such as *pozole*, meat broths, tamales, etc. Generally, the *mole* and the beans and rice are still cooked in huge clay vats on an open fire in the patio of the *mayordomo* and served on large tables or on *petates* (palm matting) on the floor to groups of 20-30 people, each in turn. Priority is given to feeding the most active participants and visitors. Some villages slaughter one of the community's cattle to insure ample supply for those who travel to attend the celebration, All, and often the entire community, many hundreds, are fed at the *mayordomo's* home.

The preparation is elaborate. The *mayordomo's* wife is assisted by a small group of women who are bound by their *cargo* (socio-ritual position); but the actual preparation requires usually from 20 to 50 women to grind each of the many ingredients for the *mole*. The drink likewise, follows the traditional and ceremonial prescriptions; whether it be the Maya *posh* (made from maize and honey) or the Aztec *pulque* (made from maguey). Each community also uses its local recipies of blends and herbal *curados* (fermented fruit beverages).

Furthermore, the communities capacity to produce the Carnival depends largely upon the existence of the local social and economic institutions that make the organization of this highly-complex event possible. Like most other Mexican *fiestas* and ceremonies, the Carnival depends heavily on the *mayordomía*, the system of positions and responsibilities whereby certain villagers, often those who have been more prosperous or have demonstrated a particular capacity, are accorded by the community certain key organizational roles and a share of the economic burden; the provision and preparation of the great quantity of food for the musicians, dancers, and other participants, or for the entire village.

Photo by Francesco Pellizzi

Chamula Indians congregate in the church atrium with colored flags

When not the responsibility of the *mayordomía*, The Carnival's productions may fall within the domian of the local authorities —the *Municipio* or the *Comisaría* wherein the local officials assume the duties and responsabilities of the *mayordomos*, collecting the financial contributions, organizing events, and preparing the food.

Those responsible for a major *fiesta* like the Carnival have most likely already gone through a whole series of ascending positions or *cargos*, depending on the relative rank of the Carnival in comparison to the other *fiestas* in each particular community. The hierarchy of the *fiesta* determines the rank of its ritual sponsor, and Carnival is always high in the list.

Photo by Andres Carli

A *Huezquixtle*, male in female attire. carries a rolled-up *petate* (palm-woven mat)

The dances, spectacles, theatrical and other representations are organized independently, usually by the older men or women, who seek out the adults or children whom they feel would be good participants, and organize instruction, the collaboration of the musicians and rehearsals. The musicians are available for these *fiestas* either by payment of through a system whereby they fulfill a community *cargo* precisely by playing at the *fiestas*, and are exempt from their communal work obligations. Playing continuously for several days requires considerable stamina, which is fortified with a good supply of alcohol.

Thus, a not so visible but central feature of the Carnival is precisely the affirmation of the collective body which functions and operates as a unit. Through the strenght of its organizational existence, the social unit is able to meet and overcome economic hardships independently from the dominant political and economic conditions and structures, for which the interests of the community may not be the central priority.

Contrary to the supposition that popular *fiestas* are on the wane, recent years have seen an upsurge and spread of *Carnaval*. Yet, the current economic crisis that has so strikingly affected the economies of the rural populations, presents a serious threat to the communities and to the celebrations that represent their identity as such. As the crisis intensifies, the *fiestas* have become harder to produce as the villages' meager surpluses vanish and increasingly large numbers of men (and women) leave in a desperate search for a living, either in the cities or as agricultural laborers, in other regions of the country or in the Unites States. Still, the luckier ones send back monney not only to their families, but also to their communities, precisely through the *fiesta cargo* system. Many fulfill other *mayordomía* tasks as well, even when they are not able themselves to return to the *fiesta*. In these cases their relatives represent them in the ceremonial and ritual roles.

Tino López, a young master potter, friend and anthropological informant, appeared last year in his native Tlayacapan, Morelos, after six months' absence, on the opening day of Carnival. He explained to a group of students from the National School of Anthropology that in five days he would return to his job in Los Angeles. "All of us who are up there in the North come back home at least once a year for our *fiesta*; to be here, with our family and our pueblo."

As the rural communities have suffered increasing impoverishment over the past years, the outside observer may consider the *fiestas* and Carnivals to be an injustified extravagance. In fact, *fiestas* distribute the limited wealth to the poorer. "Venga, aunque sea por esta vez, vamos a comer." (Come, at least for now, we shall eat."), has many subtle implications. Carnival is one of the many ways that Mexican people creatively transcend the different levels of life's trials and hardship. ★

Gobi Stromberg de Pellizzi

Political Novels Fascinate Mexican Readers

Many of the recent best-sellers point to the next presidential succession.

It's impressive how many titles related in one way or another to political themes you find these days on new book tables in Mexico City bookstores. A number of them are particularly noteworthy because of the publicity they've received and because they were so quickly sold out. Among these are *México negro (Black Mexico)*, by Francisco Martín Moreno, on oil in Mexico since the beginnig of the century and *Los Presidentes (The Presidents)*, by Julio Scherer García, about the country's last four presidents. And not to be left behind are *Memorias (Memoirs)*, by Gonzalo N. Santos (in its third edition by January 1987, despite a hefty price tag), *Desde la trinchera (From the Trenches)*, by Heberto Castillo and *Personajes (Personalities)*, by Francisco Martínez de la Vega.

There were also three novels published in 1985 that were particulary noteworthy because of the ways in which they dealt with politics or because real events were used to set the context. Vicente Leñero's *Asesinato (Assassination*; now in its fifth edition), rigorously woven from archives and press clippings, is more than simple reporting or testimony; it is a search for truth. The book is about the murder of Gilberto Flores Muñoz, ex-governor of Nayarit and a presidential contender in 1958, until in an unexpected move, then President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines proposed Adolfo López Mateos as his succesor. Flores was killed together with his wife. Asunción Izquierdo de Flores, better known by her last pen name, Ana Mairena, used for her novel *Los Extraordinarios (The Extraordinary Ones)*.

Héctor Aguilar Camin's *Morir en el golfo (To Die on the Gulf)* is based on the murder of Manuel Buendía, a highly-respected commentator whose column, "Private Network," was widely read and discussed. The story's narrator (also a journalist) makes contact with the leader of the oilworkers' union and other figures who hold important government positions. This allows him to get to know the intricacies of the government apparatus and the ways it exercises power.

Finally, *Arráncame la vida (Tear Out My Life)*, by Angeles Mastretta, is set in the 1940s, during the Avila Camacho administration. It also deals with the use of power. Catalina Guzmán, the narrator and main character, tells the story of her life alongside Andrés Ascencio, a character modeled after Maximino Avila Camacho, a general in the revolution and brother of the President, who was quite enthused about the idea of one day being his succesor. It reveals the intrigues and manuveurs of those in high government places.

All of these books have something to do with politics, either because the author is or has been involved in Mexican politics, because the events and people portrayed have been closely tied to the country's political life or because the characters and events are based on real life political figures or real incidents. For example, Gonzalo N. Santos was once Mexico's ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg, a member of the Senate and governor of San Luis Potosí, his native state. After a run-in with then President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958), however, he turned down an offer to become ambassador to Guatemala and retired to "El Gargaleote," his ranch that he refers to as "my provostship."

Julio Scherer Garcia's *Los presidentes* deserves special comment. From his own vantage point, he tells of his relationships with Presidents Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970), Luis Echeverría Alvarez (1970-1976) and José López Portillo (1976-1982), Scherer also tells why it has been impossible to date for

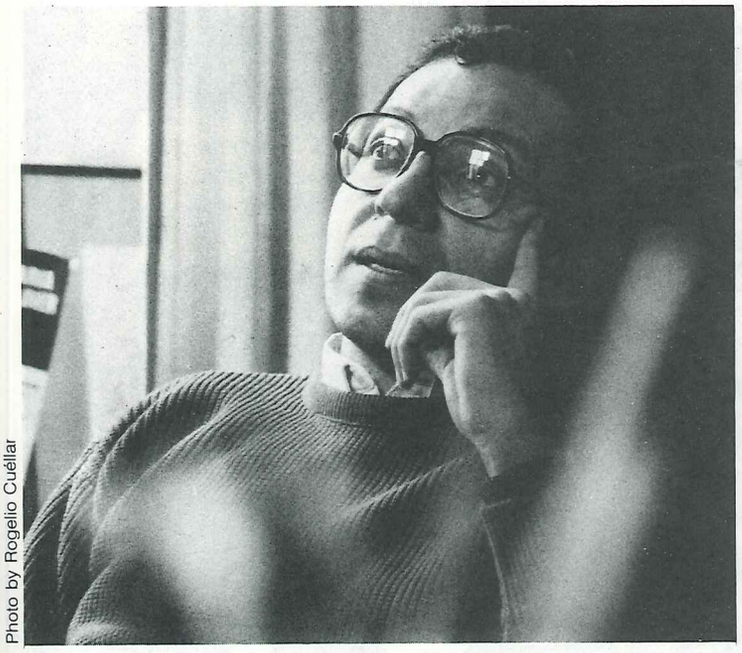


Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar

Héctor Aguilar Camin is also Sub-director of *La Jornada*, a Mexico City daily

Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar

Leading novelist Angeles Mastretta

him or any of the other journalists at *Proceso*, the news weekly that he directs, to get an interview with President Miguel de la Madrid.

Scherer recalls significant moments in the López Mateos presidency (1958-1964), dwelling on events leading to the designation of Díaz Ordaz as his successor. He also provides glimpses of former Presidents Lázaro Cárdenas and Ruiz Cortines, as well as of Latin American heads of state he has interviewed, among them Papa Doc Duvalier of Haiti and General Stroessner of Paraguay. In addition, Scherer gives new details on his ouster as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Excélsior* in 1976, during the Echeverría administration. While that story has already been masterfully told by Vicente Leñero in *Los periodistas* (The *Newspapermen*), published in 1978, and by others involved in the case, no one can question Scherer's right to tell the facts as he lived them. When Scherer talks about former presidents, he provides fascinating insights into Mexico's high-powered political circles.

One of the stories Scherer tells is of a dinner party at the home of Daniel Cosío Villégas, a prominent Mexican intellectual. President Echeverría and several close aides were invited, as were two other intellectuals, Octavio Paz and Víctor Urquidi. The main topic of conversation was the relationship of intellectuals to power and criticism. The president and all those present openly expressed their points of view. Scherer wanted to reproduce the discussion as completely as possible and asked Octavio Paz to write up the points he had made that Saturday evening. Sherer includes Paz' reply, in which he explained that the conversation concerned the role of intellectuals in modern society and that the freedom with which everyone expressed their opinions was "admirable." Paz also wrote:

"...the intellectual plays a critical role in today's world. He may not be the conscience of society, but he is its eyes and tongue. The intellectual says what he sees and what he hears; he is the witness and the spokesperson of his time. Thus, the simultaneously intimate and contradictory character of his relationship with government power" (page 82).

It's no coincidence that these books are appearing just now. Publishing works of this type when the time for presidential succession comes around is practically a tradition in Mexico. The "political season" usually begins about a year before the socalled *destape* (revelation or unveiling), when the presidential candidate for the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, is announced. It's then that the real political campaigning takes place, between different contenders and factions within the ruling party. The season comes to a close when the new president-elect takes office.

The last book in this genre during the previous "political season" was published by Elena Poniatowska in 1983, shortly after De la Madrid took office (December 1, 1982). *Domingo siete (Sunday Seven)* quickly sold out three editions. The author's fame for her courageous honesty and outspoken way of calling things by their rightful name helped make the book so popular. In addition, the book reproduces interviews with the seven presidential contenders in the 1982 race, including Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, candidate for the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) and the first woman to ever run for president in Mexico. The title, *Domingo siete*, is taken from a children's book and has a two-fold meaning: the elections were held on a Sunday, and there were seven contenders that year.

There seem to be even more "political season" books now than ever before. This, combined with the great variety of topics and analysis, points to the difficulties underlying the upcoming presidential succession. It will probably be the most delicate and complex since Manuel Avila Camacho replaced Lázaro Cárdenas in 1940, over the rebellious opposition of General Andreu Almazán.

Intellectuals in Latin American have traditionally played the contradictory role of being critical of institutions, while at the same time maintaining close ties with government power. One of the peculiarities of this relationship in our country is the periodic flood of political literature, a phenomenon that is no doubt associated with the *sui generis* nature of Mexican presidential succession. ★

María Rosa Fiscal

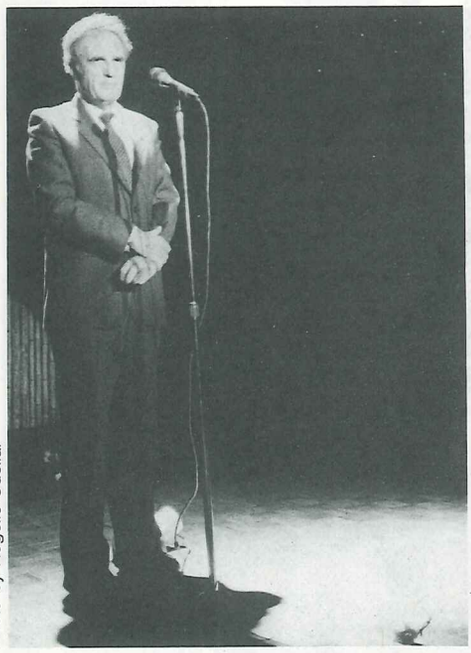


Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar

Julio Scherer heads *Proceso*, Mexico's leading weekly news magazine

Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar

Elena Poniatowska is Mexico's principal writer

Photo by Rogelio Cuéllar

Author Vicente Leñero

Paradise To Be Regained

Pollution in Acapulco ins threatening the country's best-known tourist resort.

Still considered to be one of the country's three most attractive tourist centers for national and international visitors, the Port of Acapulco is also a city with all of the common problems related to industrial and demographic growth.

Acapulco is one of the major marine fishing centers in the state of Guerrero. As a deep-sea port for coastal traffic, it also has a large concentration of port-related services, including 5 shipping agencies and 9 customs houses. Eleven foreign and one national sea cargo lines use the port, providing regular service to the United States, Central America, South America, the Caribbean and the Far East, 46 countries in all.

Without a doubt, Acapulco is tremendously important for the country because of its natural potential and as a source of foreign exchange income. Nonetheless, it is beset by problems that transcend those normally associated with tourism. It suffers from the effects of anarchic growth produced by the unrestrained, entrepreneurial drive in the tourist industry and the politics of planning for the port.

Acapulco produces close to a thousand tons of garbage a day, about 1 kilo per inhabitant (in Mexico City, the daily production per person is 722 grams). Yet the city has only 40 garbage trucks and 4 open-air dumps, without sanitary filling. In addition, according to data from the Planning Office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources, the rivers that empty into the bay dump some 44,000 metric tons of total solids into it, of which 560 are oils and fats.

Last September 8, the Minister of Urban Development and Ecology, Manuel Camacho Solís, announced a series of measures to clean up the Bay and the Black Lake of Puerto Marquez. Administered through the Ministry's Acapulco Bay Program, close to $9 million (U.S.) will be invested in the clean-up project. Included are the construction and rehabilitation of the 120 kilometer-long drainage system. At the same time, he announced the closing of the Pacific Cellulose Plant, the major polluter of the Papagayo River, principal source of potable water for the Acapulco area.

Despite these official measures to bring the bay's pollution problem under control, the difficulties related to the unprogrammed growth of a vacation-center city continue to multiply. For example, some 40% of the population doesn't have access to the sewage system. According to Alfonso Ciprés Villarreal, architect, President of the Mexican Ecological Movement and coordinator of a multi-disciplinary study on pollution in the Bay, the problem is very serious. He explains, "Acapulco is a closed and shallow bay, where the natural exchange of waters takes some 5 to 15 years. Thus, it is urgent to treat the sewage waters before they enter the Bay. And artificial means are needed to speed its water exchange process, using mechanical systems with injectors or water jets to

Photo by Sergio Dorantes

Uncontrolled urban development is leading to the ruin of a tourists' paradise

move the water out into the open sea."

There are 273 hotels with a total of 17,000 rooms in Acapulco. The hotels, together with the restaurants, pour some 5 tons of concentrated detergents into the Bay each year, the by-product of their efforts to keep their installations clean and their services hygienic. According to the above mentioned study, in just 13 years, these residues could totally destroy the marine flora and fauna in the area.

The fact that Acapulco is so close to Mexico City (just 418 kms.) is an important factor in the rapid increase of national tourism to the bay area. Most of the people from the capital who go there on vacation have never read the official material on the ecological situation, and therefore are not yet conscious of the importance of preserving our non-renewable resources. Just between 1970 and 1980, the total number of tourists, national and international, increased by more than 50%.

By 1975, some 45% of Acapulco's economically active population, was employed in the service sector, in large part because of the tourist industry's capacity to generate jobs. This situation has attracted large numbers of job-seekers to the area. Yet the industry has not been able to absorb all of the influx, and slowly but surely Acapulco is becoming a city of tremendous contrasts, between those who use or benefit from the great concentration of services and those who are seriously marginalized.

The result is the anarchic use of soil resources, the oversaturation of existing transportation systems and constant displacements of the population. The *Renacimiento* neighborhood project reflects many of these problems. Plagued by irregularities since it was established on nationally expropriated lands in 1978, this urban housing project, according to Cipres Villarreal, "is less functional than any other one like it, anywhere in the world, both in relation to the deceptive way in which people were pushed out of their human communities and to their relocation into a swamp. Now *Renacimiento* is just one more ecological problem and one more urban development problem for Acapulco. They will have to totally reurbanize and relocate service areas such as markets, schools and administrative offices."

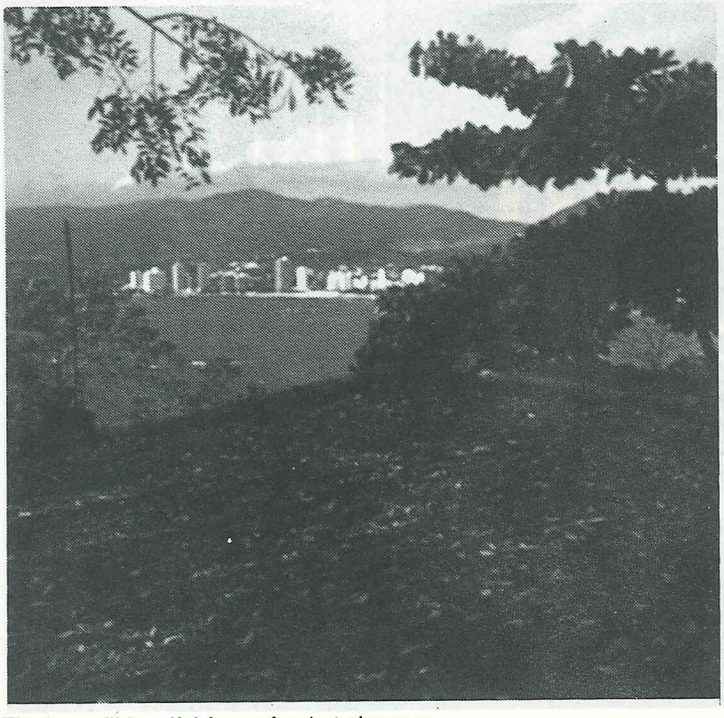


Photo by Sergio Dorantes

The bay still beutiful from afar, but closer up

In fact, the Acapulco Trusteeship, a body made up of federal, state and local authorities to promote the city's economic and social development, issued a study which acknowledges that since 1983 "the attraction of significant migration to the area has produced chaotic urban growth and meant that equipment and infrastructure are inadequate to satisfy residents' needs. Urban underdevelopment is serious, the differences between residents and visitors, extreme. Social injustice is a daily fact of life."

Photo by Sergio Dorantes

Overpopulated beaches call for visionary sanitary policies

The current state government is hoping to promote more rapid industrial growth, with the idea that local industries could meet some of the demand for industrial products (beds, matresses, milk products, etc.) generated by tourism. Government feasibility studies show that Acapulco has a large enough industrial base to warrant the construction of an "industrial park." Nonetheless, within the existing develpment framework, such a measure will probably exaverbate the area's pollution problems.

There are many problems to be faced in the Acapulco bay and port area. They range from water pollution to irrational industrial and agricultural development to overpopulation and unsatisfied housing needs. Once again, Ciprés Villarreal's comments are to the point, "The poisoning of a bay is irreversible when it happens in an integral fashion...thus, we are interested in specific solutions for social and ecological problems. Above all else, we need environmental education for officials and hotelkeepers, and we must integrate the interests of all those involved in the problem. More than an ecological matter, it is a problem of social organization."

Perhaps we need to turn back the clock to the moment when this quiet fishing village began its dizzying transformation into the country's most important tourist center. Perhaps, that way, by learning from past mistakes, tourism, the so-called "non-polluting industry," could continue to be the base for this invaluable economic enclave and to support integrated development for a population that lives along one of the world's most beautiful beaches. ★

Ernesto Rojas

Antonio Lazcano, Student of the Origin of Life

Young Mexican biologist says science is ship-wrecked in this country.

It's no secret that there are now bacteriological weapons that are much more terrible than even the atomic bomb. The industrialized countries have placed great importance recently on microbiological research and prioritized its application in the development of arms technology.

Nonetheless, science, just like art, always escapes from reductionism and utilitarianism. Microbiology, beyond its uses in weapons development, is also providing important new insights into the fascinating question of the origin of life and fresh, new approaches to understanding the many ecosystems now threatened by urban and industrial growth.

Microbiology in Mexico is contributing to solving problems related to health, the protection of endangered ecosystems, the utilization of natural resources and even the definition of our culture.

Antonio Lazcano, young Mexican biologist dedicated to the study of the origin of life, is convinced of the importance of microbiology for the country's development. He, like many other scientists in the country, is committed to supporting work in this field, despite the obstacles created by the economic crisis and the resulting lack of resources.

Lazcano worked with Oparin (1896-1980), a Soviet scientist reknown for his theory on the origin of life and a pioneer of modern biology. He has also collaborated with other distinguished scientists in the field, including Lynn Margulis, one of the most important microbiologists in the U.S., best known for her work on the evolution of cells, and Juan Oro, a Catalonian working at the University of Houston on NASA projects related to the origin of life on earth and other parts of the universe.

Despite the many opportunities offered him through his international experience, Lazcano has chosen to stay in Mexico. He will not become a part of the "brain-drain", as he describes it, "the emigration of scientists to the First World due to better job offers and working conditions."

Lazcano has his laboratory at the National School of Biological Sciencies, which was closed for 14 months after being seriously damaged in the 1985 earthquake. He is both a teacher and a researcher, in a country where these two activities are often unrelated and where bacterial microbiology is still not fully appreciated.

Lazcano's team of biologists is working to recover the tradition begun by Alfonso Herrera, an early 20th century Mexican scientist who developed an original theory on microorganisms, based on some 40 years of research. Herrera developed an integrative theory that sought a physico-chemical explanation for biological, social, psychological and other phenomenae. For Antonio Lazcano, the recovery of Herrera's work represents an important contribution to the history of science in Mexico.

Another part of their work also deals with the microbial mats found in the country's different ecosystems. "We have discovered that microbial mats are much more abundant than what we had thought. We want to understand the nature of the ecological relationships in those communities and extrapolate the findings to the study of fossil residues.* All of us who work on the early evolution of life believe that the present-day microbial mats are models of past ones."

Their third project, and Lazcano's specialty, is to understand how the first proteins were formed, using the study of ribonucleic acid. "Together with students at the National Autnomous University (UNAM) and the National Polytechnical Institute, we have already identified the first protein. Living beings have used it for more than 3.5 billion years. This finding will help us to establish an evolutionary marker and develop phylogenetic trees.** We will get an idea of the evolutionary relationship between quite separate groups of organisms, which we wouldn't be able to do otherwise. Some people have asked if anyone is going to pay for this. That's absurd."

Antonio's enthusiasm for his research has not diminished despite the scarcity of resources; he continues to explain his work, holding a small fragment of material from the Guerrero Negro swamps in Baja California. "See this rock? This green color is from a kind of bacteria. They are the present day representatives of the first organisms that freed oxygen on the earth. Plants and animals owe their existence to the grandparents of these bacteria. This red layer indicates the presence of another bacteria that lets off sulfuretted acid, indispensible for the formation of amino acids that all of us need. The integration of all these organisms is what makes life on earth possible. We believe that for about 3 billion years the only life on earth was bacterial. That gives us an idea of their importance."

Two decades ago, the study of bacteria was simply aimed at being able to prevent their pathogenic effects. Today scientists consider bacteria to be a special kingdom among living things, the same category given to plants and animals, and their study has taken on important new dimensions.

In addition, modern food processing and packing techniques, including conserving, canning, dehydration and pasteurization, have all but eliminated the danger of contamination from even a single bacteria. But very few people know that the number of bacteria in our mouth is greater than the total number of people who have ever lived on the earth; or that in a small scratch of the gum, there can be 109 bacteria in each square centimeter of tissue.

"Microbiology," explains Lazcano, "has become a basic field from an agricultural point of view. Bacteria cycle elements such as nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur, which are essential for crops. It's become an indispensable tool in genetic engineering. Usually when we think about bacteria, we think about infections. But we don't think very much about the fact that we descended from bacteria. We are really highly inter-related bacterial communities."

* The microbial mats in question are the contemporary equivalents of the fossil micro-organism communities that dominated the earth for some 2.5 billion years.

** That is, the marker will allow them to follow the evolutionary past of groups of organisms, and even some viruses, and to develop detailed evolutionary histories of the interrelationships between them.

The study of the early forms of life has few direct applications to industry or agriculture. In Mexico, there is a strong belief that the country's many needs and problems demand a very strong emphasis on applied science research. Antonio explains, "I can't expect immediate, practical fruits from my work. But it would be a mistake to only support projects that can be quickly applied. The division between pure science and applied science is a false dichotomy, an unnecessary divorce that should be avoided. Some mathematical techniques were considered to be absurd just a few years ago. Now it turns out that they are indispensible for developing new information and computer technologies."

Nonetheless, the distinction between basic and applied science is less and less an issue in Mexico. Now, the question is whether any kind of scientific research will be able to survive.

"I think there's a very uneven distribution of resources," states Antonio Lazcano. "University schools, even though they integrate teaching and research, have only a minimum of equipment, libraries, full-time faculty, etc. compared to specific Mexican research centers like the ones for Nitrogen Fixation, Genetic Engineering, Physics, Astronomy or Mathematics. It is also true that there are a number of researchers, who because of their age, experience or membership in some professional association simply don't think about the crisis because it hasn't meant a significant decline in their own resources. This isn't the responsibility of those privileged research centers, but rather a reflection of the country's general structure."

"I think," he adds "that Mexico never prepared for the crisis. There was never any collective spirit to suggest creating huge libraries for everyone's use, for lots of people and institutions. To the contrary, we're now having to cancel subscriptions to journals, can't buy books, and that isolates us from scientific production. It is a serious problem since our own capacity to develop new knowledge is truly less."

From Lazcano's point of view, science is shipwrecked in Mexico. The research budget in the country is now less than the minimum recommended by UNESCO. The national productive plant depends on technological patents developed in other countries. Educational possibilities are more and more limited. "I think the crisis is producing a contraction in the Mexican educational system, in its scientific apparatus."

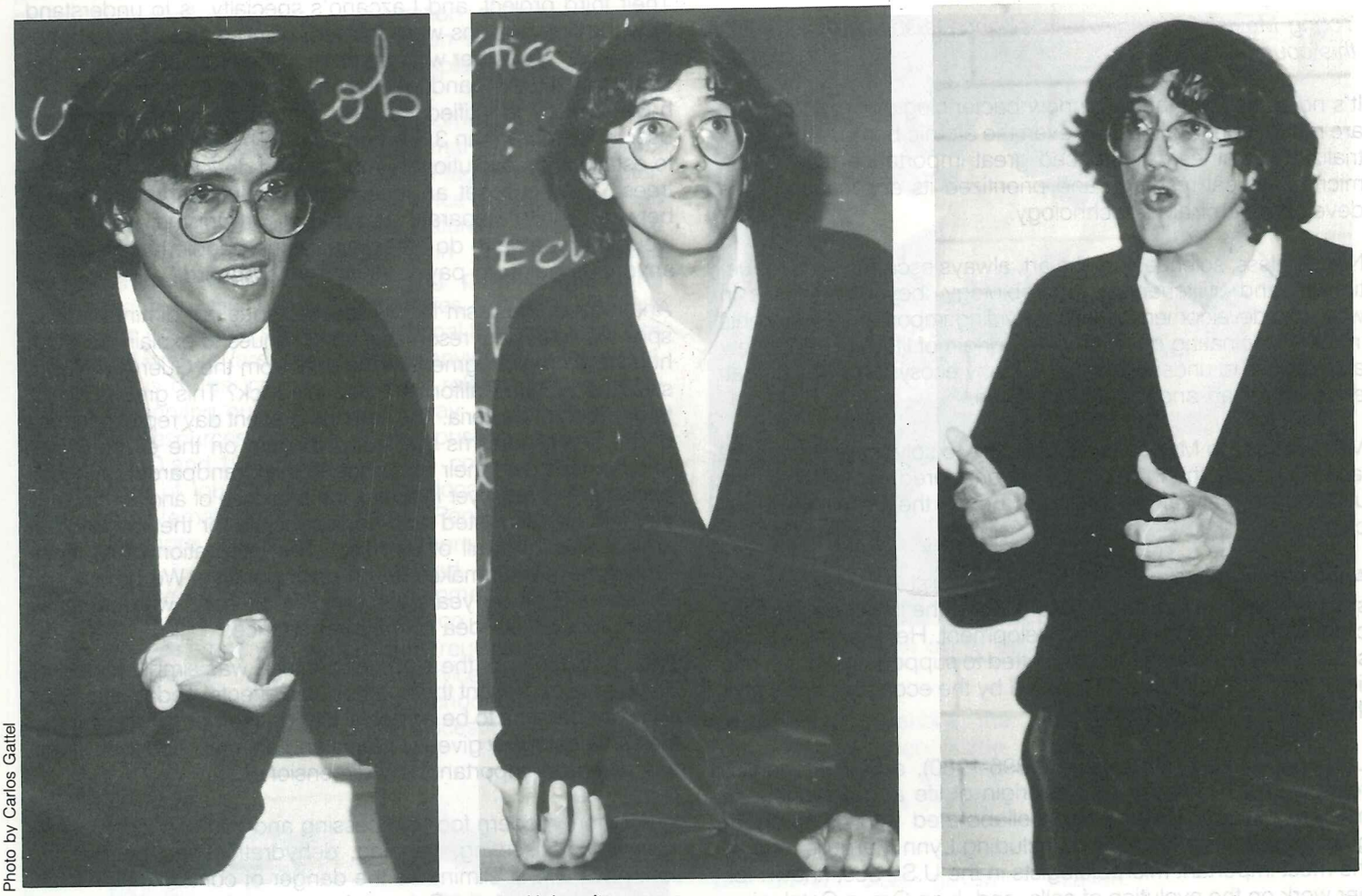


Photo by Carlos Gattel

Antonio Lazcano. Teaching at the National Autonomous University

This situation has become a national concern. "Our natural resources are under-utilized," he points out. "We don't know our own flora, our fauna, the species of microorganism that exist or our soil systems; we don't even know all there is to know about our country. This is being translated into serious disasters. Mexico's jungles are being lost at a frightening pace, and there are other grave problems like malnutrition, pollution, the lack of alternative energy sources other than oil, all of which have a direct impact on national development.

"I believe that the Mexican government should support research. And Mexican scientists have the obligation to demonstrate that the development of a scientific tradition is indispensible for creating our own cultural consciousness. Schools, research centers and universities are essential components of our nationality." ★

Jorge Luis Sierra Guzmán

Books

Looking for the Future in the Past

The event of the year in Mexican literary circles was the release of **El Río. Novelas de Caballería (The River: Tales of Chivalry**; 1986, Fondo de Cultura Económica). Guatemalan writer, Luis Cardoza y Aragón's most recent work. For many critics, it was even more than that; it was the most important contribution to Latin American literature in the past year.

Although virtually unknown in the United States, Cardoza y Aragon is not only considered to be the finest Guatemalan writer of the 20th century —better even, according to many critics, than 1967 Nobel Prize winner, Miguel Angel Asturias— but also one of the continent's most outstanding intellectual figures. It is a well-known fact that even such master authors as Gabriel García Márquez or prestigious investigators as Pablo González Casanova and Carlos Monsiváis go first to Cardoza for his opinion on their new works and that potential publishers take his reviews very seriously. He has been an intimate friend of the great literary and political figures of this century, from Pablo Picasso to Diego Rivera and Pablo Neruda to Lázaro Cárdenas and Fidel Castro. And he is the only foreign writer regularly invited to major events held by Mexican presidents. Luis Cardoza y Aragón has lived in Mexico for more than half a century, except for the brief period, 1944-1952, when democratic conditions in his native country allowed him to return there during those short years.

El Río is really a book made up of many books. It is commonly referred to as "Luis Cardoza's life story." But while the common thread throughout the book may well be the 82 year old poet's remarkable life, an enviable testimony to 20th culture, the book is very much more than a collection of his memories. It is, to use Cardoza's own words, "a search for the past, not to rescue it, but rather to grant it a future." It is a past considered to be alive by the author, and "always unpredictable," as he would say. The past is no longer the kingdom of the dead, but rather of memories and nostalgia. It is, then, an authentic memoir, not a simple assemblage of reminiscences.

Luis Cardoza was born in Antigua, Guatemala, in 1904, a time when the country was ruled by Manuel Estrada Cabrera, its dictator of the day. Cardoza is a poet, journalist, essayist and critic; a man who has struggled for his people's freedom, whose most intimate commitment has been to that cause. As he himself asserts, despite having lived many more years outside of his native land than in it, he has never abandoned it, never really left Guatemala, even in his exile. He has lived the last 30 years in Mexico, ever since Guatemala's 1944 October Revolution ("a renaissance movement") was defeated, when the Jacobo Arbenz government was overthrown in a 1954 coup-de-état, succumbing as the result of its own errors and its inability to confront the CIA-designed mercenary movement.

But before, Luis Cardoza travelled to Europe and Latin America. He won the friendship of Federico García Lorca, lived in a Paris effervescent with surrealism and cubism, educated his eye alongside of Picasso and shared sensitivity and intelligence with him.

Once in Mexico, he participated in the intellectual awakening led by "the Contemporaries" and savored the fruits of the muralist movement while the paint was still fresh and the works still incomplete. He struggled and still struggles for his ideas; he defended and still defends the need for socialism. He always condemned Stalinism and suffered its consequences. He fought against it, especially in the field of esthetics. Cardoza reiterates that imagination cannot be subordinated to the dictates of any bureaucracy, "that socialist realism is not only an error, it is also a horror."

It would not be possible, nor do we intend, to summarize the book. It would be a crime. It is impossible to extract a single brush stroke from a mural, which could tell its entire story. Yet the brush strokes do reveal a painting's quality. This is a book of phrases, of words, each with a specific weight; in short, it is a poet's book.

El Río does not fit into any specific literary genre. Essays, poetry, narratives, journalistic articles and prose coexist, and grandeur harmonizes with humor. Words devoid of restraints, memory freed from prejudice. Luis Cardoza described it this way:

"The structure I gave these pages, or that they have taken, was not the usual one for similar works. I didn't remember by years or decades or six-year Mexican (presidential) terms. Its disorder is not intentional, it is not a Piranesian order, nor is it disorder; I simply trusted that my notes would reproduce life's forms and the behavior of the imagination.

"Literary genre, Greek and Latin models, become more intertwined every day, become more blurred. That's how I constructed things even when it was barely conceivable and tolerable. How could I have kept an accounting book?

"My memory flails me alive like the live river flails itself" (p. 37).

Some books are written by chapters; *El Río* is constructed by paragraphs, each page capturing several universes. It can be read in whatever order or direction the reader might prefer, with whatever rhythm the reader wishes to impose; it is an open text.

Its 857 pages are peopled by the great figures of 20th century culture, an interminable list of men and women who come together and separate, crossing lives' paths with Luis Cardoza, weaving the monumental tapestry created in the book.

But **El Río** also has its stelar figures. I believe these might include Federico García Lorca, Pablo Picasso, and José Clemente Orozco. They are major points of inflection in Cardoza's life. His wife, Lya Kostakowsky, is not a point of inflection, but rather the very curve itself.

The murder —some 50 years ago— of Federico García Lorca is still a source of pain for Cardoza:

"The impression was painful and upsetting. I doubted that he was really dead for several days. It seemed incredible to me, incredible that someone in Spain could make an attempt on a life so filled with grace and creativity. I imagined that bestiality had a limit; I forgot that I am Guatemalan" (p. 579).

The chapter dedicated to Pablo Picasso could only be summarized by reproducing it in its entirety. It is a memorable synthesis. To give just a taste of it:

"How simple, how charming, how complex, how violent and tender. How perfect and marvelous. I will never be able to say how much I loved and admired him. How much I owe to his genius. It seems he has died."

"There are too many fingers on a hand to count the men of his stature in this century" (p. 678 and p. 676).

José Clemente Orozco receives his already classic accolade, "The three greats of Mexican muralism are two: Orozco." He was the greatest of Latin American painters, according to Luis Cardoza.

Luis Cardoza y Aragón, an Antiguan of universal vocation, defines himself as Stradivarius to the ears of a *marimbero*,* a citizen of the galaxy and lover of the Indian who has sent his *encomendero*** to the gallows. Cardoza has said that he seeks not to assure his place in literary history through one of his books, but rather, in the best of cases, with but a single phrase. It is quite likely that the phrase is to be found in *El Río. Novelas de Caballería.*

I have not even tried to write a

review. This is a passionate invitation to read. ★

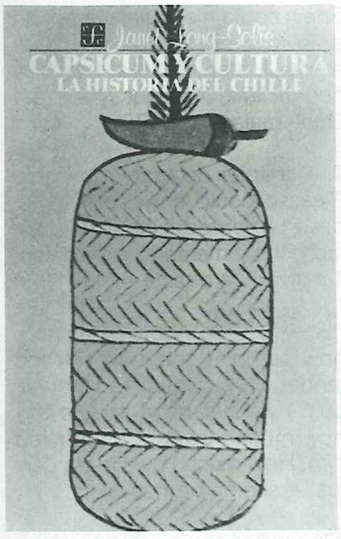
Augusto Morales

* Those who make *marimbas*, a xylophone-like instrument whose plaintive tones create some of the most traditional Guatemalan music.

** Master of an **encomienda**, estates granted to the Spanish conquerors; the Indians on the land were forced to provide him with labor and tribute.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Chile is More Than Just a Spice



Capsicum y cultura —la historia del chilli (Capsicum and Culture, The History of the Chilli) by Janet Long-Solis is an excellent book; it is very well written —reads almost like a good novel—, provides an original and thorough treatment of the topic, and brings together a wealth of historical and cultural data with scientific rigor.

The first version of this book, recently published by Fondo de Cultura Económica, was the author's doctoral dissertation, presented to the Department of Social Anthropology at the Universidad Ibero-Americana in Mexico.

After the author's introduction, the text is divided into 12 chapters: "The Archeological Evidence;" "Chilli as Tribute"; "Sixteenth Century Historical Antecedents; "References from the 17th to 19th Centuries;" "World-wide Diffusion of Capsicum;" "Taxonomy;" "The Cultivation of Chilli;" "The Chilli Trade;" "The Industrialization of Chilli;" "The Use of Capsicum in Traditional Medicine;" "Capsicum as a Ritual Element;" and "Capsicum: A Cultural Constant in Mexico."

There are also several interesting appendices at the end of the book: "A Dictionary of Chillis;" "The Word Chilli in Several Indian Languages;" "Song to the Chilli;" and "References to Chilli as Tribute in the *Suma de Visitas de Pueblos (Summary of Visits to Towns)*". Finally, there is an extensive bibliography and a listing of illustrations.

The chilli —or Capsicum, the scientific name for the genus— appears to have been one of the first cultivated plants in Mesoamerica. Its cultural tradition, then, is long and varied. In addition to being a food product ("Without chillis, they don't think they are eating," wrote Fray Bartolomé de las Casas about the natives of Mexico), Capsicum was also given as a form of tribute diring the Spanish colonial period.

For the past 8000 years, chillis have been a regular component of the Mexican diet. That tradition goes on unbroken today in all sectors of society. In addition, the chilli frequently finds its way into popular songs, sayings and jokes with double meanings. So it wasn't surprising that the symbol for the World Soccer Cup held in Mexico last year was "Pique," a chilli dressed in a soccer uniform and a broad-brimmed Mexican hat.

Capsicum has been used extensively for medicinal purposes, as well as for curing the "evil eye" and for "purging" the body. Modern medicine has demonstrated its usefulness as an anesthetic and documented its importance as a source of vitamins.

One of the many factors that led to the discovery of the New World was the search for a shorter route to the Far East, source of spices that were much coveted, quite rare and very expensive in Europe at that time. Products such as tea, coffee, sugar, chocolate, tabacco and, of course, the chilli were unknown in Europe before Christopher Columbus' fateful 15th century encounter with the Americas.

While Columbus never did find a new route to the Orient and its spices, he did discover a great diversity of New World food plants. The chilli, also known as *ají* in some places, was among them. In addition, two other very important plants found their way to Europe for the first time then: *Pimienta officinalis* (black pepper) and **Vanilla planifolis** (vanilla).

All of this and much, much more is to be found in Janet Long-Solis' detailed and entertaining account of the chilli's fascinating history. But beyond the humble chilli, the author also provides a rich reconstruction of the historical periods in question, an important contribution in its own right.

So while it may seem odd, we recommend this book to anyone with even a modest interest in history. You will learn a lot from *Capsicum and Culture*, and not only about the chilli. It sets an example for other researchers who work on what may otherwise seem to be dry and mundane topics. We think that experts will find the hoped for rigor and information in Dr. Long-Solis' book. And we are sure that it will be enjoyable reading for everyone. ★

Pantxika Cazaux

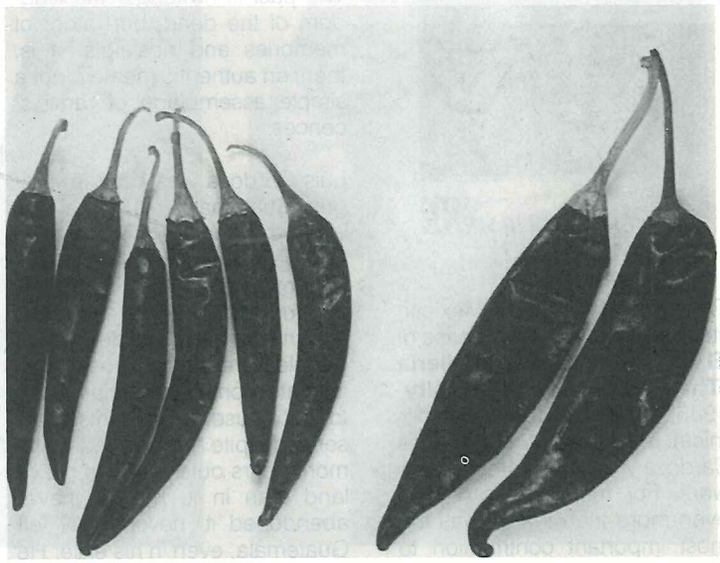
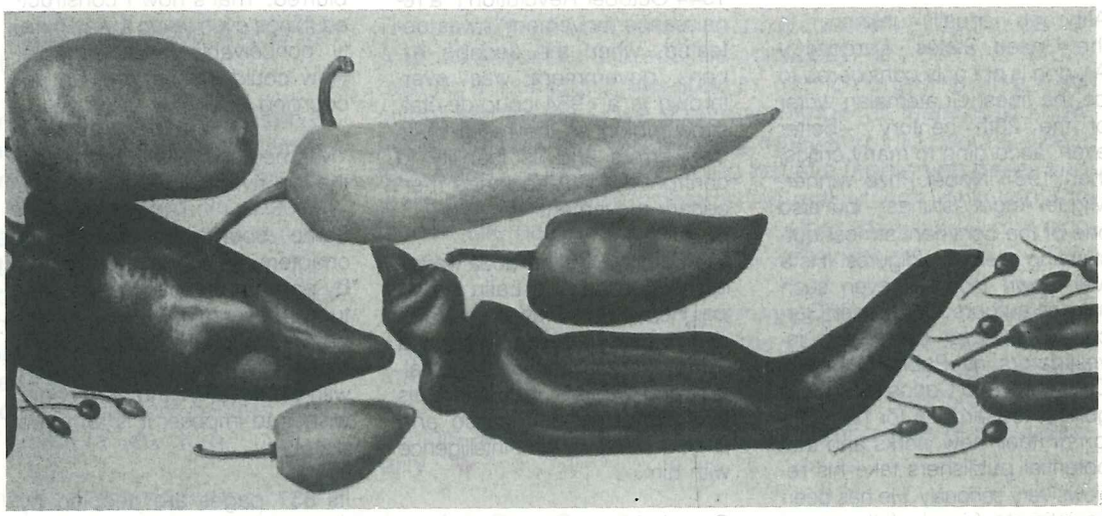


Photo by Bob Schalkwijk

"Guajillo" chilli, one of its many varieties



Elvia Esparza A. 1982

"Chiles"

Catalogue of Plants and Animals

Carmen Anguilera's book, **Mexican Flora and Fauna (Flora y Fauna Mexicana),** has just been published in a high quality edition by Mexico's Everest Press as part of its series, Mexican Roots. It is part of the publisher's project to contribute to a greater understanding of the wealth of things and beings in Mexico.

The book is the result of Aguilera's detailed and careful research at the National Institute of Anthropology and History on the flora and fauna that have fulfilled people's material, as well as spiritual, needs throughout Mexico's history. Plants and animals used during the prehispanic period, and some still in use today, are identified with their Mayan and Nahuatl names*, as well as by their scientific names and their names in Spanish.

While the presentation is not at all schematic, as taxonomic description tends to be, it does maintain the rigor of the discipline. Material is presented according to a given plant or animal's importance in Mexican life. An alphabetical index at the end of the book helps the reader to find references with ease. In addition, the book also has a bibliography, a lovely and well-printed set of illustrations and a glossary of Indian names.

Even though people still need nature today much more than we might like to admit, we continue to be one of its major predators. Thus, some native animals and plants have disappeared or are on the brink of extinction. In the case of other plants, however, their medicinal properties are still recognized, and they are used today just as they were long ago. This kind of knowledge from the past serves as a lesson for contemporary society which, whether from ignorance or a desire for immediate gain, is responsible for widespread ecological destruction, disregarding the countless benefits that both flora and fauna have provided people throughout the centuries.

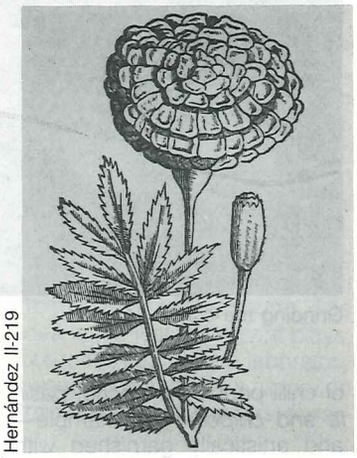
Mexico is one of the world's most important countries in this regard. Someone once claimed that Mexico's shape reminded them of a "horn of plenty," in a clear allusion to the country's incredible natural wealth. The diversity of ecological conditions allowed for the development of an abundant and varied flora and fauna, which together with the country's mineral resources, provided the ingenous peoples with all they needed to assure their well-being. The enormous importance of plants and animals in sustaining human life and the fact that they were considered to be gods (the latter being a result of the former) meant that plants, as well as animals, were respected and nurtured.

Despite the great importance of the flora and fauna in Ancient Mexico, as well as in the country today, relatively little research has been done on the subject. Aguilera's book addresses this problem and achieves its aim by bringing together a sampling of the available information on Mexico's plants and animals. It will both spark interest among neophytes on the topic, as well as become a valuable document for scientists and specialists. The latter will almost certainly find new or little-known information in the text, since in preparing the volume, the author consulted major sources on the Mayan and Nahuatl cultures, several ancient texts, modern ethnographic data and other research in progress.

Almost one hundred animals, from the eagle to owls, to the jaguar, manati, alligator, puma and many more, as well as some sixty plants are dealt with in the book. Many of the species were carried to Europe by the Spanish conquerors and their descendants. They are still to be found there today, as familiar to Europeans as the species brought to the Americas during the colonial period are to Latin Americans. This exchange of natural products demonstrates their importance for society and culture.

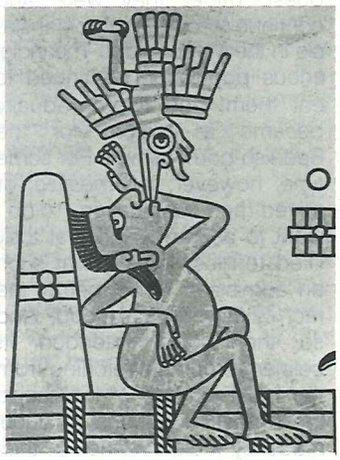
Despite the fact that one of the book's specific objectives was to be accessible even to non-specialists, the book's rather dry treatment of the data, which could have lent itself to some very interesting reflections, means that it will remain a manual an extremely well-done and careful catalog. Yet even as such, it is enormously useful. It is based on one of the most methodical investigations carried out to date on the subject. The illustrations are taken from several different codices, some prehispanic and others colonial, including the Badian Codex, with considerable European influence, and the works of Dr. Francisco Hernández, which are completely westernized. Together, these factors make the book a valuable resource, important to real and to keep close at hand.★

Pantxika Cazaux



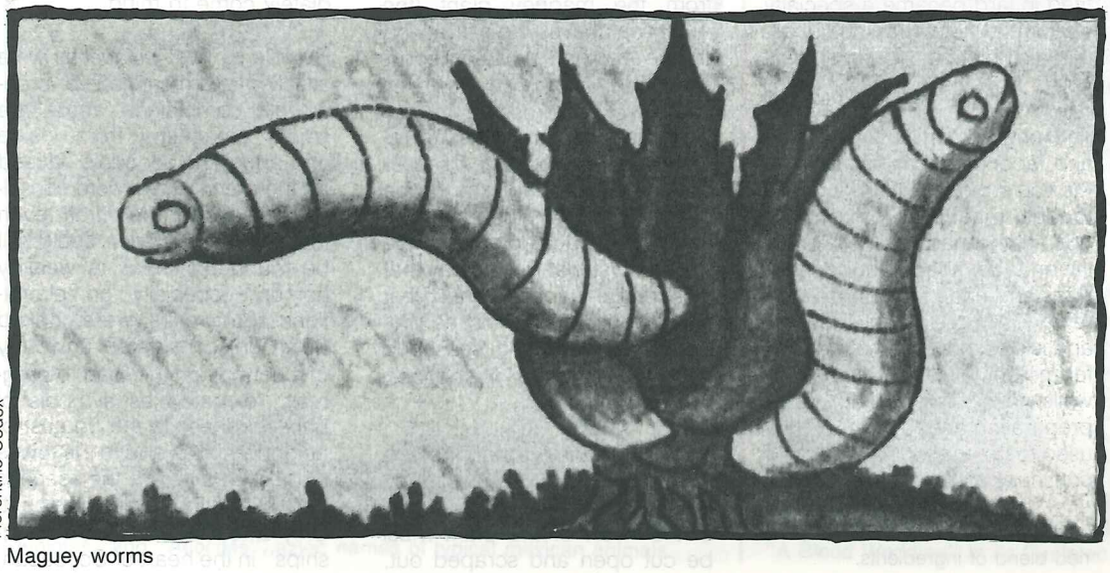
Hernández II-219

"Cempoalxóchitl", a typical flower



Laud Codex

Hummingbird



Florentine Codex

Maguey worms

* The two most important and widely-used languages of the two largest and most-enduring prehispanic Mesoamerican cultures.

Food

Tortilla and Crunchy Grasshoppers with Pulque

LA TORTILLA: BASIC DIET FOR RICH AND POOR

Tortillas were the bread of the ancient inhabitants of our lands, a corn bread similar to the Middle Eastern breads made from wheat. Tortillas were not eliminated with the Spanish conquest; rather they were and continue to be the principal staple in the Mexican diet. The indigenous population continued to eat them, and they gradually became a custom for the Spanish-born, as well. For some time, however, the *mestizo*, or mixed-race population, didn't want to acknowledge that they liked tortillas, fearing that such an admission would betray the fact of their Indian blood. And so the tortilla extended its culinary empire, stretching from the most humble of houses to the most luxurious palace, made by Indian women in their huts or by servants in feudal mansions.

Expert Indian hands prepared the dough, first making *nixtamal* from corn, water and quicklime, boiling it for hours. After rinsing and draining it several times, they would grind the mixture on a *metate*, a simple device made up of a larger, gently curved stone and a smaller, rolling pin-shaped stone, both fashioned from the same resistant material. The image of an indian woman kneeling in front of her *metate* has been used in many, many paintings. And it was from those brown hands that the dough was born, ground again and again until just the right consistency to make thin, soft *tortillas, ready to be eaten together with beans or taken to the* table in wealthy households and served along side sophisticated *moles* and *pipians.**

As a new "Spanish-American" culture emerged, the creole imaginatioin soon made the tortilla *into an essential partner in a* great variety of new dishes, all visually appealing and with a tremendous diversity of tastes and flavors.*Enchiladas* are one such dish, made from tortillas filled with shredded chicken or pork, drenched in red or green sauces prepared from all kinds of chilli peppers —*ancho, pasilla* and *chipotle*, for example— and artistically garnished with radish florettes and lettuce. Shredded beef, cheese and sauce piled on top of tortillas fried in lard became a specialty of Puebla; known as *chalupas*, they've become a regional tradition.

The original tortilla, handmade and laborious, was replaced in Mexico's modern cities by new tortillas, made with other methods, with machines to grind, flatten and shape the dough. The handmade tortilla has taken refuge in more remote regions and is little more than a memory for millions of city-dwellers. And while neither the dough, nor its preparation are as pure as they used to be, the tortilla lives on. It continues to be a substitute for better meals, distracting hunger when eaten just with salt. Prepared with an imaginative bravado of colors and tastes, it can be served in the most elegant restaurants or wealthy homes. And in the most humble places and homes, the tortilla is skillfully used by expert hands instead of silverware. Simple and proud of its pre-columbian roots, the tortilla knows that it will never be supplanted in people's tastes, that it is invulnerable to McDonalds.

* Two rich sauces made from a varied blend of ingredients.

Diego Rivera. National Museum of Art

Grinding the corn

EL PULQUE: AN EXCELLENT TONIC THAT GETS YOU DRUNK

Pulque is a frothy drink made from the maguey plant (the American agave), the native wine of the region. While it spoils very quickly and no way has been found yet to preserve it, *pulque* has other properties to recommend it. It is supposed to be less intoxicating than grape wines, good for the digestion and was even used at one time to cure hysteria. People say that it is really the only drink that should accompany dishes prepared with lard and seasoned with chillis because of its digestive properties.

Making *pulque* depends on watching how the maguey plants mature. *The tender leaves at the heart of the plant must* be cut open and scraped out, extracting the honey-water that turns white as it ferments. *Pulque* may be combined with other fruits such as guayaba, pineapple, almonds or peanuts.

The Apam valley was famous for its *pulque*, and there were large *pulque* plantations everywhere in the state of Hidalgo. *Pulquerías* (bars serving *pulque*) multiplied in cities throughout the land, and they became meeting places for all kinds of popular figures, picturesque sites for dancing and brawling, with equally picturesque names, "Good Friendships," "My Office," "Memories of the Future" and "Heaven," to mention just a few that immediately come to mind.

But little by little, *pulquerías* were attacked and marginalized: proper folk complained about the smells emanating from inside and about the scandals caused by the clients. They were considered places for the riffraff, even though cured *pulque* could still be found on tables in wealthy homes, especially on plantations. *Pulquerías* were looked down on, considered unworthy of a country on the road to progress, relegated as symbols of backwardness to the poorest of neighborhoods and to the towns farthest away from the reaches of "stabilizing" development. Only a few, like "Good Friendships" in the heart of Coyoacán,

have been able to survive in Mexico City. Their picturesque presence, their distinctive names and characteristic odor, together with their customary signs —"Minors, dogs, women and people in uniform not allowed" are slowly becoming part of our picturesque past.

LOS CHAPULINES: GRASSHOPPERS ARE TASTY WITH LEMON AND GARLIC

One of people's natural drives has always been to take advantage of the things around them. Perhaps that's the origin of the custom in the state of Puebla, Oaxaca and Hidalgo of eating insects now known to have high protein values. There are some 247 edible insect species in Mexico, and some of them form part of the dietary tradition in many communities in the three states mentioned.

We've heard people say that the maguey worm served in hot sauce is a great delicacy. But very few people know that the merry, green grasshopper is good for something other than jumping around and enthusiastically devouring plants. During grasshopper season, mostly from June to November, insect hunters come out in many places, armed with nets to snare their prey. It's quite easy to capture and preserve grasshoppers, making them a traditional, regional favorite. And they're good for people, too. The *esphenario*, one of 58 grasshopper species in the country, is 60-65 percent protein on a dry weight basis.

Previously boiled grasshoppers are grilled with lime juice and garlic; eaten in this simple way, they can solve dietary problems in even the poorest communities. But they are also used in more sophisticated dishes, prepared in garlic butter, for example, and served in specialized restaurants. Since grasshoppers are seasonal, other ways have been found to prepare them so that they can be eaten year-round. One is to boil and grill them, then grind them into a flour used to make "meatballs," croquettes or crackers (the latter served with a *nopal* cactus sauce). Thus, necessity and imagination are joined not only to solve a vital problem, but also to enrich culture and bring new pleasures to the palate.★

Emma Rizo and Teresa de Jesús Yanes

Florentine Codex

"Ajolotes" and "Acociles", aztec names of typical mexican animals.

Theater

Indigenous Group Presents Lorca Play

Ever since the experiment known as the Peasant Theater Workshop was started in May 1983, many of us had waited anxiously to see one of its productions. We finally got our chance when the group performed in Mexico City to the natural backdrop of the third section of the Chapultepec Woods, on October 24-26.

The idea for Peasant Theater originated in the state of Tabasco, based on the desire to create theater from the historical traditions of the peoples living in southeast Mexico, with roots in the rich Mayan, Olmec, Chontal and Chol cultures. Their traditions have been passed along orally through the generations, from the old to the young. The idea is not just to present plays, but rather to create a laboratory based on the region's history, to train actors and teachers, to rescue the artistic values of Tabasco, to build the repertoire and to compete in state, national and international theater competitions.

The group is based in Oxolotlan, a small Tabascan town where the tropical jungle hangs from the mountainsides. The experimental group began its work under the direction of Alicia Martínez. Their first challenges were to overcome local resistance and to learn to keep their spirits up under the broiling sun. Once established, they began to take their project to neighboring villages, as well.

The initial group grew into a full-fledged company, developing its own works, the fruits of their efforts to rescue local traditions. One such play is the *Tragedy of the Jaguar*, in which the oral tradition is re-created and transmits the Chontal spirit. Local elders told the story to two of the playwrights, Auldárico Hernández Gerónimo and Eutimio Hernández Guillermo, who working together with the director and an assistant, Martha Alicia Trejos, created the faces and the script, transforming the Chontal voices into credible characters, even though they speak Spanish. Later they got permission from the elders to include certain sacred elements in the play, like the funeral ritual.

But the company's experimental efforts didn't end with the rescue of the traditional, the presentation of ancestral community values, their relationship to the earth, their sense of the sacred and their ancient mysteries. Rather, they began to seek out the

Photo by the Laboratory of the Independent Peasant theater of Tabasco

"A Blood Wedding" in its Oxolotec version

relationship of the traditional to the universal. That's how they decided to stage Garcia Lorca's *Bodas de Sangre (Blood Weddings)*, bringing to life his world and feelings, from the perspective of the Oxolotlecan vision. The local community understood the Granadian poet's peasant world as if it were their own, quoting lines from the play for days after the performances. They related easily to his passionate conception of love as an irrepressible vital force, like the tide that inescapably drags the love-stricken girl out to sea and leads to the death of the rivals for her love.

The dramatic staging of the tragic spirit of love and death was given a much slower rhythm than any of us had ever associated with the work before, but which was just right for the play as contemplated from an Oxolotlecan perspective. Fernando Isidro H.'s music sustains this rhythm throughout the play, as popular Mexican music is interwoven into the Spanish text to express the same romantic drama, "for love," "to die for love." The tragic sense of life and of death come together as one, the Spanish village and the people of Mayan roots, able to bless the wheat and the corn growing above the resting dead. It's not a guitar that accompanies the wedding party, but a band and a *marimba*,* which at the moment of death grows quiet and is covered over, as if ashamed by its joy, like the flamenco player who strips the strings from his guitar when a loved one dies.

Lorca would have enjoyed the freshness of the interpretation, with harlequins on horseback, the wedding party in a cart with the band behind it and the chorus repeating, "Wake up the bride, it's her wedding day." He would have been excited by death's prowling presence until at last it controls the stage, with a triumphant gesture of fulfilled destiny as it extends its cape. In Oxolotlán, *Blood Weddings* was staged in a natural setting of jungle and sun. Its haunting beauty remained intact event in the clearing of the Chapultepec Woods, in a stolen silence within the very heart of Mexico City, interrupted only by occasional airplanes overhead. The slow rhythm of the Chontalan drums spoke, as if in another language, of the drama of love and death, the passion of the earth. Lorca's poetry shined through, not only in the natural simplicity of the spoken verse, but also in the merging of the simplest set components with the movements of horses, the band, the *marimba* and dancers, all on stage. And it was especially present in the outstanding team work and in the participation of a community that understood Lorca's tragedy as its own, both factors adding unique dimensions to the performance.

The Peasant Theater Workshop is not a case of the search for the picturesque, but rather of serious experimental theater, bringing together study, rigor, professionalism and re-creation to construct a work of art. The company has performed in New York City, during the annual Latin America Theater Festival, winning honors for its work. It has been invited to tour in Spain, Brazil, Cuba and other countries. It is truly an esthetic experience and a privilege to see them perform. We can only hope that their efforts, which have already demonstrated the great potential of peasant theater, will continue without losing quality; that they will not become a mere footnote to the 1986 theater annals, but that they will go on performing, this being just the start of a long history.★

Emma Rizo

Photo by the Laboratory of the Independent Peasant theater of Tabasco

A natural setting for "A Blood Wedding"

* A *marimba* is a xylophone-like instrument, traditional in Mayan culture.

Cinema

Love, Luck and Destiny Play Double in New Ripstein Film

Juan Rulfo's story *El gallo de oro (The Golden Cock)* was written into a film script by Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Marquez and Roberto Gavaldón, who finally made the movie in 1964. The script was an effort to remain faithful to the spirit of Rulfo's original and its main themes, namely chance, gambling, love and fortune, and the story of the two main characters caught up in them. The narration follows Dionisio Pinzón, a character caught up in a perfectly circular structure in which he sets out from zero or nothing and eventually ends up back in the same place. When Gavaldón translated the script into time and space on film, he produced a correct, clean-cut movie mid-way between classicism and academicism, and did not delve further into the themes indicated in the script.

In 1985-1986 Arturo Ripstein shot a new version of Rulfo's story called *El imperio de la fortuna (Fortune's Dominion)*, this time based on a script by Paz Alicia García Diego. She picks up on the recurring themes of Rulfo's story —chance, gambling, love, fortune and destiny— all linked around the central topic of duality. Thus, the passing of time exists only as an extension and unfolding of the same theme.

There is a world of difference between the two versions. For one thing, there's a basic and seemingly external aspect: the time when the story takes place. *El gallo de oro* happens in an undefined time, in a rather vaguely mythical time and space whose only reference to reality was to a series of folksy Mexican

stereotypes. The story in *El imperio de la fortuna*, on the other hand, has a precise time and place between the 1950s and the 1970s.

The time situation is very important in Ripstein's film because everything, or nearly everything, depends on it. His film is set in a time and place when the urban world and values are devouring the rural world, a time when the undefined petit-bourgeois culture of diminished suburbia (architecture and colors, for example) are overtaking the culture of a fading pastoral rural society. Thus, unlike *El gallo de oro,* Ripstein's film has no room for handsome *charros* (Mexican cowboys in flashy silver-studded dress), fancy folkloric costumes, professional singers with a great voice, *mariachis* (singing *charros*, etc. *El Gallo* is really a *charro* film with faithfully stereotipical *charro* whereas *El imperio de la fortuna* is "the first *charro* film without *charros*," as Ripstein himself put it.

"I have chosen to show a more immediate Mexico, one that better fills my eyes," says the director. "I care about how the rural areas have been urbanized, how the city has directly influenced the countryside. The action in the film takes place over a span of 18 years between the 50s and the 70s, and is a saga about the rise and fall of a man and his family. The past is Arcadia for the poor, whereas for the rich the future is paradise. I show a combination of both, and how the characters voluntarily go against that destiny," wrote Ripstein in the presentation to his movie for the 19th International Film Festival held in Mexico City during November and December, 1986.

In Ripstein's counterfeit rural world we find a series of characters whose relations are determined by chance and fortune, disguised as the destiny they try to go against. Dionisio Pinzón, a poor hawker in a miserable town, is hired as a cockfight caller. By the end of the match he is given a dying cock that would otherwise be put to death by its owners. This animal will eventually change his new owner's fortune, though just at a time when Pinzón loses his mother and cannot even bury her because he's so poor.

Pinzón travels through fairgrounds making money at cockfights. He meets and is fascinated by la Caponera, a singer who moves around like he does, and whom he comes to regard as a good luck charm. She is the mistress of Lorenzo Benavides, a professional cock-fighter and gambler. When Dionisio loses his own rooster he goes to work for Benavides, and learns the secrets of card-dealing from him under the watchful eye of La Caponera. Dionisio then launches on his own life as a gambler, and runs into La Caponera who languishes in the golden cage of her life with Benavides and longs for the noise and color of the fairgrounds. The two gamble until Dionisio finally wins Benavides' house from him. From then on La Caponera, his good-luck charm, will remain imprisoned in her golden cage as the wheel of fortune continues to turn and deal its blows.

Because of the story's structure, time had a circular movement in *El gallo oro.* Time is apparently lineal in *El imperio de la fortuna*, but it is broken down into fragments. The movie starts out as a typical story of gambling and of the relationship between a gambler and fortune and destiny. Yet this is merely a starting point, as from there Ripstein ironically makes the seemingly lineal story branch off. The very form of the episodes makes the characters move in circles, and this only emphasizes the passing of time as a series of repetitions of the same incidents or themes.

From this point of view, it seems the characters really boil down to two, Dionisio and La Caponera. All other characters are merely doubles of some sort. Benavides is Dionisio's double, and in a fair switch, Dionisio stands in for Benavides when he disappears. La Pinzona, Caponera and Dionisio's daughter, is a double of her mother's but also, as her name indicates, stands in for her father, Dionisio Pinzón.

Dionisio himself builds the different stages of his life by constantly repeating or unfolding himself. Initially, he is a character circumscribed by a poor and limited space, a man in a slumber. His first unfolding will come about through his mother's death and the resurrection of the rooster. Film-critic Mario Alberto Quesada put this very well: "Dionisio Pinzón, in waking from his slumber, will spare no effort to keep the fighter-cock alive, for it involves the resurrection and birth of his own virility, of his own power as a man. He is nourished like a vampire by his mother's death, and he will become a mutilated macho travelling through the cock-fight arenas, an apparently new world which is really only an extension of the filthy hut he lived in with his mother." Furthermore, this vampire syndrome will be repeated with Caponera and Benavides, as in a certain way Dionisio nourishes himself from them, destroys them so that he may go on living.

Thus, each one of the film's seven episodes corresponds to a cycle. Each episode is really an unfolding of the one before it, they take one another's place as if in a relay race. Bernarda Pinzon's story is a good example of this. La Caponera dies because of her loss of freedom and the denial of her womanhood, but steady in the line of duty as Dionisio's good-luck charm. When Dionisio loses his power at cards (the loss of his amulet stands in for his loss of virility), he commits suicide practically over La Caponera's dead body. Then Bernarda Pinzon takes up the baton and begins traveling through fairgrounds, repeating her parents' itinerary. Surely the new cycles to come will be further unfoldings of those before them.

This is the best of Arturo Ripstein's latest films. In *El Imperio de la fortuna* he renovates achievements previously attained in *El castillo de la pureza (The Castle of Purity), El lugar sin límites (The Place Without Limits)* and *Cadena perpetua (Life Imprisonment)*, although this film is enriched by humane vibrations that seemed somewhat absent from his other works.

Ripstein's film is visually faithful to its initial pretense of showing the urbanization of rural life, the appearance of suburbia (Mexico City's periphery) in the countryside in the form of colors, spaces and physical concepts as well as in the changing values of rural inhabitants. From the moment the characters shut themselves up in the museum-school house, the castle of purity, and La Caponera takes over for Dionisio, the movie changes in visual terms and space and colors become unreal, emphasized by Angel Goded's excellent photography. The tone is set by La Caponera's frustrated dream.

There's a scene that visually sums up one of the film's main themes, when the fighter-cock struggles against his own image in a mirror, his double, a reflection. This is what the characters do throughout the film; it is Dionisio Pinzón's path from miserable hut to unlikely castle, what La Caponera does with her dreams of freedom and what Bernarda Pinzón will surely do with her own heavy baton.★

Tomás Pérez Turrent

Photo by Imcine

A scene from *El imperio de la fortuna*

Music

Ten Centuries of Music in Cervantino Festival

The first International Cervantino Festival was held fifteen years ago in the small, central Mexican city of Guanajuato. Initially devoted primarily to theater, and specifically to the works of the great Spanish writer and creator of Don Quijote, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and his contemporaries, the festival has now become one of the major artistic events of the Americas.

The 1986 Cervantino Festival was "an embarrassment of riches," as the saying goes. During seventeen days in the fall, Guanajuato was brimming with music, ballet, modern dance, theater, mime, clowns, painting, sculpture, books, lectures and all manner of events. Temporarily suspended in 1985 because of the earthquake, the Festival was reborn with new vigor, ideas and artistic objectives.

Music at the 1986 Festival was particularly rich and varied, as musicians came from all over the world to fill Guanajuato with the sounds of compositions spanning across ten centuries of musical theory and tastes. Perhaps the oldest music was performed by Ram and Aruna Narayan, a father-daughter *sarangi* duo from India. The *sarangi* is a stringed instrument, quite different from the better-known *sitar*, with a more intimate sound quality. The Narayans, following tradition, played improvised, unwritten music based on the classic, Indian *raga* tonal sequences.

The Vilnius String Quartet

Photo by Festival Cervantino

The Cabañas Cultural Institute sent a group from Guadalajara specializing in Mexican, pre-Columbian instrumental music. Like their colleagues from India, these Mexican musicians play music that was never written down or otherwise codified. Their perfomances are mainly improvisations based on certain given themes, and one of their aims was to demonstrate the vast sound palate produced by such ancient instruments as the *huehuetl*, *teponaztli*, *tenabaris* and others that are seldom heard nowadays. Only a few Mexican composers, including Carlos Chávez, Sivestre Revueltas and Blas Galindo, have ever used them in their concert works.

There was also European medieval and Renaissance music at the Cervantes Festival. Two groups were particularly noteworthy, the *Camerata Hungarica* from Hungary and *Los Tiempos Pasados* from Mexico, because they offered two very different approaches to the art of old music. The Hungarian group, featuring world reknown lutist Daniel Benko, played courtesan music from the Old World, using purity and clarity as the main interpretive criteria. *Los Tiempos Pasados*, whose members are mostly amateurs, added a definite Latin flavor to its performances, offering livelier versions of the works of Tielman Susato and his contemporaries, a couple of the famous *Cantigas* written by Spanish King Alfonso X and especially some pieces of Arab-Andalusian origin.

The *Camerata Musica*, from the German Democratic Republic, earned high marks for its brilliant performance of baroque music. This string and harpsichord ensemble played splendid versions of works by Scarlatti, Bach and Vivaldi. Mexicans also provided some fine baroque music.

Eduardo Mata, a gifted Mexican conductor, currently music director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, assembled some of the country's best musicians to form a chamber orchestra for the specific purpose of performing Bach's Brandenburg Concertos. Baroque performing techniques were respected, using gut strings, loose hair on bows and recorders, instead of modern day flutes.

Of course, no Festival would be complete without some standard ensembles, such as trios and quartets. Two European trios (violin, cello, piano) coincidentally chose to play the same piece by Russian composer, Dimitri Shostakovich. *Trio Sentire*, a very young Swedish group, played the Shostakovich crisp, sharp and exciting, emphasizing the brighter side of the music. The *Schubert Trío* from Vienna, more mature and experienced, went more for the moody,

Photo by Festival Cervantino

Music group from the Cabañas Cultural Institute

intimate qualities of Shostakovich's score. Afterwards, the Swedes went on to perform a very interesting and mature work by their countryman Sven-Erik Back, while the Austrians rounded out their lengthy program with a piece by the relatively unknown composer Alexander von Zemlinsky.

Quartets were also very much a part of the musical scene in the Festival. Mexico's *Latin America String Quartet* selected a well-balanced program beginning with Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* and closing with Bela Bartok's *First String Quartet*. The *Vilnius String Quartet* came from the Soviet Union and offered a very precise and clear performance of one of Shostakovich's string quartets. They also provided a rare taste of their own music, performing a piece by fellow Lithuanian, Osvaldas Balakauskas.

Two very different kinds of quartets from the United States also performed. The *Sonora Quartet* played music for four saxophones; they were equally at home with transcriptions of works by composers such as Byrd, Pepusch, Scarlatti and Beethoven, as with original works by Alexander Glazunov. Moreover, the night before their classical concert, they performed in a jazz session with the American band *Jazzberry Jam*. The *Los Angeles Guitar Quartet* dazzled the audience with their performance of music by Mozart, Morley, Falla and Mexican composer, Armando Lavalle. A highlight of their concert was Copeland's *Hoedown*; the transcription for four guitars managed to capture all of the charm and fun of the Wild West.

Jazz was very much present, as groups from seven countries played, representing a wide spectrum of contemporary jazz forms, from the classical Dixieland style of *Jazzberry Jam* to the combination of free jazz, electronics and music from the Huasteca region played by the Mexican group *Alacrán del Cántaro*. Also present were virtuoso Polish saxophonist, Zbigniew Namyslowski, and the Cuban ensemble led by José María Vitier, from the same generation of musicians that make up the *Nueva Trova Cubana*, the main trendsetters for Cuban popular music.

Los Leones de la Sierra Michú, from Guanajuato, performed some very authentic Mexican popular music on chilly nights in small open squares. They are committed to preserving the authentic art of troubadors, singing witty, alternating verses. In this same vein, the *Mono Blanco* group put on a great show of *fandango* music and dance from the state of Veracruz.

This truly international festival would not have been complete without the music from Down Under, represented by the chamber ensemble *Terra Australis*. They performed a series of contemporary works by Australia's most prominent composers, Carl Vine, Anne Boyd, Michael Smetanin and Vincent Plush.

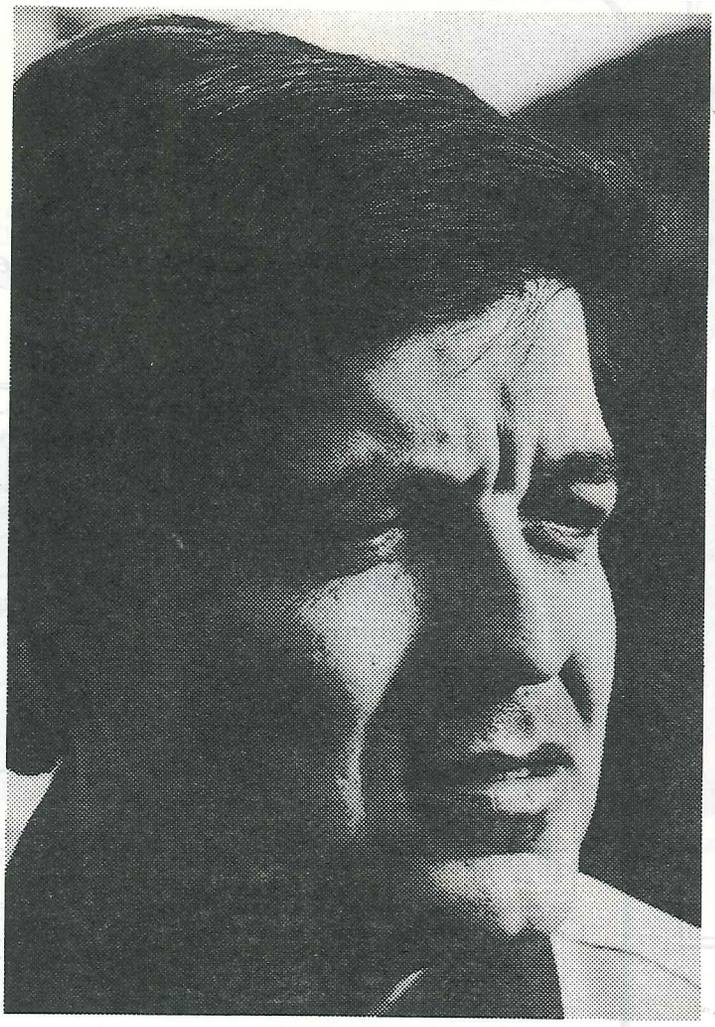
Mexico's National University sent its crack percussion ensemble with a program that combined original works by Polish composer Penhersky and Ricardo Gallardo, one of the ensemble members, with transcriptions of a string quartet by Silvestre Revueltas and the famous orchestral piece *Huapango* by José Pablo Moncayo.

From El Salvador came Germán Cáceres, a talented oboe player who is also a composer and conductor. Accompanied by young Mexican pianist, Alberto Cruzprieto, he played a very balanced program with works by Loeillet and Telemann, as well as music by Hindemith and Lutoslawski from the twentieth century. Along with Mr. Cáceres supple playing we heard Mr. Cruzprieto's surprisingly powerful rendition of Argentine composer Alberto Ginestera's *Sonata for Solo Piano*.

If I had to single out one evening from this rich musical panorama as extraodinarily special, I would probably choose Francisco Araiza's vocal concert. Born and trained in Mexico, this gifted tenor has spent the last few years in Europe, where he has become an important performer at major opera houses. The highlight of his homecoming was his impeccable rendition of Schubert's song-cycle *Die Shone Mullerin*, performed at Guanajuato's Teatro Juárez, to Irwin Gage's masterful piano accompaniment.

All in all, it can be safely said that the variety and quality of the musical performances from Mexico and the world over was the main attraction of the 14th International Cervantino Festival.★

Juan Arturo Brennan



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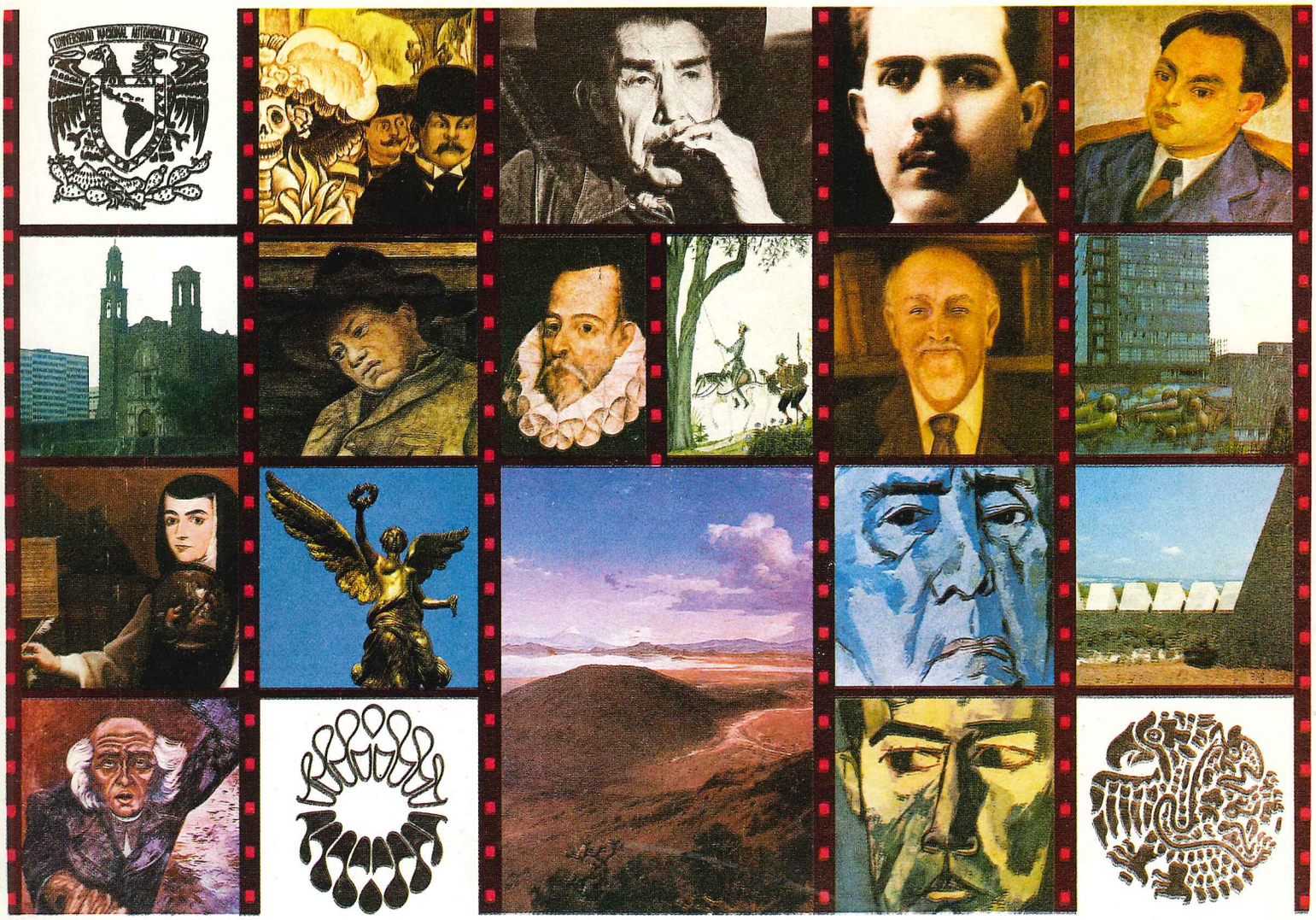

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Together with "Living Image of Mexico", the Cervantino Festival also sponsors projections of Miguel de Cervantes and Don Quijote, an ideal complement of these festivities, in which there is an attempt to rescue the spirit which gave birth to the Festival.

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