

# voices of MEXICO

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

## MODERNIZATION: THE CHALLENGE

**Medicinal Plants  
and Modern  
Research**

**Mexican  
Businessmen  
Seek New  
Understanding  
with the  
United States**

**The Foreign  
Debt Burdens  
Small  
Economies**

**Juvenile Gangs:  
Children of the  
Crisis**



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# AGUASCALIENTES

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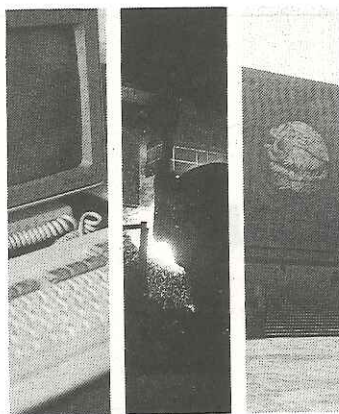
# TEMPLO DE SAN DIEGO

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September-November 1987 Number 5



Cover photos by Juan Escareño

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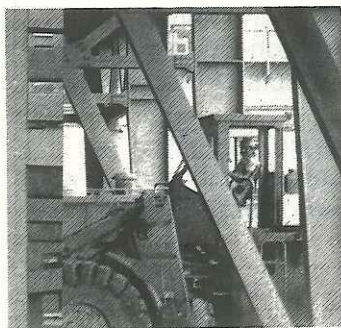
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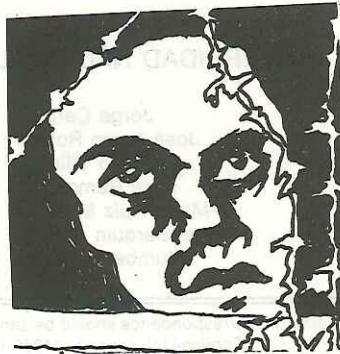
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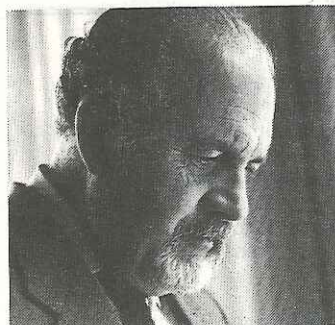


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Design: Juan Escareño



# This Issue

In our fifth issue, *Voices* features one of the most hotly-debated topics for Mexico's future: modernization. Through interviews with four outstanding Mexican academics, we hope to provide our readers with a panoramic view of this multi-faceted process, so important to Mexico's economic and political life.

Another timely subject covered in this issue is Mexico-United States trade relations. A representative of the Mexican business sector provides the focus for us this time, as he explores the different angles and discusses the principal problems of these relations.

Our Special Report is on the use of medicinal plants in Mexico. Traditional medicine, whose sources go back to Pre-columbian cultures, is deeply-rooted in Mexican society. Thus, it is quite significant that a variety of institutions—including the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)—are investigating these plants and working to set norms for their everyday use.

Regarding events in Latin America, we're running a series of articles covering subjects of special importance for the region: Central America's growing arms race, the impact of the foreign debt on Latin America's small economies, testimonies from political prisoners in Pinochet's Chile and the problems confronting the Continent's largest cities. Special mention goes to the article on Paraguay, where the government holds the record for the longest, continuous dictatorship in contemporary Latin American history.

In our sections on culture, the note on juvenile gangs is of special interest. This phenomenon is particularly significant in Mexico, where young people make up the majority of the population. As the article shows, juvenile gangs are not a passing fad, but rather are evidence to some of the structural problems affecting our societies.

Finally in our Science section, we have an article on the incidence of AIDS in Mexico. Reflecting the world-wide concern about this modern-day killer, a number of Mexican private and governmental institutions have launched a major information campaign designed to prevent the spread of the disease in our country.

Mariclaire Acosta

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## Mexico's Daily Press

Over ten million newspapers are distributed daily in the country

Juan Flores Cornejo is 20 years old and has sold newspapers for 14 years.

Every day he gets up at four in the morning; at five he picks up the newspapers and magazines from the retailer and by 6.30 he is ready to sell his first copy of the day.

The 300 copies that Juan sells every day form part of some 10,292,395 copies that are distributed daily throughout the country, according to *Medios Impresos* (March, 1987) a quarterly giving information on newspapers and magazines in Mexico.

These ten million copies correspond to 350 newspapers in existence in the Republic of Mexico, of which 310 are edited in the States and 40 in the Federal District. Multiplying the number of newspapers published daily by an average of four readers, the country has a total of 41,695,070 daily readers.

The daily with the widest circulation is *Esto*, with exclusively sports information, with 400,200 copies from Tuesday to Sunday and 450,000 on Mondays, 33.6 percent more than the circulation of *La Prensa* (299,640 copies) a general information daily with the widest circulation in the country.

The oldest newspaper in Mexico is *El Universal*, founded in October, 1916. It is now a limited company and has an average circulation of 183,713 copies, plus the 58,800 of the evening paper, *El Universal Gráfico*. The two editions together represent 2.3 percent of the total circulation of Mexican newspapers.

*Excélsior*, founded in March, 1917, is considered to be the most informative newspaper in the country. It employs a large number of reporters and correspondents, both inside and outside of the country, and reproduces articles from the main



Photo by Antonio Ortuño

Forty daily newspapers are published in Mexico City.

newspapers in the United States, England, France, Italy and Germany. It has a circulation of 200 thousand copies, each day issues two editions of *Últimas Noticias*, edits three weekly supplements and the monthly cultural magazine, *Plural*.

*Excélsior* functions as a cooperative society, with the economic participation of its workers, through loans they made when the company was going bankrupt. These loans became shares which converted the workers into company shareholders.

On the other hand, *El Nacional* is a newspaper supported by the Ministry of the Interior. Its cost is 50 percent less than the other dailies and it has a circulation of 120 thousand copies. Another daily edition of this newspaper is published in the city of Monterrey, in the north, thanks to the Morelos Satellite System.

The largest chain of dailies in the country is the Mexican Editorial Organization, which after 37 years can be found in the country's main cities through 62 different newspapers, whose total circulation reaches 2,100,000 copies. *Esto* forms part of this chain, as well as *El Sol*, a general information newspaper that has a circulation of 100,000 in Mexico City.

The president of the Mexican Editorial Organization is the well-known businessman Mario Vázquez Raña, who made a name for himself when he purchased the news agency, *United Press International* (UPI), in 1986.

Other newspapers published in Mexico City, with a circulation of less than 100,000 copies, and that have considerable influence on public opinion are *Unomásuno*, *Novedades*, *La Jornada*, *El Financiero*, *El Heraldo* and *El Día*, among others. There is also a daily in English, *The News*, published in the Mexican capital.

Odila Romero H. and Patricia Cruz C.

## PIPSA Becomes an Exporter

There are few countries in the world that can count on three paper-making processes. Mexico is one of these. In a short time, Mexico has managed to cease imports of this product and now exports it. These changes occurred with the creation of the Producer Importer of Paper, Ltd. (PIPSA).

This is a state-owned company founded by Lázaro Cárdenas, with the idea of creating an institution of mixed character, with majority participation by the State and minority participation by the editors of the Republic.

"One of our proudest achievements is having become paper exporters, approximately one and a half years ago. Our markets are countries such as the United States, Brazil, Thailand and some Central American countries. Our product's quality matches that of Canada or Chile", Rodolfo Robles, PIPSA head of Control and Statistics commented to *Voices*.

The company has three

production plants: one in Oaxaca produces the paper by extraction from wood pulp; another in San Luis Potosí uses a paper-recycling process; and a third, in Veracruz, produces paper from cane pulp.

PIPSA supplies the entire country with its monthly output of 27 thousand tons. After the Federal District, the states that consume most paper are the most developed, such as Jalisco and Nuevo León.

In order to be a client with PIPSA a company has to make an application in which they specify the product and the quantity required, aside from showing their legal permit. "When a client wishes to increase or decrease his purchases, he has to apply three months in advance", Robles explained.

Nevertheless, some indications have been given that the government control of PIPSA has resulted on more than one occasion on pressures being put on the press.



# Housing Demand on the Rise in Mexico City

A quarter of a million people were left homeless by the 1985 earthquakes

Mexico City houses 23% of the nation's population which totals almost 82 million. Of the 18 million people living in the capital's metropolitan area, 10.8 million live in the Federal District alone. The remaining 40% of the metropolis' population lives in the adjacent municipalities of the State of Mexico. These rapidly growing municipalities—their population grew by 8.6 percent each year during the 1970's—present the greatest demands for housing in the nation.

Nearly a quarter of a million people were left homeless in Mexico City's downtown districts following the September 1985 earthquake. Some 56,000 homes were damaged or destroyed and had to be evacuated. The earthquake devastated both modern high-rise apartment buildings, such as *Tlatelolco*

and the so-called *Multi-familiares Juárez*, as well as older constructions built around the turn of the century, such as the famous "*Casa Blanca*" in Tepito. This building housed more than 150 families and was the setting for Oscar Lewis' novel *The Children of Sanchez*. It has now been demolished. The *Colonia Roma*, basically a middle class residential area, was evacuated by 20% of its population after the quakes which destroyed 474 buildings in the *Colonia* and damaged another 1,400.

The government is current-

ly carrying out four housing programs for earthquake victims: the Emergency Housing Project in two phases, the program to renovate popular housing and the program to rebuild *Tlatelolco*. According to figures provided by the Department for Urban Development and Ecology, the first phase of the Emergency Housing Project has now been completed, and 13,000 housing units have been handed over to their new owners.

The huge housing complex at *Tlatelolco* was inaugurated 22 years ago and has

## The 1987 Housing Program

Through the housing program announced this year the government plans to issue 350,000 loans for home-building and for the purchase of land for home-sites, as well as for improvements on existing homes.

According to Gabino Fraga, Under-Secretary for Housing of the SEDUE (the Department for Urban Development and Ecology), the 1987 Program, with a budget of 2.4 billion pesos, will meet the annual demand for more than 300,000 homes due to population increase. SEDUE officials say there is a qualitative housing shortage—calculated in terms of over-crowding, lack of services and deteriorated buildings—as well as a quantitative shortage caused by the natural increase in population.

The 1987 Housing Program aims to work on both fronts and is part of national decentralization goals. Half of the loans are ear-

marked for 59 provincial cities, 35% for smaller urban areas and rural areas, and only 15% for the already crowded metropolitan areas of Monterrey, Guadalajara and Mexico City. The Program will provide 700,000 jobs in the construction industry as well as nearly two million indirect or complementary jobs in related services and industries. It also includes financial and tax incentives for people who build housing units for rent.

The Federal Government has also announced that it will set aside land for home-building in the main cities in order to allow for better planning in urban development and to restrain the chronic problem of invasion and settlement of vacant lots, city legalization of the situation and then new invasions in other areas.



Photo from Unomasuno Archive

Sit-in by residents of several capital city neighborhoods in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral.

undergone dramatic changes since the earthquake due to continuous demolition and repair work. Eight buildings have been or will be demolished, another 32 need major repairs—9 of these will be reduced in height—while a further 60 buildings are undergoing minor repairs. 8,400 damaged apartments will be recovered through these works.

Shortly after the earthquake, the government expropriated 3,107 blocks of city land under the program to renovate popular housing (RHP), and has now handed



over 48,800 renewed housing units. The current tenants are going to pay some \$3,000 for these homes, in payments to be made over a period of eight years.

In a paper presented to the International Metropolis Congress held in Mexico City in May, the Director General of RHP, Manuel Aguilera Gómez, reported on a study of housing conditions in the expropriated areas. According to

bathroom, kitchenette and laundry, in 40 square meters of space.

Under the RHP program the government provided 22,300 temporary shelters for use during the reconstruction period. The shelters were usually made of asbestos and galvanized aluminum and were equipped with electricity, water and gas. Here groups of 20 families shared bathroom and kitchen facilities.

The RHP program has also been in charge of restoring some 200 buildings classified as historical monuments. These buildings have been restored as dwelling places while at the same time respecting their antiquity and their architectural value.

The second phase of the Emergency Housing Program began in July 1986 with a budget of 45 billion pesos, (some \$30 million) to finance work on 15,940 damaged homes. 79% of the programs resources are earmarked for reconstruction and the remaining 21% is for repairs.

In addition to government efforts, non-government organizations such as the Red Cross, UNICEF and church groups have also worked in reconstruction, while universities and professional groups have provided technical assistance.

Residents in the damaged areas have also contributed to reconstruction, with their labor as well as in decision-making processes. Community organizations have sprung up and have now been working together for nearly two years. Both men and women report positively on their post-earthquake experiences in terms of cooperation among neighbors and in the learning of building techniques. (See Voices number 2).

In an ambitious attempt to reduce the national housing deficit, the government's 1987 housing program was allotted a budget of 2.4 billion pesos and includes facilities for 350,000 new loans for homes.

According to the report Metropolis and Health presented to the Metropolis 1987 Congress by Dr. Jorge

Ruiz de Esparza of the Conurbation Commission for Central Mexico, in 1980, 24% of the homes in the Mexico city metropolitan area had only one room, and 34% of the population lived in these conditions. In the same vein, a Bank of Mexico (Banamex) report called "La vivienda en México" (Housing in Mexico) states that in 1980 an average 5.5 people lived in each home.

The Banamex report also estimates that there will be a demand for 9.5 million housing units in Mexico by the year 2,000. A little under half of these, 4.3 million, will be necessary because of the deterioration of existing homes, while 5.2 million additional units will be needed because of natural population growth.

Jacqueline Buswell



Photo from Unomasuno Archive

The Neighborhood Assembly marches near Los Pinos, the presidential residence.

this study, before the earthquake, 63% of the population did not have their own bathroom, while 29% shared kitchens. Half of the homes studied lacked efficient water supplies and drainage. Mr. Aguilera said that the new housing—in blocks no more than three stories high—provides families with a living room, two bedrooms,

## The Fishing Industry Moves Forward

Over a million tons of seafood are hauled in each year

Mexico's fishing industry is like a small boat which has miraculously escaped being shipwrecked. In the midst of the economic storm this country is living through, this sector has achieved an average growth rate of 8 per cent. No other Mexican industry has managed that.

The Fishing Department believes the industry is in a state of inertia as far as growth is concerned. But, though production in 1986 was slightly lower than in 1982, it has fished over a million tons per year during eight consecutive years.

Mexican fishermen brought in 1.354 million tons of fish in 1986 alone; more than many other countries with a strong fishing tradition such as Britain, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

Ten years ago it was quite usual to hear people in Mexico say that most of their fishing potential was unused. Nowadays, not only is the consumer market duly supplied, but there is a large amount for export. This sector accounts for 4.8 per cent

### Fishing Production 1986

(In thousands of tons)

sardine	468
anchovy	116
tuna and similar species	102
shrimp	73
mojarra	67
algae and sargasso	50
oysters	43
shark	20
carp	17
dogfish	13
mullet	12
sawfish	10



of Mexico's exports (not including oil), which means more than 500 million dollars for the country.

The fishing boom results from the efforts of approximately 270 thousand people: fishermen, technicians, factory workers, researchers and office staff. This virtual army of people is posted along 7.147 km. of Pacific coastline and 2.756 km. belonging to the Gulf of Mexico, part of the Caribbean and the Sea of the Antilles.

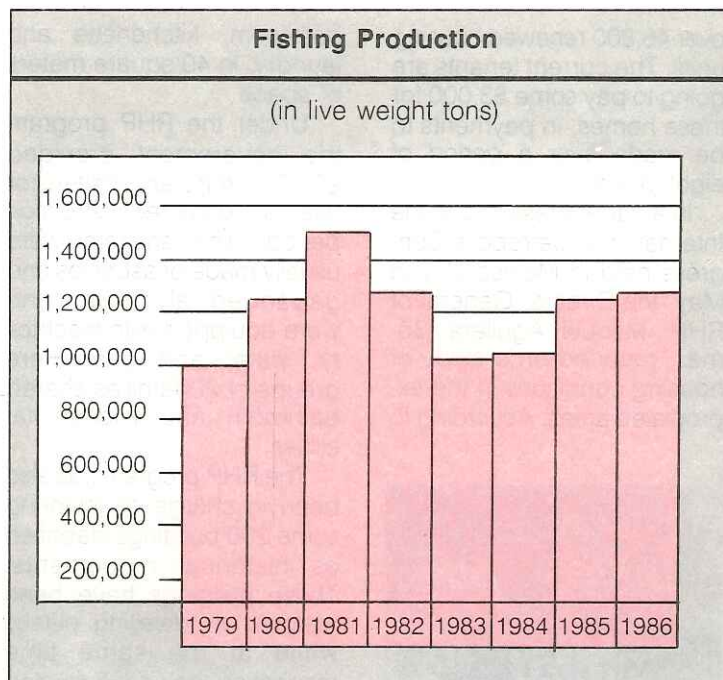
The Mexican fishing industry is divided into three groups: private firms, companies organized by the workers themselves and state-run companies. The private firms have the largest production, about 64 per cent. The companies run by the workers, which are usually a small sector in the Mexican economy, come second. They are organized in cooperatives and produce 25 per cent of the total fishing production, while the state-run companies produce only 11 per cent.

There are over 62 thousand fishing vessels in Mexico but only 3.500 are part of the fishing fleet. They can each carry 10 or more tons. This fleet concentrates mainly on shrimp, sardine and tuna-fish.

These ships are a far cry from the floating factories Japan and the U.S. have, as far as technology is concerned. But Mexican fishing ships do arrive in port with their shrimp ready and frozen, and some even get back with their tuna-fish already canned.

Nonetheless, the Mexican fishing fleet is also suffering the consequences of Mexico's financial crisis. It must face increases in the price of imported spare parts, fuel and fishing nets. Credit is also becoming more expensive and there are a series of other factors as well, all of which hinder the fleet's activity. This is why it operates only at 84% of its capacity and often starts work at the wrong moment.

The fishing industry has 485 processing plants which freeze



shrimp and can sardines and tuna-fish. Around 65 per cent are located on the Pacific, 34 per cent on the Gulf of Mexico and only 1 per cent in Mexico City. During 1986 these plants suffered financial restrictions and credit cutbacks, all of which increased operation costs.

The fact that Mexico is not keeping up to date in fishing activities means that both the actual fishing and the industrial processes will be affected. And we should keep in mind that

## Tuna Fish Exports Have Doubled

A country is entitled to the marginal waters within 12 miles of its shores. It is also entitled to another strip of sea which begins where the 12 mile limit ends and stretches as far as the 200 hundred nautical mile limit. This second strip can be used for economic purposes only by the country it belongs to.

Various countries used to fish unknown quantities of tuna-fish within Mexico's 200 mile limit. But during the López Portillo Administration, the government decided to develop the fishing industry.

Mexico then bought modern fishing ships, built new processing and canning plants and insisted on her right over this economically exclusive area.

Because of this, in July 1980, Mexico captured six U.S. fishing ships which were looking for tuna-fish in this area. The U.S. retaliated with an embargo on all Mexican

tuna-fish imports.

Mexico insisted on her right over this strip and refused to yield to pressure. But the embargo severely affected the tuna-fish industry, for the U.S. was its main client and Mexico had just increased its fishing fleet and was catching greater quantities of tuna. The international market was also out of the question because Mexico did not fulfill all the requirements concerning freezing point, degree of salinity and tests on amount of radioactivity and mercury.

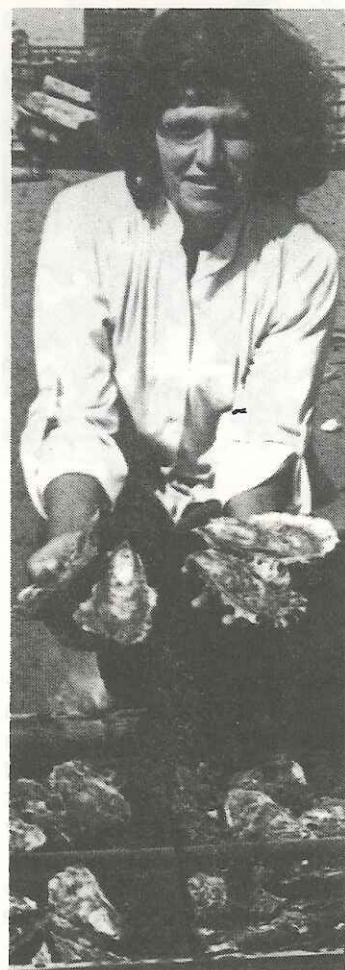
The consumer market also proved to be no alternative as the canned product is more expensive than meat or poultry. The fact that raw tuna-fish is cheaper made no difference, for the Mexican people are not used to buying it in that form.

The embargo decapitalized Mexican fishermen. In 1982, they caught 60 per cent

less than in 1981 and by mid-1984, there were millions of tons of tuna-fish stored away as the drop in prices made sales on the world market abroad impossible.

On August 13th, 1986, after a six-year embargo, during a visit President De La Madrid made to Washington, President Reagan announced that the tuna-fish embargo was over. At this meeting both parties tried to come to an agreement on trade and other issues and efforts were made to improve the relationship between the two countries.

By the time the embargo was lifted, Mexico had found a broader market for its tuna-fish, and Europe had become its chief client. Today, the tuna-fish industry has doubled the amount it exports: 35 thousand tons in 1985 compared to 65 thousand tons in 1986. Also, only 7 thousand tons went to the U.S.



Catching oysters.

Photo from Novedades Archive



we are talking about a gold mine as far as food is concerned.

Compared with other sea products, shrimp is the most important source of income. Last year, the U.S. bought 83 per cent of Mexico's 73 thousand tons of shrimp. That meant a \$400 million income for the country. The other 17% went to the consumer market. This seafood comes first in the Mexican fishing balance of trade and figures amongst Mexico's five principal exports in recent years.

The sardine is the most fished species in Mexico. The largest haul ever made took place last year, but because of its low price it is not economically relevant. Almost half of Mexico's 1986 sea production consisted of sardine, anchoveta, seaweed and sargasso. Nevertheless, they only added up to 2.3 per cent of the total value of sea products. Yet sardines are important because they are a balanced foodstuff within reach of most Mexicans.

Tuna-fish is also an important export product. When the U.S. set up a six-year embargo on Mexican goods, the country had to look for new markets in Europe. When the embargo was called off at the end of 1986 (see appendix), more tuna-fish was exported.

According to estimates, the present generation of Mexicans will see the end of this country's oil reserves. That's why Mexico is searching for new ways to increase and diversify the management of other resources which will keep the Mexican economy alive. The sea and its products are one out of various possibilities. If Mexico can achieve an ecological balance in its territorial waters and an economical balance by distributing its sea wealth in a socially just fashion, then the sea won't just be an alternative, it might mean the future itself.

Luz Guerrero Cruz

## Congresswomen Hold Third Peace Conference

The forum demanded more reasoned leadership of world affairs

The danger which the arms race offers to peace and people's development was the central preoccupation of all those who assisted at the Third Annual Conference of Disarmament and Development, organized by the World's Congresswomen for Peace, on the 14th, 15th, and 16th June, in the headquarters of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Mexico City. 480 representatives of 29 countries took part.

Work began with the topical seminar, 'Women and peace', on Sunday 14th, and continued with the conference on the 15th and 16th, with outstanding proposals and statements.

During the inauguration of the seminar, the president of the High Commission of the Senate of the Republic of Mexico, Antonio Riva Palacio, talked of Mexico's pacific tradition and declared that the seminar was a valuable facet of parliamentary diplomacy, an international exercise that, parallel to and complementary to formal diplomatic relations between heads of State, would lead to a rapprochement between people, through their representatives.

This vision of Mexican foreign policy was reaffirmed on the second day of activities, when the President, Miguel de la Madrid, declared the Conference formerly opened. The President declared that Mexico has always fought for general and total disarmament which will only be achieved when world public

opinion is made fully aware of the danger we live in.

Congresswomen for Peace had their first conference in Stockholm, Sweden, on April, 1985, and the second in New Delhi, India, April, 1986. In both events it was pointed out how minimal is woman's influence in decision-making on peace, military budgets and structures, and in negotiations on disarmament.

The Third Conference, presided over by the unanimously elected Mexican senator, Silvia Hernández, became a forum for the voice of preoccupation, and insistence on better reasoning in the leadership of world politics.

The outstanding themes that were treated in the Conference were: world military spending, the economic crisis and the arms race; and the need for disarmament for development.

The North American representative, Bella Abzug, stated her support for the termination of nuclear tests, dependent on the attitude taken by the Soviet Union. She also declared that the women of her country were opposed to the military aggression in Central America.

For her part, the Soviet Congresswoman, Rita Kukain, reminded us of the Chernobyl accident and gave it as an example of atomic danger. At the same time she declared herself against the arms race in space.

Tamako Nakanishi, from

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# The Peace Conference's Conclusions

## Table No 1: Disarmament and Development

The analysis of the discussions concluded that the external debt, the arms race and the lack of a tolerable minimum standard of living, are factors that favour and strengthen the continuance of "the dirty business of arms and the interest in maintaining a hegemony based on the domination over people, hunger, unemployment, the lack of health and habitations." This in turn causes conflicts and social upheaval that facilitate interventionism and the arms race.

It was added that we must always act on behalf of human rights in all parts, supporting the countries where internal violence, repression and the precariousness of life limits the individual.

The analysis states that women united can give battle to the struggle for life, for happiness, justice and a better world for future generations.

## Table No 2: Women and War and Peace

Several declarations resulted from this round table, among which was the outstanding support to the Peace Initiative of the Group of Six, building and strengthening women's organizations to form networks of alliances to this end.

They repeat their preoccupation with finding solutions to the problem of external debt in Latinamerican countries and they reject the policies of economic and financial pressurizing.

The congresswomen reject any pressure that cancels the free self-determination of the people.

They also pronounced themselves in favour

of more attention to the refugee problem and of full respect for human rights, among other points of equal importance.

## Table No 3: Science and Technology for Peace

It is remarkable that half of the research budget in developed countries is channelled into the war effort, which implies that they are employing the best technology available for the extermination of humanity.

They emphasize that the Third World countries refuse to be dumps for military industrial waste and they demand the restoration and conservation of the environment.

They also demand strict regulations to restrict the advance of militarization in space, as well as the complete elimination of bacteriological chemical arms.

## Table No 4: Towards a Peace Culture

The participants reflected on why the different art forms, constituting the highest manifestations of the spirit, contribute towards the cancellation of the conflicts which lead to the destruction of harmony between people and nations. A call is made for creative works that bring messages of peace to a world where the ecological laws are violated and where brotherhood and ethics are illusions. Art gives us the power to solve the mysteries surrounding the human condition.

decreased benefits for health, pension, social security, education, and habitations.

Also, the Nicaraguan representative, Angela Rosa Acevedo, made an inventory of the results of the absence of peace in her country: 40,027 Nicaraguans are victims of the war of aggression and material damages sum 2,821 million dollars.

On the other hand, the New Zealand Congresswoman, Ann Hercus, reasserted her government's intention to continue prohibiting entry to its territory of ships or planes carrying nuclear arms.

At the close of the Conference, on the 16th, there was a Final Declaration, by general agreement, in which it was stated that the arms race and the build up of the nuclear arsenals constituted the greatest danger that humanity has ever faced.

"We condemn the very existence of the nuclear arsenals since we consider them a constant peril to the human race", states the Declaration. It adds that to continue the method of dissuasion by means of terror "cannot help us to overcome the present world crisis, where increasingly greater military expenditure contrasts openly with the basic unsatisfied needs of humankind."

The Conference also gave its support to the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union designed to eliminate the medium-range weapons in Europe since if this were achieved it would be the first step towards the total elimination of nuclear arms.

The congresswomen, in their final document, demand that women be included at the negotiation tables and in any conference on the arms race.

"We refuse to share the responsibility for the destruction of this planet", states the declaration.

Finally, it was agreed that the Fourth Annual Conference of this organization would take place in Australia, next year.

Japan, the only country that has suffered the ravages of an

atomic attack, lamented the attitude of her Prime Minister,

who has increased military spending and drastically



Photo from Unomasuno Archive

President Miguel de la Madrid, accompanied by Senator Silvia Hernández and Mexican Congressional and Senatorial leaders, during the inauguration of the Third Conference.

Enrique Vargas Anaya



# Mexican Businessmen Seek New Understanding with the United States

**Trade with the U.S. is fundamental to Mexico's economy. The relationship is complex and is conditioned by issues of foreign policy, drug traffic and undocumented workers, for example, which are outside the realm of economics. In addition, cultural differences exist between these neighboring trade partners which often cause misunderstandings and distorted perceptions. *Voices* interviewed a leading Mexican businessman for his points of view on U.S.-Mexico relations. René Ortiz is a member of Canacintra's (National Chamber of Manufacturers) Board of Directors and was interviewed by Jorge Luis Sierra.**

*Mexican industrialists have come to the conclusion that an atmosphere of respect and shared opinions should exist in commercial relations between Mexico and the U.S. Trade should in fact exist as a means to favour peace and progress and not as an element of discord between commercially powerful countries and as a way for these to exert pressure on developing countries.*

*René Ortiz, a Mexican businessman, has been on the Board of Canacintra, one of the most influential business organizations in all Mexico, for six years. At the moment, as President of the Special Commission for Bilateral Affairs, he participates in all commercial deals Canacintra makes with foreign countries. He also represents Canacintra at the government's Foreign Trade Department.*

*His statements focus on the possible danger of deteriorating commercial relations between Mexico and the U.S. What is more, he is definitely against some in the U.S. who wish to sanction the question of drugs, undocumented workers and foreign debt with commercial retaliations. Yet he is also clearly representative of many Mexican industrialists in his desire to come up with new proposals and to further understanding between these two countries.*

*According to René Ortiz, a shareholder in a number of corporations which produce capital goods both in Mexico and Central America, trying to get Mexico and the U.S. to reach some sort of trade agreement has not been too much of a success. Protectionism, goods eliminated from the Generalized System of Preferences, bans on certain imports or tax increases on things such as petroleum are problems that can be solved by means of a general agreement that establishes special negotiation strategies for each case. Relations with the U.S. —says Ortiz— are vital not only for the future of industry but for Mexico's future as well.*

**As head of Canacintra, could you tell us about your experiences as a businessman regarding trade issues with the U.S.?**

The need to create a specific department to deal with bilateral affairs appeared seven years ago. The most important country we had to work with was obviously the U.S., and I say obviously because between 65 and 70 per cent of all our trade exchanges take place with the U.S. So Canacintra established this Commission for Bilateral Affairs, as it was generally felt that Mexican industrialists weren't consulted on many of the agreements reached. Also, we needed to know more about the problems in this sort of situation. We began by pinpointing the ones which affected our industry and we have been dealing with them in Canacintra's Foreign Trade Department.

## What Is Canacintra?

Mexican businessmen are organized in chambers. Every industry has its own association and these are then grouped in confederations. The National Chamber of Manufacturers (*Canacintra*), created in 1941, is one of the most powerful and important industrial organizations. It has 76 thousand members and is divided in 68 districts which include most of the country except the states of Nuevo León and Jalisco. There are various different types of industries such as foodstuff, furniture, automobile, capital goods, paper, chemical, building and metal industries grouped together in *Canacintra*.



**This Commission for Bilateral Affairs was created when the present economic crisis was just beginning. What premises do you use now when working on commercial relations between Mexico and the U.S.?**

We've worked very hard at this. As I've already mentioned, this relationship is vital for us. We really believe relations with the U.S. are central for our future, not only for industry but for Mexico as a whole. Because of the crisis we are going through in developing countries, plus the serious deficit the U.S. has, commerce is frankly very difficult and more and more problems tend to appear.

There doesn't seem to be much hope for a rosy future. In fact, friction and problems will most surely continue to arise. Therefore, as businessmen it is our responsibility to try and understand our times so as to further the interests of Mexican industry.

One of our basic principles is that the U.S. must understand that trade between our countries has nothing to do with other problems we may have. If Mexican industry is to sell and develop, it is of the greatest importance that the developed countries don't close their markets to our goods.

**Which are the other problems you just mentioned and how do they affect commercial development?**

There are extremely important issues which don't always appear to be the same. To be quite frank, the basic issue is the pressure the U.S. exerts on Mexico. It is so evident that we have all read about it in the newspapers and sensed it in our daily activities. We are constantly feeling this pressure which stems from problems which have nothing to do with trade activities. The most serious issues are the recently applied Simpson-Rodino Immigration Bill, the pressure exerted because of drug traffic, the commercial demands present in the agreements with the International Monetary Fund and the pressure of protectionist measures which empower those in charge of U.S. commercial issues to reduce imports.

The foreign debt is important because it affects commercial issues. And I say affects because in the agreements reached regarding the financing Mexico needs, a commercial opening was demanded. Obviously, this financial fix we're in is placing an additional pressure on the national situation.

The other important source of pressure is the drug question. A lot has been said about this in the U.S. Congress and retaliatory measures have been demanded. This has also caused a series of problems, some related to trade, as

**Profile of a Businessman**



Photo by Rafael Borrillo

René Ortiz, President of Canacintra's Bilateral Affairs Commission.

René Ortiz Muñiz is a Mexican businessman, but not the traditional rough, serious and authoritarian type. He's an expert on international affairs for *Canacintra* (National Chamber of Manufacturers) and he's also on the board of many of his own firms. He started off as a businessman with the powerful ACES corporation which makes equipment and machinery. It also produces chemicals used for manufacturing industrial equipment. René Ortiz, together with other Mexican businessmen soon realized how vital it was to use the country's resources, labour and technology to produce capital goods. At present ACES is important in the consumer market and has invested and expanded in Central America. In spite of competition with U.S. firms, it has progressed technically. ACES' principal aim is to preserve the country's industry and the jobs it generates.

**Fob Imports From Individual Countries and Economic Blocks**

January to September<sup>a</sup>  
(In millions of dollars)

COUNTRIES AND ECONOMIC BLOCKS	1985		1986	
	AMOUNT	%	AMOUNT	%
<b>TOTAL</b>	10016.5	100.0	8794.0	100.0
United States	6695.8	66.8	5764.6	65.6
Japan	529.3	5.3	534.8	6.1
<b>LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION ASSOCIATION</b>	393.9	3.9	233.4	2.7
Brazil	132.4	1.3	117.0	1.3
<b>EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY<sup>b</sup></b>	1234.4	12.3	1320.4	15.0
West Germany	371.1	3.7	533.7	6.1
France	182.8	1.8	184.4	2.1
United Kingdom	185.0	1.8	148.7	1.7
Spain	164.3	1.6	147.3	1.7
<b>OTHERS</b>	1163.1	11.6	940.8	10.7

<sup>a</sup> Preliminary figures

<sup>b</sup> Spain and Portugal joined the EEC on January 1, 1986.

SOURCE: INEGI, SPP, SHCP and Bank of Mexico Working Group.



for example, the closing of the border and all the obstacles for Mexicans to enter the U.S. in 1986.

The U.S. Congresses' protectionist tendency is also a serious problem. Because of the trade deficit this country has, a group in Congress wishes to pass a number of protectionist laws, such as a tax on imported oil-barrels, a measure which was even criticized in the GATT.

**Nevertheless, it is surprising to find a trend towards an increase in exports. Tentative figures for the first two months of 1987 show a 30 per cent rise compared with that same period in 1986. This clearly shows that Mexican industry has a strategy for dealing with these problems. How do you deal with this pressure? What strategies do you use?**

I'm pleased about this increase in exports. I think it's a good thing. But we also have to take a look at the problems we are living through here in Mexico. We must carefully analyse what is causing this increase in exports. Whether it is due to an increase in production, a greater degree of efficiency, or whether it is caused by a drop in the Mexican consumer market.

To put it clearly, we may be selling what people here in Mexico can't buy, we may be sending goods out of the country at very low prices, without really having created a profitable market for them. I believe that unfortunately, all these exports are due, not to a stronger industry but to a series of other factors, for example, the undervalued peso and the drop in the consumer market. We are forced to export these goods. I think we must analyse this and find a reason for these figures. According to the National Foreign Trade Bank (Banco Nacional de Comercio Exterior) exports totalled 9.904 billion dollars in 1985 and 7.583 billion dollars in 1986. That means that there was a drop in exports to the U.S.; this is an interesting point to consider.

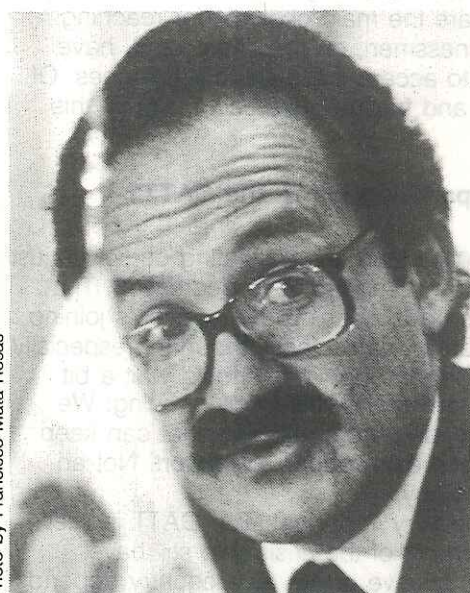
Now, what strategy do we, in Canacintra, believe should be put into practice to cope with the problems we mentioned before? I think that this is a very complex question because it involves relations between two independent countries that must respect each other. In this case the basic thing is to come to some sort of understanding, to create an undercurrent of understanding between Mexico and the U.S. When foreign businessmen (including those from the U.S.) visit our country, we ask them to take a look at what Mexico really is, to see what we are like. It has been a pleasant surprise to discover that the people who come into contact with Mexicans go home with a different view about this country.

Obviously this contact is going to result in a series of consultation

**Protectionist trends will start to disappear if we can get the United States to understand Mexico's position.**

Exports by Country and Economic Block				
January to September <sup>a</sup> (In millions of dollars)				
	1985		1986	
COUNTRIES AND ECONOMIC BLOCKS	AMOUNT	%	AMOUNT	%
TOTAL	16123.5	100.0	11284.4	100.0
United States	9904.2	61.4	7583.4	67.2
Japan	1160.8	7.2	767.7	6.8
LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION ASSOCIATION	429.4	2.7	426.2	3.8
Brazil	219.7	1.4	115.0	1.0
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY <sup>b</sup>	2971.0	18.4	1413.5	12.5
Spain	1168.1	7.2	533.7	4.7
France	628.3	3.9	272.8	2.4
United Kingdom	600.7	3.7	99.0	0.9
OTHERS	1658.1	10.3	1093.6	9.7

<sup>a</sup> Preliminary figures  
<sup>b</sup> Portugal and Spain joined the EEC on January 1, 1986.  
 SOURCE: INEGI, SPP, SHCP and Bank of Mexico Working Group.



Juan José Moreno Sada, President of Canacintra.

Photo by Francisco Mata Rosas



mechanisms. These can't, of course, question a country's right to protect its own interests, but they ought to help establish a mechanism for discussing measures which might also affect the other country. In this sort of situation it is very important to discuss and explain each of the steps taken, to avoid possible misunderstandings.

**This sounds like a diplomatic approach, as if the two parties involved were searching for an agreement, searching for bilateral solutions; the same thing occurs with the problem of undocumented workers. But in all these negotiations based on this sort of approach, what has actually been achieved that will favour Mexican foreign trade?**

Unfortunately, no real agreement has been reached. This sort of mechanism has not been established yet. I wasn't talking only about diplomatic spheres, about relations at government level. I was talking about relations at all levels. We industrialists have many connexions with businessmen in the U.S. There are many firms with joint Mexican-U.S. investment or which receive technology from U.S. firms. There is a lot of exchange, of understanding there. Joint-capital firms are an important example of this.

This sort of agreement results in a better understanding between people. Many of the protectionist measures stem from the very base of U.S. society, from worker unions, from farmers. They are the people who ask their government, through Congress, to pass these laws.

If we can get Mexico's position understood in the U.S., if we can persuade the people of the U.S. that it is in their best interest to have a strong, prosperous and independent neighbor, then this protectionist tendency towards Mexico will start to disappear.

**Would you say that U.S. industrialists treat Mexico differently from the way the U.S. government treats this country?**

Yes, I would say that there is a difference. U.S. industrialists have found that Mexico is good business. As proof of this I'd like to mention the great amount of joint-investment firms that exist. Many U.S. firms have successful co-investments in Mexico which work well and are good business. They've achieved an important level of production, they export to other countries and that is proof enough of the greater degree of integration between firms. Of course I think this is much more difficult to achieve between countries.

**Why? What is this difficulty?**

The problem here is the U.S.' attitude because it has grown used to being the leader of the Western world and because it is the most powerful country. Unfortunately the U.S. feels it is responsible for keeping the developing countries in check.

It is important to clarify that though we are neighbors who share geographical aspects, we are also very different as far as culture, history and character go and that we wish respect for our nationality and for our own way of looking at things. I think these differences are the main obstacle for reaching agreements at government level. U.S. businessmen, on the other hand, have come to know their Mexican partners and to accept these basic differences. Of course, certain adjustments are necessary and friction does occur, but all this can be easily solved.

**How would you sum up Mexico's participation in the GATT?**

It's very difficult to evaluate. We shouldn't start congratulating ourselves just yet on the fact that exports have increased and imports have decreased. That would be a serious mistake. Of course, this trade opening and Mexico's joining the GATT has had some effects, but they aren't particularly important, especially if we take into account the crisis we are going through. We should wait a bit longer to be able to see what's really happening with this trade opening. We want to become efficient, but for that we need a strong industry that can keep going on the internal market and yet produce extra goods for export. Not an industry which exports what Mexicans can't buy.

I think what we do in the future will be very important. The GATT in itself means neither a worsening nor an improvement of the crisis. We still have industrial mechanisms, and what we finally achieve or not as a country depends on how we use them. We chose to join the international game by becoming members of the GATT. Now everything depends on what we do here in Mexico.

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**In order for our industry to export, markets must be open to Mexican products.**

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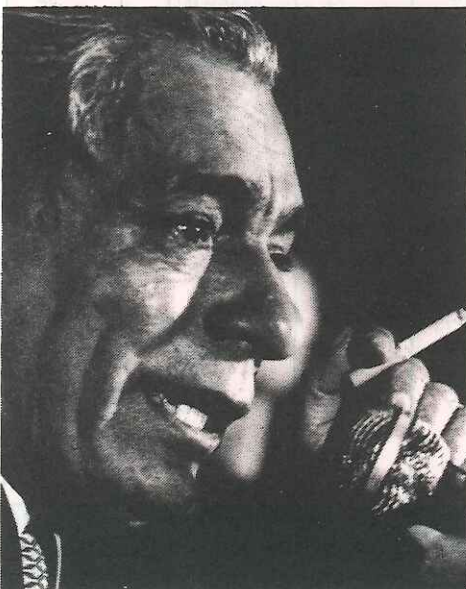


Photo by Francisco Mata Rosas

Gustavo Petriccioli, Treasury Minister.



What is basic here are the policies the industrialized countries are thinking of following. This is why reaching agreements is so important. They will allow us to find a way out for the Third World. Industrialized countries must accept their responsibility in all this. An all round understanding and what we Mexicans do right here in Mexico will determine whether we overcome our problems or not.

**What should be done regarding mechanisms to reach agreements and in relation to practical measures which would help handle relations with the U.S.?**

An agreement between Mexico and the U.S. is important to show that there is a desire to come to terms. Not all groups see eye to eye on all issues. We mentioned a protectionist trend in Congress, but the Reagan Administration has other ideas on U.S. trade, it is more liberal. Also there are different groups within Congress. This is why making contact with sectors which favour Mexico is so important.

In Congress, in the White House, in universities and technical schools, at all levels of U.S. society we find people who are very much in favour of Mexico. Workers, intellectuals, researchers, union leaders and congressmen work and use their influences in our favour. Unfortunately, we also get people who don't care for Mexico at all, who wish to pressure us. And though they are a minority, they make a big fuss sometimes. So we should come to an understanding with the people who care for us and who are working in our favour in the U.S.

Some goods were excluded from the GATT last year but it had nothing to do with trade. This retaliatory measure was the answer to the Mexican government's refusal to modify the Patents Law. That is the sort of thing we must avoid.

Regarding the bills discussed in the U.S. Congress, there are groups which are against protectionism. We should give them our support, and try as industrialists to talk to U.S. congressmen to explain how important it is for them not to take protectionist measures against developing countries. There isn't a single answer to all this. A wide agreement that would allow concrete steps to be taken should be reached, protectionist laws should be cancelled, tariff walls should be pulled down and greater frictions should be avoided. Special meetings must also be held to discuss these issues and come to an agreement.

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**It should be understood that we are geographically close neighbors with huge differences in culture, history and temperament.**

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# Modernization as a Challenge

In the midst of a severe economic crisis, Mexican society is undergoing deep changes as it approaches the end of the century. The concept of “modernization” is used to denote the changes currently under discussion by politicians, economists, sociologists and other experts. The debate centers on the viability of the different modernizing proposals, on the internal and external factors involved and on the processes’ effects on society as a whole. In an attempt to reproduce part of the debate, *Voices* consulted renowned Mexican academics Lorenzo Meyer, General Academic Coordinator at the Colegio de México, José Luis Reyna, Director of the Latin American Social Science Faculty (Flacso), Rolando Cordera, Director of Economic Research Magazine (*Investigación Económica*) and professor at UNAM’s School of Economics, and Juan Molinar, a member of this University’s Institute for Social Research. Their opinions are extremely helpful to the understanding of change in Mexico today.

*Voices of Mexico:* One hears frequent allusion in various political and academic circles to the fact that Mexican society has recently undergone a process of modernization. In general terms, what is modernization, to what point has this process become reality, and to what is it due?

*Lorenzo Meyer:* In my opinion modernization is a relative concept. The first modern societies were European and, because of this, the initial search for modernization in Mexico — which began before Independence in 1821— took the form of an attempt to copy —in its institutional, political and cultural forms— England, France or the United States. To a certain extent, the situation has not changed since then. Mexico continues to pursue modernity and takes as its models other countries, the dominating powers, particularly the United States. The idea of modernity is encapsulated in the capacity of a society to assimilate constantly, and without trauma, the incessant economic, cultural, social and political changes in an industrial, or more specifically a post-industrial civilization.

Historically, in Mexico these changes — political involvement of the masses, creation of an internal market, etc.— have occurred only partially and have been accompanied by enormous social conflicts and tensions: the War of Reform (1855-1867); the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1877-1910); and the Revolution (1910-1920). Sometimes changes have taken place more in the economic than the political

sphere and on other occasions the opposite has occurred, but in fact the real changes that have taken place are less than imagined by their sponsors. The entire history of modern Mexico can be seen as an attempt to overcome the colonial condition and a definite search for modernization. For Mexico the ultimate objective of this search is the consolidation of its independence of the great powers and the achievement of a decent standard of living for the majority of its population. Both objectives were formed two centuries ago and yet they are still aims rather than achievements.

The last stage of this process began with the Second World War, when Mexico became involved in a process of economic change prompted by the governmental urge for rapid industrialization of the country through import substitution. The aim was to move the emphasis of our economy from the external demand for primary products —minerals, petrol and agricultural goods— to the internal demand for consumer goods and capital. For some time the scheme worked: it worked so well that a decision was made not to change it and to postpone the moment for political changes, and because of this the Mexican political system, in its essence, remains the same as in the forties: a presidential system, with a dominant party and limited pluralism, but with a society which is no longer, as in the forties, rural and illiterate.

*Juan Molinar:* A modern society implies the institutionalization of change and the frequent





**From a strictly economic point of view, Mexico changed greatly between 1950 and 1980, but the political system failed to modernize at the same speed.**

and permanent shift in the manner of doing things. This is one of the first aspects of the modernization process. The institutionalization of change. A second aspect is the following: traditional societies are characterized by the fact that, in great part, the social roles played by individuals have been assigned to them by their birth, or social origin, or their sex, external characteristics. In contrast, in a modern society the majority of social roles, or social activities, are chosen independently of their sex or social rank, etc. In other words, a second aspect of modernization would be the degree to which social roles are chosen rather than inherited.

A third general element present in traditional societies is that their economy is based on internal consumption, while the modern societies gear their economy to the market. The modernizing element here tends therefore to the extension of the market and the diminishing of the economics of internal consumption.

There are other elements in the modernization process seen from the sociological point of view, but perhaps these three—increase in role choice; institutionalization of change against the prevalence of custom; and the extension of the market at the cost of production for internal consumption—could be considered a synthesis of the modernization process from the sociological point of view.

In more general terms, Mexican society is a modern society showing these three aforementioned characteristics, as well as some others pertaining to a modern society. It is a

society where the greater part of production is destined for the market; it is governed by the rules of the market; it is a society where the majority of social roles are chosen rather than applied by birth; which implies a greater social mobility, both horizontal and vertical, as well as a geographical mobility. Also, change is now much more institutionalized than it was in Mexican society a century ago. Nevertheless, as a rule, modernization is not a uniform process and the example of Mexico is not an exception to this rule, since it has occurred at different rhythms. There are some social levels and some regions in the country where modernization has not had a profound effect.

*José Luis Reyna:* It can be approached from various angles. It seems to me to be a complex process. If one takes the time lapse of the last 30 years, the country has undergone great changes, and modernization is change. If one looks only at the economic process, between 1950 and 1980 the country changed its appearance drastically. From being a predominantly rural country it became fundamentally urban; industry and manufacture developed with great speed. Nevertheless, from the political point of view, the country did not become modernized with the same speed in spite of the fact that there have been important changes in educational terms. Illiteracy has been drastically decreased and although there are still noticeable deficiencies in the general scholastic level, Mexico in 1987 is now a country where primary education is completed. This change in the educational system, up until now, has not had a modernizing effect on the political system, in spite of the fact that education and participation in general are two related phenomena. Looking generally at the process of modernization, one could say that the most important change has taken place in the economic field, and that change has been less intense in the political. Nevertheless, the granting of the vote to women in 1952 can be seen as part of the modernizing process. Another example is in the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years which opens general political participation to a wider section of society. Adolfo López Mateos, then President of the Republic, established proportional representation and, from 1952, marginal opposition political parties were permitted. Until 1958 the Chamber of Congress consisted in one hundred percent of members of the PRI. These, and other legislative rules established in the LOPPE, and passed in the last Presidency, and the electoral law presently in force, all indicate new possibilities. I would say that without being changes as important or as marked as those that have taken place in the economic sphere, they have made way for a gradual, and relative widening, but nevertheless a widening of the political sphere that allows for the participation in the Mexican political process of some groups in institutionally-organized parties. Now, for example, we can see legalized parties from the left as well as the right; the centre continues to be the official party. Even although the opposition still has little importance, it now has





**Imitative forms of modernization have been predominant in the country. We have tried to import ways of life, kinds of goods and services, above all from the U.S.**

some official institutionalized means of demonstrating itself. Seeing it from this point of view, there is a tendency, an indication of change, and therefore of modernization.

I think that this country still has a long way to go to achieve a more democratic situation. Nevertheless, I consider that there are now existing institutionalized conditions that will gradually allow a movement towards democracy. I think that political modernization has to be achieved through a relatively widened political participation which will take us towards democracy.

The level of modernization achieved by the economy of this country, and the relative level of organization reached by society in general, does not correspond to the political advances. There are certain delays, imbalances, asynchronous situations, implied in the different dimensions of change.

*Rolando Cordera Campos:* Data such as literacy, urbanization, changes in the form of domestic life, access to communication media, ownership of apparatus such as radio and television, are details of modernization. And they are not cold data but illustrate new situations in the life-style in underdeveloped countries such as Mexico. If we put these data in a historic perspective, we could say that Mexico underwent an important process of change in the thirties, which placed our society on the path towards a value production system and a social organization format which could well be called modern.

It is very important to recognise that, unfortunately, in this process of social and economic change undergone by the country, there has predominated imitative forms of modernization. We have tried to import a way of life, kinds of goods, particularly from North American society. We have sacrificed internal creativity, innovation and justice. We have sacrificed another form of modernity which is the more or less equal access to the basics of life and, at the end of this long process of change, we have a country with patches of consumerist modernity or a modernity molded in consumerism surrounded by large social and territorial extensions where there prevails basic dissatisfaction, enormous shortages in educational materials and serious employment problems. Ours has been not only an unequal modernization but also one that is dependent on and imitative of the exterior.

***Voices of Mexico:* At a political level, what are the measures, the facts that, in the present presidential period, express this tendency towards modernization?**

*José Luis Reyna:* I would say that, at the beginning of this presidential period, there were demonstrations in the ballot, where various electoral triumphs were conceded to the opposition in some states in the north. Some means of participation and representation that indicate modernizing elements in the political system have now become institutionalized. I do not mean to say by this that the elections in

Mexico are not questioned. They are questioned by many groups, by many segments of society. Nevertheless, it would be unjust not to recognize that the elections now taking place in this country are very different from those in the 'forties and 'fifties, when there was no possibility of any choice except that dictated vertically by the State. Now at least there is a degree more of participation and of opposition and the political game is wider, not as structured as society might wish, but finally more important than it was. Aside from this, there has existed since the 'seventies relative freedom of the press, where one can practically say what one wants. This is an indication of modernization. It has to start somewhere. I would say that this began fifteen years ago, when new spheres of participation appeared that have gone on opening up. We should also remember the electoral reforms in 1973, 1977, 1983 and now we can count on new examples such as the electoral tribune, which is going to be the last resort in federal elections. These, from my point of view, are symptoms of modernization.

*Juan Molinar:* There is a kind of lagging behind in modernization of the political system in contrast with social and economic modernization. This lack of synchronization in the rhythms of modernization in economics, society and politics may help to explain some existing political conflicts which are permanently occurring throughout the country. The structures of political representation for example, have resisted the process of modernization, and this as much in the employers', workers' or peasants' corporations as in the field of citizens' representation. In this last aspect there have recently been some modernizing impulses. The Law of Political Organizations and Electoral Processes was not only a modernizing impulse in Mexico's political life because it allowed for the widening of the country's party political spectrum, because it introduced substantial modifications to the scheme of political participation and because it generated a better political expression of social pluralism. That is, various currents from the left and also from the right had been legally and politically prohibited from expression in party terms. In 1977 these prohibitions were overcome and this series of party and political expressions, which did not have an electoral channel, could be defined.

Recently, measures such as the Federal Electoral Code express some advances in the integration of political representation. For example, they make proportional representation more equal. These could be seen as a series of recent measures and successes with respect to the political modernization process. Nevertheless, I think they are insufficient.

*Lorenzo Meyer:* Since the great economic crisis of 1982—a crisis which after five years is not yet over—a great number of politically active Mexicans—who, in spite of material and cultural advances, continue to be a minority—began to doubt the political way of being which



José Luis Reyna.



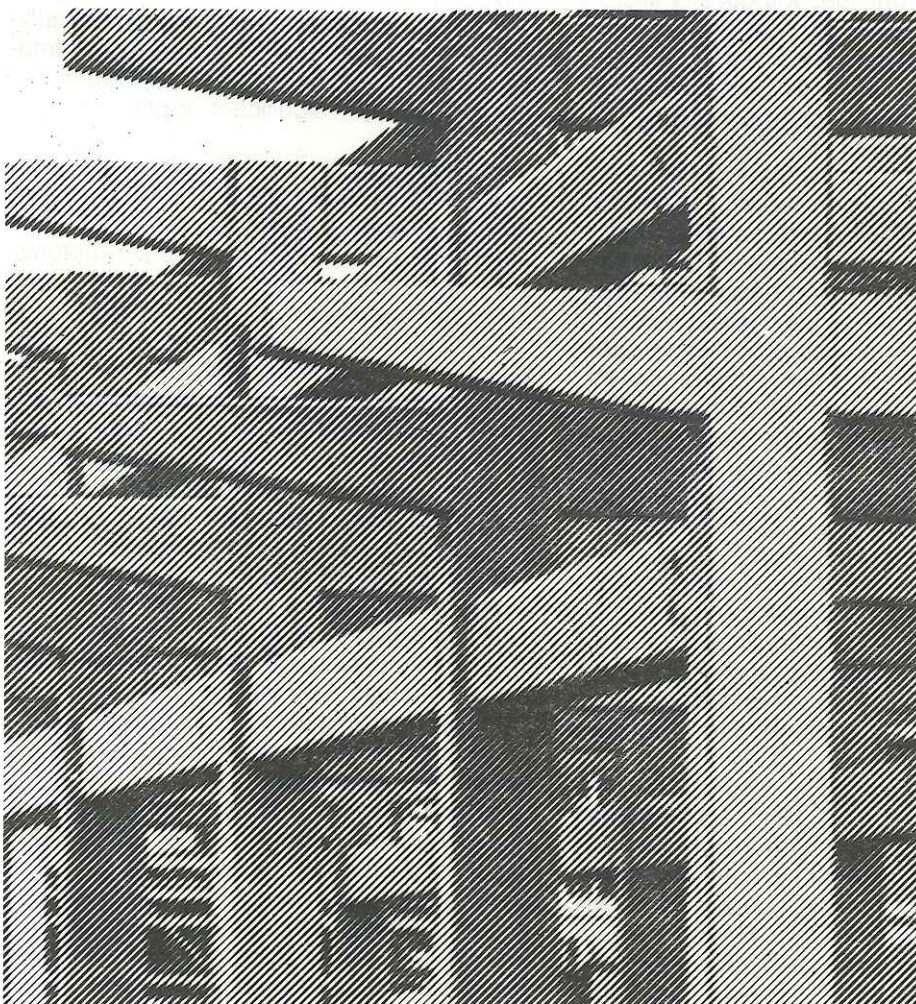
**Ever since the sixties the press has been relatively free to express practically whatever it wishes to. This is a sign of modernization.**

has prevailed in the last fifty years.

Perhaps what I am about to say is unjust but it appears to me that in the present Presidency no really important measures have been taken in the field of political modernization — authoritarianism continues basically intact— while the situation is very different in the case of economics. In this field the project initiated by Miguel de la Madrid is very different from that of his predecessor. What the present government, now in its last few months, sought to do was to erase the bases allowing them to abandon the idea of a productive apparatus determined almost exclusively by the demand of the internal market, since this gave the country, since the 'sixties, an external commercial structural deficit and led, among other things, to an enormous external debt, now over one hundred thousand million dollars.

The destruction of the old tariff protection of industry and Mexico's entrance into the GATT, illustrate the political wish to abandon the economic nationalism of the past and to make the external demand for prime materials, services and relatively simple manufactured goods the new basis of the Mexican economy. In the short term this means very difficult adjustments paid for basically by the workers with a deepening of unemployment and structural sub-employment. This is the heavy payment for attempting modernization in a situation of crisis.

*Rolando Cordera Campos:* My opinion is that there are two political modernizing factors.



One is the new Electoral Code and the other is the municipal reform. The reform to the constitutional Article 115 is designed to make it possible for the Mexican City Councils to be formed in a proportional manner. At another level, informal but equally real, and perhaps more important, is the fact of the mobilization of public opinion, a growing interest in political processes and the attack on the political scene, particularly at the electoral level, on the part of groups that act openly in opposition to the government through the PAN or other parties. The formalization of this political modernization is unsatisfactory as much in the Electoral Code as in the municipal reforms. The President's original idea, that the City Councils would effectively be constituted in a proportional way, was distorted and the local legislative bodies introduced variations in each state which to a certain extent blocked this fine idea.

On another level, there exists an element in conflict with political modernization: electoral practices are the object of great scepticism on the part of the population because of the predominance of manipulation and control on the part of the government. The mobilization of public opinion and the middle groups in electoral matters are without doubt a healthy sign, but they have to be accompanied as rapidly as possible by a more ambitious plan of the country's institutional organization. The process of political modernization is still very limited and precarious, and a conscious effort must be made with it, since it is still in its initial phase, by the governors and political forces.

One of the best possible advances would be to form a constitutional mandate where the political parties are entities of public interest. This is not going to happen on its own. There has to be created in Mexico a legal and financial context for parties.

There exist proposals for the democratization of national life, creating more open political relations, less controlled by the State, giving greater opportunities for other groups in society to organize themselves politically and participate in the electoral process which is rigorously supervised from the heights of power.

It is not an exaggeration to say that, in the matter of political modernization, there tends to be a consensus of opinion expressing dissatisfaction and the demand for effective changes.

***Voices of Mexico:* With the approaching elections of 1988 in view, what new modernizing elements of the Mexican political system have been put into practice?**

*Rolando Cordera Campos:* None. What has become evident is the archaic quality of the Mexican presidential succession and its absolutely pre-modern character. I think that the presidential succession will occur in exactly the same terms as before, but it is very probable that it will be for the last time. There is no longer any justification, either political or historical, for this and it appears to me that Mexican political society and the general population are com-



**Representative political structures have resisted modernization, and this is true of business, labor and peasant corporate structures as well as for voters in general.**

pletely tired of a process of this nature. I think that we are living at the end of the presidential succession as something that depends on the decision, without consultation or discussion, of a person who is the President of the Republic. I think that the people in power will have to give up, faced with the evidence that they have in their hands a worn-out process which no longer convinces any one and is only allowed to occur one more time because of the political wisdom of the Mexican population. But the need for renovation in this matter is alive in the minds of the people. There is one very clear fact: people do not think about the succession but about what is going to happen after. Before, there was always a great uproar about the succession, now this only happens among very restricted groups. What the people would like is to see ahead and begin to reflect, hear proposals for feasible changes, which would not alter their basic security. I think that we are living this transition very acutely even although on the surface everything seems the same.

*Juan Molinar:* There have been modifications made to the political electoral system which would not necessarily be seen as modernizing changes. Much is said about the electoral tribune, but I do not think it is very important. The presidential succession has not been modified in the last thirty years. Perhaps since the 1952 or the 1958 succession, the process, known as "tapadismo" (hiding) and "dedazo" (appointing), to decide the presidential succession, has been in existence and I think that it continues without any alteration. The presidential succession has not changed, it continues within a closed process, almost strictly one-person. It not only excludes the bases of the governing party but also the very leaders of the party in power.

What has changed is the response of some sectors of society to this mechanism. In the political sphere, in the last thirty or forty years, there has been a long succession of modernizing elements which have changed the form in which people organize themselves politically, the form in which the opposition leaders are integrated, the form in which representatives are elected, but what has not changed is the form of the presidential succession.

Maintaining intact, unchangeable, the election of the PRI presidential candidate, indicates that one part of society and some of its political organizations have not changed. Because, in the moment in which the successor is revealed, "la cargada" and all those traditional elements of PRI politics will continue to take effect. Nevertheless, there are various sectors of the country that show their displeasure, their rejection of these clearly pre-modern practices

*Lorenzo Meyer:* With relation to the presidential elections in 1988 and political modernization there is unfortunately not too much to say. It is true that we have new electoral legislation, but we should take into consideration —as Juan Molinar has commented— that since 1940 each presidential election in Mexico has involved new legis-

lation. Today, in 1987, there is almost nothing new in the form or the content of the process of transference of power that has already begun. The President of the Republic is the one to choose the successor, whose triumph in 1988 is assured. The elections serve no particular purpose except in the margin of victory won by the official party.

In reality, what is new is the attitude of the public, who now consider worn-out the political system where, since 1940, the President and only he decides who will be the presidential candidate in the dominant party that has not lost one election, either presidential, gubernatorial or senatorial, since its creation in March, 1929. This system gave Mexico notable political stability, but no longer has credibility.

Seen from this point of view, I think that Mexican political modernization is still to come, and should no longer be delayed. The new President —whoever he is— should govern in an atmosphere where the legitimacy of the principal —and at times apparently the only— Mexican political institution, that is the presidency, has diminished irreversibly. I have the impression that from 1989, as never before, the Mexican presidency should take into account the opinions and attitudes of the principal political actors and share with them some of the enormous power concentrated in him from the 'thirties to the present day.

The tendency is towards a greater participation of lay society in the formulation and execution of the policies that concern them. Nevertheless, the resistance of tradition, of the huge political bureaucracies, to this change is enormous. The Mexican political elite simply does not want to lose the privileges accumulated over more than half a century of government without any significant opposition.

*José Luis Reyna:* The 1988 elections will be very similar to those of 82, 76, 70, if we are merely discussing the presidential election. Since 1982 we see slightly different symptoms in the sense that there is a break in the continuity that has existed in presidential elections since 1952. The idea is that since 1982 there has been an important decrease in the PRI votes. 1982 was the year when a presidential candidate, backed by the PRI, obtained the lowest number of votes, proportionately speaking, than on any other previous date. It did not reach 70%. What I mean is that even although this party continues to win majority support, the PRI has less public support than before. And this will become clear in the 1988 elections. I think that there will be greater participation from those sympathizing with parties both from the left and the right. The ideal situation would be a greater participation from opposition parties. It would be a way of expressing the citizen's doubts and discontent.

In conclusion, I would say that in 1988 the non-PRI will grow. But I have to add that this is part of a gradual process where participation is effectively growing. This participation is going to be distributed over different political groups, still unconsolidated but that in some way are opening a new political game. These



Lorenzo Meyer.



**It is no exaggeration to say that agreement exists concerning political modernization, and this can be summed up in dissatisfaction and in the demand for effective change.**

are the initial stages leading towards a democratization of Mexican society.

***Voices of Mexico: In the economics field in Mexico, what have been the aspects where the government has indicated a wish to modernize the system?***

*Lorenzo Meyer:* As far as economics is concerned, as I have already said, this is where the government has most indicated a wish to modernize the system, that is, to change it in order to survive a crisis that has resulted, from 1982 until now, in the reduction of the growth of the Gross National Product to practically zero, just when around 800 thousand young people per year are entering a satiated job market. Of course, the so-called "informal" or "subterranean economy" takes care that not all of them remain unemployed, but there is urgent need for a solution that will give productive employment to everyone.

The main measures of the economic modernization program, begun in 1983, consist in the first place of the dismantling of protection of industry, in order to force it to be efficient and enter into successful competition with other developing countries for the markets in the industrialized world. The other large step—which has been only half taken—is of making state economic activity more efficient (and less corrupt); this involves the famous "slimming" of the State, a phenomenon not only to be found in Mexico but also in other developed and de-

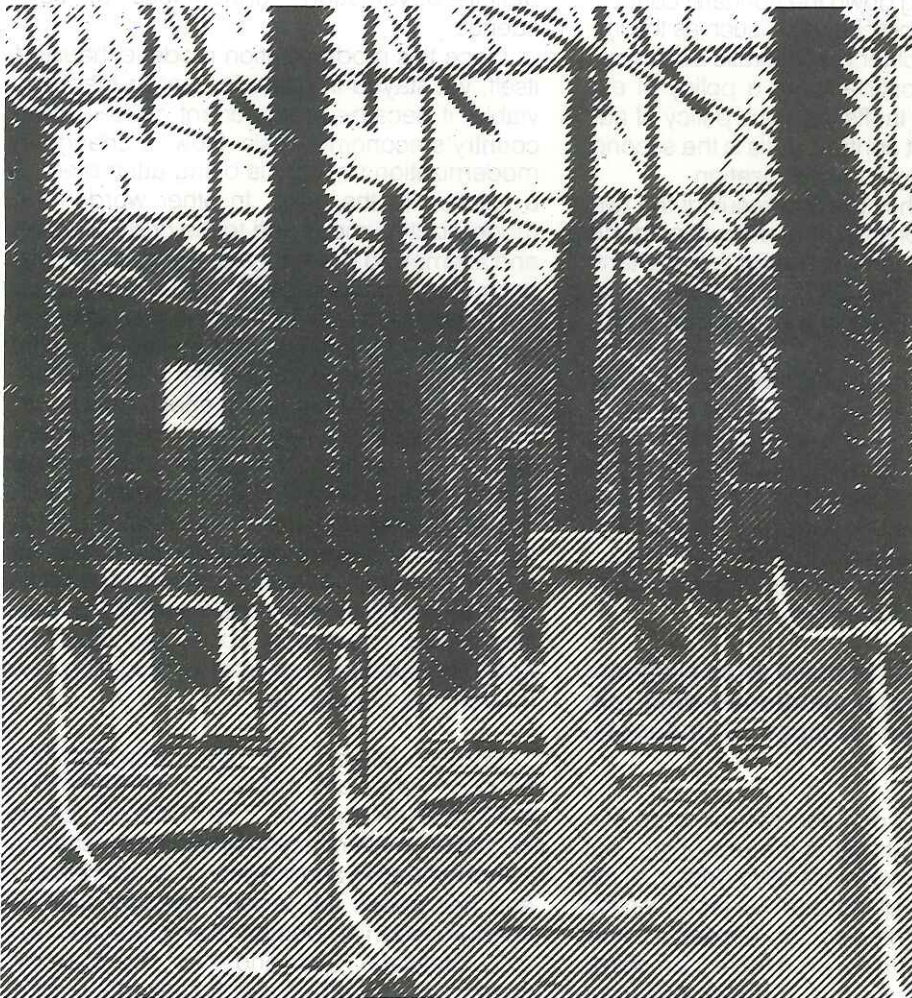
veloping countries. The result has still to be seen.

*José Luis Reyna:* I have the impression that there is an idea of modernizing the system through a greater use of technological advances instead of the use of the work force. That is, modernization consists above all of increasing the use of technology in the economy, and the cost is a diminished demand on the work force.

I don't know if this is an inevitable choice within the capitalist system. Nevertheless, this is what we are seeing taking place in other countries. The conversion to technology in Brazil, for example, has particular effect on the work force demand in that country. In Mexico we can clearly see a series of elements pointing in this direction. It has been fundamental to modernize the economic system. In spite of the crisis, the economic infrastructure has not been dismantled by the State. So much so that one can observe that the infrastructure and the initially-installed capacity allow the manufactured exports to grow at an impressive speed. I don't mean that with the modernization of the economic system, the problem of inequality is solved. I do not think that that is implied in what I say. Nor is it implied that the modernization of the economic system at the level of exports, of installed and established capacity is very great. Nevertheless, I would say that one of the ways of confronting the economic crisis has been the modernization of the productive apparatus.

*Roland Cordera:* Economic modernization is stated explicitly in the idea of the freeing of Mexican external trade. In this way we would rid ourselves of archaic or deficient production methods which have developed in Mexico as a result of the protection of industry from outside competition. Mexican companies would be challenged by this opening up: they have to either modernize themselves, bring themselves up to date, become efficient, or they will disappear. The other point is the proposals for industrial renovation, creation of new plants, substitution of old plants for new ones, and the substitution of old products for new ones, which now all comes under the term industrial reconversion.

At present this process of change has to be propelled along the paths of opening up to the outside, and internal conversion. I think that the countries that at present are in the economic and industrial vanguard have achieved these production changes through long term efforts and internal decisions on long processes of consensus and articulation of interests with regard to a national project. I believe that we are thinking wrongly if we imagine that we are going to modernize simply by opening up to the exterior, and we may also endanger what we have. What is needed is better stimulus to production methods and more active participation of the work force in production. All this depends to a great extent on internal decisions and the capacity for articulating interests and social forces and necessarily contradictory





**The foreign debt, servicing the debt, is the factor which most conditions the ongoing modernization process. It is the factor that determines the narrow limits within which economic policy decisions are made.**

symbols, that could nevertheless result on a long term basis in agreement on objectives of a national character. If this does not happen what will be achieved is only a superficial modernization which will, to a great extent, only reproduce an imitative process.

*Juan Molinar:* There is one fundamental aspect. Mexico attempted a strategy of economic development through the model of import substitutions, with protection as much through the exchange rates, which make external competition very expensive for the Mexican market, as through the route of direct protection, tariffs or worse on licences and import permits.

This modernization scheme has been declared dead, with a certain clarity, by the present government and there are proposals for a different scheme of modernization that consists of the following: to open the Mexican economy to exports; to make economic growth less dependent on external credit—something that has not been totally achieved because of the enormous weight of the interests on the external debt—; to make it more competitive, and to this end protection on the Mexican economy has been removed in stages.

In the first place an exchange rate with a very undervalued peso has been maintained. Mexican export products have been cheapened while imports have become dearer.

These actions have had a positive effect on the balance of trade during this presidency. The government has tried to modernize the economy knocking down the non-tariff controls on importation of merchandise, such as the import licences and other bureaucratic limitations.

There is more confidence in a policy of exchange rates and tariffs than in a policy of administrative import controls. This is the second element of economic modernization.

The third, which is the end result of the two previous ones, consists of Mexico joining the GATT, through which it is hoped that the tariff precedences that the GATT members share, will benefit the country in the sense of giving it export facilities.

Non-competitive national industry will either have to change, raise its productivity in terms of capital and work, or it will be swept away once the entrance to GATT is completed. This then is a process of modernization in the way the present government is looking at things and it will doubtless make a very important impact on the economy of the country in the immediate future and in the long-term.

***Voices of Mexico:* In these three elements which you have just mentioned what role is played by the process of industrial reconversion?**

*Juan Molinar:* I can see two or three elements standing out, not in the reasoning, but in the political and administrative deeds, of the government. One of these is that reconversion implies the cheapening of Mexico's most privileged merchandise, even more than petrol, its work force. This, so that, by cheapening the

work force costs, the work productivity will rise. This has been seen on different occasions. Not only is the work force cheapened but ways of deepening its exploitation are sought, by limiting some rigidity in their reactions that, from the capitalist point of view, existed in the work organization process due to the demands and gains obtained over many years in the collective work contracts. This is one very important aspect of modernization that has to be taken into consideration

***Voices of Mexico:* How do the economic crisis and the modernization process interrelate?**

*Juan Molinar:* There's a double relationship. On the one hand, the so-called stable development modernization model is responsible for the long-winded economic crisis the country has been through since the early 70's up until recently, with the oil boom as its only short-lived breather. This long-lasting crisis came about precisely because once (the economy) was well into the process of substituting imports by means of protectionist measures, the process became unsustainable because it led to cyclical crises, current accounts deficits and currency devaluation, all of which finally takes on the form of a seemingly structural "loss of confidence". Subjectivity and capitalists' sensitivity to possible changes in economic policy increased, and these losses in confidence immediately translated into capital being exported and the flight of foreign exchange, reinforcing the cyclical process of current accounts deficit—devaluation—further loss of confidence.

Once this modernization model exhausted itself, yet stayed in place for longer than was viable, it became an important cause for the country's economic crisis. Now, a change in modernization strategy is being attempted as a solution to the crisis. In other words, one modernization model led to the crisis situation and attempts to resolve it are relying on a different model. This is one way of looking at things.

Another angle to the issue is that while the crisis spurs a change in modernization model and points to the need for other ways and means, it also has a hindering effect, mainly because of Mexico's huge deficit in investment capital. For starters, the foreign debt service conditions the process slated to go into effect. This factor determines the very narrow limits within which economic policy decisions can be made. In fact, if we are to judge on the basis of these last six years, it's the main factor in economic policy decisions. So, I'd say the crisis both detonated and restricts the struggling new modernization process.

*Lorenzo Meyer:* The relationship between economic crisis and modernization is complex but it is also very clear. The crisis has forced the nation in the direction of economic change—modernization and the search for efficiency—and has posed the urgent need for political change, meaning democratizing Mexican society. Between 1940 and 1982 the Mexican economy behaved in a way that was unique

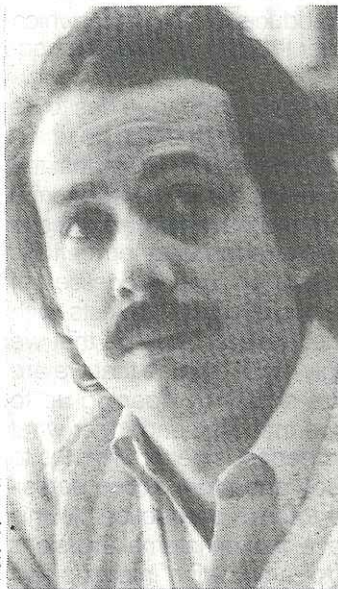


Photo by Antonio Ortuño

Juan Molinar.



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**Modernization as a great process of change must attempt to resolve a problem that has been present throughout Mexico's history, and that problem is inequality.**

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in Latin America. It allowed for inefficiency-plagued but steady growth of the Gross National Product (GNP), at a rate of about 6% a year. Mexican society became accustomed to this and came to see it as a naturally guaranteed process. This is why, for the most part, public opinion accepted political authoritarianism as a sort of fair price to pay for a kind of economic security that did not exist elsewhere in Latin America. This held especially true in the case of businessmen, organized labor (which is not a majority) and the middle sectors. It was less so for the great losers in the process, namely the peasantry and the deprived sectors of the urban population. When the Mexican economy entered a crisis situation in 1982, the basic premises underlying the political pact drawn up after the Revolution crumbled. The crisis also began to erode the legitimacy of the authoritarian politics that were so successful from the end of the Great Depression up until the mid-1970's. Today, people who previously thought the lack of mechanisms for political participation a normal state of affairs, maybe even convenient, see it as intolerable. This is especially the case of large-scale private enterprise, long protected and subsidized by the state.

At present, the politicians in charge of Mexico realize there's no alternative to broadening and democratizing the political process, but they try to put it off because it would seem to be the beginning of the end for the official party's political monopoly. There is also the

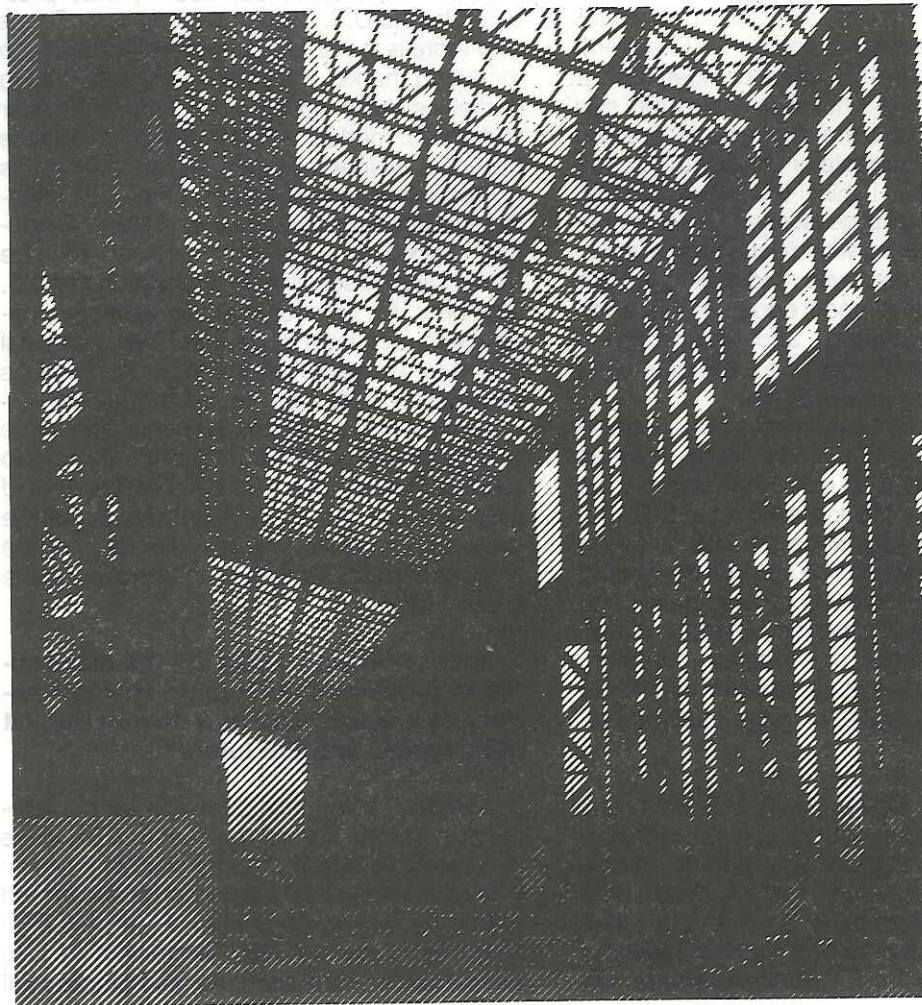
temptation to further close the system and use force to deal with the currently widespread inconformity with Mexican politics. But a hard hand —overt exclusionary authoritarianism Chilean style for example— would merely mean a short-term solution which in the long run would cause more problems. History shows how in the large Latin American nations, exclusionary authoritarian regimes have never been institutionalized nor have they avoided coming to a tragic end. Furthermore, today this type of policy is inconvenient because the international situation is not favourable to such solutions. In truth, the authoritarian solution is no solution for Mexico.

*José Luis Reyna:* I'd say modernization has been a way of dealing with the economic crisis. I don't know what you mean by modernization in this question, but I'd say that all in all it's a process that must be sped up in order to overcome the economic crisis Mexico's going through. We touched on this somewhat in the answer to the previous question. I'd say that in a certain sense, modernization is being accented to obtain goods for export. When seen from a financial point of view, from the point of view of economic growth, it would seem that the export market is one of the solutions to the problem.

But the local market's needs and possibilities should of course also be kept in mind. A country that doesn't take care of its own is losing sight of inequalities that may already exist and will probably make them worse. I believe you have to take care of both aspects. To a great extent, there's a modernization experiment underway in the attempt to increase industrial productivity by expanding manufacturing activities. In addition to this, farm regions such as those in the northeast, are rapidly being modernized in terms of their productivity. Yet I would like to mention the fact that to a certain extent, modernization comes in response to the country's problems. The crisis isn't being dealt with unless modernization and change processes are put into effect. I believe this is the sense in which the crisis and modernization processes interrelate.

*Rolando Cordera Campos:* It's an inescapable fact that the world is changing very rapidly. The world crisis is fueling accelerated change processes that to a great extent are produced by new waves of technological innovation made possible by scientific advances in certain areas that have great impact on nations the world over. This began in countries like the United States and Japan, but the process is developing world-wide implications that no country can be oblivious to. Important changes taking place in the structure of industry and of the overall economy are forcing nations to act accordingly. This in turn provokes certain reactions, particularly among the different power groups and at the state level, and everyone tries to be prepared to react and avoid being swamped by the changes taking place.

National states are trying to respond to what





**In an already modern society such as ours, it is impossible to succeed in economic development if the political system remains closed.**

they understand to be new social demands produced by new social relations. This is particularly the case with new and very active and dynamic middle groups in the cities and with new economic power groups that demand other forms of government and of organizing the economy. Underlying all of this are changes in economic relations on a world scale and structural changes in Mexican society.

On the other hand, I believe the idea of modernization has also been used in a very ideological manner by proposing modernization as an alternative to the social and political reforms the country needs. I think this is a false alternative. I'd say it's hard to conceive of, to even imagine truly modernizing the country without being imitative and without greater equity and greater internal capacity for innovation and creativity in art and culture.

### **Voices of Mexico: What do you think the modernization process implies in terms of U.S.-Mexico relations?**

*José Luis Reyna:* Given that two thirds of our exports go to the U.S. market and that two thirds of our imports come from there, it is obvious that in economic terms any kind of modernization is going to have either a positive or a negative effect on U.S.-Mexico relations. From a political viewpoint, I believe the U.S. government tends to express opinions in situations where it is not fit to do so. This was the case in the 1985 elections in Chihuahua, where they really wanted the Mexican political system to behave like the one in the U.S. Plus, political modernization processes vary from one country to another. U.S. government officials say they cannot understand a country where there's not even a two party system. We could take the exact same position and say we're incapable of understanding the two-party system. I think this would be the same. The political processes are different because we are dealing with different social structures and cultures, with societies that are different. The developed countries have followed a certain course, and Mexico has a course of its own. It would be a mistake for us to try to follow or imitate them.

Mexico's modernization will no doubt affect relations with the U.S. The relationship between the two countries is so close that any change that takes place in Mexico is felt in the U.S. and viceversa, especially when the U.S. is telling others what they should be doing. They should let other countries follow their own paths, find their own modes of development and modernization, be it political or economic. As neighboring countries we must certainly maintain a dialogue, but its field and scope must be precisely defined.

*Juan Molinar:* Obviously the U.S. continues to be the great conditioning factor for development strategies in Mexico. This may seem contradictory to the statement that the foreign debt is the main limiting factor, but it isn't so when you take into account that most of Mexico's debt is contracted with U.S. banks and private

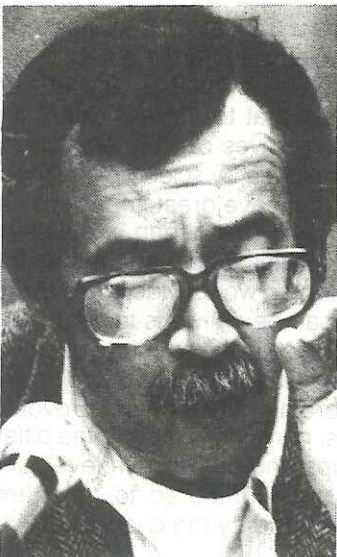
institutions. Mexico's situation has become, or rather has always been, a very important issue that is constantly under observation and in which strong intervention takes place through the economy. Relations with the U.S. are also strongly marked by the fact that the crisis has accelerated age-old migration patterns of Mexican workers to the U.S. It seems that the Simpson-Rodino Bill imposes rigid constraints on this flow of labor seeking employment mainly in the south-eastern U.S.

U.S. interference in Mexico, in a way that may limit internal decision-making processes, has also taken place in two aspects that are not intimately part of the modernization process but do serve to illustrate the U.S' role as a conditioning factor. I'm referring to the issues of drug traffic and foreign policy, especially concerning Nicaragua.

*Lorenzo Meyer:* Economic modernization currently underway in Mexico has profound and not necessarily favorable implications for U.S.-Mexico relations. In fact, the semi-autarchical economic model Mexico developed after the World War II resulted mainly from the political and economic elite's desire to link the country's economic future as little as possible to the United States. One of the revolutionary forces' main criticisms of dictator Porfirio Díaz was aimed precisely at his policy of opening the economy to foreign capital and increasing dependence *vis a vis* the world market. On several occasions during the difficult years of political upheaval surrounding the Mexican Revolution, our country was pressured by the U.S. in economic matters. This is why there is fear that opening our economy to the world market will mean, above all, linking ourselves more closely and clearly than ever to the U.S. market, a fact that would increase Mexico's vulnerability to pressure from its powerful northern neighbor. Once our ongoing economic process reaches a state of maturity, Mexican economic activity will be extraordinarily sensitive to changes in the U.S. economy. It's obvious that this economic dependency will tend to translate into a political one. If for whatever reason the U.S. market is ever closed to Mexican products, the economic, political and social consequences could be truly catastrophic, particularly since it's hard to see how Europe, Japan or Latin America could ever be—or want to be—substitutes for the great U.S. market we are currently in the process of joining ourselves to as never before in our history.

### **Voices of Mexico: What are the modernization processes' effects on Mexican society as a whole, and how do you think it will develop into the future?**

*Lorenzo Meyer:* The prospects for modernization in Mexico are not clear yet, but the future does seem to be full of ambivalence. From an economic viewpoint it's possible that the project begun by Miguel de la Madrid will succeed, especially if it receives real support from the U.S. Nevertheless, in the short term the process will



Rolando Cordera Campos.



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**Economic modernization in Mexico has profound implications for U.S.-Mexico relations.**

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mean tremendous hardship for the social sectors who are the least prepared to meet the challenge of liberalizing trade and increasing productivity, as opening up our economy requires. Marginal businesses, un-qualified workers and youths just entering the job market will pay the price for what we are calling "industrial reconversion." As I said before, structural unemployment may increase in the immediate future. Only in the very very long term can we expect to see the bulk of Mexican society incorporated into the modern productive process. Even though it is hardly ever mentioned, the fact is that Mexican leaders are conscious of the Darwinian overtones in the breakdown of the old economic model.

As far as political aspects are concerned, modernization has already been identified with democratization. Yet in practice, no one in Mexico knows the meaning of democracy because we have never experienced it over an historically significant period of time. Each social sector expects a lot from democratization, and expectations are often contradictory. Businessmen expect less government interference and more efficient services. The middle class hopes for less corruption, a greater sense of responsibility in government bureaucracy and greater opportunities for participating in politics. Organized labor wants less authoritarian leadership and greater independence from state policy to better be able to pursue their own class interests. But I really don't know what democratic change can mean for the large

deprived sectors of our society. It would seem to me that during the initial stages of the process, the demise of populist authoritarianism will leave them vulnerable and unprotected. I'm afraid political modernization may come to mean that these sectors will suffer net losses, at least in the initial stages. The old order was paternalistic, and the ruling party's government dedicated a large part of its fiscal income to subsidizing the basic needs of marginal sectors of the population. But today resources are no longer available for these subsidies, nor will they be in the foreseeable future because the new model tends to make each social sector more self-sufficient, more capable of looking out for their own interests and less dependent on the state. Thus, I believe that over the next few years democracy will not favor a lot of Mexicans. Political freedom comes hand in hand with risks and responsibility for the inexperienced. Nonetheless, there's no better alternative because populism as we have known it is not viable in today's economic modernization model. In our case, as Winston Churchill once said, even though democracy turns out to be a defective system, all others are worse.

*José Luis Reyna:* I think Mexican society is much more modern and complex and allows for greater political participation than it did 25 years ago, for example. I believe that at least certain segments of our society yearn for a greater role in the overall process of change. The media's development has opened the way for means of solving problems or being critical. Information has been and tends to become an important factor in the modernization process, something which did not previously exist. To a certain extent, Mexican society today is relatively better informed in comparison to how things were just a few years ago. I'm not saying that all of society is perfectly well informed, but rather that there is a greater level of information in comparison to a few years ago.

Mexico can expect an economic upturn as far as GNP growth is concerned, although it will probably be at lower rates than the ones we knew between the forties and the sixties when the economy moved ahead at about 6% a year. This will be hard to repeat. At any rate, our society today is much more complex and so is the economy, so lower growth rates can nonetheless allow in-depth advances.

The most important point to make is that economic growth should have the effect of reducing inequality. In other words, a process of modernization seen in terms of great changes should try to resolve a problem that has been present throughout Mexico's history, namely, inequality.

In order for modernization to provide a viable outlook for the future, it should mean opening political spaces for greater participation. It's very important that this society find democratic solutions to its problems. The quickest way out of the crisis is to provide democratic solutions to the problems it causes instead of attempting to resolve them in the usual vertical, top-heavy manner. Increasing opportunities to



Photograms by Juan Escareño



**The crisis has forced the nation in the direction of economic change**

**—modernization and the search of efficiency— and has posed the urgent need for political change.**

participate in decision-making processes will make it possible to integrate more social sectors and thus to become a more modern country in which there's less inequality, a country in which there's a little more room for partaking (in the political process).

*Rolando Cordera Campos:* I'd mention three essential aspects. One is that our Constitutional right to be informed should be regulated so that it translates into rights and obligations for those who produce information as well as for its recipients. The mass media is the crucial burning issue. A population as large, diversified and spread out as ours is requires an efficient multi-party system. The mass media, and especially television, are still controlled in a savage pre-modern way. It is totally unusual for the main mass media to be controlled by a few individuals who are accountable to no one. This has nothing to do with democracy nor with modern society.

Moving on to a second issue, I believe we have a serious problem in Congress, particularly in the Chamber of Deputies' internal organization and in its relationship to other state powers, especially to the executive branch. We have a political system dominated by the federal government. There's a lot of room for action in this area, and it could spur other institutional innovations and different ways for building agreement on matters of national development and organization. In the third place, we need a critical body of scientists and technicians who are familiar with the nation's problems and who have enough information and knowledge to make the correct technological choices (for the nation). There are other aspects in addition to these, such as the need to further integrate the rural areas. I think justice is a difficult issue in Mexico. Ours is a modern country which at the same time shows serious cracks in its social make-up. Too large a part of the population is on the brink of absolute poverty and unsatisfied. We would have to move on these broad issues to effectively be able to speak of national modernization.

*Juan Molinar:* There are several factors to consider. Over the previous decades, modernization led to enormous changes in Mexico's population. The process modified the size of the population as well as its composition and geographical distribution. It made an urban country out of Mexico, whereas 50 years ago it was a rural country. The majority of our population today is under 20 years of age, so we have become a country of young people. These changes in the structure of the population and in its spacial geographical distribution, are two aspects that will further limit and condition whatever path is followed towards modernization. It is merely a question of taking a look at the increase in the economically active population and at the number of young people who enter the job market each year without a hope of landing a paying job. This situation will continue unrelenting during the next ten years at least, and the number of unemployed and underemployed will increase

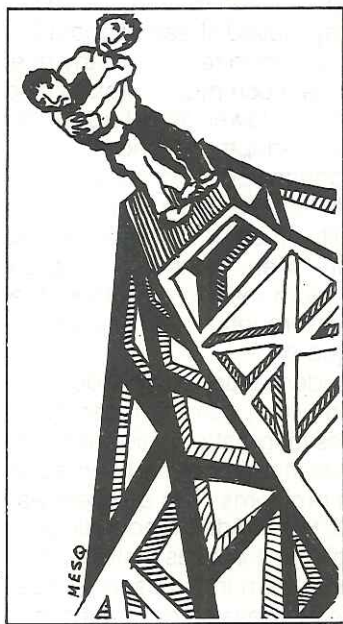
steadily, especially among the young. In a capitalist society there is practically no way to provide an occupation for the whole of the population (born of the modernization process) joining the work-force. We will be facing enormous problems in urban areas, in housing, in assigning resources to the countryside and to the city, and most of these will probably not be solved during the next decade.

A social pact that will allow us to delay these solutions must be found, for they will not come about before the nineties or the early XXI century. These are factors from the past and in the present that strongly condition prospects for the future. This obviously has political consequences, society will require considerable internal political adjustments. I believe there are two aspects that need adjusting and that in fact are already in crisis. On the one hand, corporative structures such as labor, peasant organizations and business will surely have to make adjustments in their relationship toward the state, and they will have to adapt to the new processes. And the same is true for citizens in general, particularly because the social sectors that are not or cannot be corporatively organized are on the increase. For example, how can you corporatively incorporate the great number of young people who are going to be joining the job market over the next 15 years?

***Voices of Mexico:* Does the danger or risk of failure exist for the modernization process the regime has been following?**

*Juan Molinar:* Yes. If the political system cracks we loose factors that are fundamental to carrying out the modernization process. The government might choose an authoritarian or maybe even a dictatorial path to impose this type of project, but the social and political costs could well break the economic process. This has been the case with the South American dictatorships which attempted to adjust their political problems to the pace of modernizing society. They practically decided to cancel and close down politics and take over the modernization process at their own risk and under dictatorial conditions. This resulted in unprecedented economic crisis in addition to enormous costs in lives and in human rights' violations.

What I'm saying is that it's impossible to attain successful economic development in an already modern society such as ours if the political system remains closed. The government may well attempt to go ahead despite the fact that it would be a tremendous historical failure. But this in no way eliminates the possibility of seeking a "dictatorial" and repressive way out of the crisis, truly a form of useless escapism. Any attempt to impose economic modernization without at the same time trying to bring the state's bonds to society up to date, would be the worst possible historical error. Extreme solutions must be avoided at all costs, and the only way to do so is to set the course for political modernization. The process is not an easy one, yet it must be undertaken.





# The Arms Race in Central America

## The United States has turned the region into a testing ground for Low Intensity Warfare

The new regime that followed the overthrow of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua in 1979 was the key that opened a particularly violent decade for all of Central America. The Nicaraguan example and the revolutionary movements' growing strength in El Salvador and Guatemala, were all perceived as a threat by the United States. The U.S. response was to increase military aid to its allies and to turn the region into a testing ground for what so-called Low Intensity Warfare (LIW).

This program's precedent is in the U.S. strategic defense doctrine known as "flexible response", which during the 60's led to the creation of the Central American

Defense Council (CONDECA). The United States justified its recommendation that this body be set up under the mantle of the Organization of Central American States by arguing that it was necessary to wage a coordinated battle against internal subversion following the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba.

Luis Albarrán, correspondent in El Salvador for the Mexican daily *Excelsior*, wrote on May 9, 1986, that "the U.S. still considers CONDECA an anticommunist army." He also quoted a high-placed Salvadoran official who claimed that "Central Americans tend to regard it as a way of obtaining more aid" for their individual countries.

Around the same time the Washington Office for Latin America (WOLA), stated in an article that regarding Nicaragua, CONDECA "might play a similar role to the one played by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States which 'called for' the intervention in Grenada in October of 1983."

### The War's Intensity

CONDECA was apparently conceived with specific conjunctural needs in mind. However, despite the alarming magnitude of the joint maneuvers, displacement of

lates is the subordination of military aspects to political ones in order to avoid direct involvement of U.S. troops, it makes sense to view CONDECA's intervention as a possible tactical resource.

Up to now the thrust of Low Intensity Warfare has moved in several directions, operating simultaneously on various levels, influencing U.S. institutions and public opinion as well as the United States' Central American allies. In this sense, the following points are revealing:

1. Significant efforts have been made to create a civilian-military governmental



military forces beyond their own national territory seems to be a last resort option within the framework of Low Intensity Warfare. Considering that one of LIW's main postu-

agency in the U.S. to coordinate the political, diplomatic and military aspects of aid to the contra and to allied governments in the region.

2. There has been an important display of public relations campaigns and psychological propaganda programs designed to obtain the support of Central American public opinion.

3. Considerable emphasis has been placed on exerting pressure and carrying out plans which allied governments in the region can use to secure the adhesion and support of their own people (for example, carrying out elections.)

4. Light-weight weapons for use in irregular warfare by highly mobile units, are being designed and manufactured often with Israeli support.

5. Plans have been drawn

## Who Is a Threat to Whom?

### The Arms Race in Central America

	Nicaragua	Guatemala	El Salvador	Honduras
Soldiers	60,000	51,000	56,000	25,000
Militias or paramilitary personnel	110,000	941,000	136,000	
Airplanes	25	77	117	157
Helicopters	16	25	46	55

SOURCE: Council on Hemispheric Affairs (Washington). The New York Times. U.S. State Department. Lieutenant Colonel Edward King (in *EI D'a of Mexico*).



## Military installations built by the United States in Honduras have considerably increased the power of the Central American nation's air force.

up to avoid using U.S. troops on foreign soil but which contemplate aerial or naval attacks, and covert action by U.S. Special Operations Forces.

6. These forces have increased their role in training and advising anticommunist forces in the region.

### The Weapons

The strategic objective of Low Intensity Warfare in Central America is Nicaragua, although revolutionary movements throughout the region are also included. This is why the Reagan Administration



has accused Nicaragua of threatening the region by significantly increasing its weaponry. It has also turned Honduras into an enormous military base and the other countries in the region into bases of logistical support, training, intelligence and propaganda for the contra.

"In less than five years the Sandinistas have built the largest and best equipped military force in Central America," according to the

U.S. State and Defense Departments in a July 18, 1984 publication entitled "Background Paper: Nicaragua's Military Build-up and Support for Central American Subversion." Facts and figures, such as the above, quoted by the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) in mid-1985 in "The Military Balance in Central America: An Analysis and Critical Evaluation of Administration Claims", indicate that at that point Nicaragua had 61,800 troops, El Salvador 51,150, Honduras 25,000 and Guatemala 51,600. Costa Rica, for its part, has 9,800 Civil and Rural Guards and a light army of civilian militia comprising some 10,000 men. According to the COHA document, reliable sources report that Costa Rica is un-officially developing armed groups based on the Salvadoran ORDEN model.

As for heavy mobile equipment, Nicaragua has 193 armoured vehicles and tanks, although not all are operational because most date back to the Somoza era, are U.S. manufactured and thus are lacking in spare parts. Honduras has 73 armoured vehicles and tanks, all in good operating conditions, and El Salvador has roughly the same number. Guatemala has 57 of these vehicles.

In terms of air power, the Nicaraguan Air Force has 58 units including both planes and helicopters. Honduras, for its part, has 137 airborne units, including its powerful fleet of 20 French Dassault Super-Mystere B-22 fighter bombers, recently modernized by the Israelis.

It should also be added that U.S. military construction in Honduras has considerably increased their air forces' ability to maneuver. These include the airports at Aguacate, Puerto Lempira

and Palmerola, while the U.S. also built a sophisticated radar station on a hill southeast of Tegucigalpa called La Mole.

The Salvadoran Air Force has over 200 airborne units, among them 41 combat planes and over one hundred helicopters of various models. Guatemala has 131 airborne units including combat and logistical support airplanes and armoured helicopters.

In terms of artillery and anti-aircraft equipment, global data indicates that Nicaragua possesses around 388 pieces

try, while the U.S. State Department insists that there are between 2,000 and 3,000, plus an additional hundred or more advisors from Eastern European and Middle East countries.

The stated figure for Honduras is 100 permanent foreign advisors. However, there were more than 6,000 U.S. advisors and military personnel in that country during the Big Pine II maneuvers in 1983. In sum, more than 85,000 U.S. military personnel have passed through Honduras over the last four years.



Arsenal of a counterrevolutionary group fighting the Sandinista government.

including mortars, howitzers, rocket launchers and cannons of different calibers. In 1981 France sold Nicaragua 7,000 SS-11 land-land dirigible missiles and SS-12 land-land anti-tank missiles. El Salvador has about 50 similar units, Guatemala has 72 and Honduras has 24 fixed pieces, although this does not include artillery used in joint military maneuvers nor the war power the U.S. has set up in that country. On the other hand, Honduras' relatively low artillery power could be tied to the superiority of its air force *vis a vis* Nicaragua.

Finally, the controversial issue of foreign advisors and military personnel in the region can be summed up in the following figures. According to the Nicaraguan government there are 786 Cuban military advisors in their coun-

COHA reports 97 U.S. advisors in El Salvador. But the Salvadoran press agency SALPRESS, on the other hand, indicated that as of 1986 the government of this small Central American nation had only officially recognized 55 U.S. advisors, although other sources quote figures as high as 300, in addition to 100 Israeli advisors.

Costa Rica has over 20 foreign military advisors, and this not counting personnel engaged in building roads and bridges along the Nicaraguan border. Up to the end of 1983, Guatemala had 23 officially recognized foreign advisors.

A final word for thought is in order. If these figures are even half-way accurate, then who is threatening whom.

Otoniel Martínez



# The Foreign Debt Burdens Small Economies

The debt takes on its full role as an impediment to social and economic development in these countries

The issue of the Latin American countries' foreign debt immediately brings to mind Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. There are good reasons for this: the combined debt of these three countries represents 66% of the total regional debt, and when added to the amount owed by four other countries — Venezuela, Chile, Peru and Colombia— it amounts to 88% of the \$382.8 billion Latin America owed its foreign creditors by the end of 1986.

A superficial review of these figures might lead to the idea that since the rest of the Latin American countries hold such a small proportion of the debt —\$45.73 billion, 12% of the total— the problem doesn't affect them as much as it does the large or medium-size debtors.

This, however, is definitely a rash conclusion. When viewed in relation to the dimension of the smaller Latin American economies, the burden of the foreign debt can be as heavy or heavier than it is on Brazil or Mexico. Unfortunately for the small countries, this situation rarely receives the publicity or understanding needed to change the treatment they receive from their creditors or from the international financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In these small economies, much more so than in the

larger ones in the region, the foreign debt takes on its full role as a deterrent to social and economic growth and

development. The debt plays havoc on these economies in many complicated ways. For one, it absorbs an extraordinarily high level of their already precarious monetary reserves and of the foreign exchange obtained through exports. At the same time, they are in a very weak negotiation position *vis a vis* private banks and international financial institutions, and are thus vulnerable to all kinds of external pressure, particularly regarding the application of so-called adjustment policies.

Most of the small Latin American countries house stark contrasts in terms of the internal distribution of wealth, and poverty has reached explosive social and political levels. In this context, the foreign debt becomes an additional burden which subtracts resources from the possibility

of reducing what has been termed the "internal social debt."

## The Weight of the Debt

Structural factors of these economies such as their basic reliance on a single raw material or crop for export, added to the trend towards declining prices for their main goods, make the weight of the foreign debt much heavier to bear for the smaller Latin American countries. In fact, the pressure is such that some of the small nations — along with their large and medium-size counterparts— have become net capital exporters and can no longer aspire to an effective internal accumulation of capital.

A quick review of how this problem is manifested in three small countries —Costa Rica,

## Foreign Debt Indicators for Latin America and Central America

	Latin America +		Central America ++	
	1981	1986	1981	1986
Total disbursed foreign debt (in millions of dollars)	287.758	382.080	10.410	16.790
Total disbursed foreign debt per capita (U.S. dollars)	810	941	495	541
Ratio of total interest paid and exports of goods and services (%)	28	35	16	17
Ratio of total disbursed foreign debt and exports of goods and services (%)	248	401	238	501
Annual growth rates of the total foreign debt (%)	24.6	2.4	17.2	4.7

+ 19 countries not including Cuba  
++ Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

SOURCE: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL).

The figures illustrate how in certain aspects the debt problem is more serious for the smaller economies than for Latin America as a whole. Attention should be called to the fact that while the total disbursed debt of the entire region amounts to 401% of the value of exports in 1986, the corresponding figure for the five Central American nations is 501%. Taking into account that the price of coffee on the world market fell drastically in 1987, and that this is one of Central America's main

exports, it is easy to predict that this index will become even worse. Paradoxically, in order to meet their growing financial needs and to compensate for decreasing prices for their main exports, the Central American nations must resort to more foreign credit. The figures provided show quite clearly that in 1986 the rate of indebtedness in Central America was almost double the rate for Latin America as a whole.



Ecuador and the Dominican Republic— serves to illustrate the point.

At the end of 1986, the total disimburged foreign debt of the three countries amounted to \$4 billion, \$7.54 billion and \$4.5 billion respectively. If these sums are correlated to the total population, it boils down to a per capita foreign debt of \$1,600 in Costa Rica, \$800 in Ecuador and \$634 in the Dominican Republic. Contrast these figures with the comparable ones for Brazil,

Dominican-Republic in 1984, adjustment policies suggested by the IMF led to a series of massive protest movements that were as explosive as those which took place during the aborted constitutional revolution in 1965.

Costa Rica's internal situation has not reached such explosive proportions. However, there has been a progressive erosion of sovereignty which affects not only economic policy but the course of foreign policy as well. The debt crisis

IMF. Subscribing to this letter would facilitate re-scheduling payments to private foreign banks and obtaining a contingency loan for \$60.5 million.

In order to obtain IMF and World Bank approval, Costa Rican officials accepted the commitment to reduce the fiscal deficit to 3% of the GNP during the next year, increase direct and indirect taxes, cut back on public sector employment to 1984 levels, and apply a wage-adjustment program which in real terms

would mean freezing the wage-earning population's income.

Paraphrasing Saúl Osorio Paz, former rector of the National University of San Carlos of Guatemala, one is forced to conclude that for the large, medium and small Latin American debtors, the debt problem goes hand in hand with the economic crisis of the capitalist world.

Edgar Celada

### The foreign debt is equally or more onerous for the small Latin American economies than for countries with a relatively higher level of development.

where the per capita foreign debt is \$727, and you will have a more exact sense of the debt's proportional weight.

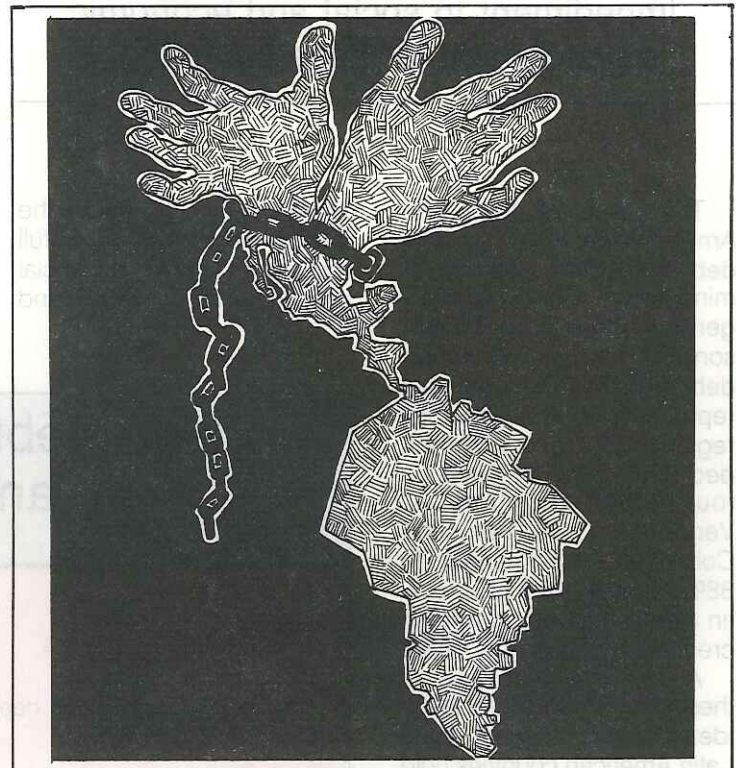
These figures are even more revealing when compared to the gross national product (GNP) per capita. For example, in Costa Rica the per capita GNP showed accumulative decrease of 13.1% between 1981 and 1986, while the total disimburged foreign debt grew by 19% during the same period. In absolute terms, this means that while the per capita GNP in Costa Rica decreased from \$932 in 1981 to \$885 in 1986, the per capita foreign debt increased from \$1,394 to \$1,600 during the same period.

The conclusion is the same regardless of what example or index is used: the foreign debt is equally or more onerous for the small Latin American economies than for countries with a relatively higher level of development. This is the case in terms of the economic burden and of political vulnerability, both of which result in an erosion of national sovereignty when dealing with international financial institutions.

In terms of the countries used as examples, it is interesting to recall that in the

coincided with increasing political and military tension in the Central American region, and it is well known that during Luis Alberto Monge's administration, 1982-1986, the U.S. took advantage of Costa Rica's financial problems to pressure the country into an alignment with its regional strategy.

Regarding economic policy, the Costa Rican government is at present totally dependent on the negotiation of a letter of intent with the



### Two Ways of Looking at the Problem

Solutions to the problems the foreign debt poses remain a puzzle. An analysis of the most outstanding proposals leaves us with two basic approaches to the question, and these appear to grow farther apart every day.

On the one hand are the proposals along the lines of the International Monetary Fund's orthodoxy such as the Baker Plan and the more recent Rockefeller Plan, among others. They all share the common goal of guaranteeing payment to the creditors. The adjustment policies these plans recommend emphasize the need to reduce budget deficits at the expense of public services— austerity— freezing wages and increasing exports, and are all based on the idea that these economies need to "grow in order to pay."

On the other hand, from the viewpoint of the Latin American debtors there is a growing coincidence around proposals which initially ap-

peared to be mutually exclusive. Between the radical idea of not paying the debt, the moderate position that insists on renegotiating and seeking new foreign funding with which to revive the national economies in order to service the debt, and the various proposed forms of moratorium, there are at least three points of growing coincidence. These are a) the co-responsibility creditors share in the origin and development of the problem, and therefore in its solution; b) an unwillingness to place payment of the foreign debt above and beyond the need for economic development in the debtor nations, and c) the need for Latin American solidarity in dealing with the problem.

The latter point is essential for the small Latin American economies to be taken into account in decisive negotiations. Therefore, this is a specific goal in the resolution of their own puzzle.



# The Southern Cone's Forgotten Dictatorship

The Paraguayan general is Latin America's longest-lasting dictator in the 20th Century

74 years old. 33 in power. Name: Alfredo Stroessner Matiauda. Military rank: General. Country: Paraguay. Population: 3.5 millions.

These data begin to recount the recent history of a nation that last century was economically superior to its neighbors and considered independence to be its most important asset.

On May 4th of this year General Stroessner celebrated his 33rd anniversary as President of the Republic of Paraguay. On that same day he was already talking with certainty of his nomination for an eighth consecutive period, from 1988 to 1993 (he was re-elected in 1958, 63,68,73).

The Paraguayan General is considered to be third on the list of dictators who have held power for the longest time in this century, and is only beaten by Francisco Franco, who governed Spain for 39 years (from 1936 until his death in 1975), and by the Portugese Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, who remained in power for 36 years (from 1932 to 1968), until he was overthrown.

It appears that the Southamerican general has every intention of breaking these records. As a forewarning of this, he announced to the public months ago that his perfect physical state of health was such that he could continue as governor until the year 2,000.



Photo from Novedades Archive

Dictator Alfredo Stroessner.

## A Devastated Country

In the middle of the 19th century Paraguay was outstanding among its neighbors for its healthy trade surplus, its strong and stable currency.

The Paraguayan government applied for no loans and had no debts; enormous public investment was undertaken and the most brilliant students

tional Product (GNP) grew by only 2.3 percent between 1981 and 1983, and in the same period the product distribution per capita decreased by 14.4 percent.

The free trade system applied has resulted in 15 transnational companies for the 18 national ones.

In the streets of the city of Asunción European and

## Three wars have changed the course of Paraguay's destiny

were sent to study in European universities.

The country that Alfredo Stroessner governs is something quite different. But that is history. Three wars are responsible for the change in the course of its destiny: the war of the Triple Alliance (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) from 1865 to 1870; the Chaco War from 1932 to 1935 and the prolonged and silent war undertaken by the present government in order to remain in power.

Now Paraguay owes 1,500 million dollars. Its Gross Na-

American luxury cars jostle with ox-carts, and if 90% of arable land was formerly State-owned and the peasants farmed freely on it, now only 1.5% of the owners possess this 90%, and they cultivate less than 2 percent of the country's total area. The majority of land lies fallow and is used for cattle-rearing.

The conditions of the peasantry (61 percent of the total population) are of the most dramatic in the region: their average life-span is from 35 to 38 years of age, and many of them, due to a lack

## Amnesty International Report on Paraguay

The regime of Alfredo Stroessner survives thanks to legislation limiting all democratic activity, according to information gathered by Amnesty International (A.I.) in its 1974 Annual Report.

Martial Law imposed on the entire country since the *coup d'etat* in 1954 was partially lifted in 1974 and finally removed in 1986. In spite of this, the means employed to remove the opposition extend to cover the whole of society.

The anti-subversive laws which originally complemented martial law now remain as the regime's only effective weapon, and has respect for neither social nor cultural level nor sex.

A.I. states the most important laws that reinforce the stability of the dictatorship:

\* Law 294 "*The Defence of Democracy*", passed in 1955, prohibits the activity of any po-

litical group inspired by the concept of class struggle: the mere spreading of Marxist ideology is considered to be a penal crime.

\* Law 209 "*The Defense of Public Peace and of Personal Liberty*", became law in 1970 as a complement to Law 294. It stipulates jail sentences of one to six years for those who "by whatever medium, publicly preach hatred between Paraguayans or the destruction of the social classes". Jail sentences of 3 to 6 years are also indicated for "those who belong to an illegal association of 3 or more people".

These and other similar laws are applied indiscriminately and according to the exclusive criteria of the authorities, as a result of which injustice and excess are liberally applied in Guarani jails.



# A Country Plundered and Sold Out

The first outbreaks for independence occurred in 1810. On May 14th, 1811, a group of Paraguayan revolutionaries, mainly military, rebelled against the Spanish Government.

At this time, the lawyer, José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, better known as Doctor Francia, formed part of the triumvirate that took over the functions of the provisional government.

In 1814, an assembly declared Doctor Francia 'Supreme Dictator of the Republic'. Two years later, another popular assembly gave him life-time mandate.

The principle advantage derived from his long hold on power was that his country's independence was defended against external threats, mainly from neighboring Argentina and Brazil.

Historians describe this period as a "beautiful Rousseauian utopia" since, while its neighbours became involved in fratricidal civil wars and the English capital established itself and controlled destinies, Paraguay strove towards an economy of its own, a national independent State and a society of free agriculturalists.

It was at this period that it had its great trade surplus. Their currency was stable and strong and there was sufficient wealth to allow for enormous public spending without looking to the exterior for help.

## The Triple Alliance

Doctor Francia died in 1840 and he was succeeded by Carlos

Antonio Lopez and after him by his son, Francisco Solano, both of whom continued along the same lines.

By this time, Brazil and Argentina were beginning to look for a way to destroy the powerful Paraguayan state.

With English support Argentina and Brazil formed the plan of dividing up that country between them. Together they overthrew the government of Uruguay, a friend to the Paraguayans, and together with an addict ruler, they formed the Triple Alliance that destroyed Paraguay, in a war that lasted from 1865 until 1870.

At the beginning of the war the country, in contrast with its neighbors, had a line of telegraphs, a railway, and a large quantity of factories producing construction materials, fabrics, linen, blankets, paper, ink, porcelain and gunpowder. They also had a national mercantile fleet, in spite of having no outlet to the sea.

At the end of the war Argentina took possession of 94 thousand square kilometres of Paraguayan soil. Brazil acquired 66 thousand and the work force from thousands of prisoners of war who were subsequently treated as slaves in the coffee plantations in Sao Paulo. Uruguay got nothing.

Of Paraguay's half million inhabitants before the war, only 221 thousand survived the war: 106 thousand women, 86 thousand children and 29 thousand men, mainly old men.

Not only the population disappeared from the defeated country but also the foundries, the factories and economic independence. Everything was pillaged and sold: land, forests, mines, fields of maté and school buildings.

of work in their own country, have to emigrate to the plantations of Curitiba, Matto Grosso or Parana in Brazil. There has been an exodus of more than half a million inhabitants in the last 20 years.

## The Cogs of Power

Those who have tried to construct a new economic and political future for their country have come up against the strength of those in power

Alfred Stroessner has not been sparing in his violence towards them: throughout his 33 years in power there have been disappearances, murders and political imprisonments. Peace is enforced by Martial Law which has been automatically renewed since 1954 and by anti-subversive laws, along with a cancellation of the most elemental human rights and free speech.

In 1976, in its Annual Report, Amnesty International protested the rights of more than 50 political prisoners who had dared to attack the regime of silence imposed

by the Paraguayan political apparatus.

The laws have respect for no-one. In 1986 they closed down the newspaper *ABC Color*, one of the 5 in existence in the country.

In January, 1987, the strongly critical Radio Nanduti was also closed, as a result of permanent interference that it suffered since April 1968 in its transmission of reports and interviews touching on the country's political and economic situation. They had already been obliged to close in July, 1983 because of an accusation of "systematic agitation of public order" and "disturbance of social harmony".

The News Agency Alasei commented in *Semana Latinamericana* on February 2nd, 1987, that, as a result of the broadcasts from Radio Nanduti, friends of the station's director, Humberto Rubin, lost their jobs; some collaborators were beaten, others, such as the journalist, Oscar Acosta, from the same communication medium, were persecuted and finally

## The 33 years of Stroessner's dictatorship are strewn with disappearances, jailings and political assassinations.

detained by the police. Even listeners and announcers were intimidated.

## The Trade Unions and the Opposition Party

The only officially recog-

nised central trade union is the Paraguayan Work Confederation (CPT), which is under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and Work, and for this reason it was expelled, in 1979, from the International Confederation of

## Area and Population

Paraguay is a country without any outlet to the sea. To the north its frontier touches Bolivia and Brazil and to the south, Argentina. It covers an area of approximately 406,752 square kilometres.

It has approximately 3.5

million inhabitants, of which some 455 thousand live in Asunción, the capital. The official language is Spanish, but the majority (predominantly of mixed race) speak Guarani. There are some 100 thousand Indians.



Free Trade Unions (CIOSL), accused of political subordination.

There are others that work on the fringe of the government and which frequently suffer from repression, such as the Christian Workers Confederation (CCT) which groups together mainly peasants under the name of Agrarian Leagues.

In 1978, the CCT, together with other trades, formed the National Workers Coordination (CNT) affiliated to the Latinamerican Confederation of Workers (CLAT). These organizations and some others belong to the Inter Union Workers Movement (MIT), which, in spite of repression, has become more and more active.

The Colorado party is the party in power in Paraguay. Officially there are one million and a half members, practically half of the entire population. The only officially recognised opposition group is the February Revolution Party, with social-democratic tendencies.

Paraguay, which at present is considered, along with Bolivia, to be the poorest and most backward of the Latinamerican countries, is beginning to see changes.

The Authentic Liberal-Radical Party, the Demochristian Party and a break-away party from the official one, the Popular Colorado Movement (Mopoco), all part of the National Agreement, have become the major opposition to the dictatorial regime of Alfredo Stroessner.

On the 21st and 22nd of June, in spite of threats and prohibitions, they managed to gather together more than 50 thousand people in demonstrations of protest against the dictatorship.

A month and a half previously, the MIT, managed, for the first time in many years, to stage an independent demonstration in commemoration of International Workers Day.

### New Winds

The next elections are to take place in 1988. At the moment, the National Agreement announced on June 21st that it will not take part in the elections. According to the Demochristian leader, Luis Andrade Noguez, to participate would be to legitimize the dictatorship. "This is suicide for a serious and responsible political party. We are not electoralists."

The new winds are not just tousling hair. Depending on their force, they could even remove apparently solid structures. The opposition is confident that it will attract more and more followers and calculate that groups such as the Mopoco that have broken with Stroessner may well join the democratic cause and interrupt General Alfredo Stroessner's tired pace towards the record as longest in power.

E.V.A.

# Chilean Political Prisoners Denounce Torture

## Files containing evidence of human rights violations in Chile's prisons pile up in the courts

In Chile there are more than 500 political prisoners. Fifty are accused of introducing and distributing arms in the country or of involvement in the attempt last year against General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, who has held power since the fateful 11th of September, 1973. The rest are detained for "infringements" to the Law of State Security.

Nevertheless, and in spite of the difference in charges against them, 98% of the political prisoners claim that they have been submitted to physical and mental torture.

The accusation of the prisoners is against the National Investigation Center (CNI) that, together with the 220 thousand elements that form the military, police and paramilitary forces, constitutes the basis of permanence in power of General Pinochet's *de facto* regime.

It is estimated that, since 1973, more than half a million Chileans have been detained, tortured, and jailed, for political reasons. According to the Chilean Commission for Human Rights, in 1986 alone there were 21,287 detentions,

Political leaders from left to right share the misgivings about the judicial system.

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256 charges of torture, 252 cases of failed homicide and 50 political killings.

The files containing convincing proof of the violation of human rights in Chilean jails are piled up and gathering dust in the archives of the courts that attend to these cases, in particular Crime Court 20. The legal process against the elements of the CNI has had to choose among the obstacles provided by representatives of the so-called "military justice" that have pressed on repeated occasions for the civil judges to be declared incompetent, so that they themselves can deal with the prisoners' complaints.

## Rebellion Against Tyranny

One of the political prisoners, Claudio Molino Donoso, who was detained on September 4th, 1986, identified two of his torturers who, in spite of the descriptions and proofs against them, remain unpunished. Molina Donoso is clearly identified as a member of the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (MRPF), a group that takes political-military action against the military regime of Pinochet.

Molina Donoso states: "We have made no attempts against the stability of any legitimate government. What we are doing is making use of the law deriving from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that makes it a patriotic duty for us to use the ultimate resource of rebellion against tyranny and oppression, when these rights are stamped upon by the dic-

tatorship imposed since 1973."

In a damp, dark cell in a Santiago jail, this man, his worn face illustrating the continual interrogations, pressures and tortures to which he has been subjected, spoke to *Voices of Mexico*. "Our Penal Code establishes that one is considered free from crime if one is fulfilling a duty or exercising a right, or if one is acting in legitimate defense. Our actions, therefore, are the expression of a legal right and an imperative duty. We are innocent and we do not recognise the legitimacy of a military justice that has been imposed through the use of arms."

Molina Donoso's testimony can be found in the file on ill-treatment received by the political prisoners. In the document. A leaf 146, the prisoner

## A Severe Economic Crisis Burdens Chileans

Fifteen years after the military coup that removed the constitutional president Salvador Allende, Chile offers a sharp contrast between opulence and poverty. Santiago's apparent calm, with its sumptuous governmental buildings and the aristocratic window displays in the main avenues giving it a European touch, is broken frequently by the shouts of "it's going to fall", "democracy now", "down with Pinochet", from the thousands of demonstrators that are harassed by vehicles hosing water and tear gas.

Aside from the suppression of political liberties, the severe economic crisis is wearing down the Chileans. With a population total of 12 millions, 40% of the economically active population is unemployed or under-employed. The real salary in 1987 is worth one third less than in 1972. Unofficially, it is calculated that some four million

people—30 percent of the total population—live in conditions of extreme poverty and have a monthly income equivalent to 15 to 45 U.S. dollars.

The contrast between militarism and social welfare is more than evident: there is one doctor for each 1,925 inhabitants, while there is a soldier or policeman for every 55 Chileans.

There are two kinds of press in the country: the official or so-called "uniformed" press and the independent; the latter (represented by journals such as *Apsi*, *Cauce*, *Análisis*, *Hoy*; the dailies *Fortín Mapocho* and *La Epoca*) is constantly persecuted and censored. Nevertheless General Pinochet congratulates himself on having done away with the "communist threat" and declares that he will not rest until he has accomplished "the development that Chile merits".

states that after his arrest he was taken to a room in the CNI quarters, where, he states, "they strapped me down on a bunk, and applied an electric current through electrodes placed on my feet, penis, mouth and hands."

The file A leaf 147 relates: "They took me out of this room to another where there was a kind of bath. My hands were tied, and they submerged me in this, they grabbed me by the hair and forced me in. The bath was

through the defense lawyer Hugo Pavez Lazo, the prisoner reports, "I was stripped and they began to beat me and ask questions. They connected me to an (electric) current on the testicles and the penis. I realized that they had broken my testicles; my penis was also broken and bloody. Afterwards they connected the electric current to my teeth and my ears."

In order to force a statement from him they brought

## The prisoners' families have also been a target of ill-treatment.

full of excrement and other things. I was held there for a long time. They only took me out when I began to lose consciousness and was moving my arms in desperation. On other occasions, they threatened me, beat me, they stood me against a wall and staged a sham execution."

Another of the political prisoners, José Abelardo Moya Toro, also accused of arms-dealing for the FPMR, states that he was connected to an electric current of 200 volts. In a testimony made

his sister-in-law to him: "At first I didn't believe it was her, until they forced her to speak and then I recognised my sister-in-law, Viviana Ortega. She had been badly treated and was drugged. I realized that because she became tongue-twisted and the words didn't come out properly."

Sergio Buchman Silva, also a political prisoner, states that for 12 days he was hung upside down and five members of the CNI beat him constantly. Buchman Silva records: "After some time had





passed I would feel something warm dripping from my nose and ears. It was blood. When I had bled a lot and lost consciousness they would take me down. They let me fall to the floor and waited for the bleeding to stop before hanging me upside down again".

The prisoner states that on other occasions they put live rats in his mouth and all over his body. "They put an incredible amount of rats in my shirt and trousers. They tightened my collar and closed the bottom of my trousers with socks, so that the rats could not get out. It was a horrible sensation, as the rats bit me and I still have many scars from their bites."

**Trials by Law**

Hugo Pavez Lazo, a defense lawyer for 25 political prisoners states that the prisoners' families have also been the target of ill-treatment. "I have counted the people who have had to leave the country because of persecution and they number 15 complete family groups".

This 47 year old, grey-haired lawyer, who was jailed one day after the military coup in 1973, tortured, and then spent two years of exile in Sweden, states: "We are lodging a complaint stating the application of tortures, in-

juries, illegal detentions, deprivation of communication by what are no more than a band of criminals acting against the interests of the political prisoners".

Faced with these facts and evidence against the CNI the question in Chile now is whether the Courts will take up the subject and apply the necessary justice. Political leaders, from left to right, share the misgivings about the Courts, whom they accuse of having become an entity that shares responsibility for the crimes and misdemeanors of the armed forces' intelligence service.

But their complicity goes deeper than merely evading a trial of the CNI subordinates.

If the trial comes to court a large part of the military intelligence machine would be revealed, the curtain covering their illegal methods would be lifted, and the existence of systematic violation of human rights in Chile would come out into the open. In other similar cases, the so-called military justice has lodged an appeal of incompetence on the part of the civil authorities and the trials have passed into their jurisdiction.

Of the crimes and the criminals of the CNI, no more mention has been made.

Haroldo Shetemul in Santiago

ly recent, and has been a brutal process involving the creation of immense zones of spontaneous and precarious settlements inhabited by millions of people. The United Nations says that during 1987, the year of Shelter for the Homeless, 20 million children and youths in Latin America be living and sleeping in the streets. Almost one

that continues today. Since the 1950's, millions have abandoned the countryside seeking work, food, money and other social satisfactions in the cities. It is estimated that one million new residents arrive in Mexico City each year, part of a pattern that is repeated all over Latin America. Between 1950 and 1980 Mexico City, Lima, La Paz and

**Experts estimate that by the year 2,000 Mexico City and Sao Paulo will each have over 20 million inhabitants.**

fourth of the world's population —1,250 million people— lacks adequate housing. In addition, there are 100 million people who have no dwelling whatsoever.

Latin America's attempts in the 1950's to increase industrial production were accompanied by a lack of attention to rural development, a trend

Guayaquil tripled their population, and experts estimate that by the year 2,000 Mexico City and Sao Paulo will have over 20 million inhabitants each.

**Newsprint and Cardboard Housing**

As a result of this rapid and

**Latin American Cities Are Problem-Ridden**

**Rapidly expanding populations and large-scale immigration were not foreseen by early city planners**



View of Mexico City.

Photo from Unomasuno Archive

Urbanization in the developing countries is relative-



# latin american issues

desperate urban development, huge sprawling slums have sprung up around the main cities in Latin America. They are called *favelas* in Brazil, *lost cities* in Mexico and Peru, *villas miseria* or *barriadas* in Argentina, *callampas* in Colombia. In these poverty areas population growth is twice as fast as in the cities in which they emerge, and four times faster than the world's population growth. In 1950 this marginalized population accounted for only 10% of urban dwellers, but today makes up nearly 45%. Experts estimate that if present trends continue, by the turn of the century half of the people who lack an adequate dwelling will be urban residents, living on the fringes and in the ghettos of modern cities.

One of the main characteristics of these lost cities is the squatting or "*invasion*" of land by homeless people who come either directly from the countryside or from another semi-urban settlement. The squatters begin construction of their homes with whatever materials available while they negotiate or fight to defend their right to stay on the land. Possession of the land is thus termed "*irregular*", and increasing proportions of urban residents now live on land they do not legally own or rent. In Ixtapalapa in Mexico City, for example, 50% of the land is in this kind of irregular form of possession.

Experts who study the phenomenon of the self-constructed housing put up by these settlers, point out that

this way of building is quicker and cheaper than what is done by the construction industry. The state's contribution to this process is almost nil, although government is called upon by residents to provide services —water, electricity, gas, transport, health and education facilities.

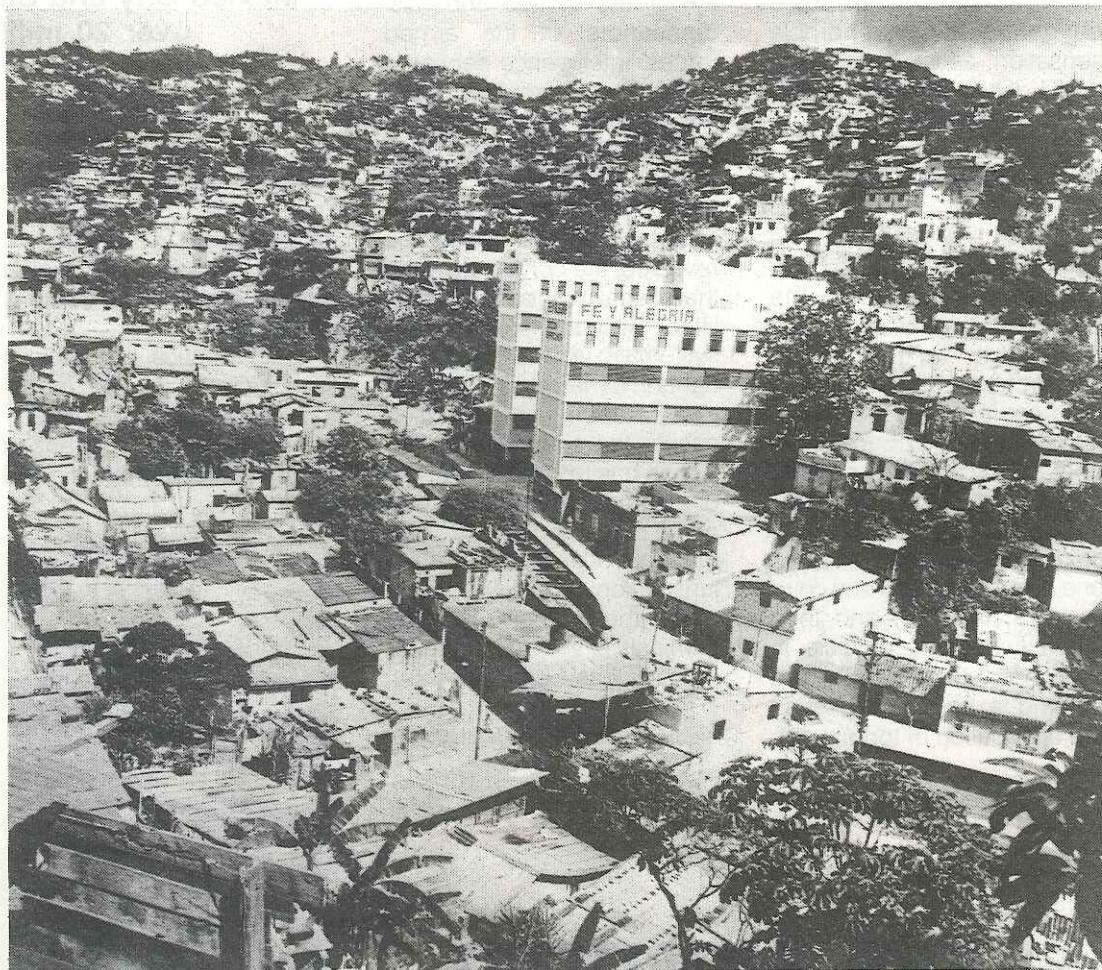
While this wide-spread self-construction of housing is an admirable example of human enterprise where need arises, the fact remains that the so-called "*precarious*" settle-

ments are miserable and unhealthy breeding grounds for disease, delinquency and crime, where increasing numbers of people live in overcrowded and promiscuous conditions.

Many of these spontaneous settlements are built on land that is totally inadequate for dignified housing, such as the edge of cliffs, beside factories and railroad lines, on terrain which is often flooded or subject to land falls. The houses, too, are precarious,

effects on the lungs, asbestos is a common building material in Latin America. Even water-tanks are made of it, as are rooftops and in some cases, household walls.

Irregularities in land tenure lead to speculation and to further migration. When an area has managed to obtain services, land values go up, taxes are levied and the poorer residents then have to move on. A study of urban living conditions in the Mexican city of Guadalajara showed that



A Caracas, Venezuela suburb.

Photo from Novedades Archive

Population of Latin American Cities			
(In millions of people)			
	1950	1985	2000
Sao Paolo	2.8	15.9	24.0
Mexico City	3.0	17.3	25.9
Buenos Aires	5.5	10.9	13.2
Rio de Janeiro	3.5	10.4	13.3

Source: United Nations

especially in the early months of a settlement. Instead of using locally available traditional building materials such as stone, adobe or wood, the people are forced to use whatever short-term, cheap material is at hand, such as assorted sheets of tin, cardboard, plastic, hessian, newsprint and so on. Manufactured materials such as asbestos are often used by the residents who at a later stage wish to improve their homes. In spite of its negative

some families have moved and resettled up to nine times.

### Survival in Shanty Towns

During the international Metropolis Congress held in Mexico City last May, Gabino Fraga, Mexican Under-Secretary for Ecology and Urban Development (SEDUE), stated that spontaneous settlements must be protected in terms of securing land ownership and by providing them with basic infrastructure and



services. He said that services such as drinking water, drainage, electricity, health facilities, education and transport are part of basic social justice and deserve high priority. He also proposed the availability of financing for low-income residents, with the active participation of the housing construction industry.

Mexico City (pop. 18 million) and Sao Paulo (pop. 16 million) are the largest cities in Latin America today. Other great urban centers include Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife and Porto Alegre in Brazil; the Buenos Aires metropolitan area; Santiago de Chile; Bogota and Medellin in Colombia as well as Lima, Montevideo, La Paz and Caracas. All of these cities, and smaller ones such as the capitals of the Central American countries, face problems resulting from rapid urban growth in the midst of poverty and under-development. Terrible air, land and water pollution is caused by industry and cars (in Mexico City, 70% of the pollution is said to be caused by motor vehicles). There are masses of under-employed and unemployed workers seeking survival on the streets and in the shanty towns. Transportation from home to work and back again is often an activity (or a waste of time) that can add as much as four hours to some people's working day. Trash collection, open-air garbage pits, or worse yet, garbage thrown into the city streets and rivers, as well as diseases caused by all of these, along with a large population of rats, further erode living conditions. There are also problems of social violence and alienation. Additionally, hunger and despair lead to many different individual solutions, but only in Brazil have crowds formed to assault supermarkets and take by force the food they cannot afford to buy.

In an attempt to decentralize the metropolitan area, Argentine authorities announced plans to move the capital's political works to Viedma, some 630 miles south of Buenos Aires, in the Patagonia. According to

President Raúl Alfonsín, the move aims to separate financial and political powers, develop the Patagonia and institute political reforms to benefit Argentine society.

The decision was made in spite of the negative experiences of other centrally planned or re-located Latin American cities such as Brazilia—capital of Brazil since 1960—and Ciudad Guayana in Venezuela. During Metropolis, Governor of Brazilia José Aparecido de Oliveira, said that transferring the seat of government in order to decentralize a capital city does not really solve the problems of a great urban area. He said Brazilia was planned for half a million people but today has nearly two million.

Early city planners did not foresee the rapidly expanding populations and extensive waves of immigrants that were to come. During the 1940's, for example, Mexico City planners forecast that the city's population in 1980 would be a mere three million people...

Cities are obviously growing out of control. In the words of a Spanish delegate who attended Metropolis, Architect Alfonso Vegara Gómez, "It would seem that in spite of our extraordinary economic, organizational, and technical means, our society is incapable of solving the urban and land-tenure problems generated during the years of economic take-off and unbounded urban growth. To mention but a few of the consequences, I'd say large cities have become massified and congested, there is an ongoing erosion of hereditary values, a loss of ecological and territorial balances as well as deep-rooted social segregation, while broad sectors of the urban population are not equipped with basic services... In general, I believe this negative urban situation was brought about not only by the poor quality of specific decisions made on the matter, but rather because of the lack of a clear understanding of what we want our cities to be."

J.B.

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# XXVII Mexico and United States of America Interparliamentary Meeting Joint Communique

**The Mexico and United States parliamentary delegations gathered in Cancun in the framework of the XXVII Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Meeting. At the end of their deliberations they manifested the following:**

— The XXVII Mexico-United States Interparliamentary meeting provided an opportunity for Representatives and Senators from both countries to review the fundamental issues on the political and economic agenda of our bilateral relations.

— The Meeting took place in an atmosphere of absolute frankness and with a constructive spirit. Problems were not eluded, difficulties were not avoided, and positive aspects and advances towards overcoming obstacles were objectively recorded.

— The delegations reviewed the international political and economic situation, as well as the premises underlying each nation's foreign policy. Differences and coincidences in this area were analyzed with objectivity and mutual respect.

**As a result of their deliberations, the Mexican and North American congressmen coincided in drawing up the following considerations:**

— Relations between Mexico and the United States can only develop constructively in an atmosphere of absolute respect for our peoples' sovereign right to decide over their own destiny.

— The XXVII Interparliamentary Meeting contributed to a better mutual understanding of the different perspectives and approaches resulting from our particular historical, social and cultural realities. Important points of agreement were also reached.

— Relations between our two countries require a propitious atmosphere for dealing with the basic issues in a mature and objective manner and from a global long-term perspective.

— Political accusations and unjustified public statements do not contribute to creating the favorable atmosphere to deal with the very specific challenges posed by our bilateral relationship.

— It is absolutely necessary to foment a better understanding of our diverse realities as well as to promote balanced cultural interchange to contribute to friendly relations based on mutual respect for the historical roots and social and cultural realities of each country.

**The working group responsible for reviewing political issues reached the following conclusions:**

— The situation in Central America must be dealt with by peaceful and negotiated means if the conflict is to be resolved.

— Peace in the region is accorded the highest priority, as is the need to reestablish conditions for social and economic development.

— The delegations agreed that regional pacification efforts

must be reactivated and strengthened. At the same time, they stated that Contadora must be supported and strengthened as a forum for dialog and agreement in Central America. In this context the Delegates welcomed the Arias Plan.

— The Delegates also coincided in the need to re-activate discussions between the Central American governments.

— The Mexican Delegation expressed its concern over the impact of the United States Immigration Law (Simpson-Rodino) on undocumented Mexican workers. In the same vein, it referred to the problems which have arisen in the United States because of the shortage of labor to harvest crops. The North American congressmen referred to the great contribution Mexican workers have made to the economy and culture of some states of the Union, and emphasized that it is regrettable that differences have arisen between the spirit of the Simpson-Rodino Bill and its application through its by-laws.

— The U.S. delegates reiterated that one of the Law's basic objectives was to avoid the exploitation of workers because of the lack of documentation, and that their rights as human beings and as workers would be protected.

— Both delegations agreed to ask the pertinent officials of the governments of the United States and Mexico to apply the flexibility which the North American Congress intended in the spirit of the Law, so as to allow Mexican workers access to their traditional sources of work, providing them with the opportunity to gather the documents they need to legalize their situation and to freely move back and forth between the two countries.

— At the same time they agreed to ask said officials to make sure that the human rights of undocumented Mexican workers are always respected and protected.

— The United States Delegation referred to the Commission to Study International Migration and Cooperative Economic Development which will soon begin to look at the consequences of the Simpson-Rodino Law for countries such as Mexico. In this sense, both delegations agreed to exchange information, something which on Mexico's side will involve placing at the disposition of said Commission the criteria and data which might be helpful for its work and especially in determining the law's various effects, including ones related to the human and labor rights of Mexican workers in the United States.

— Mexico and the United States took note of and praised their governments' efforts to combat the illegal use and traffic of drugs, as well as the job being done by Attorney General Sergio García Ramírez of Mexico and his U.S. counterpart, Edwin Meese III.

— In addition to agreeing to exchange any information related to legislative reforms in this area, the legislators agreed to try to go to the roots of the problem, to the causes giving rise to this scourge. They committed themselves to adapting and bringing up to date legislation to prevent and sanction these illegal actions.

— The delegates took up the commitment to search for new measures to help reduce the consumption and production of drugs. They discussed areas such as education and others af-



fectured by said traffic, and agreed to combat the sale of drugs and the use of profits from this illicit trade.

— They rendered tribute to those who gave up their lives in this line of duty.

— They recognized that in order to reinforce the struggle against international drug traffic, both sides must apply a constructive and cooperative regional approach.

— They called on their respective governments to ratify the Reciprocal Treaty for Legal Assistance, which provides for bringing drug traffic related crimes to trial.

— Both countries reiterated their approval of the agreement adopted in Colorado Springs at the XXVI Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Meeting, which refers to setting up an inter-governmental commission to study the measures adopted by both governments. This should produce recommendations for improving activities currently underway to combat international drug traffic, while maintaining respect for the sovereignty of the various nations involved.

— In relation to border and maritime issues, both delegations coincided in the need to give priority attention to the problems affecting the common border, especially to economic matters. At the same time, the delegations agreed to demand that officials in both countries facilitate the paperwork at border crossings to avoid unnecessary delays in the flow of goods and people.

— The Mexican Delegation recalled that an international agreement on the maritime limits of both countries has already been negotiated at a government level. This agreement is pending approval by the United States Senate. The Mexican Delegation requests that this matter be examined to make sure that the agreement goes into effect in the near future.

— Both delegations agreed to include the issue of radioactive waste and fallout and its effects on the environment, and the issue of nuclear testing on the American Continent, as subjects for analysis during the next Interparliamentary Meeting.

— The delegations also agreed to include the issue of mutual cooperation in the research, prevention and treatment of AIDS. They coincided in the need to cooperate and coordinate efforts with the World Health Organization and with other international institutions in the field of biomedical and health research.

### **The parliamentary delegations of Mexico and the United States who participated in the working group on economic matters manifested the following:**

— They recognized the need to increase communication between both countries, and placed particular emphasis on the need for good trade relations between Mexico and the United States of America.

— They recognized the need to increase communication between the two Congresses on matters such as commerce, investment and others related to economic interchange.

— They recognized that both countries participate in a multilateral trade system and maintain absolute respect for the principles of said system. They are aware of the benefits that can be derived from increased international trade and will exert all their influence to prevent problems arising from protective measures.

— Within the framework of GATT, they recommended the elimination of all non-tariff obstacles to trade in order to allow for greater and more efficient access of farm products to the markets of both countries.

— They recognized the special role of border transactions in the area's development and the need to study measures for mutual cooperation on the problems arising in the border area in both countries.

— They acknowledged that the draw-back or in-bond assembly industry has become a sort of model of cooperation for the two countries to achieve industrial complementarity and to

improve the competitiveness of either side.

— They recognized that in order for Mexico to continue servicing its foreign debt, the country must substantially increase its income from exports.

— They recognized Mexico's advances in liberalizing trade and the careful and responsible efforts of the U.S. government to overcome the country's trade deficit through macro-economic corrective measure rather than through unilateral trade restrictions which might obstruct economic relations between the two countries.

— They recognized that the world's economic interdependence makes it necessary to face up to certain types of situations. It's impossible for each individual nation to seek solutions to its own problems without taking the international context into account. This translates into a political will on the part of both Congresses to foment and increase communication, dialog and negotiation between the two countries.

— They recognized that there is no mutual long-term financial policy, and that formulas for financial cooperation must be found to provide durable solutions to the problematic cycles of instability and uncertainty.

— The Mexican side recommended that the Federal Executive search for an adequate solution to the truck drivers' problems as a pilot proposal in order to stimulate trade between the two countries.

— The delegations dealt with the issues pertaining to tourism and agreed that Mexico has significantly improved security conditions for tourists and that relations between the two countries in this area are excellent, as results show. Thus, they urged the U.S. State Department to revise its quarterly report on the subject.

— The Presidents and members of both delegations agreed that the time has come to take a further step toward greater and more permanent communication between the Congresses of both nations, based on understanding and mutual respect for the sovereign rights of both legislative bodies.

— To this effect, it was recommended that a working sub-commission be set up with congressmen from both countries—four senators and four representatives each— within the framework of the Interparliamentary Conference. This body would be charged with maintaining communication in order to analyze common issues and problems and to follow up on agreements on specific matters. The sub-commission's work will be evaluated at the next Interparliamentary Meeting.

For the U.S. Delegation

Rep. Eligio (Kika) De la Garza  
Sen. Christopher J. Dodd

For the Mexican Delegation

Dip. Nicolás Reynes Berezaluze

Cancún, Quintana Roo, June 28th, 1987.





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# Mexican Markets, An Enduring Tradition

## The *tianguis* has survived since pre-columbian times

It might seem that, in modern Mexico, the traditional market—the *tianguis* with its oriental traits that dazzled Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror—has disappeared to give place to the modern supermarket.

Supermarkets multiply throughout Mexico City—*Gigante, De Todo, Aurrera, Sumesa*. They stand as monuments where order and polyethylene reign and offer their produce, canned, industrialized, completely hidden, wrapped, weighed. Frozen vegetables, packaged meats, canned soups, sophisticated sweets, selected wrapped fruit, are ready to be placed in practical self-service carts. Seldom is there an attendant to lead the way through this consumer's kingdom, bereft of human contact.

In contrast, the *tianguis*—the traditional market—will always offer the unexpected: an infinite variety of fresh and natural colors, smells and tastes, the pleasure of observing, selecting and even tasting the fruits, the vegetables, the cheeses before deciding which to buy: the pleasant chit-chat with the *marchantes* offering their merchandise, "what can we offer you, sir", "what would you like", "try this mango, it's really sweet", "here, let me throw in some chiles, as an extra".

In one of his murals, the great Mexican painter, Diego Rivera, depicted the prehistoric market of Tlatelolco where they sold "all kinds of merchandise to be found on earth, from household goods to food, jewels of gold, silver, lead, brass, copper, tin, stone," according to the letter in which Hernán Cortés describes the market.

The *tianguis*—with its stalls pitched under colored cloths—survived into the colonial period. The *Lagunilla* market continued the native tradition and the *San Juan* offered one of the widest selection of fruits, vegetables, cotton and pottery. The Plaza Mayor itself was a kind of gigantic *tianguis* in the period of the Viceroy Revillagigedo, with its great storehouses of corn and wheat which were assaulted in 1692, to the cry of "Down with the Viceroy and the aldermen who are starving us to death". Later—in the second decade of Independence—there was another riot in "El Parian", near the main square, which was considered the center of commercial power.

The *tianguis* survived—then as now—the vicissitudes of history, and if the *Volador* market disappeared to make way for the Palace of Justice, there appeared others such as *Mixcalco, San Cosme, 2 de abril*, and the *Merced*. The *trajineras*—long, narrow canoes propelled by one oar—reached the *Merced* through canals stretching from the villages of *Xochimilco* and *Chalco*. The *trajineras*, loaded with colored flowers, moved slowly through canals bordered by large trees.

The *Merced*—for a long time a wholesale warehouse—was a market offering the widest variety of Mexican fruits and vegetables; jicamas, avocados, zapotes (sapodilla plum), tejocotes (hawthorn fruit) and chiles of all kinds.

As Mexico City grew, the markets in the neighboring villages—Coyoacan, Mixcoac, San Angel—became citified and began to compete with the central ones. They also diversified and began to specialize—flowers and sea-food in *San Juan*, wholesale fruit in the *Merced*, furniture, antiques and books in the *Lagunilla*, herbs in the *Sonora* market. The herbalists, possessors of the old magic and tradition of the medicine men, offer remedies to every evil, tlanicalla for inflammation of the stomach, goat heads for calcium for the bones, Yingseng tea for sexual inadequacies and to counteract cholesterol, spiritual waters to cure envy, quail's eggs and orange blossom tea for the nerves, talismans, pyramids, diabolical masks. The vendors, proud of their trade, transmit the ancient secrets they have inherited although they cannot avoid having alongside their herb-filled stalls the plastic articles, wristwatches and pocket calculators,

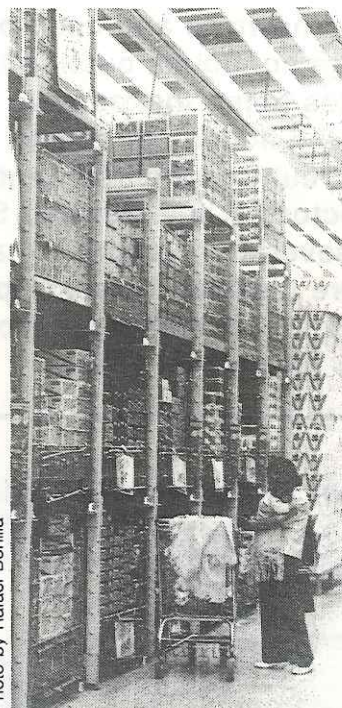


Photo by Rafael Bonilla

A self-service store: impersonal service.



Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Selling vegetables at La Merced market.

the modern contraband offered mainly in the *Tepito* market.

The old market of the *Merced* has lost the lavishness of food and craft work for which it was famed. Its warehouses have been moved to the Center of Provisions and its eating places do not offer their original variety, when one could order dishes of wild boar, *moles* (sauces made from a mixture of chiles) and hand-made tortillas. Not far from there, the *San Juan* market survives fires and earthquakes. Japanese, Catalan and Swiss restaurant-owners go there in search of sea-food, cheese, ducks, rabbits, lobster tails and even pheasants. These markets are housed in constructions equipped for them in the 50's when the city's mayor launched a campaign against the insanitary street *tianguis*. Strict rules of hygiene were imposed and the markets were moved off the streets.

But now the classic *tianguis* has returned in the form of the mobile markets, nomadic *tianguis* that appear each day of the week on different streets, reviving the custom of 'market day'. There the housewives arrive eager to rake the mountains of fruit and herbs, imagining the dishes they will concoct with epazote, pepper or coriander. The authorities who want to avoid traffic jams and impose rules of hygiene are powerless against this urge. And so are the self-service stores with their 'comfort', their efficient and impersonal service. Perhaps, because of this the Mexican *tianguis* has endured through the centuries.

Emma Rizo



# Medicinal Plants and Modern Research

Traditional medicine is known to and used by millions of Mexicans, and its usage continues outside the scope of modern medicine. Besides being inexpensive and effective, traditional medicine has the added advantage of treating the patient in his social and cultural environment. This is why scientists—including doctors at the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS) and at several universities—are promoting the use of herbs to cure disease. *Voices* reporter Jackie Buswell prepared this article, after having followed up on the subject for several years.

Plants to cure an ailing heart, your nerves, your liver and skin... Remedies to improve your love life... Plants to make you hallucinate or to put you to sleep... Mexico has all of these and more, thanks to a rich vegetation and to the ancient medical practice of some 56 indigenous groups who are believed to have used over 10,000 different plants, as well as minerals and precious stones and animals in their medicinal and magical practices.

During their colonization of Mexico the Spaniards were not blind to the knowledge of medical botany possessed by the Aztecs and the Mayans. The Spanish King Philip the Second even sent his personal physician, Francisco Hernández, to study the medical practices of the indigenous peoples. Hernández arrived in Mexico in 1571 and after six years' travel wrote a manuscript describing more than 3,000 plants and their uses. These volumes have been published by the UNAM.

An earlier work on Mexican herbal medicine was the *Códice Badiano* published in 1552. It was written in Nahuatl and translated into Latin by indigenous doctors, and contains 185 beautiful illustrations and an explanatory text mentioning 270 medicinal species.

Moctezuma Xocoyotzin, last King of the Aztec Empire and ruler of Tenochtitlan from 1503 to 1520, established various botanical gardens including Chapultepec Park, now considered the most important "lung" or green area in Mexico City. An earlier king, Moctezuma Ilhuicamina, set up one of the most important pre-Hispanic gardens with an emphasis on medicinal plants. This was Huaxtépetl—today, Oaxtepec, Morelos, a popular resort area.

Netzahualcoyotl, King of Texcoco who ruled from 1428 to 1472, founded gardens in Cuernavaca and Texcoco, among others. Texcoco is considered to have been the most



Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Medicinal herbs at the Sonora market.



important center for medical-botanical studies in ancient Mexico. Unfortunately it was destroyed during the war between the Spanish invaders and indigenous defenders. In contrast, the garden at Oaxtepec was preserved throughout colonial times and reportedly supplied plants to a hospital in that town up until the middle of the 18th century.

### Botanical Gardens in Mexico Today

The most important botanical collection of medicinal plants in Mexico today is found in the National Anthropology Institute in Cuernavaca, Morelos. This garden was started in 1976 by the Chilean anthropologist Bernardo Baytelman, and according to biologist Margarita Avilés, now has 478 plant species, some 300 of which have known medicinal uses. Other plants in the garden are ornamental or are used as food, for making dyes or in construction. In addition to these, there's an interesting collection of orchids and cactus species.

The garden contains imported plants as well as native ones. Plant samples are dried and pressed for exhibit in the Museum of Medicinal Plants housed in "*la casa de la India Bonita*" (the house of the pretty indian woman). It just so happens that the Ethnobotanic Garden in Cuernavaca is located in the House of Maximilian, the Hapsburg Emperor sent by Napoleon III in 1864 to rule Mexico. During his unfortunate reign of only three years Maximilian built a country residence in Acapantzingo, Cuernavaca, and "*la casa de la India Bonita*" was the home he built for one of his mistresses.

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### Pre-Hispanic King Netzahualcōyotl founded ancient Mexico's most important center for medical-botanical studies at Texcoco.

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Today the Anthropology Institute conducts archeological and ethno-botanical research in Acapantzingo. There's a seed collection and a small plant nursery, a library and the museum, and studies are under way in medical anthropology, ethno-botany and ethno-pharmacology.

The Agricultural University of Chapingo, near Texcoco, houses a botanical garden dedicated exclusively to medicinal plants. It was started in

1980 with the aim of collecting and cultivating 3,000 medicinal plants from Mexico and other countries. The garden's founder, Erick Estrada Lugo, head of Ethno-botanic Studies, named it after Maximinio Martínez, one of the most important students of Mexico's medical botany.

The garden was begun on the roof of the Phyto-Tecnia Department in the University, but now has facilities for more than 200 plants of different climatic origins. Many of the species have been collected by students attending Chapingo's course on

medicinal plants, in expeditions to the states of Hidalgo, Guanajuato, Chiapas and Puebla.

Researchers in Chapingo, including Estrada Lugo, have conducted experiments in the propagation of medicinal herbs as well as extensive ethno-botanic studies in rural communities. A plant that has stirred special interest is the toad's herb — *yerba de sapo*-*Eringium heterophyllum*— used to cure gall stones and to prevent the accumulation of fat in the liver.

The National University (UNAM)

## A Health Culture

Bernardo Baytelman, Chilean social anthropologist, came to Mexico as a result of the coup in Chile, in 1973.

With the help of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, in 1976 he founded the Acapantzingo Botanic Gardens in Cuernavaca, Morelos, and in the following years, until his death in 1982, he laid the foundations for the study of medical anthropology in that state.

His dedication and enthusiasm soon prompted a small group of collaborators who are still working in this field.

Besides his studies on the anthropology of health, Baytelman became involved in literature and the theatre, worked in educational cinema and radio, was a teacher and a poet, and designed the "Map of myths and legends of Chile", which remained unfinished when he left his country. Baytelman wrote two books during his stay in Mexico; both published by the INAH: "*Etno-botánica en el estado de Morelos*" (Ethno-botany in the State of Morelos), and another that was published posthumously: "*De enfermos y curanderos, medicina tradicional en Morelos*. (1986) (On the Sick and the Medicine Men, Traditional Medicine in Morelos).

The two works are the result of field work which "Beco" —as he was affectionately called by his collaborators and friends— carried out in spite of bad health, with the urge to become acquainted with and recover the traditional medicine of the local medicine men.

The first book is a study of 50 plants from the northern area of the State of Morelos, based on information on the medicine men of the region, as well as literature and historical documents on the traditional use of herbs.

The second contains 19 interviews — from the 60 that he made for his research on the book— with midwives, vendors of medicinal herbs, medicine men, wizards, quacks, spiritual healers and some patients of these traditional doctors.

The book also contains essays by Baytelman himself on the theory and practice of Nahuatl medicine before the Conquest, comments on traditional medicine and "official medicine", and on the magic elements in the health-illness process.

This work has two indexes, one on plants and the other on the illnesses mentioned in the interviews, illnesses such as: "love-problems", "temper fits", "cramps", "sexual problems", "diarrhoea", "influenza", "withcraft", "cold".

Baytelman's work emphasizes the importance that the wizard-medicine man has always had in his community, now as well as in prehispanic times. The anthropologist states that traditional medicine is a health culture that is widespread and well-rooted in society, especially among the poorer sections of society, and that continues to cure millions of Mexicans.

Traditional medicine in Mesoamerica, states Baytelman, consists of an infinity of cultures and magic-religious criteria in their way of seeing health and illness: it incorporates concepts of the indigenous community, of the Spaniards (with their Arab influence) and of the black communities that were brought from Africa to this continent.

Another very important aspect emphasized by Baytelman in his study is the increase in psychosomatic illnesses suffered by peasants when they move from the country to the city: this is due to the identity crisis provoked by their apparent acceptance of the values and norms imposed by technology, which contradict the magic-religious concepts that the peasant has of life and the cosmos.

The posthumous publication of *De enfermos y curanderos* was prepared by specialists who worked in collaboration with Baytelman in his investigation, in conjunction with his widow, the writer Eliana Albala.



## special report

also has an important botanical garden, divided into indoor and outdoor sections. The outdoor section boasts an important display of the rocky volcanic area's native vegetation. Some biologists working with medicinal plants in UNAM's Garden are Edelmira Linares, Miguel Angel Martínez and Robert Bye.

### Traditional Medicine

Mexico has a long tradition of healers who conscientiously apply their knowledge and use medicinal herbs. They also make ample use of magical, religious and superstitious concepts. In traditional popular medicine many ideas about health and illness are dealt with in supernatural terms such as "evil eye", "loss of the soul" and "loss of the shadow." A person can become seriously ill because of "terror" or because of a passing "bad air." Both plants and illnesses can be considered in terms of "hot" and "cold", and a hot sickness such as a fever will be treated with a cooling plant such as lemon grass.

Healers use herbs in teas and tinctures, and also in "limpias", a process in which patients are brushed down with aromatic herbs such as geranium, basil, rosemary, rue, mint or branches from the pepper tree, so that the forces causing illness are cleaned away. Other healers give herbal steam baths called *temazcals* while some use magic mushrooms to diagnose and cure disease, as María Sabina used to do in Oaxaca. Spiritists might go into a trance for the same purpose, while other healers will recommend the use of amulets, love potions, incense and candles to cure emotional woes. Herbs in the form of creams and lotions are also used in various kinds of massage, or they can be applied directly to the skin to reduce swelling or soreness.

It is traditional for people to buy their herbs in the market-place. Sonora, in central Mexico City, is the best known market for herbs. It's a fascinating place full of penetrating smells and peculiar shapes, sacks full of plants, strange amulets, distorted-looking roots and branches, exotic fruits and flowers.

The customer can consult the herb sellers in Sonora as well as in other markets in the cities and provinces. They'll listen to the complaints and symptoms, deliver a diagnosis and recommend herbal remedies. Thus the corridors of Sonora market are filled with herb-sellers-cum-doctors, clients/patients, as well as the bundles of herbs which spill over from the

stalls, and the boys and men who constantly deliver new supplies of aromatic herbs. Here you can find remedies for arthritis, bronchitis, colitis or gastritis, and women who want to avoid pregnancy will find both contraceptive and abortive herbs. Biologist Edelmira Linares will soon publish a book on the Sonora market and its medicinal herbs.

### Modern Research

In 1976, José Luis Díaz of the



Photo by Antonio Ortuño

Healer preparing plants for a *limpia*, or cleansing.

Mexican Institute for the Study of Medicinal Plants (IMEPLAN), published an extraordinary index of 2,237 medicinal species, giving cross references of common and scientific names and the reported medical use. The index contains 2,787 common names, for at times a plant in Mexico will have several indigenous names (given by different linguistic groups) and a Spanish name. For example, *toloache* is known in Spanish as *yerba del diablo* (devil's herb). This is the thorn apple, *Datura stramonium*, a dangerous plant that can cause hallucinations, sleep or even death, but which is used throughout the world to treat asthma. The marigold, *cempasuchil*, is called *flor de muerto* (flower of the dead) in Spanish because in Mexico it is used on the Day of the Dead.

IMEPLAN as such existed between 1975 and 1980, when it became part of the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS). Today the Unidad de Medicina Tradicional y Desarrollo de Medicamentos (the Unit for Traditional Medicine and the Development of

Medication), in Xochitepec, Morelos, is dedicated to research in traditional medicine and to the development of herbal medicine. Research in traditional medicine includes:

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### UNAM has an interesting botanical garden housing an important display of the area's original vegetation.

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— The study of ideas used by traditional healers —what is loss of



Photo by Antonio Ortuño

The *limpia*

shadows, what is involved in the act of healing.

— The study of healers; how many exist in the country, their social role, etc. Dr. Xavier Lozoya, director of the Research Unit, says that for every doctor working in the Social Security Institute, there are five traditional healers working in the community.

— The study of the plants used. "We're promoting the use of plants in the same way that traditional medicine has used them for centuries. We aim to demonstrate scientifically that they are pharmacologically active and have no side effects, and to provide new information about their medicinal properties."

According to Dr. Lozoya, the conflict in Mexico between traditional and modern western medicine must be overcome. He believes public health institutions must resolve the



modern world's health problems but they can use the knowledge of traditional healers and herbalists to great advantage. Given Mexico's troubled economic situation, says Dr. Lozoya, the scientific use of medicinal plants is very important. It is increasingly difficult for the country to import manufactured medical products due to the lack of foreign exchange to pay for them, and thus the Research Unit at the IMSS is working to provide specific alternatives to imported pharmaceutical goods.

The IMSS also aims to instruct doctors and health professionals in Mexico's traditional medical practices. Dr. Lozoya says medical students today are trained in modern techniques, but when they receive their degree they are ill-equipped to work effectively in isolated rural communities with little or no health infrastructure.

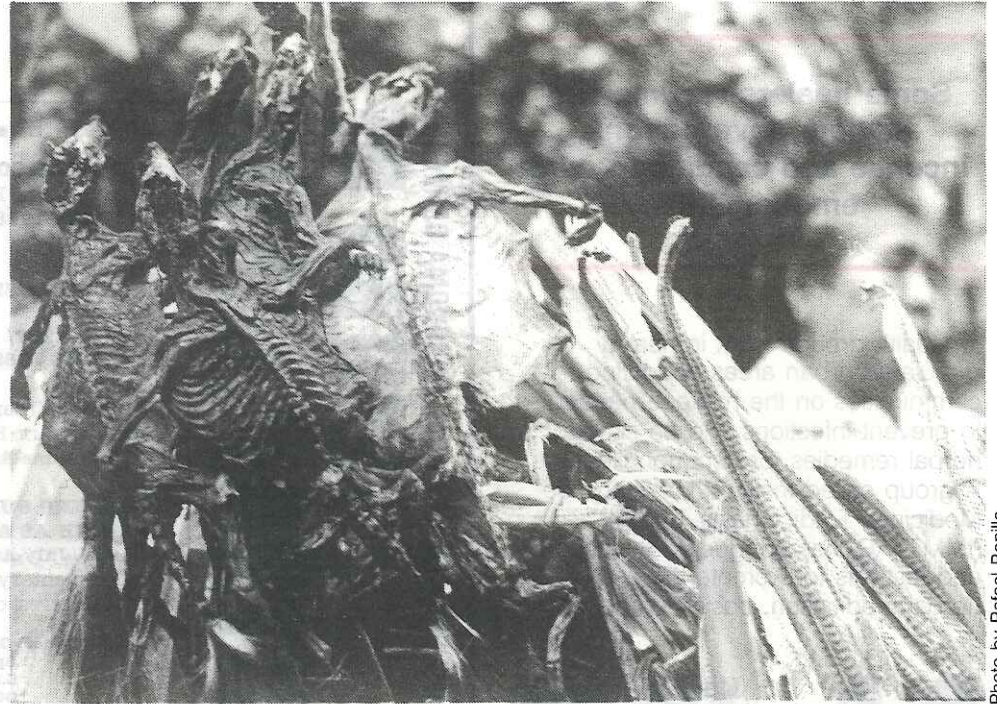
In a slightly different vein, Dr. Lozoya says that since China joined the United Nations 15 years ago, the west has had access to more

information on acupuncture and other traditional medical practices in that country, and on how to combine these practices with modern medical knowledge. Although the popular use of herbs continued in Mexico after the Spanish conquest, these traditional cures have not been incorporated by public health institutions. In the book *Flora medicinal de México* (Mexican Medical Flora), authors Xavier and Mariana Lozoya argue that it is more urgent than ever for Mexico and other Latin American countries to re-assess

**The Scientific Use of Teas and Infusions**

The Research Unit is studying plants used to treat the primary health problems in Mexico such as gastro-intestinal diseases, respiratory diseases, diabetes, hypertension and cardio-vascular illnesses. The Institute does not aim to study plants in order to extract active ingredients for use in making new pills and tablets. Rather, it studies the herbs as they are generally used—in teas and infusions—in order to recommend their use in curing disease.

The Social Security Institute now officially supports the use of plants for curing certain common ills, thus promoting the use of national, popular and economical remedies. Imported pharmaceutical products to treat amoebas now cost around 50,000 pesos (over \$30), while the cure with *chaparro amargo* costs under \$4.



Plants and animals with medicinal properties.

Photo by Rafael Bonilla

**These are some of the herbs presently recommended or being studied by the IMSS Research Unit:**

Common name	Scientific name	Use
cuachalalate	Amphipterygium adstringens	antibiotic
chaparro amargo or "bitter one"	Castela tortuosa	anti-amoebic
jacaranda tree	Jacaranda acutifolia	anti-amoebic
zapote blanco	Casimiroa edulis	for high blood pressure and insomnia
flor de manita	Chiranthodendron pentadactylon	heart problems
nopal	Opuntia tuna	diabetes
guayaba	Psidium guajava	diarrhea
gordolobo	Gnaphalium sp.	coughs and colds

their herbal traditions, and to develop them in accordance with modern science to open way for locally-produced medicine.

One positive step towards this goal is that next year the Morelos State University in Cuernavaca will establish a master's program in Chemistry and Pharmacology of Medicinal Plants. The course is designed for chemists and biologists as well as other scientists interested in medical botany. The director of the State University's Medical School, Dr. Montalvo, stated recently in Cuernavaca that modern medicine has always made great use of traditional herbal knowledge. Proof of this is that 60% of modern prescriptions, he said, contain vegetable compounds. Furthermore, Dr. Montalvo praised traditional medicine for the way in which it sees and treats the patient in his or her social environment, while modern treatment tends to remove the patients from his or her social and emotional environment.

Photo by Rafael Bonilla



**Independent Groups**

Meanwhile, independent health groups in cities and rural areas, are promoting and strengthening the popular use of medicinal plants. One such group, for example, visited areas in Mexico City that were hard hit by the 1985 earthquake. They advised residents on hygiene and promoted the use of herbal teas to calm nerves and relieve headaches and other symptoms brought on by the prevailing tension, dust and depression.

**Some healers recommend amulets, love potions, incense and candles to cure emotional ills.**

Health groups work in heavily populated urban areas educating communities on the hygiene needed to prevent infections and on simple herbal remedies for common illnesses. A group called Instituto Mexicano de Medicinas Tradicionales Tlahuilli (IMMTTAC) has conducted workshops and festivals to promote the use of herbal medication, basic homeopathic



Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Plants to cure all ills.

remedies and other so-called alternative therapies. The group has also researched basic health problems in specific communities in several states, including Morelos, Jalisco and Puebla.

IMMTTAC aims to establish community-level health committees that would help extend health services and organize lobby groups to press for running water and drainage in

towns that lack these services. These groups would also promote discussion of health problems in the workplace. Along with other grassroots organizations interested in herbal remedies, IMMTTAC is promoting community orchards and herb gardens to improve the people's diet and to provide readily available medication.

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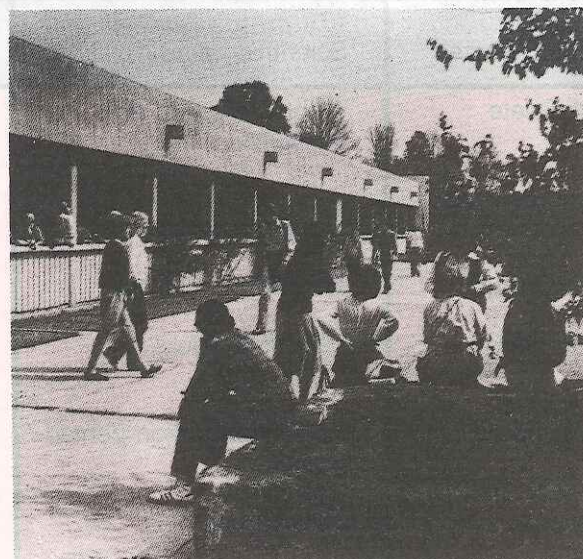
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# Juvenile Gangs: Children of the Crisis

**Juvenile gangs have arisen as a side-effect of the crisis on deprived urban sectors. More than a passing fad, a way of dressing or a form of identity, these gangs are a way of responding to an environment, a means of becoming a part of it and rebelling and being recognized. This article provides an account of this relevant aspect of Mexican society today.**

The new juvenile gangs of the 80's, a social phenomenon that is a product of the acute contradictions of the system, came to the notice of Mexican public opinion in 1981. They already existed in the shadows and anonymity of the slums —or 'lost cities'— and the sensationalist press presented them as a yet another fashion with the name of '*los panchitos*' or '*los panchos*', legitimate sons of the megalopolis.

This new type of suburban juvenile gang —which is no mere fashion— arises more from the structural problems in our society. It is a product of the massive migrations from the country to the city, of unemployment and want, of the generalized economic crisis. It stems from the congestion in our society, the lack of opportunities and the imperative need to earn a living.

The 'lost cities', the poverty belts that circle round this huge city, are the territory of the new juvenile gangs. They are to be found everywhere —Tacubaya, Observatorio, Ixtapalapa, Neza-hualcoyotl, the Ajusco, Naucalpan and the Merced. But the phenomenon of the juvenile gangs is mainly evident in the suburban zones at the west of the city. A local newspaper estimated, in 1982, that the organized gangs in the area totalled around 300, comprising more than 4,000 children and youths, ranging in age from seven to 24.

In Santa Fé —situated at the west of the city and comprising 62 districts in the Alvaro Obregón Delegation— the topographical and ecological conditions, and the utilization of land are completely adverse: gorges, land undermined by sand extraction, puddles, rubbish dumps, unpaved breaches, and if that were not enough, a gunpowder factory, property of the National Defence. Here, where the human habitations are improvised with wood, rubber, wires, cardboard and tin, where the public services are almost inexistent and the streets have been self-planned, with the help and organization of the inhabitants themselves, here is the territory of the '*Panchos*'.

The number of gangs that exist on the periphery of the city cannot be calculated exactly, since their continual appearance, disappearance and division impossibilitate numerical control. Nevertheless, we know of the existence of gangs in the whole Republic and of gangs operating in towns neighboring the city, but still outside of the 'lost cities' —as is the case of the gangs in Cuajimalpa, formed by groups of 30-50 members and known as the Country Funks.

Since their appearance all the gangs are known as '*Los*

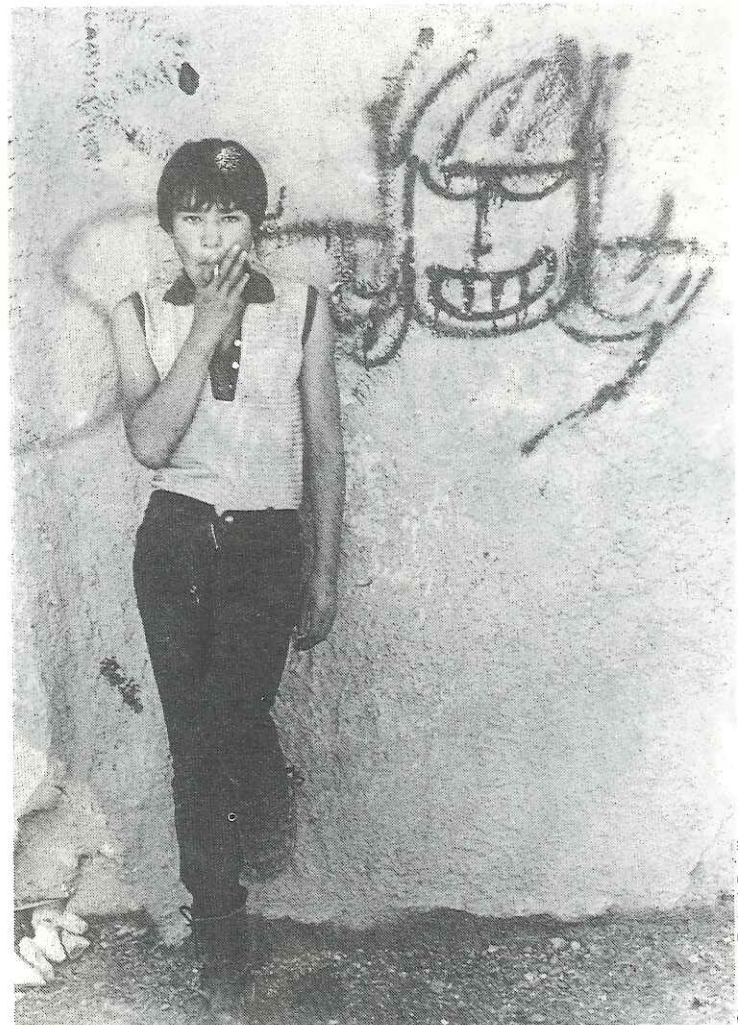
*Panchos*', but in reality the repertory of gangs and names is very varied: The Gophers, The Stains, The Nazis, The Monkeys, The Warriors, The Smurfs, The Sex Castrators (an all-female gang), The Savages, etc.

Systematic harassment by the police, and violence perpetrated against the gangs has provoked violent demonstrations, fights and holdups, which can all be seen as a direct threat to established order. Consequently the Police Department initiated an urgent Security Program, to eradicate juvenile gangs, which involved raids and more vigilance in the poorer neighborhoods.

## "We Are Violence Itself"

The gang serves as a means of cohesion. It is also the way in which these adolescents feel integrated into the community that protects them. They are the Boy's Band. Their appearance breaks with all the juvenile stereotypes. "We are violence itself", they have declared in a graffiti. Effectively, violence and the urge to be different is present in their gestures, movements, words, their dress. They define themselves as punk, but not as an imitation of English punk. To the gang, to be punk is to be young, restless and violent, to be disorder itself and not to be blind to the neighborhood's problems.

## "I'm not writing protest music, I am the protest"



Member of the Santa Fe gang.

Photo by Rafael Bonilla



In its formal aspect the gang uses leather jackets with pins, buttons and zippers, odd and original hairstyles, old torn jeans, preferably narrow, a t-shirt with the slogan, Sex Pistols, and high-topped tennis shoes. The gang consists of 15 to 30 'chavos' (guys) and the 'cotorreo' (chatter) is the essential part of their reason for being. They meet to talk, to take drugs, to go to a 'tocada' (party cum rock session)— that's the 'cotorreo'.

The juvenile gangs are composed in their majority of males, but there are mixed gangs with a higher percentage of males, and there are also all-female gangs, although in smaller proportion. The formation of female gangs has met with greater problems since girls tend to be more controlled by their families. At this social level, belonging to a gang implies a break with the family. In the female gangs the conflicts generated from being a woman, belonging to a gang and to a certain social class are accentuated. In the mixed gang, female participation is impeded by the unadulterated *machismo* on the part of the masculine members of the gang.

Since the beginning, gangs have identified with rock. Many gangs take the name of some famous rock band for theirs: Pistols, Doors, Scorpions, etc.

Although it is true that not all the juvenile gangs are drug-addicts, alcohol, fights, hold-ups and drugs are all associated with gang-life. Marijuana, alcohol and 'chemo'(glue) are the most common.

Drug-consumption inside the gangs has been, for obvious reasons, one of the most apparent and, at the same time, one of the most manipulated and hidden, aspects. The declaration of one punk speaks for itself, "If we sniff (inhale glue) it's because the glue takes away our hunger, it's not so much because we want to do it." In the same way as some gangs adopt the names of famous rock groups, others take the name of some

drug: The Flexis (Flexo, contact glue), the Fz-5000 (combination of two types of industrial glue).

### The Germ of the Organization

The graffiti are live proof of the trail of the gangs through the streets. They are symbols of power, rivalry, alliance between the gangs.

"We are more anti-social than political. I'm not writing protest songs: I'm the protest." (*La Pared*, No.2, Oct.1983).

The image of the boy's gang is one of violence, vice, inactivity and the total lack of political conscience. Nevertheless one can observe the germ of organization in some juvenile gangs. In many of the poorer districts the organization of the youths alongside the general population is a concrete fact.

"I'm fed up with you shouting at me." (Graffiti in *Santa Fe*).

Repression of juvenile gangs in the deprived areas, their bad press image and the need for a united front, for protection and the need for internal and external investigation led, in 1981, to the formation of the Youth Council (CPJ) which attempts to approach the numerous gangs with suggestions of mutual aid. The immediate objectives of the CPJ are to combat gang violence and drug-taking. Nevertheless, the principal objective is to develop the gang's perception of life around them.

With the formation of the CPJ the levels of violence and drug-addiction in the gangs lowered considerably. It seems that the level of drug-addiction lowered, in 1982, by 15%. As far as police repression towards the gangs is concerned, this apparently has not decreased.

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### In the gang, punk is young, restless and violent.

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By that time the country's economic crisis had deepened and this became an obstacle to the organization of the CPJ, and for this reason the National Council of Resources for Youth (CREA) —through its Emergency Work Protection Program— and the Coordinating Commission of the Higher Education Students Social Service (COSSIES) acted as channels of communication between the gangs and the State, and initiated activities to stimulate and resolve the needs of the juvenile gangs. CREA began a program of Voluntary Social Service to redirect youth's energy towards its own community, and in the Santa Fé area they authorized 100 scholarships for Community Service activities. At the same time the CPJ nominated a coordinator in CREA.

The Social Service Program implemented by the CREA in Santa Fé included brigades of students of different disciplines (doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc.) according to the specific needs of each area, and 100 social workers designed for community service. Unfortunately lack of resources on the one hand and the absence of a real commitment and solidarity on the part of the volunteers on the other, resulted in the program's partial failure.

The policy adopted by the state towards the juvenile gangs is one of a search for radical solutions that will control and attack deprivation. So the Police Department and the Federal District have begun rehabilitation courses in carpentry, ironwork, driving, etc. to help the deprived youth to aid his community and to be re-integrated into society.

Irma Suárez



Photo by Rafael Bonilla

Girl of the gangs.



# Mystery Novels Prosper in Mexico

**Mystery novels are increasingly popular in Mexico. New authors and new titles, seminars and special literary awards signal the new trend. This article offers an overview of the genre's development in Mexico.**

Critics today when dealing with mystery stories recognize two principal sub-genres: the thriller or detective story which describes the society where the plot takes place and the 'roman noir' in which solving the mystery is less important than the handling of suspense and the description of characters. In the first category there is a crime to be solved, a culprit, a lady in distress, some vital clues and a detective whose sharp and clever mind rivals the criminal's. Famous writers such as Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle belong here. Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler are important within the second category which often includes violent characters.

Crime story writers in Mexico usually belong to the first sub-genre. But they have certain peculiarities such as the presence

of open spaces and sociopolitical concerns which should not be overlooked. There are also a number of stories which have characteristics of both. To mention three: Ana Mairena's *Los extraordinarios* (The Extraordinary People) (1961), Jorge Ibarguengoitia's *Dos crímenes* (Two Crimes) (1979) and Vicente Leñero's *Asesinato* (Murder) (1985).

## Crime as Reality

In *Los extraordinarios* there is a good handling of suspense which is meted out in adequate doses. It works as a *leitmotif* that gives the story unity and helps in the unfolding of the plot. A young man from the country arrives in a big city where he carefully plans the murder of a rich lady who amassed a fortune in a devious manner. He kills her with a stiletto and without turning a hair. Oddly enough what happens in the story was also a sort of premonition. The author, whose real name was Asunción Izquierdo de Flores Muñoz and her husband Gilberto Flores Muñoz were savagely hewn to death. These two murders provided Vicente Leñero with the subject-matter to write *Asesinato*, which is a report cum story and not a crime story as such. It is based on a detailed analysis of trial documents and newspaper accounts of the case. According to Leñero this

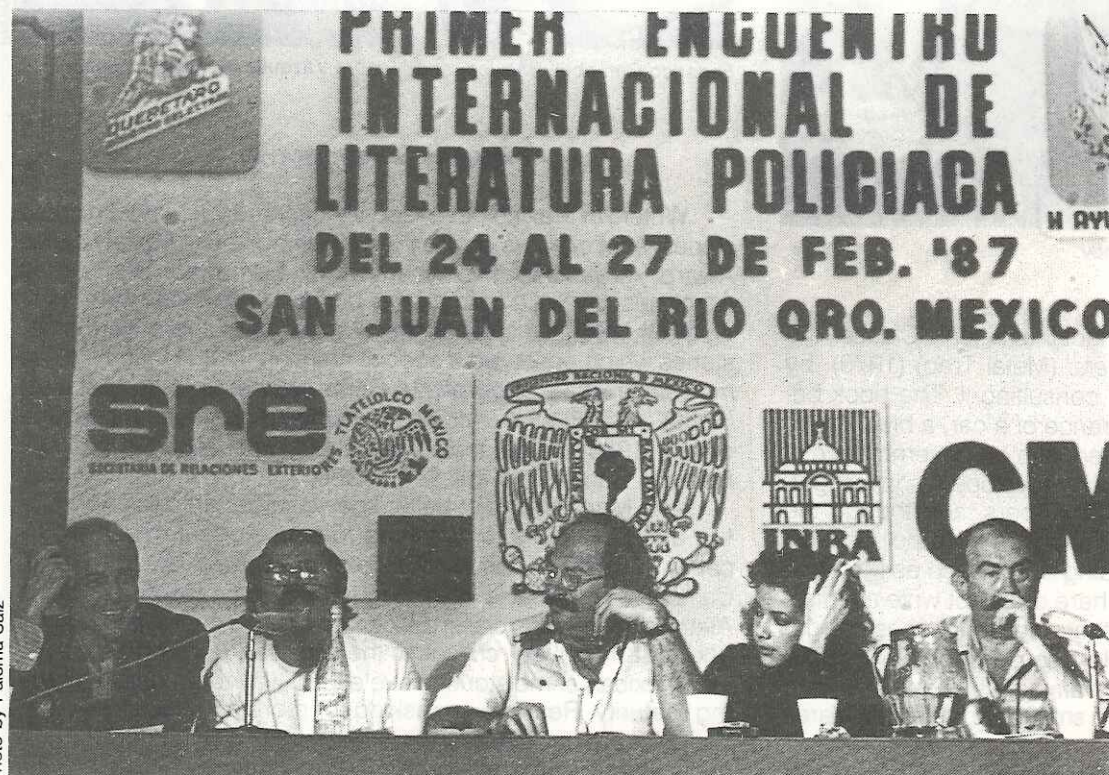
## Mystery Writers' International Meeting

Various cultural organizations including the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the National Art Institute, the government's

Department of Education and the International Association of Crime Story Writers organized a Mystery Writers' International Meeting last February. The first part took place in the House of Arts and Culture in San Juan del Río, Querétaro, and was sponsored by the state authorities. The second part and the Mystery Novel Book Fair were held in the Palacio de Minería in Mexico City.

Renowned writers such as Germany's Manfred Drew, Czechoslovakia's Jiri Prochazka, Argentina's Juan Sasturain, U.S.S.R.'s Julian Semionov, U.S.' Roger Simon and Spain's Manuel Vázquez Montalbán were there. Mexican crime story writers were also present: Edmundo Domínguez Aragonés, for example, whose book *La fiera de piel pintada* got first prize in the Crime Story Award organized in Mexico by the publishing house Plaza y Janés.

According to Vicente Leñero, author of *Asesinato*, which he considers a report cum novel, an academic tone and a desire to better define this literary genre prevailed at the meeting.



From left to right: Roger Simon (US), Paco Ignacio Taibo II (Mexico), Juan Madrid (Spain), Malú Huacuja (Mexico) and Rafael Ramírez Heredia (Mexico).

Photo by Paloma Saiz



type of book is more open because "it sees crime as part of reality and not only as fiction."

*Dos crímenes* is nearer to being a detective story: there is suspense, a first crime which leads to a second, some clues, one or two culprits and two people who investigate—a professional and an amateur who is really a chemist—. Together with this we get a deep concern for political issues and a fine sense of humor, which is typical of Ibarguengoitia's prose.

Rafael Bernal's *El complot mongol* (The Mongol Plot) (1969) is undoubtedly the best detective story written in Mexico and marks a turning-point in the development of crime stories in this country. The protagonist is a professional killer who must investigate a possible attempt against the U.S. president. His way of thinking corresponds to a certain type of Mexican policeman commonly called "guarura" (bodyguard); that is why he is described as being solitary, ruthless, good with his fists, violent, tough and a woman-hater. Through this character Bernal criticises both these bodyguards and Mexican politics. The story

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### Rafael Bernal's *The Mongol Plot* is a landmark in the evolution of Mexican mystery novels.

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takes place in Mexico City, mostly on Dolores Street, located in the heart of the city and inhabited by Chinese immigrants.



Photo by Paloma Saiz

Writers Roger Simon and Julian Semionov.

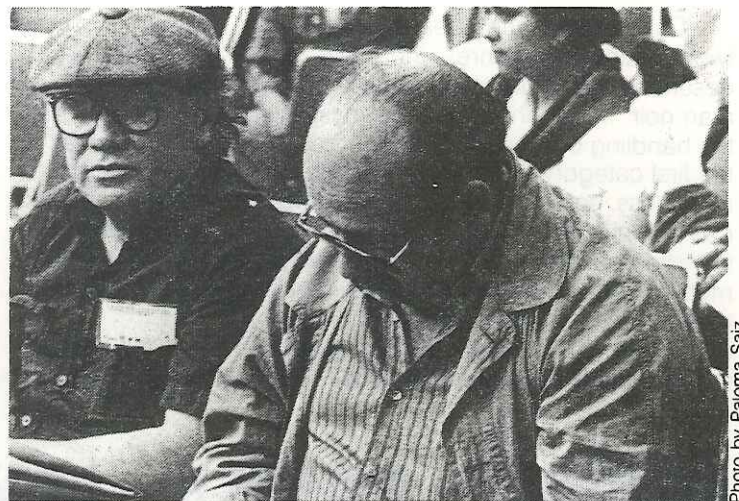
This detective story is so important that Ifigenio Clausel, the private detective in *Trampa de metal* (Metal Trap) (1979), by Rafael Ramírez Heredia is forever consulting it. The book begins with the mysterious disappearance of a car, a blue Volvo, which conceals the shady maneuvers of high government officials. These come to light as Clausel develops his investigating. The crime does not take place indoors, and though the Volvo disappears from a car-park it then goes on to include most of Mexico City and some surrounding areas such as Metepec and the Toluca highway. Ramírez here does not write a typical crime story; he goes further than that and denounces corruption in high government circles. He also describes the typical difficulties of living in a large city: traffic jams, lack of parking space, eating in "taquerías", life in a small apartment in the area of Coyoacán.

María Elvira Bermúdez is another interesting detective story writer. She is both a lawyer and an expert on crime stories—she has even written a book on this subject—. Her books *Diferentes razones tiene la muerte* (Death Has Different Rea-

sons) (1953), *Muerte a la zaga* (Death Lags behind) (1985) and *Encono de hormigas* (Ant Resentment) (1987) are influenced by British and American detective story writers. Bermúdez' books are full of detail and they have a logical, almost mathematical narrative sequence. She has created a character called Armando H. Zozaga, a professional journalist and amateur detective who is in charge of solving the crimes. It is interesting to note that sometimes a woman solves the mystery.

Rosa Margot Ochoa, better known for her books on ancient Greece, is the author of *Corrientes secretas* (Secret Currents) (1978) which takes place in an hacienda in Yucatán. At the International Meeting of Mystery Writers she read a paper called "In Defense of Crime Stories" in which she insisted these stories "are close to Greek tragedy."

Paco Ignacio Taibo II, should also be mentioned here. He is the author of *Días de combate* (Battle Days) (1976) which was made into a not too successful film and of many other stories centered round crime; for example *Pálidas Banderas* (Pale Flags) (1986) which is about a plot to overthrow a Latin-American dictator. *Días de combate* reminds one of *El complot mongol* especially in the way suspense is handled, the detective's personality, how the criminal is discovered and the prevailing violence.



Federico Campbell (Mexico) and Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (Spain).

Photo by Paloma Saiz

### Recent Crime Stories

Writers in Mexico have recently become interested in crime stories. A lot of this is due to the publishing house Plaza y Janés Award, organized two years ago. Edmundo Domínguez Aragonés' book *La fiera de piel pintada* (The Beast with Painted Skin) (1986) was the winner. Nonetheless there were other stories which deserved a special mention: Malu Huacuja's *Crímen sin faltas de ortografía* (A Crime without Spelling Mistakes) (1986), José Huerta's *Accidente premeditado* (Premeditated Accident) (1986) and Eugenio Aguirre's *El rumor llegó del mar* (The Rumour Came from the Sea) (1986).

Ana María Maqueo, better known for her articles on linguistics and her books for teaching foreign students Spanish, recently published *Crímen del color obscuro* (A Dark Colored Crime) (1987). What is interesting is that the protagonist, Roberto Alatorre, a middle class policeman, can actually be trusted, and that he is very critical of the Mexican upper class.

Mexican crime stories have a long way to go before attaining maturity. Readers are asking for more of these stories and there still are not very many on the market. But the new authors show enthusiasm and it probably won't be long before a writer of international dimensions appears.

María Rosa Fiscal



# AIDS in Mexico

**Fifty percent of the known cases have been reported in Mexico City, but the disease has also been diagnosed in just about every state in the Nation**

By June of this year, five hundred cases of AIDS had been reported in Mexico. The first was identified in 1983 and today the disease is spreading at an alarming rate that doubles every seven and a half months.

Brazil with its 1,700 cases and Mexico are the Latin American countries with the most AIDS victims, while Haiti has a high number in relation to its population, 800 out of a population of 5.5 million.

Over the last year more countries from all over the world have reported greater numbers of people suffering from the disease. In March 1986, 83 countries had notified 21,733 cases to the World Health Organization (WHO), while by June 1987, 113 countries had reported over 50,000 cases. Yet these 50,000 AIDS victims are only the tip of the iceberg, for according to experts from WHO and the Pan American Health Organization, anywhere from five to ten million people throughout the world carry the AIDS virus.

Experts predict that anywhere between half a million and three million people will develop the syndrome over the next five years, and will probably die from it.

"If a group of infectologists, epidemiologists, molecular biologists, immunologists and virologists had gotten together to design a di-

abolic mechanism to use against humanity, I believe that inspiration would have led them to the problem we have today": Dr. Guillermo Soberón, Mexican Secretary of Health.

## Groups at Risk

This year the Mexican Department of Health launched a public information

## Several institutions provide health care for AIDS victims in Mexico.

campaign on AIDS, and in June Health Secretary Guillermo Soberón and his men met with officials from WHO and the Pan American Health Organization for a public symposium on the subject. During the event the Director General of Epidemiology in Mexico, Dr. Jaime Sepúlveda Amor, said that the campaign and the information about the ways the virus can be transmitted and the means of avoiding infection, as well as its advice on "safe sex", offended some people who accused the government of "invading family morals and promoting promiscuity." But at the same time, Dr. Sepúlveda stated, other groups complain that the government is

not doing enough or that it is promoting the persecution of certain (high-risk) groups.

The Mexican press recently published reports of discriminatory practices against homosexuals and prostitutes in the states of Campeche, Veracruz and Yucatan, despite the fact that Dr. Soberón has repeatedly condemned discrimination against these and other high-risk groups. Dr. Sepúlveda pointed out during the symposium that "the virus has no sexual preference." In defense of his Department's campaign, Dr. Soberón said that "if it's a sexually transmitted disease we have to talk about sex using direct language."

According to information given out during the symposium, the first AIDS victims in Mexico have been mostly homosexual and bisexual males, who account for 90% of the reported cases. Another 5% of the victims were infected through blood transfusions, while only one percent were intravenous drug users. So far, there are fewer women than men with AIDS in Mexico, with 23 male victims for every female one.

This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Haiti and Africa, where transmission is believed to be through heterosexual contact and AIDS strikes both men and women alike.

At the symposium Dr. Sepúlveda told the audience that one third of Mexico's AIDS patients have already died, another third is still receiving medical care while contact has been lost with the remaining third. The National Nutrition Institute has cared for 84 AIDS patients over the last three years, 95% of whom were homosexual males. Out of these, 65% have since died, said Dr. Samuel Ponce de León, head of research at the Institute's

Infectology Department.

Several Mexican institutions provide medical care for AIDS victims. The Social Security Institute (IMSS) has attended 46% of the diagnosed cases, especially at its La Raza Hospital in Mexico City. Hospitals belonging to the Department of Health have provided care for another 37% of the patients in centers such as the Nutrition Institute, the Institute for Respiratory Diseases and the Mexico City General Hospital. The Social Security Institute for State Workers (ISSSTE) has dealt with 9% of the cases, while private hospitals have cared for 7% of known AIDS victims.

Through blood tests doctors have been able to observe that people who sell their blood are a high risk group since many have antibodies to the AIDS virus in their blood in a proportion ten times greater than is the case for altruistic blood donors. As a result, the government has now forbidden buying and selling blood and is currently setting up a system which will include screening for AIDS in all blood tests, transfusions and blood banks throughout the country. Health officials have also performed blood tests among prostitutes in Tijuana and Acapulco, and found no antibodies to the virus in their blood.

Fifty percent of AIDS cases in Mexico have been reported in Mexico City, although the disease has also been di-



Several Mexican institutions have launched an intense preventive campaign against AIDS.

Photo by Antonio Ortuno



## What Is Being Done About AIDS

The government declared AIDS an immediately notifiable disease and established an Information Center in Mexico City. Blood tests are available for high-risk groups, and all blood transfusions are subject to new screening. The educational campaign includes a monthly bulletin for the general public and courses for medical personnel about treating AIDS patients.

Individuals and groups are organizing as well. During a demonstration homosexuals held at the end of June in Mexico City, the marchers declared that "AIDS will not send us back into the closet."

Groups such as Gay Pride Liberation (GOHL), the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action (FHAR), the Support Center for the Gay Community and the Cultural Gay Circle, as well as groups

in some left parties, have all begun working to defend the rights of AIDS victims. In addition to this, the Foundation to Help Persons with AIDS has been set up to provide moral and financial support to victims and to counsel people on prevention and treatment.

Health workers in the field say one of the major problems they face is how to control hysterical and panic reactions in the population regarding this contagious disease. Thus, emphasis has been placed on information campaigns. But others are concerned about the implications of this pandemic on the mores of sexual behaviour. As the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano put it, "AIDS...may be the perfect excuse for policing sex."

A drug called Rivabirina is available in Mexico, where it has been used for some years against viral infections, but the Food and Drug Administration has never authorized its sale in the United States. Dr. Ponce, who attended the Third International Conference on AIDS held in Washington in June, said that conflicting reports on Ribavirina were heard at the conference. He said that although some studies indicate an improvement in AIDS patients with use of the drug, others reported no change in the victim's condition.

Interviewed at the National Nutrition Institute, the doctor said there did not appear to be any toxic side-effects associated with Ribavirina, but he added that the drug is priced so high it is out of reach for most Mexicans. Monthly treatment with the drug costs around 350,000 pesos... that is, more than three times the monthly minimum wage. At the best, said Dr. Ponce, the drug might

which he said are two of the three states in the U.S. with the highest number of reported AIDS victims.

Seventy five percent of AIDS patients in Mexico are

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### "The virus has no sexual preference"

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people aged between 25 and 44 years, while people between 45 and 64 constitute 13% of the cases. Dr. Ponce de León reported five victims under the age of 15. These patients are cared for in the Pediatrics Institute, at the Children's Hospital or in the Social Security's facilities.

#### We Must Overcome Aids

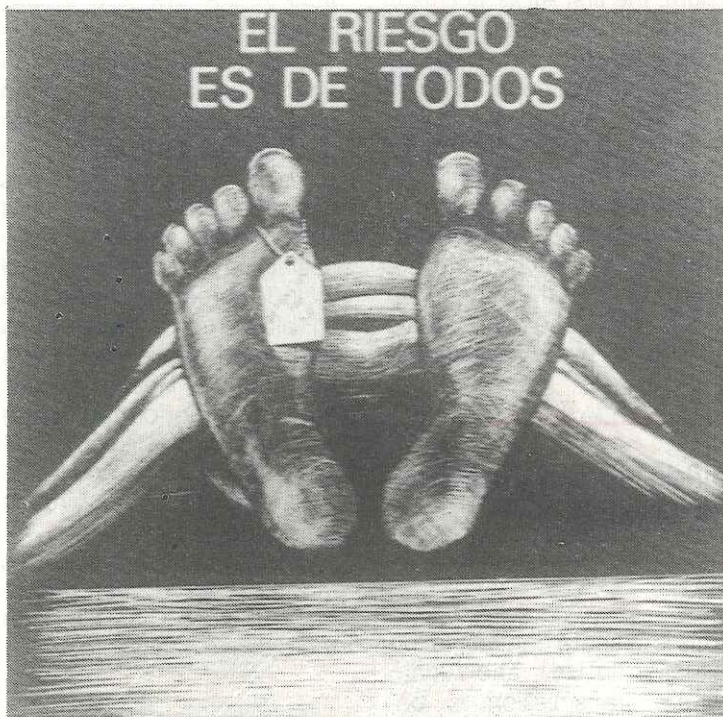
Epidemiologists estimate that if the disease continues to spread at the current rate, by 1991 there will be between 22,000 and 30,000 AIDS victims in Mexico. This of course will represent a heavy financial burden for health authorities. Dr. Ponce believes medical care for each AIDS patient may cost around 20 million pesos (some \$15,000), while according to the WHO, treatment for an AIDS patient in the United States costs between 25,000 and 150,000 dollars.

control the virus but it cannot destroy it. Nevertheless, AIDS victims are known to come from the United States to Mexico to buy the drug.

At the symposium on AIDS held at the Medical Center, Dr. Jesús Kumate, Under-Secretary of Health, said that it's unlikely a vaccine will be developed against AIDS in the next five years, and that the virus is a very changeable retro-virus. Dr. Soberón explained that an infected person will then always carry the virus and can transmit it to others, although not all carriers will develop the disease.

The symposium ended with a call for international cooperation put forth by Dr. Jonathan Mann, Director of the UN Special Program against AIDS. His closing words were "We must overcome AIDS before it overcomes us."

J.B.



EL SIDA  
Si...da

Photo by Antonio Ortuño

The risk is for everyone: AIDS does strike.

agnosed in just about every state in the nation. AIDS is more commonly found in Jalisco and in the northern border-states of Baja Califor-

nia, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Nuevo León. Dr. Sepúlveda pointed out that the northern states border with Texas and California



## Exhibits

### A Unique Watercolor Museum

"Welcome to this house of paintings. The flowers I offer you with my jade flute are water colored a hundred different ways. Let my song reach your heart in the same way as art was revealed to me. A long time ago, when all art and all science was just beginning, Quetzalcoatl<sup>1</sup> taught us to paint with the black ink and the red..." Alfredo Guati Rojo, founder and only head the Mexican Water-Color Museum has ever had, is also a poet. The excerpt above belongs to one of his poems which used to decorate the entrance to the museum when it was in Colonia Roma.

This museum, since it opened on December 21st, 1967, had always had the same address: 141 Puebla Street, Colonia Roma. But after the September earthquake, when it was seriously damaged,

<sup>1</sup> A Prehispanic god.

it had to start looking for a new home.

According to Guati Rojo the only show-place in the world dedicated specifically to water-colors couldn't disappear so easily. In order to help out the Friends of the Water-Color Museum Society was formed, and together with the district administration they managed to move it to 88 Salvador Novo Road. The people of Coyoacán have a new museum.

The Water-Color Museum opened its doors for the second time on May 15th. It's now located in an area of narrow streets and old stone houses, where one tends to forget the problems which plague large cities. It has

a big garden with a hundred year-old elm trees and a swimming-pool where a gallery will soon be built. In fact, it's completely different to the art nouveau building damaged by the quake.

The Water-Color Museum believes that "water painting is, because of its very nature, the oldest technique known by man", and that is why it stresses the importance of the Pre-Hispanic codices as real works of art. As one goes into the museum one can see magnificent copies of the Borgia, Selden, Bodley and Colombino codices. They are proof enough that the history of this sometimes wrongly called "minor art" shouldn't only concentrate on XVIII century English artists.

The works on show at this museum are divided into three sections: the Pre-Hispanic period, famous for its murals and codices, the XIX century, when water-colors after having been practically forgotten during colonial times became important again as an "ally of the litograph technique", and the XX century. The main characteristic of this last period was a depuration of the techniques used; this dates from the time Pelegrín Clavé and the Italian landscape artist Eugenio Landesio arrived at the Academy of San Carlos.

We feel the presence of the XIX century in the miniature portraits painted on ivory. We see serious-looking ladies, half-turned profiles and frilly dresses which barely show the bust. After that, there appeared a number of artists who, though they still painted portraits by commission, were interested in landscapes. Félix Parra is one of them.

But the XX century brings along a great number of changes in the subjects painted. Artists start working on landscapes, the Iztacchuatl and the Popocateptl, the "village nook" and the "sunset at Chalco". Dark women holding earthenware pitchers become as abundant as French-looking ladies carrying dogs.



Pastor Velázquez

Mujer indígena (Indian Woman)



Manuel M. Ituarte

Dama con perro (A Lady carrying a dog)

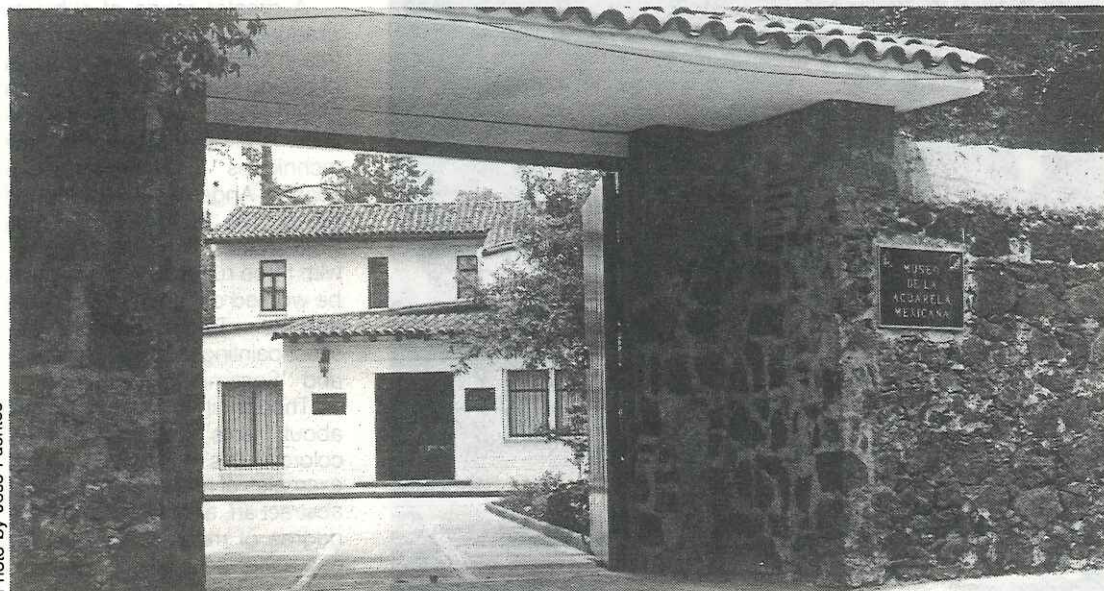


Photo by José Fuentes

Front of the Watercolor Museum.

Great painters such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, Alfredo Martínez, Ignacio Rosas and many others also produced magnificent water-colors. Nevertheless, only a few artists dedicated themselves exclusively to this technique. Severo Amador, Manuel M. Ituarte, Gonzalo Arguelles Bringas, Pastor



## A Coleccionist's Singular Effort

Professor Guati Rojo and his wife Berta Pietrasanta bought and donated most of the paintings in the Water-Color Museum so that everybody could see them. Together with the Friends of the Museum Society, created after the 1985 quake, they work here every day for free.

— Mr. Guati, how did this museum begin?

— Well, this of course is something which I did privately. As I myself am a water-color artist, I started collecting all these paintings. First from my teachers, my friends and other artists who are no longer alive. My collection got bigger, and there came a point when I felt I should no longer enjoy it just by myself. I felt I should open it up to the public, that's when the museum materialized.

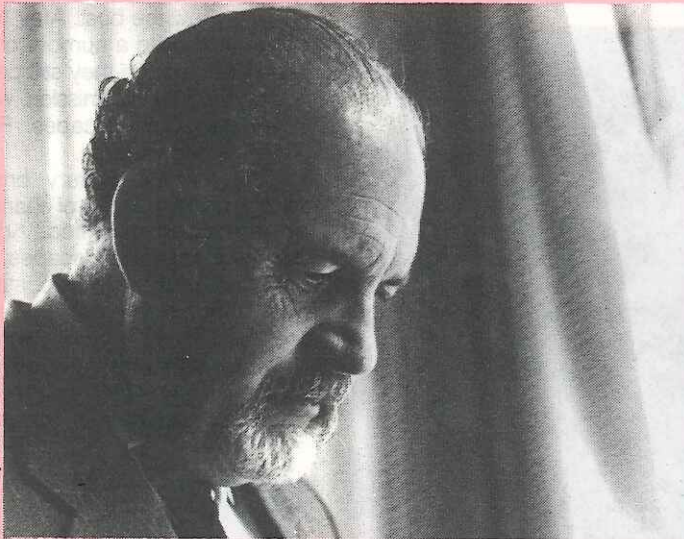


Photo by José Fuentes

Alfredo Guati Rojo, founder and director of the Museum.

I invited Agustín Yáñez, who was then Secretary of Education, to inaugurate the museum. Its address was then 141 Puebla Street. At that time the collection consisted of ninety paintings which I symbolically handed over for him to take charge of officially. At present, there exists the Guati Rojo Collection Trust, through which we donated all of our paintings, and by this I mean not only the 120 pictures on show.

— How important do you think this museum is?

— Well, it is the only water-color museum in the world. People from abroad visiting Mexico have told us so.

— Does it concentrate on any particular style?

— No, not at all. Here we have examples of abstractionism, realism, surrealism, etc. But as I was saying, water-color painting is no longer thought of as drawing, it's considered a plastic creation where exaggerated outlines no longer exist. It's another conception. The Mexican Water-Color Salon is open to all tendencies. Nevertheless, contemporary paintings are accepted only if they have received a prize at the annual salons. This helps the collection to maintain a certain level as far as quality goes. Not any artist's paintings figure here. There is a reason for this: if the Water-Color Salon is supposed to give us a sample of what is considered to be important, then the artists taking part in the event should be the ones to go on show at the museum. This is what we have done up to now and what we will continue doing in the future.

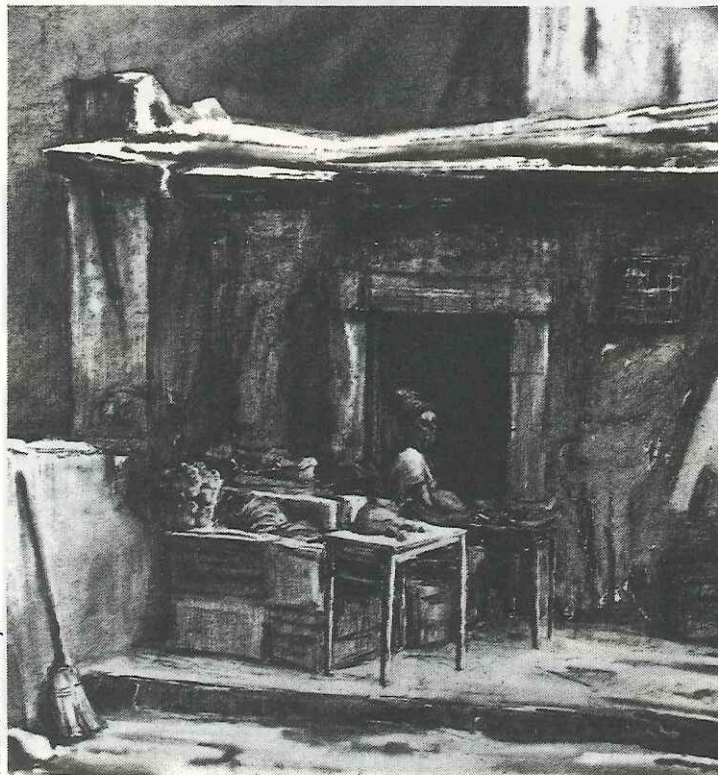
Regarding artists of the past, we shall include only the best-known. Yet we don't have any water-colors by Diego Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros and Tamayo. This is because I was the one who bought the paintings, and when I tried to purchase some by these artists, I found them out of my reach. But, as I said to President De La Madrid when he inaugurated the museum, we are at present trying to borrow water-colors by these artists for an indefinite period of time.

Velázquez, Agapito Rincón Peña and Carmen Jiménez Laborda belong in this second category.

The contemporary movement made its first appearance at the studios of the now much changed National School of Plastic Arts, where Pastor Velázquez worked as a teacher for twenty years, starting in 1935. Gustavo Alaniz, Alfredo Guati Rojo, Jesús Ochoa, Rafael Muñoz López, Edgardo Coghlan, Leopoldo Macías and Manuel Arrieta all passed through here.

During the second half of the XX century artists began to question the "too conservative" rules which governed this genre. This coincides with the opening of the first Water-Color Salon in 1957, an exhibition organized by the Art Institute of Mexico.

The creation of this Salon marked a turning-point in the production of water-colors. In 1960 the Institute established annual prizes for water-colors and pointed out how necessary it was



Alfredo Guati Rojo

La espera (The waiting)

to make these paintings larger, for until then they had belonged in the small category. This is how the Salon helps to organize and improve the production of water-colors.

A greater range of subjects gradually begins to appear. Beteta in 1966 discovers new ways of seeing reality. "Rocky Terrain of San Angel", with its diffuse outlines, is an example of the new techniques for painting landscapes. Angel Mauro Rodríguez paints "The Jazz Rhythm", Guati Rojo creates "A Ladder of Life" with three rungs to it which must be worked out and José Montiel and Luis Toledo produce abstract paintings such as "Taurus" and "Sentimental Torneé".

Though it is difficult to talk about "isms" regarding water-colors, in this museum we do get examples of realist, surrealist and abstract art, all of which show the degree of maturity Mexican art has achieved.

José Fuentes Salinas



## Music

### The International Forum for New Music

For historical and cultural reasons that would be too difficult to explain in a few pages, Mexican music lovers who attend concerts are completely hooked on Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and a few other very classical composers, and seem to want nothing to do with work older than Bach or newer than Stravinsky. Twentieth century music is very seldom heard, and the new music that gets played is usually performed before small groups of dilettanti, composers, music students and a few authentic amateurs.

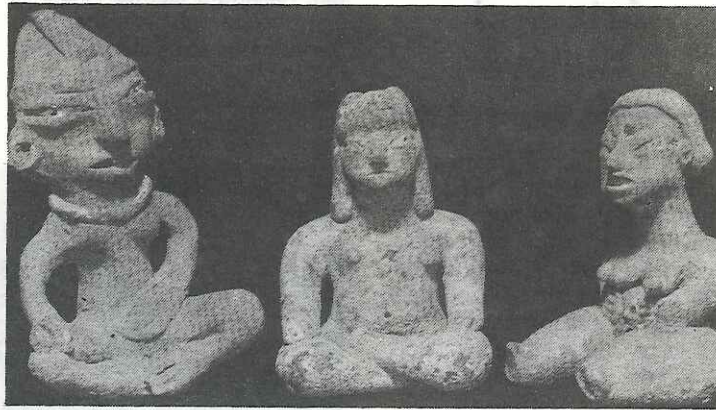
It is often said, and not without reason, that this sorry state of affairs has a lot to do with the box office. In fact, when one of Mexico's important symphony orchestras dares to include a world premiere in its program or when it plays a repeat performance of a very recent piece, more often than not the concert hall will be only half full. Nonetheless, in recent years there have been

several encouraging signs pointing to the fact that, given the opportunity, certain sectors of the music-loving public will at least give new music a chance. No doubt one of this trend's main driving forces has been the International Forum for New Music that has been held in Mexico City for nine years in a row. With exceptions few and far apart, it can be safely said that in a cultural environment that tends to reject contemporary sounds as a matter of principle, the forum has provided the best opportunity to approach 20th century music.

One of the Forum's main features is that the music performed

feature at the Sixth Forum, held in 1984. Robert Aitken, a flutist with a superb technique and an astonishing repertoire, came from Canada. Italy sent master double-bassist Steffano Scodanibbio, who has brought his awkward instrument to the forefront of contemporary music. And from Sweden came Peter Schuback, one of today's most prominent cello players.

Amidst this galaxy of accomplished international soloists, Mexico was represented by the fine guitar duet formed by Margarita Castañón and Federico Bañuelos. Two of the concerts at the forum are especially worth



each year is a very broad cross-section of ideas, styles and musical languages from the world over. At each Forum it is possible to hear works by the big names in 20th Century music alongside compositions by very young and talented musicians, both Mexican and foreign. And of course, no instrument, no sound combination, no musical possibility is left unexplored, as witness some of the main features in the last four editions of the International Forum for New Music.

Some outstanding soloists and ensembles were the main

mentioning. One was a salute to the late American singer Cathy Berberian, a performer who was equally at home singing the operas of Claudio Monteverdi and the avant-garde works by the likes of composer Luciano Berio. The other was a homage to Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera, who died in 1983 and was one of the most important composers in 20th Century Latin America along with Chávez, Revueltas and Villalobos.

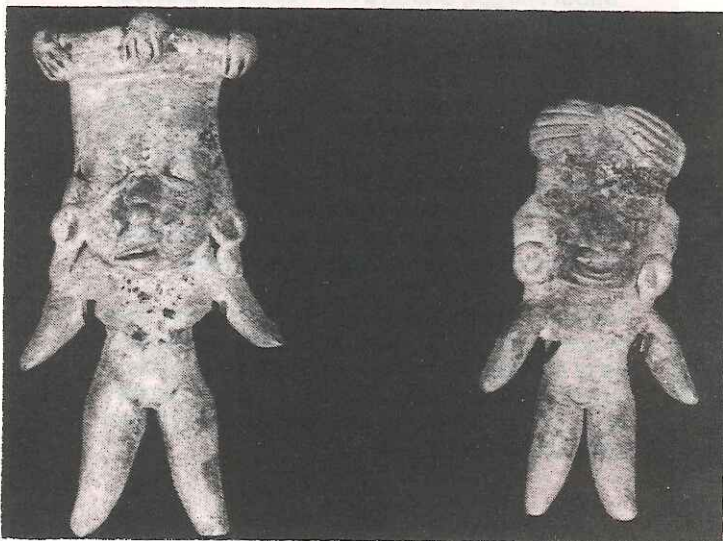
In 1985, the Seventh forum featured the Fine Arts Chamber Orchestra, Cuba's José White Trio and a very interesting multimedia performance in which music mingled with dance, theater, images and assorted elements. That year Mexican audiences were treated to some works by composers that have become classics in their own time, such as France's Pierre Boulez and the Greek Iannis Xenakis. Also present was the music of such interesting personalities as Marius Constant and Thea Musgrave. But perhaps the most interesting and intriguing concert of all was the so-called Photographic Concert in which musical elements were combined with the actual taking of pictures and other activities related to photography. This happening was held by an ensemble deceptive-

ly called Música de Cámara. The pun should not be lost: Música de cámara means, literally, chamber music, but the word cámara in Spanish also means camera.

The International Forum for New Music of 1986 was perhaps one of the better organized of the whole series. Each concert was arranged around a specific element of musical performance, and the result was a very tight-knit and very interesting event. The elements featured were voice, harp and guitar, wind instruments, electronic music, piano and clarinet, multimedia, double-bass, percussion instruments, harpsichord (indeed, there is fine harpsichord music in our time!), women composers, flute and string instruments. Special notice should be given to the presence of American conductor Joel Thome, who has become a permanent guest at the forum, always conducting very difficult pieces with precision and authority.

The ninth and latest edition of the Forum was held in May 1987, and for the first time some of the concerts were heard not only in Mexico City but in cities elsewhere around the country as well. Again, flutes were very much in vogue. Canadian flutist Robert Aitken performed and his French colleague Pierre-Ives Artaud was also on hand.

At one point they even joined in a very amusing session of duelling flutes. But the real surprise came at another concert, featuring that long-forgotten instrument, the recorder (known in Mexico as a baroque flute), expertly played by Horacio Franco, a young Mexican musician who studied in Holland. The high point of his performance was the world premiere of Mexican composer Mario Lavista's *Ofrenda*, a splendid study that takes full advantage of the recorders possibilities





and of Franco's awesome technique.

Also featured in this latest edition of the forum was the monumental organ at the National Auditorium. It was played in a recital by organist-composer-musicologist Felipe Ramírez, who is also curator and plays the organ at Mexico City's Cathedral. On this occasion, percussion and dance were combined with the powerful sound of the Auditorium's organ. Another noteworthy concert could be labeled as the meeting of two worlds. The Música Aurea group (its name means Golden Music) joined forces with composer-engineer Raúl Pavón to produce a fascinating combination of sounds from pre-Hispanic, traditional and electronic instruments.



The Images of Sound were especially interesting. This is a series of works by Pavón in which electronically synthesized sounds are paired with the images they produce on a waveform monitor. From this process Pavón produces abstract films of rare beauty.

Finally, mention should be made of a concert held in memory of the late Mexican composer and pianist Alicia Urreta. Four Mexican pianists joined forces to play pieces from Mexico and Spain that were originally dedicated to Urreta, who died in late 1986.

In wrapping up this brief retrospective of the International Forum for New Music, credit should be given where credit's due. The main driving force behind this yearly session of contemporary music is Mexican composer Manuel Enríquez, who has always been a keen promoter of the sounds of our time.

Juan Arturo Brennan

## Radio

### Radio UNAM's Fifty Years of Arts and Culture

Radio UNAM has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. University officials, intellectuals and radio listeners all agree on the importance of this station, particularly for cultural issues.

Radio UNAM started work on June 14th, 1937. Beatriz Barros Horcasitas, its present director, has said that this station prides itself on keeping an open mind, even during troubled periods.

The idea of having a radio with an arts and cultural emphasis dates back from the time of the movement for university self-government. Its principal aim was to reach sectors which had nothing to do with academic life, to come into contact with a society of 16 million people, out of which

9 million (66.6 per cent) were illiterate.

Radio UNAM started out with few resources, but as the people who got it going have remarked, enthusiasm was such that it outweighed many financial difficulties.

In this, Radio UNAM is not very different from other non-profit radios stations. In an article which appeared in the *UNAM Gazette*, Alma Rosa Alva de la Selva says that its main concern has been to survive. This has made competition with commercial radio stations very tough.

Even so, this university station has managed to provide its listeners with a new concept in radio. Alejandro Gómez Arias, its first director, has said that from the very beginning Radio UNAM tried to "be different from other great commercial radios, both in

its aims and its programs, and to create a new style in transmissions, without, of course forgetting the main purpose of all university departments: spreading culture".

That is why this radio is considered the first of its kind in cultural aspects. Also, it was the first one to organize its programs so that they would link the university with the rest of society. Radio UNAM has coordinated efforts with radios with a similar outlook, while making very clear how different it is to other commercial stations.

When Radio UNAM first appeared only commercial radio stations existed, and they were in full swing. This gave it the opportunity to come up with and test plenty of new ideas. Today, this radio together with Radio Education (which belongs to the government's Education Depart-



Jorge Carpizo, UNAM Rector, and Beatriz Barros, director of Radio UNAM.

Photo from Gaceta de la UNAM

## National Broadcasting



"Shoot Margot, Shoot, a Fair report on Mexican RADIO", by Fernando Curiel, Premiá Editora, México, D.F. 1987. 149 pgs.

"Shoot Margot, shoot" is the end product of the author's explorations in one of the less-known fields of our national culture: broadcasting (radio and t.v.). Here is an account, with knowledge of motive and malice, another history of the facts: a history very different from the view taken by private industrialists, and sometimes even adopted by the state.

Fernando Curiel, critic, essayist and narrator, was on two occasions director of the broadcasting service of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) (see note in this same section). At present he is coordinator of the Difusión Cultural (Cultural Diffusion) of the UNAM.



ment) are just about the only two oases as far as radio is concerned in the Valley of Mexico.

Mexico has a total of 703 radio stations, out of which only 27 are cultural ones; 2.5 per cent are AM, 2.96 per cent are FM and 36 per cent are short wave.

Alva de la Selva says "the university radios, with Radio UNAM in the lead, have shown us their importance when it comes to spreading culture through different sorts of musical, literary, historical and political programs, all of which have contributed greatly to Mexican transmissions. They have also made clear how useful they can be for furthering social causes and how vital it is to work in an atmosphere of freedom and respect whatever one's political point of view may be".

This attitude towards radio transmissions has always existed in Radio UNAM during critical moments. Beatriz Barros gives a few examples:

— The programs transmitted during the U.S. invasion of the Cuban Bay of Pigs which included interviews with people from the university and with well-known experts on Latin America.

— Radio UNAM's presence in the 1968 student movement in Mexico. Important aspects of this

were the recordings of Rector Javier Barros Sierra's speeches and the account of the famous silent march in which thousands of teachers and students took part.

— Covering the consequences of the September 1985 earthquake. Telephones were set up in the transmission booth to provide help and information. Radio UNAM received a number of distinctions for this.

— Last February, when the student movement pressed university authorities to grant a number of reforms Radio UNAM transmitted the ongoing negotiations between the student organization and the officials.

Radio UNAM has had its ups and downs, its good moments and its bad; nevertheless it has managed to overcome all sorts of difficulties during these fifty years.

Arias insists the radio should carry on as it has up to now. He also says "One mustn't forget that Radio UNAM is paid for by the Mexican people both to help them and to defend their identity which is becoming more endangered each day. In this it differs radically from many other radios which are a constant source of foreign influence".

E.V.A.

## Books

### Ancient Meso-American Artists

**Crónicas de barro y piedra** by Jacqueline Larralde de Sáenz, UNAM, México, 1987.

Perhaps the most interesting reflection to be derived from a perusal of "*Crónicas en barro y piedra, Arte Prehispánico en la colección Sáenz* (Chronicles in Clay and Stone, Prehispanic Art in the Sáenz Collection) (The Formative Period) by Jacqueline Larralde de Sáenz, is that the idea and the role of art have undergone as many transformations as man himself in order to reach what we now understand as civilization.

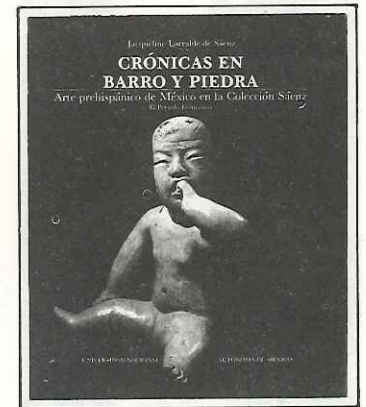
This book, published by the Institute of Research in Aesthetics, of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (U.N.A.M.), dedicates itself to 789 pieces from the Sáenz Collection from the Formative or Pre-Classical Period (1800-100 B.C). It has the specific purpose—in contrast with many texts or catalogs—of rescuing the value of the work of art and the particular perception of these ancient artists in one precise historic situation.

Mrs. Sáenz takes as her starting point the idea that our concept of art is different from that in more gregarious societies where the individual, as we now understand it, did not exist: "More often than not the representation of objects with their own aesthetic significance was not the immediate intention of the artists. That is, art produced by the ancient Mexicans was a means of achieving magic and religious results." Nevertheless Jacqueline and Josue, her husband, offer us objects imprinted with the force and vitality of artists who are permanently preoccupied by their need for expression, given their formal

possibilities and technical progress. We do not know who these anonymous creators were but we have their work, objects that have far more than mere archaeological value.

*Chronicles in Clay and Stone* is a happy mixture of art, anthropology and archaeology. The first of a series of four—the other three will deal with the Proto-Classical, Classical and Protohistoric and Historic Periods—it is an amazing tale, a sort of conversation, that revives approximately 15 centuries of art from the agricultural communities of Mexico's lake district, the valleys of Puebla and Morelos, the Olmecs of the cities and the country, Guerrero, Guanajuato and Michoacan,

Jacqueline Larralde de Sáenz



makes a close-knit synthesis of the origins of American man and recovers studies such as those of the Tehuacan valley to explain how civilization came to the vast cultural zone that we now call Mesoamerica: the cultivation of grains, and the improvement in diet, the networks of communication, the social organization of work and the specialization in production, demographic growth, the appearance of a central power, etc.

In what Mrs Sáenz defines as the Initial Formative Period, we find pieces of great expressiveness, such as the female figures with elaborate hairstyles, from El Arbolillo; or the singular *Venus Esteatopigida*, from the early Huasteca culture. Also coming from this period is a little female head, from the findings in El Openo, Michoacán, where an ancient sculptor achieves the expression of the eyes, the mouth, and the pupils through his skilled handling of tools and strips of clay.

From the Middle Formative period there are outstanding Olmec sculptures from Tabasco and Veracruz. Pieces representing felines or monkeys show the different roles played by these





creatures in Mesoamerican iconography. Those human figures with Olmec features, impregnated with feline characteristics, originate perhaps from the millenarian myth of a jaguar copulating with a woman. Also from this period are the impressive 'pretty women' of Tlatilco.

Among the pieces that illustrate the Late Formative Period we find sculptures representing ball players and pregnant women from Pánuco, Veracruz, or the funeral statues and multi-colored pottery from Chupicuaro, Michoacán.



Art from the Formative period is rich in facets of daily life and full of symbolism: twin-headed dogs or bodies, animal-shaped or shaman vases, act as chroniclers of times when the ancient Mexican understood reality by expressing it.

The Sáenz, like the Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut or the Emperor Moctezuma II, assume the role of 'collectors for love', along the lines of Diego Rivera or Carlos Pellicer, in order to share with us a legacy of incalculable value.

The Sáenz Collection, which is intended to be a substantial part of a museum in the city of Puebla, consists of 2,500 archaeological pieces brought together between 1944 and 1968 and "was formed through our interest in associating art with the history of ancient Mesoamerica. From this comes the title, *Chronicles in Clay and Stone*."

This magnificent book constitutes the first issue of one of the principal cultural patrimonies of Mexico. I should like to emphasize the great capacity of the author to present with sensitivity the enormous artistic wealth of our country in the aforementioned period which made possible the flowering of a civilization as awesome as any of the most important the world has seen.

*Chronicles in Clay and Stone* achieves yet one more objective implicit in the loving collectionism of the Sáenz: "to plumb the essence of the objects that reflect life and animation through inanimate matter, that is the creative intention of the artists."

Luis Alberto Barquera



### The "Pretty Young Ladies"

*Las niñas bien* (The Pretty Young Ladies) by Guadalupe Loaeza; Editorial Océano. México, 1987.

During the last few years Mexico has lived through a severe crisis. Because of this the middle class has become more and more impoverished. Also, the gap which separates two sectors of Mexican society: the small privileged minority—the "nice" people— and the enormous

majority of dispossessed has grown wider. Plenty has been written on this subject from the point of view of those who don't have a bank account in dollars nor the possibility of going to Vail on vacation. Cristina Pacheco, for example, in *Sopita de fideo* (Noodle Soup) (1984) and in *Zona de desastre* (Disaster Area) (1986) has constantly stressed the anguish of those who can hardly manage to survive. Elena Poniatowska, another well-known writer, has become very much involved with the problems of the seamstresses affected by the 1985 earthquake and with the troubles of many other women, many of whom don't normally even earn the minimum wage. What we didn't have was a book written from the point of view of that "other Mexico" both opulent and elitist, of that sector whose attitude towards life and whose gigantic shopping-sprees abroad contributed and still contribute to the crisis. Loaeza provides us with this vision we were lacking.

This book is really a collection of articles which appeared in two Mexico City newspapers, *Unomásuno* and *La Jornada*, and in the weekly *Punto* between 1982 and 1986. The first ones materialized shortly after the state take over of the banks on September 1, 1982. They reveal the malaise which prevailed among the middle class because of this presidential decree. The articles haven't been arranged in chronological order, but are grouped

together according to what they are about. The book begins with a section about the "nice young ladies", and in it these young girls are classified depending on which category they belong to, for they don't all fit into the same group. There is another section which describes how a lady from *Las Lomas*, an upper class residential area, becomes politically-conscious on the eve of elections in July 1985.

Loaeza, with a sharp, often even caustic sense of humour, outlines the feelings of this class that apparently doesn't know about—or pretends not to—the extent to which their way of life affects the crisis the country is going through. These people, who used to travel abroad—usually to the U.S.— eight times a year and would come home loaded with things they had bought there, who own houses in Coronado, Houston or Florida and go to Veil and Epcott on vacation, believe (an easy way to keep one's conscience clear) that this decapitalization is simply the result of corruption, faulty administration or the world crisis. The élite is not, however, unaware of the crisis and Loaeza in her articles tries to show that they are becoming more conscious about all this. Nevertheless, simple things like buying a pair of stockings at the local store and finding them acceptable are not all that easy for them.

The articles are written from a woman's point of view, general-





ly a housewife from Las Lomas with various school age kids. In some we also get a male point of view, but the emphasis is always on the woman's reactions. They describe the usual tasks a woman belonging to this social class performs: shopping, taking the kids to school, choosing Christmas presents, visiting friends, etc. This woman is of course also undergoing psychoanalytic therapy and trying to adapt to this new way of life in the hopes of convincing herself that she loves

reproduce telephone conversations between women. Loaeza handles the way this type of woman speaks marvelously. These texts, in fact, are useful both for a sociolinguistic and a sociological analysis. Other interesting articles are "*Sueño de una tarde de invierno*" ("A Winter Afternoon's Dream") where the journalist has an imaginary interview with Por-

firio Díaz and "*Una hamburguesa doble*" ("A Double Hamburger") which parodies Don Quixote's battle with the windmills; the only difference is that Burger Boy tries to fight the street lights.

These articles had most meaning when they first appeared in the newspapers mentioned above. Now, put together

as a book, they tend to sound repetitive and result less effective. Their literary value is not too great either. In fact, though they haven't lost their vitality or their realism they do give the impression of being slightly dated, specially as the crisis has reached unexpected levels.

M.R.F.



Mexico. In the following excerpt we get an example of how Loaeza describes the identity crisis many middle class women are going through:



"This situation is giving me a very funny complex. I feel as if I owed everybody money, and also as if I had taken all those dollars out of the country. I feel guilty Doctor, I think my husband's name is going to appear on that famous list. It's as if I were mortgaged, I feel like a thief, thriving on gossip, belonging nowhere, illegal and devaluated. I'll tell you what, my problem is a credibility, an identity problem; I was never taught to accept myself as a woman or as a Mexican. My mom's one dream was for us to marry foreigners. I just don't believe in anything, I can't find any answers anywhere" (p. 27).

Some of the best articles

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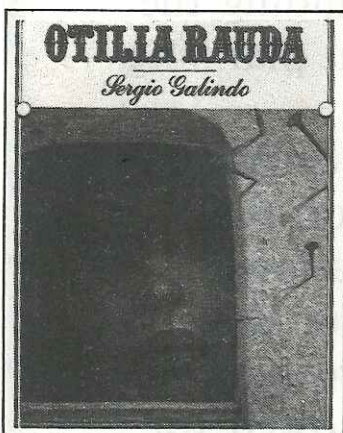


## An Unusual Literary Heroine

Otilia Rauda, by Sergio Galindo. Editorial Grijalbo, Mexico City, 1986.

Sergio Galindo's latest novel is part of contemporary narrative literature in Mexico and the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. The author was born in 1926 in Jalapa, capital of the state of Veracruz. He attended the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and later studied in France. Back in Mexico he taught aesthetics at the School of Drama in his hometown and went on to win a scholarship from the *Centro Mexicano de Escritores* (Mexican Writer's Center). Galindo also headed the University Press of the Universidad Veracruzana at Jalapa, whose publications have played an essential role in Mexico's literary development.

Galindo began his career as



a writer in 1951 with *La Máquina Vacía* (The Empty Machine), a collection of short stories, and later published his first novel, *Polvos de arroz* (roughly Rice Dust or Ground Rice). The novel has been his chosen form ever since, with books such as *La justicia de enero* (January Justice) in 1959, and *El bordo*. Sergio Galindo's own very realistic style is already present in his early works. Basically, he breaks down folkloric and revolutionary (from the Mexican Revolution) stereotypes with their social themes that tend to predetermine the character's evolution and fate, and relies on essentially literary devices. Thus, his novels tend to transcend their specific time and place and stand as universal examples of human tragedy.

*Los dos angeles* (Two An-

gels), published in 1984, deals with the encounter between childhood and old age in the form of a Mexican boy and an old Spanish refugee from the Civil War. Through this relationship Galindo illustrates the connections between two countries, between two worlds in which one was once the conqueror and the other the conquered. Another novel, *El hombre de los hongos* (The Mushroom Man) was published in 1976 and takes an entirely different course from *Angels*. This work deals with magic, and the author superimposes space and time and fudges the border between reality and fiction, unleashing a rush of fantasy on the reader.

The Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, granted Sergio Galindo the José Fuentes Mares Literary Award for his latest novel, *Otilia Rauda*. In this book Galindo further develops the literary devices he began working with when he first started writing. He is clearly an heir to the classical 19th Century linear-plot novel and is immersed in the Mexican narrative tradition which began in the early part of the 20th century with fictional literary accounts of the Mexican Revolution. In *Otilia* Galindo once more resorts to the same topics and techniques, but this time as part of the Latin American literary boom and its emphasis on the use of language as the basic creative device, leaving social and political issues on a secondary level that springs forth from the artistic work itself.

*Otilia Rauda* is impressive in its simplicity and narrative effectiveness. The plot unfolds in almost chronological order through an independent narrator who at

times becomes part of the different characters' psychology and inner conflicts. This is a love story, and it centers around Otilia Rauda, the extraordinary main character who is unique in Mexican literature. She is a woman of great strength who combines a nearly masculine sense of determination with extremely feminine sensuality and passion. Otilia is what we could call an anti-heroine in the way she breaks with the traditional image of women in Mexican literature.

The story is set in the small, narrow-minded town of Las Vigas, in the setting Galindo usually uses, the state of Veracruz. It opens in 1907—the beginning of the century and eve of the Mexican Revolution—and continues on into the 1940's, covering the

period of instability that followed the Revolution. Even though time and place are precise in the novel, with clear references to the decline of Porfirio Díaz' dictatorship and including a splendid description of the 1910 Independence Centennial celebration at the Port of Veracruz, it is really the characters who constitute a complete universe. They include Otilia Rauda and her lover, the suspected murderer Rubén Lazcano, Otilia's parents and godmother, her wicked husband Isidro Peña, and others.

The novel deals with the interaction between Otilia and the townspeople, a relationship characterized by the neighbors' envious gossip about the woman who is different. The community shuns Otilia and discriminates



against her, yet she is strong enough to continue to be herself and to earn the friendship and love of those capable of going beyond social prejudice. Rubén Lazcano is Otilia's counterpart and complement, the other discriminated character whose story is told as a novel within the novel.

Galindo successfully manages to captivate the reader and involve us in the characters' conflicts, problems which might very well be our own, no matter the time and place we live in.

Adela Iglesias



## Cultural Pursuits

*Políticas culturales en América Latina*, (Cultural Policies in Latin America) by Néstor García Canclini, ed. Guillermo Bonfil and others. Editorial Grijalbo, México, 1987, 220 pgs.

The central purpose of the studies that form this volume is to analyse the relation between politics and culture in Latin America. Faced with the habitual reserve and lack of interest aroused by this question in politicians, artists and intellectuals, the authors stress the urgent need to uncover the cultural bases organizing and orientating society, its social and economic functions in the context of the phenomena occurring throughout the continent.

The book is also a sample of the systematic work that—for the last two decades—has surpassed mere bureaucratic description and offers a critical conceptualization that attempts to define the contradictions and controversies normally accompanying the development of cultural policies, as well as the theoretical and methodological problems deriving from the study.

Examples of this are the texts of Sergio Miceli on the relationship between "State, market and popular needs" and that of Guillermo Bonfil on the political crossroads reached by the indigenous community.

Other changes have occurred. Setting aside chronologies and apologetics, the specialists have engaged in a rigorous empirical investigation that evaluates the way in which public actions tie up with social needs. Equally, attention has moved from state politics to the consideration of the role of heterogeneous political and social forces. Thus, Jean Franco's study on Reagan's cultural policy illustrates how, from the neo-conservatism of the metropolis, his relation with Latinamerican

socio-cultural needs and political processes is structured.

Meanwhile José Joaquín Brunner's study is an original attempt at constructing a typology capable of articulating the various cultural circuits (public, private and voluntary association) and of re-thinking the task of the opposition movements.

On the other hand, and setting aside local points of view and the arrangement of theoretical parameters analyzing transnational policies or the problems common to various countries, the authors document the cultural policies not only according to institutional criteria. In order for this record to have certain objectivity and explanatory value it is necessary to investigate the policies in relation to their results, and to

and education; or a chronology of each government's actions. There should instead be cultural policies combining all those actions resulting from State intervention, and from civil institutions and the community groups organized to direct symbolic development, to satisfy the population's cultural needs and to obtain a consensus on a kind of order and social transformation.

Once this definition is established, this book can be seen as a reflection of an aspect of our societies that is fundamental but, until recently, disregarded.



their reception and refunctioning when they arrive at their destination. The critical study of Oscar Landi on the National Cultural Plan of the Argentinian Government (1984-1989) is an example of the *a priori* quest for coherence in State actions and in the potential of social scientists to lay the bases for cultural policies.

As Nestor Garcia Canclini observes in his study, these changes stem in great part from the theoretical limitations of models of only the economic or political aspects of development. It is essential to examine the cultural bases of production and power since development is not merely a question of patterns and material level, but also of the significance of work and recreation, in the sense that societies build, alongside production, through their songs, and images, in their consumption, education and daily life.

Because of this, the conclusion of this volume is that it is not enough to have a cultural policy that is a rutinary administration of a historic patrimony; or a bureaucratic classification of the state apparatus dedicated to art

Sebastián Salazar Bondy

### TODO ESTO ES MI PAÍS



*Poeta del tiempo, de las cosas que se pierden en el tiempo, Salazar Bondy habla de la ciudad y sus trampas, del amor y sus máscaras, del pasado...*

*"La poesía es su triunfo secreto".*  
Emilio Adolfo Westphalen

*"... para Salazar Bondy las cosas, los seres, los hechos están penetrados, a veces henchidos, de cierta delicada congoja..."*

Javier Sologuren

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Juan Nuño  
LA FILOSOFÍA DE BORGES

José Durand  
DESURIANTE



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## Books From Tabasco

**Las Tierras Bajas en el Sureste de Mexico** (2nd Edition), (The Lowlands in south-east Mexico); by R.C. West, NP Psuty and B.G. Thom; Biblioteca Básica Tabasqueña, Gobierno del Estado de Tabasco; Villahermosa, Tabasco, Mexico, 1985, 409 pgs.

This monograph describes and interprets the principal physical, geographical and cultural characteristics of the Tabascan low lands: a humid and tropical section of south-east Mexico that borders on the extreme southerly part of the Gulf and incorporates the largest coastal alluvial plains in the Republic. The authors present here the outstanding physical aspects of these plains and trace the development of the colonization of man in this area. A special emphasis on the historic point of

view is made in the presentation of the human aspects of this study.

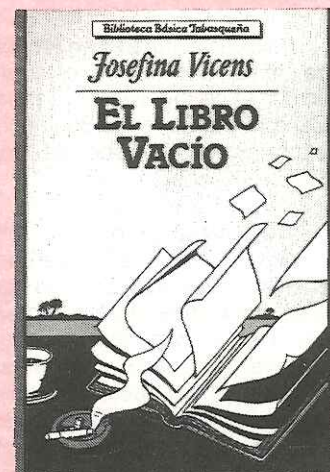
**Muestra de la Flora de Tabasco.** (Samples of the Tabascan Flora). Illustrations by Elvia Esparza Alvarado; text by Angeles Guadarrama Olivera and others. Gobierno del Estado de Tabasco; Villahermosa, Tabasco; Mexico, 1987, 103 pgs, 47 color plates.

Because of its situation in the tropical region of Mexico, Tabasco offers a large number of vegetable species; it is calculated that there are some five thousand phanerogams in existence in, at least, twelve different types of vegetation. A large quantity of these plants satisfy a combination of alimentary, medicinal, timber-yielding and ornamental needs. Only a small sample of

the wealth of species and knowledge of the Tabascan flora has been used in this work but this is valuable in itself if it acts as an introduction to readers to the range of resources in this state.

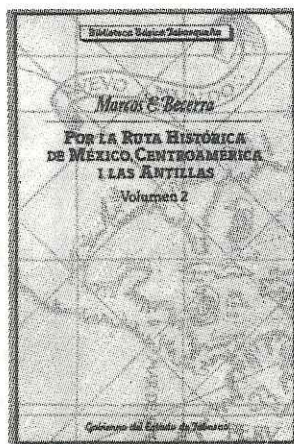
**El Libro Vacío** (The Empty Book) by Josefina Vicens, Biblioteca Básica Tabasqueña; Gobierno del Estado de Tabasco; Villahermosa, Tabasco; Mexico 1985, 171 pgs.

Reading this book produces the opposite effect to that suggested by the title. The reader, on formulating the void with the words of the book, fills it up. Because this book of Josefina Vicens is only empty of what is not life, love, death. The Mexican poet, Octavio Paz states in his letter-preface to the author: "What is it that your hero tells us, this



man who has 'nothing to say'. He tells us 'nothing' and this nothing—which is everybody's nothing—is converted, from the mere fact of its adoption, into everything: it is an affirmation of the solidarity and fraternity of men"

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XXX AÑOS DE PROMOCION DEL ARTE CONTEMPORANEO

leo castelli Y SUS ARTISTAS

De hecho, empecé en París, en el año 39. Tenía una galería maravillosa. Había una habitación tras otra con hermosos tapices de terciopelo, frente al jardín del Hotel Ritz. Empecé con un amigo mio, Edouard Drouin, que diseñaba mobiliario Art Deco; e n aquel entonces, no sabíamos que era Art Deco. La guerra se inició con la ofensiva relámpago alemana, así que tuve que irme a otro lado, y al lugar que llegué, fue América. Fui considerado como un enemigo por un tiempo; después de todo, era un ciudadano italiano. Decidí convertirme en estadounidense y así, fui alistado en el ejército. Lo hice con gusto; uno estaba consciente de que tenía que hacer algo con Hitler. Después de la guerra, regresé a París y me encontré a Drouin operando allí. Por un tiempo, trabajé para él en Nueva York. Me gustaba mucho más esa ciudad: la encontraba más interesante. No pasaba nada en Europa después de la guerra, pero aquí estaban empezando cosas muy interesantes en la escuela de expresionismo abstracto. Pero pasó un buen rato antes de que tuviera los medios y el valor para abrir una galería — muy modesta por cierto— en el cuarto piso del número 4 de la Calle 77 Este, donde también vivía. Eso fue en el 57-58. E s el vigésimo aniversario de la galería, pero el cuadragésimo de mis actividades en el mundo del arte. Nací en Trieste y allí fui a la escuela. Tomé un curso elemental de historia del arte que se decía en 1850; los impresionistas no estaban incluidos. Esa fue toda mi preparación dentro del arte. En aquel entonces, me interesaba la literatura. En Trieste no había un conservatorio de arte ni un museo. De hecho, en ninguna parte de Italia se podían encontrar muchos libros sobre arte contemporáneo. Yo leía lo que podía. Un libro que me influyó mucho, fue el de Clive Bell; él era uno de los integrantes del grupo de Bloomsbury; desde Cezanne. Ese fue el primer libro de arte serio que leí y me puso en el camino del arte. Empecé con Jasper Johns y Bob Rauschenberg. Después con los artistas pop: Lichtenstein, Warhol, Oldenburg, Rosenquist. El pop, el pop y el arte minimalista son áreas que yo diría que domino. Unos cuantos años antes de que abriera mi galería, en el 57, me sentí enfermo y harlo por lo que estaba sucediendo en el campo del expresionismo abstracto. Había grandes maestros: de Koonin, Kline, Rothko, Newman, pero los que les seguían eran sencillamente terribles. Estaba buscando algo nuevo que pudiera manejar. Y lo nuevo que sucedió, fue la obra de Rauschenberg y Johns, y Cy Twombly, no lo olviden. Andy Warhol siempre fue un acontecimiento, y Jasper Johns y Rauschenberg también. O Dios, hay tanto. Hasta cerca del 68, todo parecía bastante claro y se desarrollaba bastante bien. Pero ciertas directrices comprensibles. Entonces surgió un nuevo grupo. A f alta de mejor definición, se las llama conceptuales; y todo se volvió loco. Los artistas se iban por mil y una nuevas direcciones. Todo resulta interesante, pero uno no ve que es surja entre los artistas jóvenes, como Bruce Nauman, Joseph Kosuth; también bien gente con la que no he tenido ningún contacto, pero que también es muy buena, como Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, Bruce Marden. Quizá el artista más importante desde los grandes minimalistas, como Morris o Flavin o Judd, no es un pintor sino un escultor, Richard Serra. El es probablemente el más grande artista que surgió como figura, como personalidad. De corazón, creo que si algo es valioso, no basta con mi opinión. Me lleva algún tiempo comenzar a otra gente, algunos críticos, algunos curadores de museos. Ahora tengo dos galerías, la de la Calle 77 y una muy grande en Soho. Siempre es un trabajo difícil, porque la gente tiene fantásticas sumas de dinero para manejarlas dentro de una escala repintando la galería por completo. Todo es siempre prístino. Y tengo un buen número de personas trabajando para mí. Hay que mantenerlos felices. TodoS los trabajos de todos los artistas que exhibo, se fotografían, y todos los con respecto a un artista, son guardados, de tal manera que cuando los museos o los estudiantes necesitan saber algo acerca de un artista, pueden encontrar todo esto material, y son bienvenidos. Es como una empresa museográfica. Cuando hago una exposición, nunca pienso si algo se va a vender o no. De hecho, nunca espero que se venda algo. Pero, de una manera u otra, sí se vende. Actualmente, Nueva York tiene muy pocos coleccionistas importantes. Así que uno tiene que depender de una tremenda divulgación a través del país: museos, comerciantes de arte; en Calif ornia, en San Luis y Minneapolis, que estén; en Europa también. Está diseñado, pero hace posible sobrevivir. Y siempre es una operación "mano-boca". Yo aun no sé una cuestión de unos cuantos miles de dólares. Ahora es una cuestión de unos cuantos cientos de miles de dólares. Pero el problema continúa. Yo aun no sé de un mes a otro, conseguí el dinero para pagarles a los artistas, para pagar a mi personal, para pagar la publicidad y todas aquellas cosas que hay que gastar cuando uno tiene una galería. Muy rara vez vendo los cuadros que tengo en mi casa, pero sí he y muchos, muchos cuadros también. Depende de a quién se vayan. Si es alguien que se enamora, entonces es particularmente molesto. Si va a un buen amigo o a un museo donde lo pueda volver a ver, mantener contacto realmente con él, es menos doloroso; se mantiene en familia. Mi departamento está en un rasca-cielos de la Quinta Avenida; es relativamente pequeño, pero tiene una vista preciosa del parque que lo hace parecer más grande. El mobiliario es mitad antiguo, mitad moderno. Hay una mesa de Roy Lichtenstein. Tengo algunas cosas de Tiffany por allí; cosas de Art Deco, una larga mesa Shaker de madera de cerezo, algunas sillas de la época de Carlos X de Francia; es una mezcla de cosas que he comprado aquí y allá. No hay absolutamente nada de iluminación. Los cuadros están en la oscuridad. Soy muy viejo, soy antiguo. Son increíblemente entusiasta acerca de la vida, soy muy activo. Amo lo que hago, no sólo lo que hago en la vida privada. Es muy excitante y me mantiene vivo y en buena forma. También me ejercito un poco cada mañana, soy cuidadoso de mi dieta. No como nada especial, pero soy cuidadoso, me peso todos los días y si me sobrepaso me limito. Bebo. Hago de todo, pero no demasiado. Es difícil encontrar ropa porque, generalmente, no la tienen en mi talla; pero sí compro de Turbull, Assert y Bonwit Teller. Me ocupaba ser pequeño, particularmente cuando era joven. Por eso entré al deporte aunque fuera pequeño. Obviamente, esto jugó un papel importante en mi vida. Me divierto más conforme envejezco. Seco mucho más de la vida, de la gente, que cuando era joven. También me siento más seguro de mí mismo. Conforme avanzo, me siento cada vez menos inhibido. No es sólo la edad, también la experiencia. Tuve bastantes problemas cuando joven. Era muy tímido. Era tímido cuando empecé con la galería. Pero cuando ves a tanta gente, la empiezas a conocer; desde todos los rumbos de la vida; así que empecé a estar más seguro de mí. He estado casado dos veces. Pero he tenido otras muchas relaciones. Mi primer matrimonio fue con Helean Sornabard, la famosa vendedora de arte, que sigue siendo mi gran amiga después de un periodo de distanciamiento cuando nos divorciamos. Después me casé con Twinky y tenemos un chico de trece años. Mi hija del matrimonio anterior tiene tres hijos, y este año cumplirá cuarenta y dos. Imagínense, más o menos de esa edad me siento! No veo a mis nietos para nada. Viven en Washington, D.C. y no tengo un contacto verdadero con ellos. Estoy demasiado ocupado. Pero estoy muy involucrado con mi hijo, que anda por aquí; es joven y muy agradable. Lo amo. Es hijo de nieto para mí. Me enamoro de mujeres difíciles y duras. Pero mi mayor placer proviene de mujeres que son realmente femeninas. Por alguna causa idiota, todo mundo parece enamorarse de este tipo de mujeres rechazantes. Afortunadamente, hay otras que no son así. En lo que respecta a mujeres artistas, está Georgia O'Keefe, está Louise Nevelson, que es una gran personalidad y hay todo tipo de mujeres jóvenes que están surgiendo. Pero las mujeres tienen un ciclo de vida diferente. Muy pocas deciden llevar una vida similar a las que llevan los hombres. Tienen que tender hacia otras cosas diversas. Usualmente, quieren tener hijos; ellas, generalizando, son dependientes. A pesar del movimiento de liberación femenina, conozco a varias mujeres muy independientes que siguen siendo mujeres. Permanecen siendo lo que son, gracias a Dios por eso. Un día típico para mí empieza a las siete de la mañana porque el perro viene y me despierta. Seco al perro a caminar en el parque durante una hora. Después peso una hora desayunando y leyendo los periódicos. Recojo mi camioneta color mostaza y conduzco hasta el Soho. Manejo yo mismo. Recojo a mi secretaria, Susan, en el camino y...

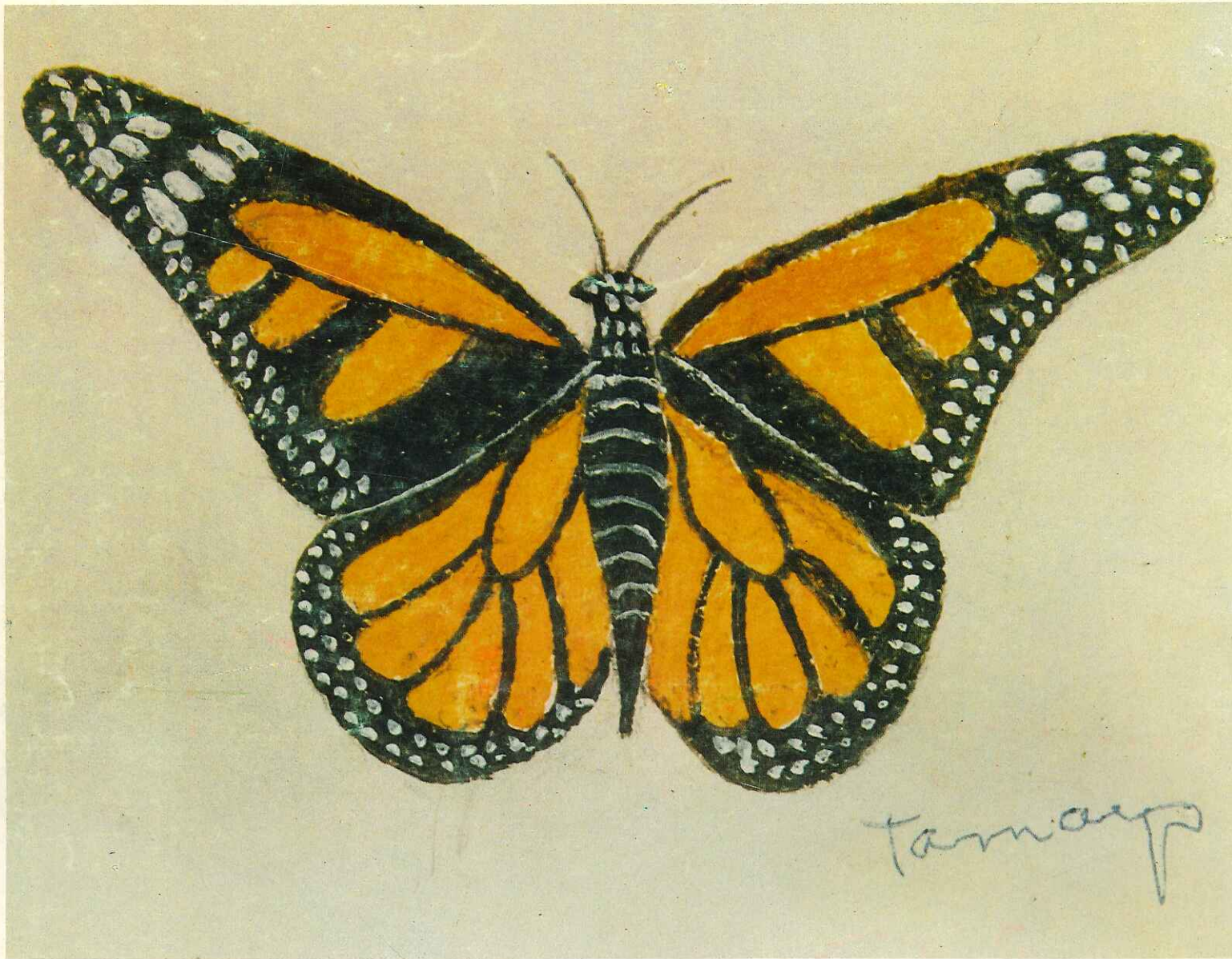




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