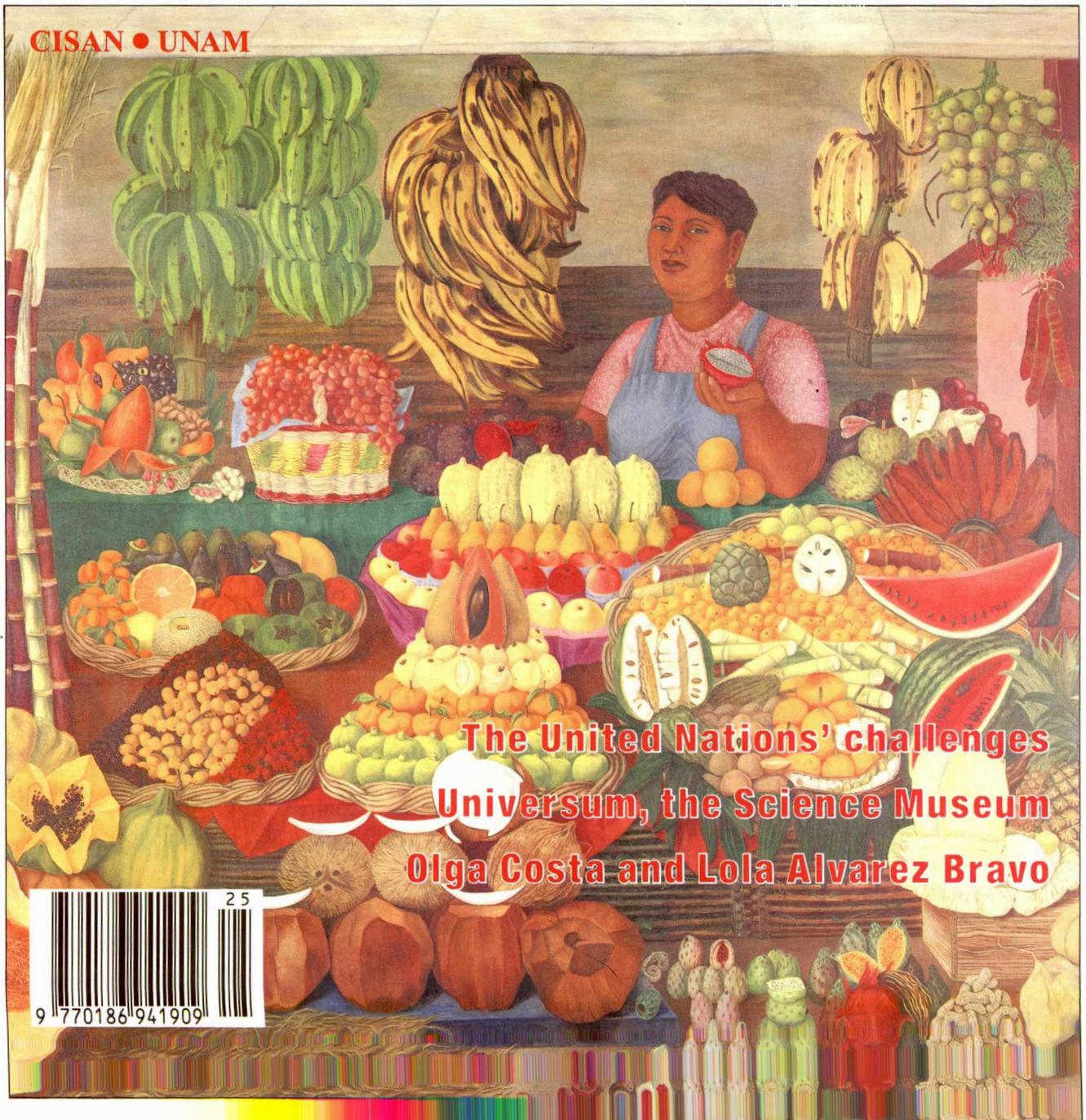


# Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Nahui Olin  
and  
Dr. Atl

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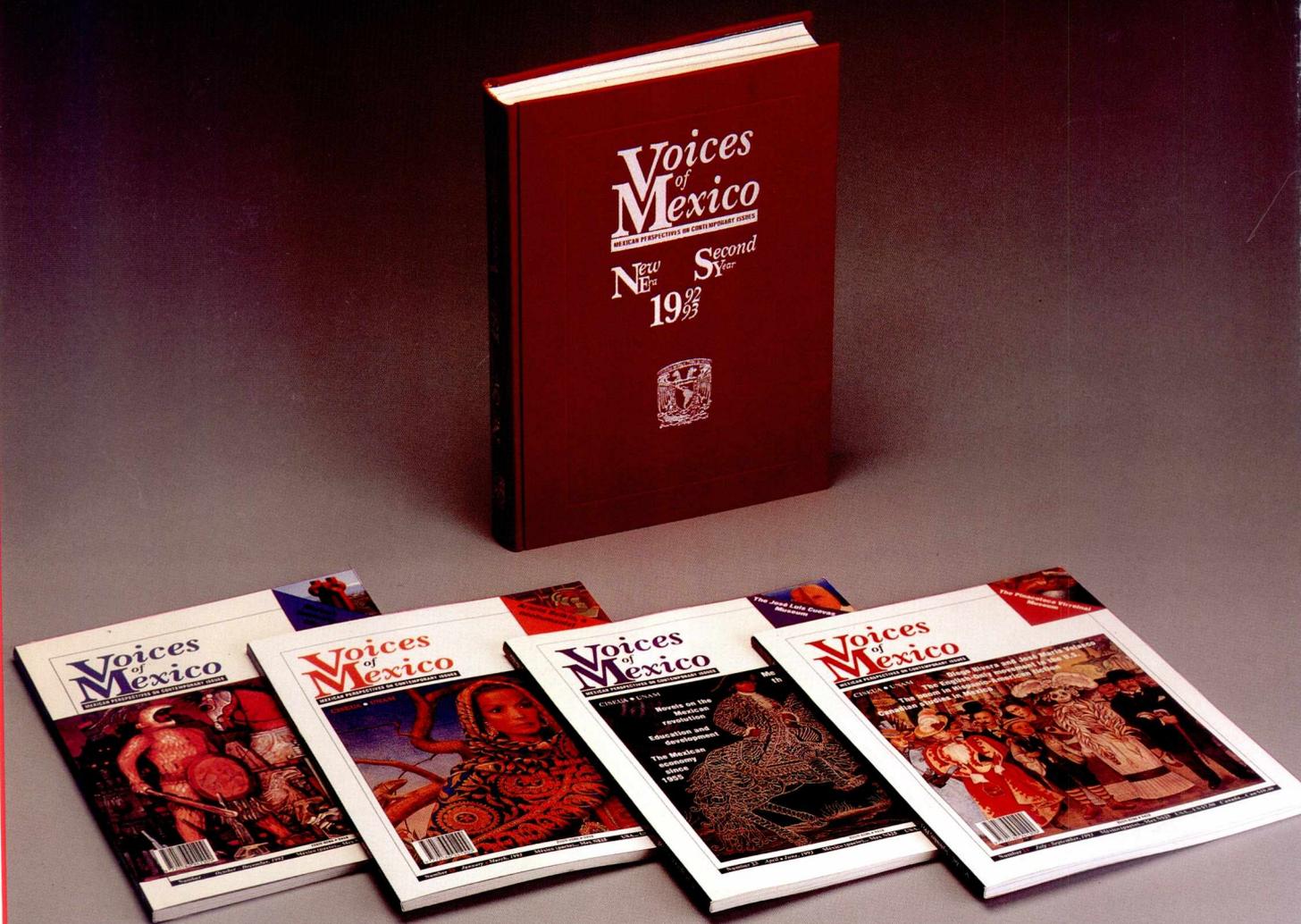
The United Nations' challenges  
Universum, the Science Museum  
Olga Costa and Lola Alvarez Bravo



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# Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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# Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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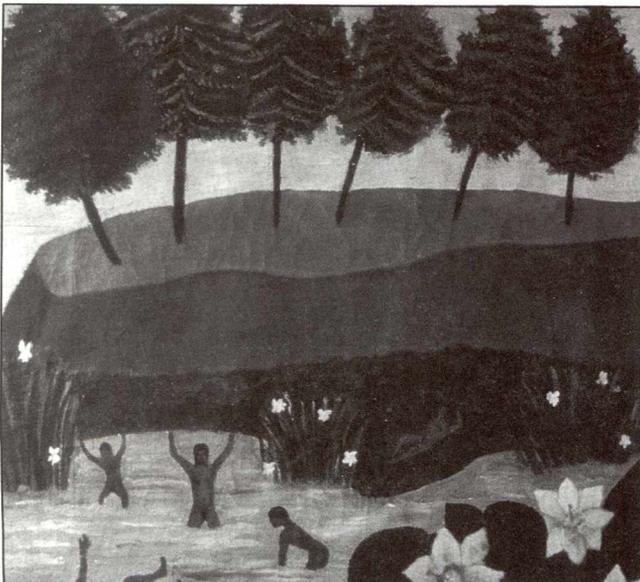


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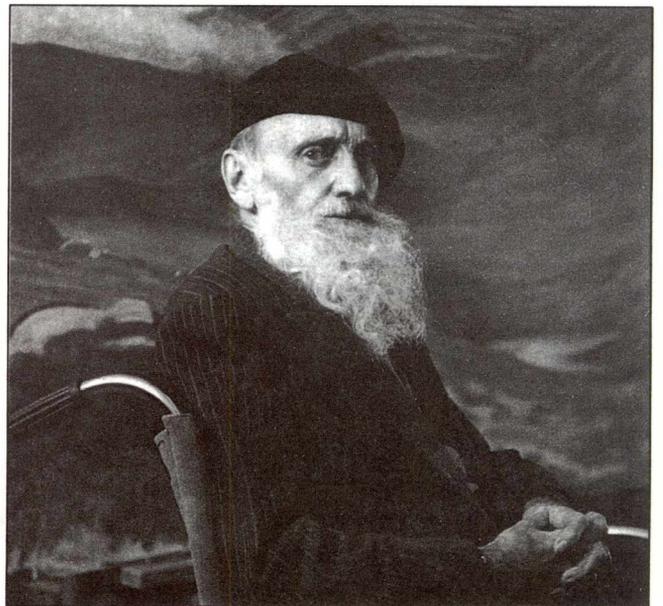


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Cover: *Olga Costa, Fruit vendor, 1951, on exhibit at Mexico City's Museum of Modern Art.*  
Photo by Jorge Pablo de Aguinaco.

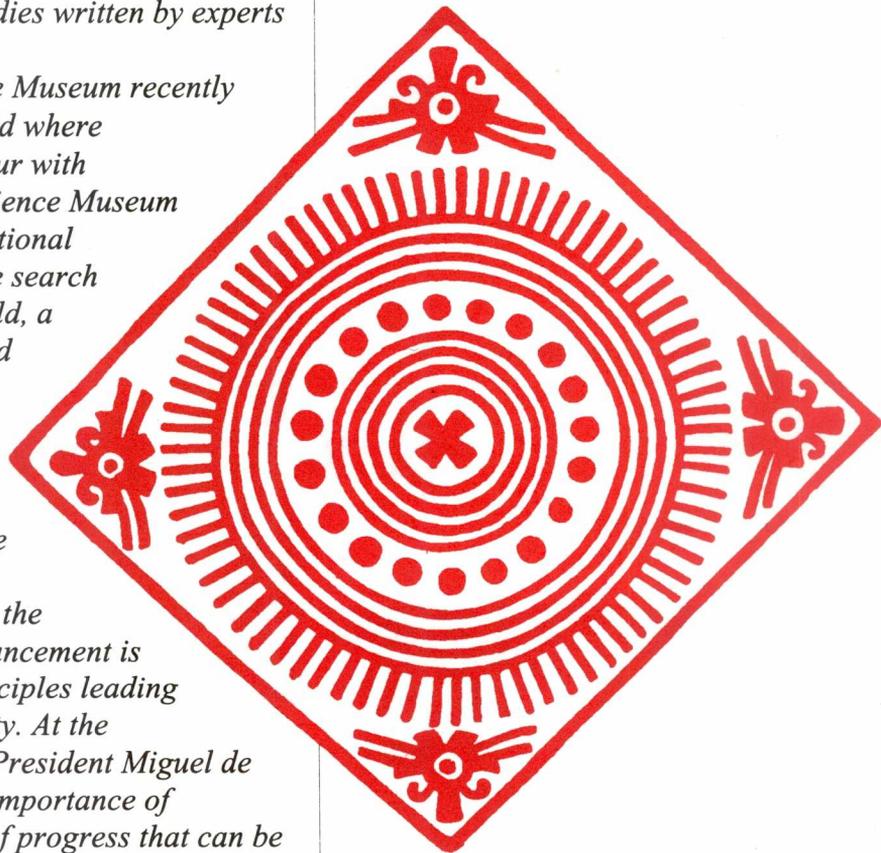
# Our voice

**D**rug addiction is a serious problem worldwide, a malady which corrupts society. With regard to this topic, in this issue we publish the final part of Peter H. Smith's introduction to the book *Drug policy in the Americas*, an important collection of studies written by experts from our continent.

The Universum Science Museum recently opened its doors. In a world where technological changes occur with increasing rapidity, the Science Museum is a contribution by the National University of Mexico to the search for peace and a better world, a world which can put an end to poverty and ignorance.

At its New Delhi meeting, held last May, the Action Group released a statement on the *Advancement of Human Civilization*, stressing that the precondition for such advancement is respect for a series of principles leading to world peace and stability. At the meeting, former Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid referred to the importance of disarmament for the sort of progress that can be shared by all of society.

The United Nations is the world organization charged with the task of encouraging and supporting the factors which can guarantee coexistence. Measures have been proposed for reforming the UN's structure in order to improve its functioning. We publish two articles on this question, one contributed by Mexico's representative to international organizations in



*Geneva and the other by a Mexican specialist on international relations.*

*The Third Ibero-American Summit was held this year in Brazil. We give an account of the effort to achieve a greater cultural and economic interrelation between the Ibero-American countries which, together, make up an enormous region. Particular emphasis is given to the urgent fight against poverty, through a program jointly shared by all.*

*Negotiations for NAFTA are presently in their final stage. Intellectuals from the three countries that make up the northern part of our continent have put forward their opinions on this pact—not all of them favorable. Since the first issue of the new series of this magazine, we have published the viewpoints of academics and politicians of various ideologies. Another opinion is published here.*

*One of the architectural jewels of Mexico's Colonial era is the Colegio de las Vizcainas. In this issue we give our readers a glimpse of its beauty.*

*Carlos Fuentes, one of Mexico's best writers, wrote the excellent book *The buried mirror*, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to America. We have reprinted the introductory words from the English version.*

*Of the foreign travelers who visited Mexico and left written testimony, Thomas Gage's comments on his passage "through the new world" are outstanding. Andrés Henestrosa directs our attention to this significant historical figure.*

*One of the first Europeans to arrive at the marvelous city of Tenochtitlan, capital of the Aztec empire, was Bernal Díaz del Castillo. Since*

*he was an eyewitness to the bloody struggle between Spaniards and Indians, his narrative is one of the most important books on the Conquest of Mexico.*

*Bernal Díaz del Castillo recalls the impression this unique city made upon him, describing it with admiration. He also laments its destruction, which was an irreparable loss for humanity. We publish this chapter from his remarkable book *The true history of the Conquest of Mexico*, taken from the first translation to English, made by Maurice Keatings, Esq. and printed in London in 1800.*

*Given the dynamic interrelationships in the northern region of our continent, we are pleased to take note of developments in contemporary Canadian literature. It is indispensable that we get to know each other better, and one of the best vehicles for doing so is the written word.*

*Of Mexican painters from the beginning of this century, in this issue we refer to Gerardo Murillo, better known as Dr. Atl ("water" in Nahuatl), a witness to the Revolution which began in 1910 and initiator—together with other painters—of an artistic movement with deep national roots.*

*This issue begins the third year of the new series of *Voices of Mexico*, published quarterly by UNAM, with articles of general and abiding interest which reflect an era of profound changes moving towards globalization. Each year we publish a bound volume consisting of the four issues published over the course of the year. Other volumes will follow in the future, gathering part of the imprint of our time ❧*

**Hugo B. Margáin**  
Editorial Director.

# The political economy of drugs: conceptual issues and policy options (Final Part)

*Peter H. Smith \**

From *Drug policy in the Americas*, edited by Peter H. Smith, University of California, San Diego. 366 pp.

## Policies and wars

Antidrug policies produce complex and contradictory results. In this issue-area, more than in many others, political language has come to have a decisive effect on policy options and outcomes. Repeated public declaration of a “war” on drugs has had a remarkable impact on policy debates and discussions. It has led to calls for “total victory” (whatever that might be), prompted appeals for enlistment of the military, and encouraged ostracism of those who disagree with current policy—as though their patriotism were in doubt.

In September 1990, the metaphor prompted the then-chief of the Los Angeles police, Daryl F. Gates, to proclaim that casual users of drugs “ought to be taken out and shot.” The police chief’s reasoning was that the United States has proclaimed a war on drugs; thus, users of drugs are committing the equivalent of treason, and execution is standard wartime treatment for traitors.<sup>1</sup> Rarely has a metaphor had such pronounced effects on public discourse and debate.

<sup>1</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, September 6 and 7, 1990.

\* Director of the Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, University of California, San Diego.

Campaigns of repression have erupted in organized violence between armed groups, including the military and the police. These are genuine “wars,” and they come in multiple forms. To provide a sense of this complexity, Table 1 outlines the anatomy of drug wars being waged in Latin America in the early 1990s. (Note that I am not referring to educational or therapeutic campaigns, although politicians frequently describe such activities as part of the antidrug “wars.” I am referring to organized violence.)

cartels who use terror, violence, and intimidation to assert raw political power. (This has been most clearly apparent in Colombia.)

In the third drug war, Latin American governments engage in struggles with armed guerrilla movements including such forces as Sendero Luminoso in Peru. In the fourth kind of war, Latin American governments wage armed campaigns against narco-traffickers—those who produce and export illicit drugs but do not engage in systematic political terrorism.

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“There are at least seven simultaneous drug wars in Latin America”

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As the table suggests, there are at least seven simultaneous drug wars in Latin America. In the first, the United States takes on drug suppliers in one way or another, most conspicuously through agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). In the second, Latin American governments respond to challenges by narco-terrorists—agents of drug

In the fifth kind of war, drug cartels fight among themselves, usually over market share. This explains some of the violence in Colombia, where the Cali and Medellín cartels have skirmished over control of the New York cocaine market. It is this kind of war that has reached into the cities of the United States, where rival dealers and distributors have been

waging campaigns of attrition against one another.

In the sixth confrontation, drug traffickers engage in conflict with their sometime-allies, armed guerrilla groups. This often occurs once the *traficantes* begin to purchase significant amounts of real estate, especially in rural areas, thus gaining entry into the landowning class and joining the socio-economic establishment —against which the guerrillas took up arms in the first place. Alliances between traffickers and guerrillas tend to be fragile at best —arrangements of convenience rather than principle— and they can fall apart for many reasons.

In the seventh and last kind of war, unique to Colombia at this point, *narcotraficantes* declare war against ideological opponents —in this case the political left. To the extent that the Medellín cartel has had any political purpose, it appears to consist of a primitive, reactionary, semi-fascist project.

This tendency has been exacerbated in the case of one well-known ringleader, Fidel Castaño (nicknamed “Rambo”), whose father died while held hostage by guerrillas and who promptly unleashed a violent campaign of retaliation against all left-wing groups. This may help explain the otherwise inexplicable attacks on leaders of the Unión Patriótica and other radical movements in Colombia in 1989-1990.

These wars often overlap with one another, and they can appear in varying combinations. Mexico presents a battleground for the United States to fight against suppliers (war 1) and for its own government to challenge traffickers (war 4). Peru combines a U.S.-led fight against suppliers (war 1) with a government campaign against guerrillas (war 3).

Colombia has suffered multiple wars: a fight between the government and narco-terrorists (war 2), between two groups of narco-traffickers (war 5), between narco-traffickers and

some guerrilla groups (war 6), and between some narco-traffickers and the political left (war 7). At various times, too, Colombian authorities have waged campaigns against guerrilla movements (war 3).<sup>2</sup>

The diversity in drug wars underlines the range and variability of interests involved in public policy: the “drug problem” in Colombia is markedly different from the “drug problem” in Peru, Bolivia, or Mexico (not to mention the United States).

Bolivia —or in other neighboring countries. Indeed, it appears that the Colombian crackdown has accelerated the dispersion of drug trafficking activities throughout the continent, from Chile and Argentina to Costa Rica and Belize, especially as transit routes and as sites for money laundering.

“Latin America as a whole is sliding into the drug war,” according to Ibán de Rementería of the Andean Commission of Jurists. “Argentina and Brazil can see their future in Bolivia.

“The diversity in drug wars underlines the range and variability of interests involved in public policy”

The goals of governmental policy as well as the choice of instruments therefore are likely to vary, as are the prospects for success.

Also striking is the ubiquity of unintended consequences. It is not always easy to foresee results of public policies. Colombia’s crackdown on the Medellín cartel produced a temporary decline in the price of coca leaf in Peru and Bolivia; most observers thought, and many hoped, this would convince coca producers to start cultivating licit crops.

On the contrary, however, it encouraged Bolivian peasants to integrate their operations, processing their own products (thus increasing value added) and exporting coca base instead of coca leaves. According to economic logic, this response was entirely rational.

This episode demonstrates that a “success” in the Colombian drug war could exacerbate the problem in

Bolivia sees its own (future) in Peru, Peru in Colombia, and Colombia in Lebanon. It’s an endless cycle.”<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, too, the dismantling of the Medellín cartel may have made trafficking more difficult to stop. By 1991 the Cali group handled 70% of the cocaine that came to the United States through Colombia, up from 25-30% in 1989. And the Cali group, it turns out, is much more sophisticated than the rough-and-tumble Medellín gang.

According to the head of the DEA, in fact, “The Cali cartel is the most powerful criminal organization in the world. No drug organization rivals them today or perhaps any time in history.”<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile the Medellín cartel moved much of its operation to Venezuela. In short, the Colombian crackdown led to a transference, a dispersion, and an upgrading of trafficking activities.

Nor have the U.S.-sponsored drug wars achieved the goal of reducing

<sup>2</sup> See Peter H. Smith, “Drug wars in Latin America,” *Iberoamericana*. Sophia University, Tokyo, 12, No. 1 (Summer 1990: 1-16, especially 6-10).

<sup>3</sup> Cited in “A widening drug war,” *Newsweek*/International Edition (July 1, 1991: 9).

<sup>4</sup> “New kings of coke,” *Time* (July 1, 1991: 29).

**Table 1**  
**Anatomy of the drug wars**

War	Combatants
1	United States vs. suppliers
2	Latin American governments vs. narco-terrorists
3	Latin American governments vs. guerrillas
4	Latin American governments vs. narco-traffickers
5	Narco-traffickers vs. narco-traffickers
6	Narco-traffickers vs. guerrillas
7	Narco-traffickers vs. political left

supply and raising prices for illicit drugs in the U.S. market. As plainly suggested by Table 2, campaigns for eradication and interdiction of cocaine merely encourage additional production: more and more *campesinos* become involved in cultivating coca leaves, and the total quantity of cocaine available for export to the U.S. market remains about the same. And because the cost of replacing seized shipments is relatively modest (perhaps 5% of the street value), interdiction has little if any observable impact on price.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, drug wars have almost no chance of success.

Yet the wars have altered society and politics in important and far-reaching ways. First, they have subjected the countries and peoples of Latin America to staggering levels of violence and intimidation. The human

<sup>5</sup> Peter Reuter and associates have shown that interdiction can have only a minor effect on retail price because it is likely to account for no more than 8% of the total price of cocaine. See Reuter, "Quantity illusions and paradoxes of drug interdiction: federal intervention into vice policy," *RAND Note* N-2929-USDP (April 1989: 11), and Peter Reuter, Gordon Crawford, and Jonathan Cave, *Sealing the borders: the effects of increased military participation in drug interdiction* (Santa Monica, California, RAND Corporation, 1988).

toll of antidrug campaigns has been extremely high—not only in Colombia but also in Peru and Mexico. Both the power of the drug trade and the violence induced by government efforts to fight that trade have created a widespread sense of fear among the general public. Ominously, too, antidrug campaigns have produced large-scale violations of human rights.<sup>6</sup>

Second, drugs and drug wars have exposed national institutions to increased temptations of corruption. One of the lessons of antidrug campaigns around the world is that law enforcement agencies risk corruption by drug traffickers and lords; increased contact with *traficantes*, even in an

<sup>6</sup> See Americas Watch, *Human rights in Mexico: a policy of impunity* (New York and Washington D.C., Americas Watch, 1990); Minnesota Lawyers International Human Rights Committee, *Paper protection: human rights violations and the criminal justice system* (Minneapolis, Minnesota Lawyers International Human Rights Committee, 1990); Americas Watch Committee, *The "drug wars" in Colombia: the neglected tragedy of political violence* (New York, Americas Watch, 1990); and Peter H. Smith, "Human rights, democratization, and U.S. policy toward Latin America in the 1990s," paper presented to conference "Setting the North-South agenda: United States-Latin American relations in the 1990s," at the North-South Center (University of Miami, June 1991).

adversarial manner, increases the possibility of compromise and subversion. This can have a particularly deleterious effect on Latin American police forces, local and national, and on the armed forces as well.

Third, prosecution of the drug wars places increasing autonomy and authority in the hands of the Latin American armed forces. To put it bluntly, drug wars encourage militarization. This can pose a substantial threat to still-fragile democracies, especially in Bolivia and Peru, and alter the political course of the region as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the drug wars have created major complications for U.S.-Latin American relations. For reasons of its own, the United States has strongly encouraged Latin American governments to enlist in the antidrug wars. And Latin American leaders respond, also for reasons of their own. Sometimes, as in the case of Bolivia, they are reluctant to precipitate what they regard as all-out wars against the peasantry. Sometimes, as in the case of Colombia, they react to challenges from drug cartels with considerable force—but even then, they are not waging the same war the United States advocates.

The U.S. government has been asking Latin American governments to join ranks in a war against the narco-traffickers and thus to forge an alliance with the United States. But as successive Colombian presidents have expressed, the concern in Colombia is not so much with narco-trafficking as with narco-terror. This entails different purposes, strategies, and policies.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Washington Office on Latin America, *Clear and present dangers: the U.S. military and the war on drugs in the Andes* (Washington, D.C., Washington Office on Latin America, 1991); and "The newest war," *Newsweek* (January 6, 1992: 18-23).

<sup>8</sup> On Peru, see Gustavo Gorriti, "Misadventures in cocaland," *New York Times*, September 8, 1991.

**Table 2**  
**Worldwide cocaine production:**  
**quantities available for export to the United States**  
**1986-1990**  
 (metric tons)

Cocaine production	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Worldwide production	606	635	714	776	824
Eradicated	- 2	- 8	- 26	- 21	- 80
Interdicted	- 13	- 45	- 62	- 98	- 152
Consumed overseas	- 50	- 55	- 60	- 65	- 75
Available for export to United States	541	527	566	592	517

*Source:* Unpublished estimates supplied by U.S. Office of Management and Budget (1990).

This incongruity in antidrug campaigns leads not only to confusion but also to missed opportunities. As a result of the inevitable tension that accompanies misunderstanding, the United States and Latin America have often found it difficult to collaborate on other pressing issues—such as debt, trade, and development. Drugs have been a particularly conspicuous flashpoint in U.S. relations with Mexico,<sup>9</sup> but the issue has affected other countries as well.

### Policy options

What are the policy alternatives? There is no quick-fix solution, no cost-free outcome. In a sense, policymakers can seek only least-bad solutions. For the sake of simplicity, I present three basic possibilities.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See González and Tienda, *The drug connection in U.S.- Mexican relations*.

<sup>10</sup> For the sake of this discussion I am assuming that antidrug policy will not be distorted by other policy considerations, especially foreign policy considerations, which has not always proven to be the case. See Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, *Cocaine politics: drugs, armies, and the CIA in Central America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1991).

One entails intensification and escalation of the current drug wars. This accepts at face value the claim that the present strategy is starting to work. According to this scenario, Colombia should continue its fight, Peru should redouble its efforts, and Bolivia should enter the fray.

The U.S. government might increase its overall antidrug investment from \$10 billion a year to \$20 billion or even \$30 billion, but the focus of the effort would remain as it is. The question is whether the alleged benefits of such a course would outweigh the costs. Some analysts and most policymakers in Washington believe this would be the case.<sup>11</sup>

A second alternative has been called “legalization” of the drug trade. In fact, most such proposals do not envision the straightforward legalization of existing practices; instead, they call for decriminalization of consumption and for governmental regulation of wholesale and retail markets.

<sup>11</sup> A statement on current (1990) policy appears in Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy 2* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990).

Most versions would place an age limit on people who purchase drugs, and some advocate state-run monopolies on retail sales. Some would begin only with marijuana; others would embrace virtually all currently illicit substances.

One major goal of these schemes would be to curtail the levels of violence and criminality that currently surround drug trafficking and sales. Another would be to reduce health hazards stemming from adulteration or impurities in drugs. As *The Economist* once asserted in a widely quoted editorial, “The worst policy is the present one of making the supply of noxious drugs illegal, so that only dreadful illegals engage in their supply.”<sup>12</sup>

In the unlikely event that the United States were to opt for legalization, it should do so only in close consultation with key countries of Latin America. After all this promotion of drug wars, it would be politically and morally untenable to decide on unilateral legalization and thus proclaim that Colombia and other countries had made their sacrifices in vain.

It would also be important for the United States to develop a capacity for treatment and therapy sufficient to respond to increased use of currently illicit drugs. (Proponents of legalization generally concede that consumption

<sup>12</sup> *The Economist* (April 2, 1988: 12). On this subject see the many writings of Ethan A. Nadelmann, especially “The case for legalization,” *The public interest* 92 (Summer 1988: 3-31), and “Drug prohibition in the United States: costs, consequences, and alternatives,” *Science* 245 (September 1, 1989: 939-947), “Thinking the unthinkable,” cover story in *Time* (May 30, 1988: 12-18), a series of op-ed articles in the *Los Angeles Times* (March 12-21, 1990), Richard J. Dennis, “The economics of legalizing drugs,” *Atlantic monthly* (November 1990: 126-132), and Robert J. MacCoun, “Would drug legalization ‘open the floodgates’? Examining the effects of legal sanctions on psychoactive drug consumption,” unpublished paper (RAND Drug Policy Research Center, March 1991).

would rise: the question is how much and for how long.) As things now stand, the United States can provide treatment for only one-third of those who need it.

Responsible proposals for legalization present serious and thoughtful alternatives to the course of current policy. The entire idea is far

alternatives for *campesino* growers and to the reduction of demand now incipient in drug-producing countries.

This type of approach has been advocated by the Inter-American Commission on Drug Policy, a blue-ribbon group of experts and policymakers that after two years

One comes from the apparent decline in the number of illicit drug users within the United States, at least within the middle class—a trend that demonstrates the workability of demand-reduction programs.

Second is the formation of an international consensus against drug trafficking, particularly through the 1988 United Nations (UN) Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances—a document that provides the first coherent set of norms and standards for multilateral collaboration.

Third is the development by the U.S. government of an Andean Strategy, a policy that budgets sizeable and increasing sums for international programs over the next several years.

The challenge is to assure that public resources are employed in constructive, effective ways. With considerable candor, the Inter-American Commission (composed largely of former policymakers)

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## “Antidrug campaigns have produced large-scale violations of human rights”

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out of favor with the U.S. public and political establishment, however. It is also inconsistent with the international regime codified in the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. At least as of the early 1990s, there is virtually no chance of the adoption of legalization within the foreseeable future.

For a third alternative, the United States (and Latin America) could embark on a major rearrangement of priorities. Instead of devoting most resources to supply control and law enforcement, governments could concentrate on the long-term reduction of demand through prevention and treatment programs—education, rehabilitation, and assistance.

Instead of allocating 70% of its antidrug budget to supply control and law enforcement and 30% to demand reduction and prevention, as in recent years, the United States could reverse these percentages—or go even farther—allocating 80-85% to treatment, prevention, and the long-term reduction of demand.

Ultimately, it is decline in demand that will bring about a decline in supply—and in the power of the Latin American drug cartels. Similarly, the United States could devote assistance not so much to the prosecution of the drug wars as to the creation of viable economic

of study released a policy report in June 1991, entitled *Seizing opportunities* (see *Voices of Mexico* No. 18, pp. 6-14). Basing its analysis on many of the essays in this book, the commission formulated three fundamental premises:

1. Demand, not supply, is the most powerful force underlying the market for illicit drugs.

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## “Drugs and drug wars have exposed national institutions to increased temptations of corruption”

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2. Drugs and drug trafficking present a multilateral challenge, and nations of the hemisphere must develop a coordinated, multilateral response.
3. Efforts and resources should be devoted to strategies that are truly effective. As a practical, political matter, legalization (in any form) does not offer a plausible choice.<sup>13</sup>

In the commission's judgment, the early 1990s present policymakers with a special set of opportunities.

begins its recommendations with a direct call for the U.S. government to terminate or reduce programs that are ineffective or counterproductive.

These programs include interdiction of drug supplies at the U.S. border, which costs a good deal of money and has no observable impact on retail prices for drugs; diplomatic pressure in favor of militarization, which endangers human rights and the consolidation of democracy; advocacy of herbicidal spraying as a primary means for eradication of coca production, which poses excessive environmental (and political) hazards; and congressionally mandated “certification” by the U.S.

<sup>13</sup> It should be reported that most (but not all) members of the commission objected to the idea of legalization in principle.

government of antidrug efforts by other countries, which is demeaning and counterproductive.

Instead, the commission advocates a cooperative and integrated effort throughout the Americas to reduce consumer demand for illicit drugs. Positive steps toward this goal should include the provision of drug treatment in all penal systems (which have large drug-afflicted populations in both the United States and Latin America); publicly funded programs for drug-impaired youth, especially those who have dropped out of school; and the training of specialists (perhaps through the Pan-American Health Organization or the Organization of American States) to provide technical assistance to Latin American countries.

Especially important, in the view of the commission, is an emphasis on prevention: the promotion of education, counselling, and awareness in all elementary and secondary schools, in community organizations, in the media, and in the workplace.

## Mexico confiscates more cocaine than the U.S. and Canada

The National Anti-Drug Institute, affiliated to Mexico's Attorney General's Office, reported that in the last four and a half years Mexico has confiscated 200 tons of cocaine, and that in the first six months of this year it seized more cocaine than the U.S. and Canada combined, despite the fact that Mexico is neither the place of origin nor the main destination of this drug.

Raquel Villanueva  
Staff Writer.

This entails the withdrawal of incentives for illicit cultivation; practically speaking, this means lowering the market price for such crops. (This can best be achieved by interruption of demand at both the wholesale and retail levels and by the encouragement of market gluts; in actual practice, crop eradication programs have the counterintuitive consequence of supporting prices for coca leaves.)

This strategy also calls for the expansion and intensification of rural

coordination. Here the Organization of American States could play an especially constructive role —by guiding the efforts of governments with legal analysis and model legislation and by supporting regional commissions of jurists to consider such crucial issues as the status and security of judges.

These recommendations do not call for increased expenditures of public funds by governments throughout the Western Hemisphere. Instead, they call for a major reallocation of public expenditures, away from interdiction and supply control and toward demand reduction.

"In the unending campaign against drugs," the commission concludes, "governments must be flexible enough to draw appropriate lessons from their own experience. They should support the programs that work, not those that do not. It is in this fashion, and only in this fashion, that countries of the region can gain genuine benefit from the increased levels of funding foreseen in the U.S. Andean Strategy. And it is only through effective regional collaboration that the nations of the Americas will be able to meet the multiple challenges posed by drug abuse and trafficking"<sup>15</sup> M

## “Drug wars encourage militarization”

Funding for such efforts could come from two sources. One would be through savings from high-cost but ineffective programs, such as border interdiction; amounts spent on such programs run into billions of dollars per year.<sup>14</sup> Second, the commission proposes the innovative creation of a multilateral fund based on the pooling of economic assets seized from drug traffickers in the United States and in other countries of the hemisphere.

To dissuade *campesinos* from engaging in illicit production of drugs, especially coca leaves, the commission calls for a realistic economic approach.

development programs based on hard-headed evaluation of commercial prospects for specific agricultural products. Only through such efforts will it be possible to offer meaningful economic alternatives to hard-pressed *campesinos* in Latin America.

Law enforcement would have a key role in the commission's strategy. Instead of concentrating efforts on producers and consumers, however, the Inter-American Commission calls for intensified campaigns against the middlemen: the cartels, the trafficking networks, the wholesale distributors, white-collar criminals engaged in money laundering.

By definition, such efforts would require enhanced international cooperation, intelligence-sharing, and

<sup>14</sup> The commission calls for a reduction in the allocation of funds for border interdiction, not for their complete elimination.

<sup>15</sup> *Seizing opportunities: report of the Inter-American Commission on Drug Policy* (La Jolla, California, Institute of the Americas and Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1991: 41).

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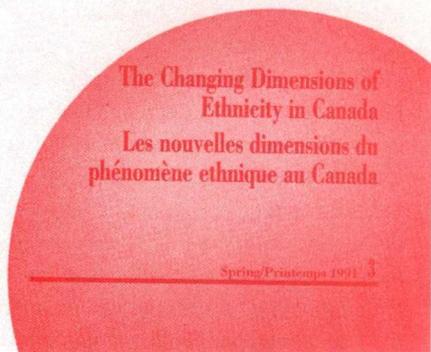
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JULIO-AGOSTO, 1993

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 Carta de Alejandro Finisterre.

# Universum, the Science Museum



*Jorge Flores Valdes \**

**T**he Universum Science Museum at the National University of Mexico (*UNAM*) opened its doors to the public on December 12, 1992. The museum is located in the “cultural zone” of University City, in the southern part of Mexico’s capital.

On that day, visitors toured eight exhibition halls: Mathematics, the Structure of Matter, Energy, Biodiversity, Agriculture and Food, Ecology, Human Biology and Health, and the Universe. Two more halls—one devoted to Chemistry and another, called Consciousness of the Great City, to Mexico City itself—opened in mid-1993. We hope to finish work on two additional halls before the end of the year: one on Animal Behavior and Society, and one entitled Infrastructure of a Nation.

These twelve halls, in an enormous (77,000-square-foot) building, are home to approximately 450 “science toys” which children can play with and learn from.

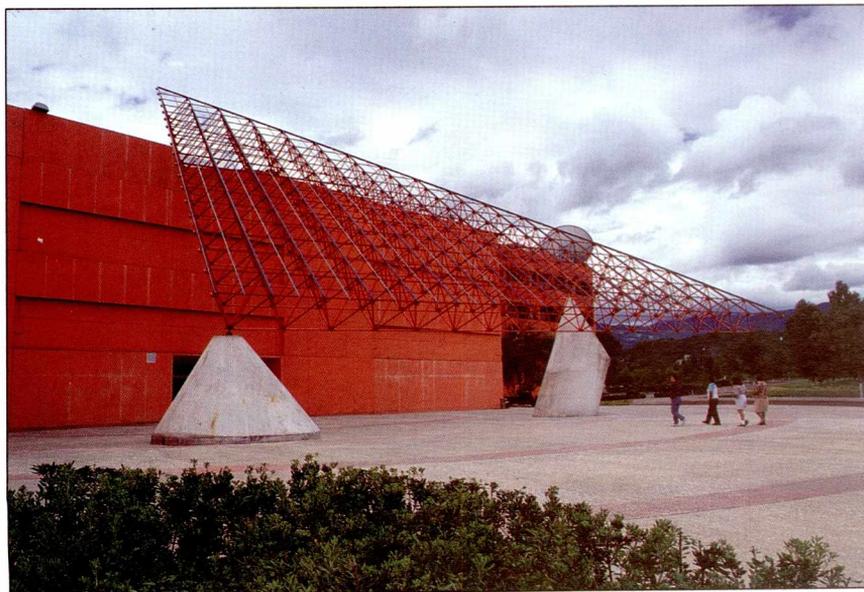
Nevertheless, the original plans for Universum were even more ambitious. The halls on Our Planet and the Avenues of Evolution (Cosmic, Biological and Sociocultural) have remained on the

drawing-board; blueprints were made, but it has not been possible to build these halls yet.

Three elements were required in order to carry out this huge project: ideas, people, and financial resources. First, a group of people was formed which gave birth to the ideas; the appropriate and sufficient flow of material resources was due to the support of *UNAM*’s Rector José Sarukhán and his two administrative secretaries—Tomás Garza (1989-1991) and Mario Melgar (1991-1992)—during the rector’s first term in office.

The biggest obstacles to carrying through a large-scale project are not, as many people believe, those of a financial or economic nature. Instead, they have to do with bringing together individual will-powers in order to bring the project to fruition, especially when the project seeks to disseminate scientific understanding and calls for an inter-disciplinary effort.

People who combine a knowledge of science with the ability to explain it are few and far between. Different gifts are required when it comes to knowing what to say and



*Entrance to the museum.*

\* Director of the Museum and researcher at the Institute of Physics, *UNAM*.

Sergio Dorantes.



*Kaleidoscope.*

knowing how to say it. Thus we put together mixed work groups of scientists and science communicators, who designed and built the various exhibits that today make up the backbone of Universum.

The first ideas, often in very rough form, came from the scientists responsible for the exhibition halls. Then we carried out an exercise in the popularization of science, in which the chief of each hall tried to convince a

group of science communication experts of his ideas.

Up to twenty-five different professions or trades were represented in these meetings. For example, we had a biologist give a talk to engineers, computer specialists, interior designers, writers, film-makers, draughtsmen, pedagogues, scientists from other fields, museum specialists, architects, painters and sculptors.

Sergio Dorantes.



*Central area with mosaic and sculpture.*



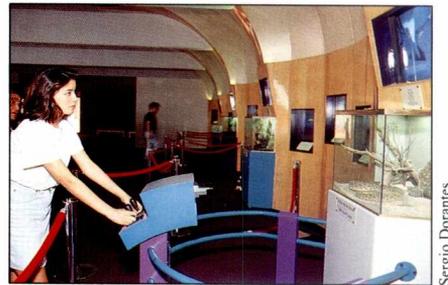
*Gyroscopic chair.*

Sergio Dorantes.



*Insects and lens for close-up examination.*

Sergio Dorantes.



*Animals in their habitat, with video monitor.*

Sergio Dorantes.



*Another of the experiments which can be carried out in the gyroscopic chair.*

Sergio Dorantes.



*Pendulum.*

Sergio Dorantes.

Sergio Dorantes.



*Biodiversity bingo, one of the games museum visitors can enjoy.*

Sergio Dorantes.



*This machine shows how electricity is generated.*

Sergio Dorantes.



*Gyroscope.*

Sergio Dorantes.

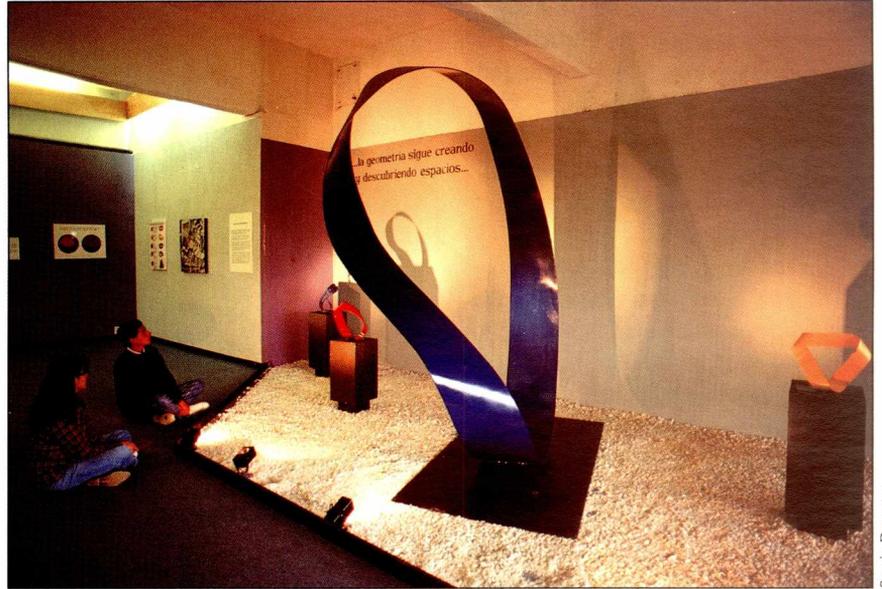


*Magnetic polarization.*

Sergio Dorantes.



*Pendulum of chaotic movement.*



Sergio Dorantes.

*Moebius strips.*

After one or more such meetings, through a rich process of exchanging ideas, the educational exhibits which make up Universum began to take shape. Each group of specialists set about doing their “homework” with the assignment to show up at the next meeting, within a set period, with the detailed design for the various installations.

When you are building a museum of the sciences, with so many

complicated installations, strict deadlines must be set for design, construction and try-outs. This was done in the case of Universum, giving rise to the sectoral or partial exhibits which were like pieces of the huge jigsaw puzzle that today is our museum.

These partial exhibits —39 of which were opened to the public before December 12, 1992— allowed us to speed up the work of construction. For example, it was



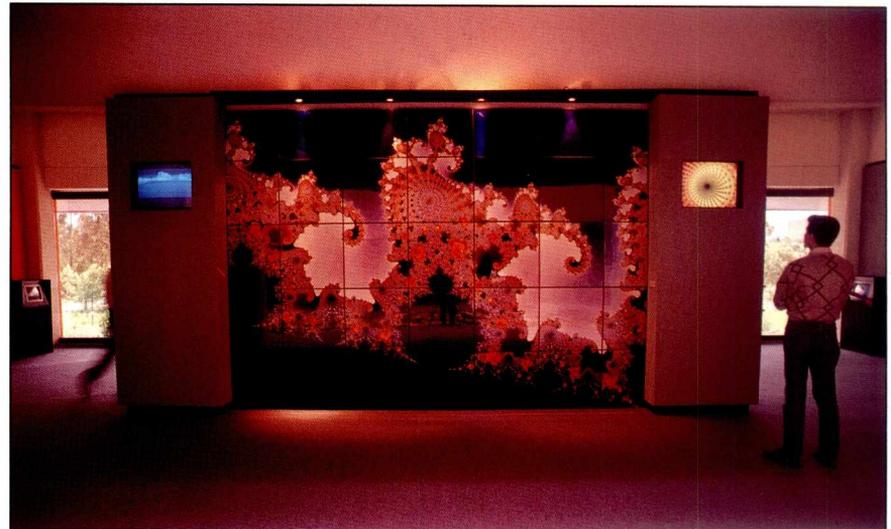
Sergio Dorantes.

*Pythagoras' theorem.*

decided that “Nevertheless, It Moves,” one of the sections of the Structure of Materials hall, would be inaugurated in the Federal Electricity Commission’s Technological Museum on February 20, 1990; that the 1992 International Book Fair, held in the Palacio de Minería (the “Mining Palace” in downtown Mexico City), would be the temporary home for the Encyclopedia of Human Reproduction; and that on July 11, 1991 we would inaugurate an exhibit on eclipses in the Tunnel of Science, located in the La Raza metro station.

This enabled us not only to insure that prototypes (at least) of these installations would be ready, but also to measure their physical durability—in interactive science centers, the public participates not only by looking but also by touching, pushing buttons and levers at will—as well as how viable they were, their quality as teaching tools, and their visual attractiveness. In short, we were able to see the public’s reaction to our installations and educational exhibits.

After the partial exhibits were dismantled, the evaluation team presented the results of their studies. These studies (which we continue to carry out today) consist of surveys,



Fractal mural.

“cold” observation, evaluation by experts in the given field, and analysis of audience behavior.

Thus, the inter-disciplinary group which built each exhibit found itself taking a test, and anxiously waiting to find out what grade it would get. Sometimes the grade was good, while other times the group flunked. A flunking grade meant starting the project over, redesigning many of the installations, even changing the exhibit’s basic idea.

But when the installations passed the test, they would become part of

Universum. This is how the museum was built, and continues to be built, since a project such as this never comes to an end.

We were surprised by the response to our hall of Mathematics. Aware of the difficulties involved in popularizing this science, we put particular effort into the design of this hall, emphasizing objects of art which are at the same time mathematical objects. Together with computer games, this has made the hall one of those in which visitors spend the most time.

In an interactive museum *not touching* is against the rules. It is well known among those who run this kind of museum that three or four broken machines (especially if they are located near one another) inevitably lead to the fatal sentence: “Nothing works in this museum.” So the main problem is to keep the machinery working without restricting enthusiastic visitors.

In addition to its exhibition halls, Universum organizes a wide variety of activities: lectures, plays, movie clubs, workshops for children and young people, educational concerts, etc. In addition to popularizing and publicizing science and its own research activities, *UNAM* thereby establishes one more link to Mexican society as a whole **M**



Main hall, with various exhibits.

# The Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Initiative for the Advancement of Human Civilization

**1.** We offer our tribute to the memory of Rajiv Gandhi, India's young and charismatic leader, whose tragic death in May 1991 prematurely removed from the world scene a statesman of great vision and energy, deeply committed to the ideals of human brotherhood, peace and international cooperation for the progress and well-being of all humanity. Rajiv Gandhi regarded humankind as one indivisible family and worked ceaselessly towards the universal acceptance of this high ideal. Durable peace, he believed, can come only from the advance of human civilization to a new, more just and equitable world order. In his short political career, lasting no more than a decade, as a worker in and then leader of the Indian National Congress, as India's Prime Minister and, finally, as a responsible leader of the opposition, Rajiv Gandhi left an indelible impression on the world stage as a statesman devoted to the goal of lifting humanity to a higher state of civilization in which the quest for dominance is abandoned so as to render the world free of violence, oppression and war.

**2.** The long and tortuous history of humanity is replete with conflict and war, along with great achievements of the human spirit in the fields of culture,

science and technology. In the global village that has now emerged, the threat of nuclear annihilation needs to be permanently eliminated, so that the creative energies of humanity can be directed towards building a harmonious and just global society on planet Earth.

**3.** We meet against the backdrop of a new international paradigm. The end of the Cold War has paradoxically brought with it new crises and conflicts across the globe. The problems of proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons have assumed new dimensions. Divisions rooted in ethnicity, religion and economic disparities threaten to rend societies asunder. Welcome demands for greater democracy and human rights worldwide create their own challenges. The economic hiatus between North and South continues to widen. Ecological disaster hangs like a sword of Damocles over planet Earth. These are the threats to human civilization that brought us together from all corners of the world to contemplate.

**4.** Peace must begin in the human mind. For the human family to have the assurance of survival, with honor and dignity for all, a new ethic of international relations is needed. Non-violence must become the governing principle for relations between citizens and nations. A secure future for humankind must be predicated on

acknowledgement of the concept of a common humanity in all its diversity, and the application of universal and non-discriminatory norms in human interaction and in dealing with human problems, wherever they might occur.

**5.** The starting point of such a transformation must lie in agreement, by 1995, on a balanced program of nuclear arms reduction so that they are eliminated as early as possible and, in any case, not later than the year 2010. Simultaneous with the process of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, the threshold powers and other non-nuclear weapon powers should undertake to not themselves cross the threshold. Such a process would not only help achieve the twin objectives of the elimination and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in a fair, reasonable and balanced manner. It would also facilitate the world's return to the true spirit of the United Nations Charter. Indeed, the arrangements for comprehensive global security envisaged in the Charter would be indispensable to ensuring that once a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world order is established, there is no slipping back into national nuclear-weapon arsenals.

**6.** In today's world of unprecedented technological advances in weaponry of mass destruction, the quest for dominance carries the threat of

strategic miscalculation, human error or even a technical lapse ending all life on our planet Earth, destroying all that human civilization has so far achieved. Clearly, nuclear weapons pose the greatest threat to human civilization and to humankind's survival. Their elimination is, therefore, the first prerequisite for the advancement of human civilization. It is this approach that inspires the Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapons-Free and Non-Violent World Order submitted by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to the United Nations' Third Special Session on Disarmament in New York on June 9, 1988.

**7.** We commend the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, updated to take into account momentous developments since it was presented, to the consideration of the international community as the best possible path to sustained peace and sustainable development. We urge the immediate commencement of negotiations on universal treaties and conventions for:

- A total ban on all nuclear tests.
- Banning the threat or use of nuclear weapons, with corresponding confidence-building measures, including the deactivation of all missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, and a complete inventory and control of nuclear-weapon-grade materials, nuclear warheads and bombs, and their delivery vehicles.
- The cessation of any further production of nuclear weapons and weapon-grade fissionable materials, including the closure or conversion of nuclear weapon production facilities and test sites.
- The cessation of the transfer to other states of nuclear weapons, delivery systems, and weapon-grade fissionable materials.
- Placing under the control of an international authority all existing stocks of weapons-usable nuclear material.
- A moratorium on the testing and deployment of all space weapons

systems, leading to an international agreement to ban the testing, development, deployment and storage of all space weapons.

- Restriction of the development of ballistic missiles and re-entry vehicles to those intended for peaceful purposes.
  - Control and management of new military technologies by bringing all new technology projects and technology missions with military potential under the purview of the United Nations system, leading to an agreement to ban technological missions aimed at the development of new weapons systems.
  - Establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system, with effective sanctions, for monitoring the implementation of conventions and treaties under the aegis of the United Nations.
  - An immediate declaration reaffirming the illegitimacy of any threat or use of nuclear weapons.
  - The immediate commencement of a negotiating process aimed at the elimination of all nuclear weapons by international treaty as early as possible and, in any case, not later than the year 2010, based on a comprehensive verification system that precludes the production of any nuclear weapons.
  - In exchange, an undertaking by non-nuclear weapon powers not to acquire or take steps towards acquiring nuclear weapons.
  - Reduction of all conventional forces to minimum defensive levels as early as possible and, in any case, not later than the year 2010.
  - Establishment of a comprehensive global security system, backed by a permanent military force under strict UN control, to sustain a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
- 8.** While nuclear disarmament is the core of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, the end of the Cold War and the emerging transformation and

transition have made urgent attention to conventional disarmament an imperative. This calls for universal agreement particularly among armament-trading nations on the control and limitation of the flow of armaments to warring nations, support of internal armed conflict, terrorist groups, and international criminal groups involved in narco-trafficking. In addition to these global initiatives we favor renewed attempts to negotiate reduced tensions, and thereby decelerate the arms race, in various volatile regions of the world.

**9.** We congratulate presidents Clinton and Yeltsin for their agreement, reached at their Vancouver summit, to enter negotiations for a multilateral nuclear test ban and appeal to them, in the name of humanity, to maintain their moratorium on nuclear testing as an important aid in achieving a comprehensive ban to shut off all nuclear testing by all countries in all environments for all time. Reducing testing even to low threshold levels will not suffice in preventing the development of smaller, even more sophisticated nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons development must be terminated completely forever. Bearing in mind the forthcoming review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), we state emphatically that any prohibition on testing must be a comprehensive nuclear test ban, as this is essential for the non-proliferation and elimination of nuclear weapons. A comprehensive test ban would reduce the discriminatory nature of the NPT and such discrimination will only be fully overcome when the existing nuclear-weapon states renounce reliance on nuclear weaponry and move expeditiously to accomplish its elimination.

**10.** Rajiv Gandhi had repeatedly drawn the world's attention to three other major impediments to humanity's well-being and progress—dehumanizing poverty in large parts

of the world, environmental degradation, and the relative absence of democratic values within nations and in relations between nations. These problems are among the root causes of much instability and global insecurity. The world community as a whole must address them in a cooperative family spirit.

**11.** The United Nations Organization provides an excellent forum for the preparation and implementation of a carefully planned program of collective international action to eradicate poverty in the large number of developing countries. A duly accelerated process of nuclear and general disarmament should release adequate funds for such collective action. A substantive attack on poverty and creating conditions for reducing growing global disparities should be urgently undertaken and implemented. Absolute poverty should be eliminated by 2000. A new era of international economic cooperation should be promoted, having regard to the growing globalization of the world economy and its impact in the fields of trade, finance and technology, and the need for increased flows of financial resources, so as to effectively support sustainable development as envisaged by the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. We are particularly concerned that efforts be made to protect the weakest and most vulnerable states from the impact of global market forces, especially in relation to such matters as external debt, restraints on trade, and the accountability of transnational corporations and banks.

**12.** With regard to safeguarding the earth's integrated environment, we urge all national governments to lend their support to Rajiv Gandhi's proposal, made at the 1989 Summit of the Nonaligned Countries, for the establishment of a Planet Protection Fund to be used for the transfer, free of charge, of conservation-compatible technologies to all Fund members. International cooperation is

indispensable for sustainable and equitable development.

**13.** We urge the promotion of humanitarian values and democratic practices all over the world, and the elaboration and strengthening of a universal normative framework, so that human beings everywhere might live and work in full enjoyment of their fundamental freedoms and human rights. That will broaden the dialogue between peoples of different races and regions of the world and bring them closer together in cooperation for humankind's advance. The promotion of and respect for human rights is essential for the promotion of international peace and security. Human rights should be a central concern of the United Nations. We strongly condemn ethnic cleansing, systematic rape, and other genocidal acts, as well as racially- and religion-inspired oppression of minorities, and all other forms of collective punishment, as incompatible with the non-violent world order we aspire to establish.

**14.** For the rule of law, justice and the spirit of friendship to prevail in international relations, the democratization of the international system, based on due respect for the sovereignty of states, is necessary. As a first step in this direction, we urge a substantial enlargement of the Security Council to reflect the fundamental changes that have taken place since the Organization's inception. A suitably enlarged Security Council should play its proper role in hastening the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and in monitoring progress of the process.

**15.** There is also a clear need for an enlargement of the UN General Assembly's role in global security matters—especially in conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution, including the socio-economic causes of conflicts within nations. A strengthened collective security

system requires major advances in international law, including acceptance by all states of the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, and the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

**16.** We wish to thank the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation for convening this Conference to launch the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Initiative for the Advancement of Human Civilization. The spirit underlying the Foundation's Initiative and its objective of helping humanity advance to a higher state of civilization, marked by the absence of violence and war, are in line with India's great and ancient cultural tradition.

**17.** We request the Foundation to constitute a group under its aegis to further develop the proposals outlined in this declaration. The group will also help the Foundation in promoting and propagating this Initiative globally through appropriate networking arrangements with like-minded Non-Governmental Organizations. We assure the Foundation of our active cooperation in these tasks.

*Birendra K. Bhattacharyya* (India)  
*K.P. Bhattacharai* (Nepal)  
*Guennadi E. Burbulis* (Russia)  
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*R. Venkataraman* (India)  
*I.H. Zaki* (Maldives) ✕

# Considerations on peace and equitable development

*Miguel de la Madrid \**

**T**he proposal presented by Rajiv Gandhi to the United Nations in 1988 responded, at that point in time, to the spirit of the action taken by the Group of Six to which Mexico belongs, together with India, Argentina, Greece, Sweden and Tanzania. We must recall that this group was set up in line with an idea presented by the distinguished stateswoman Indira Gandhi to the Association of Parliamentarians for Peace.

The first meeting was held in New Delhi in 1985, and we later met in Stockholm and in Ixtapa, Mexico. Our proposal was, without a doubt, important in its time, and contributed effectively to the advances that have been made during the last years in regard to nuclear disarmament.

I fully coincide that, although considerable advances have been achieved due to the arrangements made by the Soviet Union and its newly formed countries and the United States of America, there is still a long way to go.

We must maintain as our final goal the abolition of arms capable of massive destruction, and the worldwide prohibition of the testing,

development, production and transfer of nuclear weapons; we must also ratify the agreements that have been reached in this sense in regard to biological and chemical weapons.

Compliance with the agreements so far achieved, through mechanisms for monitoring and supervision, and financial and technical support for the destruction of these weapons, wherever they may be, are of fundamental importance. This is particularly indispensable in the case of Russia and the successors of the Soviet Union where nuclear arms exist.

Likewise, it is indispensable to achieve, as soon as possible, the

sale. The arms race, which is supported and financed by several countries, constitutes a high risk for regional and world peace; worse still is the sale of arms to terrorist groups or delinquents in general, particularly drug traffickers. The necessary agreements and mechanisms must be promoted at the level of the United Nations Organization.

We must continue to strengthen the mechanisms for the prevention of conflicts and the solution of controversies which clearly constitute a danger to regional peace and risk being extended internationally. The United Nations has assumed an

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*“We must maintain as our final goal the abolition of arms capable of massive destruction”*

---

definite prohibition of nuclear tests and their subsequent development and production. It is also imperative to arrive at a moratorium and, later, final prohibition, of testing and development of armament systems in space.

At the same time, the world must continue to advance towards the control and reduction of conventional weapons and the regulation of their

important role in this regard, but it does not have the necessary institutional and financial resources to carry out its mission successfully.

It is recommendable that the effort towards the prevention and solution of conflicts be concentrated in the United Nations Organization, and that the international regional agencies assist the worldwide Organization in these

\* Former President of Mexico.

tasks, instead of becoming isolated forums having different criteria.

Conditions for world peace and security will not be solid and permanent if international cooperation is not substantially increased for a sustainable and equitable development. Extreme poverty and the growing inequality between the rich countries and developing countries, or

development of humanity will continue to be at great risk.

As regards the economy, it is indispensable to conclude trade negotiations within GATT, because if these long negotiations are frustrated we will run the risk of incurring trade wars and new protectionisms which will imply stagnation and regression in the international economy.

It is important to continue to promote democratic values and respect for human rights, but we must be careful that this task not be transformed into new forms of intervention on the part of powerful countries to the detriment of weaker countries, nor into seeking to establish universal models of institutions of democratic processes, which can only develop and take root in accordance with the conditions of each country.

The development of a new world civilization based on peace, security, development, democracy, human rights and justice requires restructuring international organizations. The premise upon which this restructuring should be based is the political willpower of the member states, but during this process they must seek an adequate balance in the composition of the agencies of the international organizations.

As regards the concrete case of the United Nations Organization, a new, democratic and efficient balance must be sought between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Court of Justice. At the same time, as the strengthening

---

*“The sale of arms to terrorist groups or delinquents in general, particularly drug traffickers, constitutes a high risk for regional and world peace”*

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decidedly poor countries, increases day by day. This trend is not to be tolerated, for both ethical as well as practical reasons.

The great migrations which are growing rapidly from South to North, or from East to West, or West to East, as the case may be, have this increasing imbalance as their structural cause. The achievement of a sustainable and equitable development is a challenge of prime importance at the end of this century and it will be prolonged throughout the 21st century.

The Rio de Janeiro Conference, held in June 1992, was a step forward towards the formation of an international consensus and the adoption of certain initial commitments. However, there is a need for a greater political willingness on the part of countries to attack global problems and to strengthen international cooperation in economic, financial and technological matters.

If no concrete advances for the compliance with and extension of the commitments and programs contained in Agenda 21 are made, there will be great international disappointment and a sustainable and equitable

Another serious problem to be faced is the great scarcity of financial resources needed for sustainable and equitable development. One part of the necessary effort to be made by all countries is to increase their domestic savings, but they must also increase and improve the transfer of resources from industrialized countries to developing countries.

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*“Powerful countries should not seek to establish universal models of institutions of democratic processes”*

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The increase of investment flows from industrialized countries to developing countries must also be substantially augmented, together with technologies suited to the needs of each country in accordance with its stage of development. Countries in the process of development should channel greater resources towards their own educational, scientific and technological development.

of the mechanisms for the prevention and peaceful solution of conflicts occurs, there must be a substantial energizing of the institutions and programs in charge of international cooperation for development.

These last few years of the 20th century must be used to prepare an international order more suited to the great and serious challenges that humanity is facing ❧

# The United Nations and human rights

*Miguel Marín Bosch \**

**T**he following are some thoughts regarding the way human rights are approached within the United Nations. To begin with, let me state the obvious: there are some concepts that are readily understood and probably accepted by most UN members.

If we were to speak of “instincts,” we could probably draw up a list of what we understand “instinctive behaviour or reflex action” to be. While this is common to all animals, in many mammals instinctive behaviour is overlaid by learned patterns. And here we would begin to discover differences regarding those “learned patterns.” Most of us have some idea as to what we mean by the survival instinct, which is common to most animals. And this leads us to the question of security. In other words, the instinct to survive triggers the search for security.

Almost all animals appear to be concerned about their security, i.e., their survival. But only some, like beavers or human beings, can do something about it. The sources of insecurity are their habitat — the terrain, the elements, the availability of food and water, etc.— and other animals. Beavers can build dams in streams or rivers to ensure a safe

environment, but they cannot save their skins from hunters.

For human beings, nature also poses security threats, as natural disasters constantly and painfully remind us. But the greatest insecurity comes from fellow human beings. Like persons, countries are subjected to constant threats: military, economic and political. The key to security is respect for the rights of others. In the words of former Mexican president Benito Juárez, “Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace.” And peace is the ultimate expression of security: to be secure is to live (and develop) in peace.

Whether international, regional or subregional, security is indissolubly linked to peace. In this sense, the United Nations Charter is somewhat redundant when it speaks of “international peace and security.” Moreover, today its Chapter VII is being interpreted in a much broader sense than its drafters probably intended in 1945.

Whose security is it, anyway? Are we talking about the nation-state, the government of a nation-state or the individuals who happen to inhabit the territory of a given state —or all three? In a country where there have been no elections for years, the holding of elections can pose a threat to the permanence, i.e. security, of its government. In countries that have

periodic elections, these are a source of security, i.e. stability. Again, “peace and stability,” another redundant phrase.

Today we are told that haphazard economic growth is a source of insecurity; but it was not so when the Industrial Revolution began. How many governments fell because of that haphazard economic growth? Individuals —yes, they were affected. The health of coal miners is an obvious case. Now we are told that “sustainable growth,” i.e. environment-friendly economic growth, is the right way to do things. The right way for whom? For the inhabitants of a certain region or for the inhabitants of another, quite different region?

Regional security in Europe, as certified in Paris in November of 1990, is often given as a model for the rest of the world. Cynics would say that the way to achieve security is this: grow industrially for almost two hundred years, pollute your rivers, destroy your environment, export your people massively to other regions, carve yourself overseas empires and exploit your colonies, wage many wars, including a couple of world wars with millions of victims, and then get vast sums of money to rebuild. Rule the waves and the airwaves, sell your manufactured products dear and buy commodities cheap, and, yes, stockpile the greatest concentration of weapons —nuclear, conventional and other— the world has ever seen.

Security, as stated in the 1985 United Nations study *Concepts of security*, “is a condition in which states consider that there is no danger of military attack, political pressure or economic coercion, so that they are able to pursue freely their own development and progress” (A/40/533). Countries the world over have been subjected to political pressure, economic coercion and military attack. Those are obvious security concerns.

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A less obvious concern is derived from the changing perception of the role of the nation-state.

Some countries are today placing greater emphasis on the preservation and enhancement of individual rights. A few have gone so far as to call for "humanitarian intervention" in order to protect human beings from their own national authorities. These are all ideas that seek to modify a five- or six-hundred-year-old order based on the nation-state. In theory, these ideas are derived from noble sentiments. But the United Nations is based on the nation-state and the maintenance of international security (i.e. the sum total of national securities) is what it is all about. And yet, at the same time, many of the UN's shortcomings can be traced to the nation-state.

The Charter embodies a fundamental tension between the human being and the nation-state: on the one hand, it urges the peoples of the world to defend and promote a series of universal principles; on the other, it recognizes and even broadens many of the rights which nation-states have arrogated to themselves.

For almost two hundred years the inhabitants of the world have based their professional careers and even their lives on the shared notion that, in one way or another, nations are distinct, and therefore differ from one another. Perhaps this trend would have overwhelmed us by now had it not been for the recurrence of military conflicts, especially the two tragic and sobering world wars during this century.

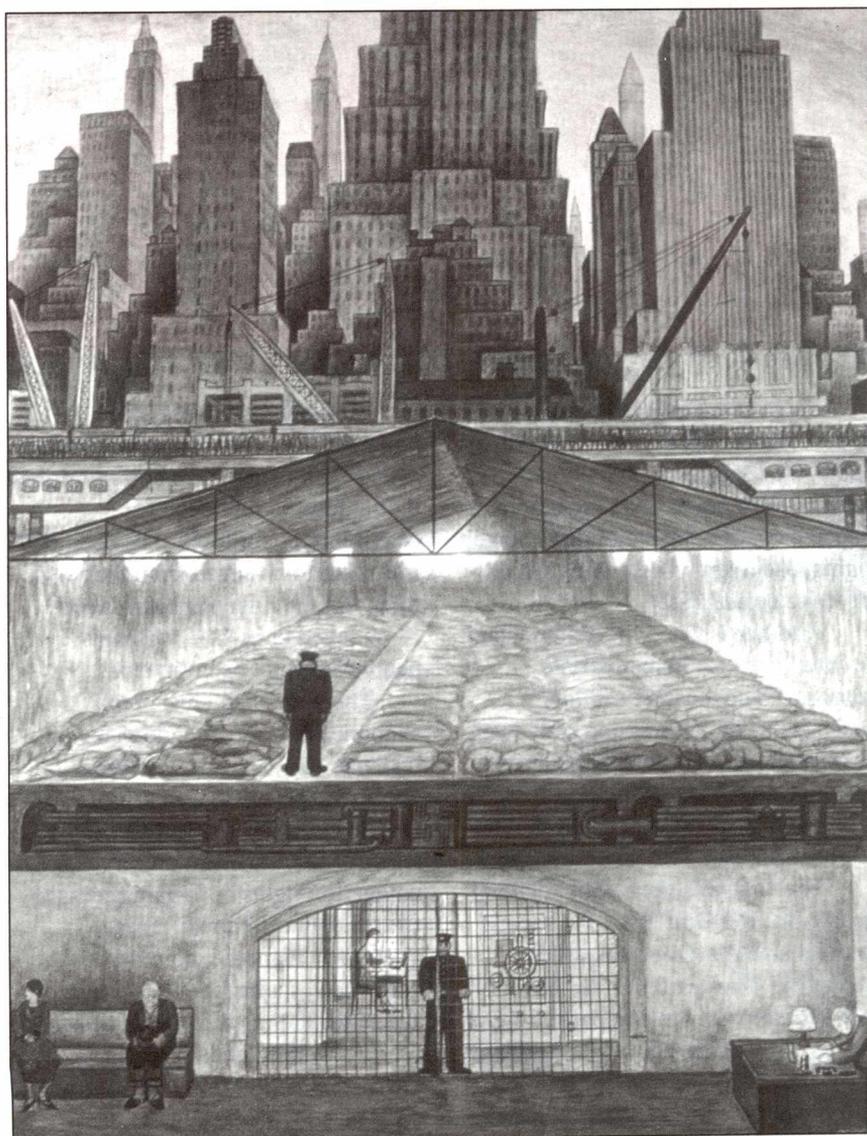
Caused by certain manifestations of exaggerated and threatening nationalisms, they gave rise, paradoxically, to a vigorous crusade for universal human values and international solidarity. The UN was itself the product of this renewed internationalism, inspired by our shared human goals which, for a moment, seemed to bury perceived national differences.

The UN founders, however, were unable to take the international organization that one final leg of the way: a world authority. That is the step we still have to take. The United Nations, it is ironic to note, was to fall victim to the very threats it was supposed to deter: the pursuit of parochial interests by the nation-state.

The history of the UN is, in a sense, the history of the conflict between nationalism and internationalism. Its saddest chapters have been the work of nationalists; its best pages have been written when its

members have recognized their common dreams and aspirations. And the Charter is an example of that inherent contradiction: humanity's high aims are proclaimed in its preamble, while in one provision after another the rights and prerogatives of states are preserved intact.

Critics of the UN invoke those provisions; its defenders allude more often to the preamble. Debates within the UN have frequently reflected that dichotomy, which on occasion has resulted in tension and friction between the participants.



*Human rights violations are a legitimate subject for debate in international forums. Diego Rivera, Frozen assets, 1931.*

## The UN in the post-Cold War world

From the Korean War up until 1989, the United Nations Organization hung in the dangerous balance of the Cold War. The boundaries of its actions were defined by the conflict between the two military, economic and ideological blocs headed by Washington and Moscow.

With the disintegration of the Soviet bloc and the defeat of the Communist economic model, the United States saw the UN as one means to buttress its hegemony. The U.S. economically and diplomatically controls many UN agencies, among them the Security Council, whose resolutions paved the way for the military attack on Iraq as well as the sending of peace-keeping forces to the Balkans and Somalia.

The Iraq war was prompted more by the imperatives of domestic U.S. politics than the intent to promote international peace and security, while in Yugoslavia and Somalia the situation has worsened without the UN being able to act effectively. In Somalia the blue-helmeted UN force has become a menace equal to, or worse than, that represented by the "warlords."

The UN seems to be beating a dangerous retreat in terms of the world balance of power, making it increasingly unable to fulfill its mission of securing peace. The United Nations' "dove of peace" is becoming a kind of bird of prey, at the service of the interests, capital and armed forces of the powers emerging from the post-Cold War period: in first place the United States, followed by Germany and Japan, which seek to join the exclusive club of Security Council members and to show that they possess the money and diplomatic clout to impose their interests.

The UN is going through a dangerous phase, as there is no project for radical reform aimed at preventing the "majority of two" that was the United Nations from becoming a "majority of one" —or perhaps three great powers or three great economic blocs— which lacks the real capacity to preserve world peace.

Source: "Informe especial," *El Financiero*, July 31, 1993.

Cases of widespread or massive human rights violations are a legitimate subject for debate in international forums. Why some cases are ignored or papered over by the multilateral human rights machinery is a question which needs to be addressed.

Another is who will decide when to intervene "for humanitarian reasons." The massive military response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was sanctioned by the UN Security Council. But it is one thing to force Iraq out of Kuwait, and quite another to force Saddam Hussein out of Iraq.

The first was the public, official reason for the Gulf War; the second was its undeclared or unspoken objective. The results so far have been mixed. On the one hand, Iraq is out of Kuwait; on the other, Saddam Hussein is still the head of Iraq's government, a diminished government to be sure, but a government which is still in power.

This situation poses some interesting questions regarding the so-called right (some have even described it as a duty) to intervene for humanitarian purposes. The people of Iraq were to be saved from their own ruler, but the ruler has been saved —or saved himself— while his people have not been spared.

There are many historical examples of military action taken in response to a non-military threat to one's own security. Countries have resorted to force to ensure a supply of water or foodstuffs, to preserve certain navigation rights or to gain access to the sea. But can human rights violations in another country be construed as a threat to one's own security and thus provide justification for intervention under present international law?

What is there about the idea of humanitarian intervention that makes some of us uneasy? One source of

concern is, who decides when to intervene and where? The immediate answer is: the Security Council. Yes, let the new and improved Security Council decide.

But far from being "new and improved," the Council is rather outdated; its composition certainly does not represent (or reflect) the present international order. Moreover, in recent years, and specifically during the Gulf War (which is often cited as an example of the "new" Council), it did not act in conformity with the UN Charter.

In the first place, when the UN is asked to embark on military action, the pertinent decision has to be taken "by an affirmative vote of nine members [of the Council] including the concurring votes of the permanent members" (Art. 27, para. 3). And yet, decisions were approved in spite of the fact that one permanent member abstained. Secondly, one should remember that the Council

supposedly must act, not on behalf of its members alone, but of the members of the UN in general.

And for what so-called humanitarian reasons should the Council decide to intervene? In cases where atrocities are being committed? Well, it has yet to act decisively in the prolonged agony of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In cases where a government is behaving in a way that is flagrantly contrary to shared human values? Well, there is no clearer example of institutionalized discrimination than South Africa's apartheid regime, yet the Council has never contemplated an intervention there.

Examples of double standards abound. Here's one: after almost a century of colonial presence in Hong Kong, the British authorities decided, on the eve of withdrawing, that the colony was in need of certain democratic improvements. What took them so long to realize this?

Here's another example: the foundations of today's human rights are often traced to the 18th century. Indeed, the American and French Revolutions are the source of many of those rights. And yet the person who, in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, wrote that "all men are created equal" was himself a slaveowner.

And what about the right to self-determination and the right of a people to freely choose their government? Well, a few decades after pronouncing the three magic words—*liberté, égalité et fraternité*—that same people embarked, together with some other Europeans, on the colonization of Africa. What are we to make of these contradictions and double standards?

But it is to the 16th century that we must trace the beginnings of this so-called right to intervene for humanitarian reasons. Faced with a large population of Indians, the Spanish Crown struggled to find a justification for its invasion and conquest of America.



War was considered justified if it was fought to spread the faith.

And the "Catholic Monarchs" Ferdinand and Isabella found intellectuals who were ready to justify that conquest in spiritual and legal terms. The Kouchners of the early 1500s turned to the writings of Spanish jurists, especially Francisco de Vitoria. He was among the founders of international law and the laws of war; his treatises planted the seeds of today's so-called right of humanitarian intervention.

Vitoria wrote that conquest was difficult to justify, but that it was permitted if it was carried out in order to protect the innocent from cannibalism and human sacrifice. War was justified if it was fought to spread the faith. Moreover, war was not justified except as defense against aggression or "to right a very great wrong."

In the process of spreading the faith and protecting the innocent from cannibalism and human sacrifice, the Spaniards decimated the Indian population of America. In Mexico alone, the 25 million inhabitants in 1500 fell to two million by 1700.

Humanitarian intervention can certainly have its drawbacks.

No one advocates turning a blind eye to human suffering. And here we again encounter the question of instinct. Survival is pursued instinctively, whereas helping your neighbor is part of the "learned patterns" of behavior. We all have our dose of compassion and there is a good Samaritan somewhere in all of us. And yet as nation-states we are hard put to act in a selfless, compassionate manner.

On the other hand, few seek to justify repressive, undemocratic regimes. Nor can the leaders of such regimes seek refuge in the theory espoused by some characters in the musical *West Side story*, to wit, "I'm depraved on account of I'm deprived." The problem is indeed complex. But we shall not begin to resolve it as long as there are those who preach while following a double standard, and those who are preached to and attempt to defend themselves by invoking other standards. ❧

# What kind of United Nations do we want?

Roberta Lajous \*

**T**he end of the Cold War has given the United Nations a new opportunity to fulfill the expectations it created in 1946. Yet the context of mistrust between the superpowers prevalent when the UN Charter was drawn up provided for a structure that is no longer needed or desired. The time has come to reform and strengthen the UN's role. It is imperative not only to recognize the UN's achievements, failures and shortcomings, but, most of all, to define the role the international community wants it to perform over the next fifty years.

## A new world order?

While everyone agrees the Cold War is over, we don't necessarily know what lies ahead. Since much depends on our ability to imagine a better future, we should dream of a peaceful and prosperous world. Stability requires the strengthening of international organizations.

As far as the UN is concerned, the Secretary General has prepared a document entitled *An agenda for peace* (June 1992)<sup>1</sup> which describes what the organization needs to do in terms of preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peace-keeping. This 24-page document is an extraordinary

<sup>1</sup> *An agenda for peace*. General assembly forty-seventh session. Report of the Secretary General on the work of the Organization. A/47/277.

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summary of the most urgent tasks ahead for the UN which would assist it not only in maintaining peace but in confronting the thorniest problem of international security: foreseeing and resolving the sources of conflict.

The Liberal International praised *An agenda for peace* as well as producing its own report in December 1992<sup>2</sup> addressing international security as well as economic, social and environmental issues, the promotion of democracy and human rights, and international law. The purpose of the report is to indicate in which fields and in which ways the work of the UN can be strengthened.

While it is difficult to argue against a stronger UN, recent developments should be analyzed with caution. The organization is currently overextended and underfunded. During the last three years it has been involved in 14 peace missions, the same number of missions it undertook in all its preceding 43 years.

The estimated cost of peace-keeping has grown from 750 million U.S. dollars in 1991 to 2.9 billion in 1992. Member nations have contributed only 2 billion towards this cost, leaving a shortfall of almost 900 million for this year alone. These figures do not include United Nations commitments to Somalia and

<sup>2</sup> *Strengthening of the United Nations*. A publication of the Liberal International. The report was presented to Boutros Ghali, Secretary General of the United Nations, in New York on December 17, 1992, by Otto Graf Lambsdorff, President of the Liberal International and leader of the German FDP.

Mozambique, which could double the UN's expenses.<sup>3</sup>

The issue is not only who pays and when, but how successful the increased activity has been. UN intervention in Yugoslavia is an example of unfulfilled expectations, especially in light of the difficulties in providing protection to the civil population.

But the case of Somalia will certainly be seen as a watershed. Once the U.S. army leaves, it will be difficult for the UN to take responsibility for the transition to an orderly civil life. The argument may arise that a foreign military presence can disrupt more than it can build. Many more questions may arise in cases where UN humanitarian intervention in a country's affairs may be accepted as a legitimate response to internal aggression.

While the UN experience in El Salvador and Namibia has been of success in ending civil wars, there is still a long way to go in the peace-building operations in Cambodia and Angola. Much has to be assessed and learned from these experiences.

In the 1960s and 70's the decolonization of Africa was seen as one of the UN's greatest successes. It was one of the few issues on which the U.S. and the Soviet Union could agree: limiting European power and influence abroad. As the emerging nations of the world became a battleground for ideological struggles, it was extremely difficult for them to

<sup>3</sup> Stephen John Stedman, "The new interventionists," *Foreign Affairs*. America and the world 1992/1993, Vol. 72, No. 1, p. 10.

develop democratic political institutions.

Two decades later, we are witnessing a continental collapse as a consequence of the breakdown of traditional structures and emerging civil institutions. Today the four horses of the Apocalypse roam through Africa, while humanitarian foreign intervention may be interfering with economic development sustained by indigenous and stable political institutions. If rapid decolonization in

the 60's raised many legitimate questions, let us hope food aid does not hamper the ability of developing countries to provide for themselves.

There is hardly a more positive development within the UN than its capacity to address the global issues that a more interdependent world needs to deal with. In spite of criticisms of last year's Rio Conference, we have to recognize that many great steps forward have been made, standards have been set and, most of all,

international consciousness has been raised. We are familiar now with the concepts of biodiversity and sustainable development, and every country will have to follow international standards sooner or later.

The whole question of development, as viewed from a variety of perspectives, deserves priority attention. So does human rights. One of the main goals of the UN should be to keep setting the standards for conduct. Yet there still

### The UN: old and new problems

The challenges, both old and new, facing the United Nations in its mission to preserve world peace can be seen in the following problem areas:

- *Ethnic-religious conflicts and the disintegration of nations.* A UN report published in 1993 reveals that "in 1989 and 1990 there were 33 armed conflicts, each of which produced more than one thousand casualties. Only one of these conflicts was between nation-states. All the others were civil wars: conflicts between ethnic, religious, or other types of groups within nation-states." In 1992, more than 12,000 people in India and 6,000 in the former Yugoslavia died as a result of ethnic confrontations. There are 16 armed conflicts in the former USSR, while 62 ethnic groups are presently in conflict in the 27 nations of Africa.
- *Ecological devastation.* According to the UN report, the deterioration of the environment is a result of the model of economic development that has been in force since the "Second Industrial Revolution." "The pace of extinction of the Earth's species has accelerated in the past two decades. It rose from one species per day in 1960 to one species per hour in 1990, to one species every 12 minutes in 1992." Existing resources are minimal in light of the magnitude of the problem. The Rio de Janeiro Summit stressed that for each dollar spent on saving the ecosystem, 1,000 dollars are invested in projects that are highly damaging to the environment.
- *Trade wars.* In the post-Cold War world, trade war is not limited to the sphere of a single nation but is now waged by groups or communities of countries, which formally or informally mobilize their resources to protect their markets, penetrate others, and obtain advantages for themselves. The multilateral mechanisms that were created beginning in the 1950s, for the purpose of controlling struggles between multinational companies or regional blocs, have been overtaken; today they show clear signs of wearing out and losing step with current problems. A recent example is the failure of the Uruguay Round of GATT trade negotiations.
- *The growing gap between North and South.* The great economic imbalance between the developed nations of the North and the underdeveloped ones of the South is increasingly leading to diplomatic conflicts. The level of poverty in the underdeveloped nations is cause for alarm. In 1985 1.1 billion people lived in poverty in these countries. 75% of them were inhabitants of South and East Asia. In Latin America and the Caribbean 20% of the total population lives in poverty. The "lost decade" of the 1980s had devastating effects. Poverty in urban areas grew, reversing the previous trend: in 1988 the urban poor (94 million people) were more numerous than the rural poor (76 million). In contrast, the population of the developed North grew more slowly, in percentage terms poverty grew much less than in the South, and economies continued to grow at a certain pace. From 1982 to 1991, the per capita growth rate in the underdeveloped countries was half that of the developed countries.

Source: "Informe especial," *El Financiero*, July 31, 1993.

## The UN: reforms urgently needed

The United Nations Organization has shown itself to be incapable of adequately responding to the accumulation of international problems which reflect the emergence of a new world order. This has given rise to proposals for urgent reforms of the UN's traditional mechanisms. Yet views are divided between those who propose moderate changes and those who speak of the urgency of "refounding" the UN.

The moderates propose cosmetic changes which would reflect "the new world balances of power":

- Reforming the Security Council so that Germany and Japan may join the exclusive club of five permanent members, as a recognition of their new role on the world stage. In order to provide a counterweight to the developed nations' power, the inclusion of two highly-populated underdeveloped nations would also be sought—India and Brazil in the first place.
- Transforming the system of national representation in the UN Security Council so as to accommodate blocs or communities of nations.
- Reforming the United Nations Charter so as to include the struggle against poverty and the defense of human rights among the organization's central objectives in the post-Cold War period.
- Eliminating obsolete agencies, such as the Decolonization Council, which is currently analyzing only the case of the Palau Islands.

Other nations propose reorganizing the entire UN, arguing that new challenges cannot be met with the logic of power that prevailed before the post-Cold War period. Among their proposals are:

- Abolishing the right of veto in the Security Council, since they consider it anti-democratic.
- Transferring the functions of the Security Council to the Economic and Social Council, which would imply the recognition that the main threat to world peace is the growing international socio-economic imbalance, and that the UN must not be a simple instrument at the service of the most powerful nations.
- Abolishing the principle of "state sovereignty" in favor of "citizens' sovereignty," in order to resolve the contradictions in the United Nations Charter between individual rights and the sovereignty of states, as well as between the idea of equality as a normative characteristic of each state and the real inequality imposed by the Charter's superpower regime.

Source: "Informe especial," *El Financiero*, July 31, 1993.

seems to be a divorce within the UN family. While deliberations in the General Assembly and its specialized agencies seem to drift endlessly, the institutions created at Bretton Woods—the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the International Development Corporation—follow their own criteria.

Fortunately the Third World rhetoric of the 70's has scaled down with the crumbling of Communism. Yet across the U.S. there is still latent distrust towards an institution which was used by many member nations as a forum for Western-bashing. There is work to be done towards upgrading the image of the UN and furthering

the education of younger generations about its work and value for mankind.

Although East-West and North-South confrontations have begun to give way to a more enlightened global cooperation, the fact that the political and economic bodies of the UN family have different governing boards still results in the lack of a coherent policy. An incredible drain of energy, time and money is produced by the endless discussions and resolutions in ECOSOC, the second and third commissions of the General Assembly, UNCTAD, UNIDO and other specialized agencies that seem to live in a world of their own.

Meanwhile, any significant issue regarding trade and finance is resolved by GATT and the Bretton Woods institutions mentioned above. Whereas developing countries support the deliberative forums, with their corresponding bureaucracies and the mountains of papers they generate that hardly anybody reads, the case must be made for a more coherent trade-aid-finance approach to development assistance under World Bank guidance.

Much may be learned from the "UN Nordic Project," which made an assessment of multilateral assistance in 1990. One of its conclusions was that governments consider the UN's approach inadequate because:

- The funds are too widely scattered in small projects.
- The UNDP (United Nations Development Project) does not utilize its network role and potential capacity to address core policy issues.
- The implementation of the projects through the specialized agencies is not adequate as regards quality in general and performance of experts in particular.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *The Nordic UN Project*. Perspectives on multilateral assistance. Stockholm, December 1990. (In this text, the term "specialized agencies" does not include Bretton Woods institutions.)

### Reform or perish

Many of those who study, think or talk about the UN—still a small minority throughout the world—are still afraid to mention the idea of reforming the Charter. They believe that with so many issues of peace and war, life and death, at hand, time and energy should not be wasted on another UN debate.

I would argue the contrary. The world has changed and there is no way to avoid the painful process of questioning the status quo of international institutions—not if we want to be around in the next century. We have to democratize and trim the structure of the UN. We also need to make way for the enforcement of its resolutions.

Although the mere existence of the Security Council is to some degree undemocratic, there has to be a compromise between solidarity and reality in the world community. And it is unrealistic today to ignore major world players like Japan and Germany, particularly given that they are going to be paying for many of the activities that we all want the institution to perform.

Nothing is more dangerous than a bureaucracy serving itself and no bureaucracy is more difficult to control than the “old boys’ network” of the UN structure. Serious steps must be taken towards eliminating some specialized agencies that have proven to have very little impact on the lives of countries or individuals. Both at the international and regional level, there is an enormous amount of duplication, with heavy costs in comparison to what is obtained in return. Certainly a master plan would make the necessary changes easier to achieve.

In the case of Latin America, there are a number of institutions that duplicate functions supposedly covered by the UN. Yet we all want to show support for the long-cherished goal of integration. All around the

world, governments have undertaken structural adjustment programs to reduce spending and become more efficient. The same task, however unpopular, has to be undertaken at the world level, if we want to have working institutions.

Not all is rotten in Denmark. Some agencies need to be praised and receive additional support. The UN High Commission of Refugees is doing an extraordinary task, considering its resources. For example, in Mexico the Agency has helped all parties involved in dealing with Guatemalan refugees.

### Commitment?

For over a century, a common saying in my country was “poor Mexico, so far away from God, and so close to the United States.” We have become more pragmatic in recent times and have decided, in the context of GATT, to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement with Canada and the U.S. This agreement complements Mexico’s commitment to global free trade and in no way constitutes fortress-building.

Despite learning how to take advantage of our location and surroundings in a competitive world economy, we still become very sensitive when “interventionist fever” starts heating up on Capitol Hill.

The Clinton administration has given us guarantees that the kidnapping of Mexican nationals to be tried in U.S. courts will not be repeated. It has also expressed second thoughts about the Supreme Court decision backing the application of U.S. law outside U.S. territory—to the relief of Canada and Latin America.

Nevertheless, it seems that the rise in support for greater intervention abroad is not yet over. President Clinton has put priority on domestic matters, but many are shopping around for new causes to fight, such as military intervention to control drug trafficking in the Americas, now that

communism has disappeared. We can only wish that determination would be applied with the same zeal to stopping domestic consumption.

World stability cannot depend on the result of the balance between the extremes of interventionism and isolationism in Washington. We need a stronger UN with a clear commitment to respect and promote the development of and compliance with international law.

This same commitment will have to be evident in the debate that must accompany the reforms needed to strengthen the UN. Moreover, if we really want a UN that is able to prevent the emergence of conflict, we need to provide effective tools and resources for information-gathering and a more active multilateral diplomacy.

If we are going to restructure multilateral aid, it is necessary to increase World Bank lending as well as the bank’s capacity for developing projects in those countries where they are most needed. Sustainable development also means combating extreme poverty to avoid the depletion of the world’s natural resources. After all, we know now better than ever that we are all in the same boat.

### Conclusion

Governments, non-governmental organizations, political parties, academic and civil institutions must be consulted as to how, through greater involvement, international cooperation and respect for international law can be furthered.

A new era of greater UN effectiveness should be welcomed, but not for the purpose of serving the whims of one or a very few countries. Participation furthers responsibility, and both should enhance commitment to peace and economic development in the next century. At the same time, care must be taken not to paralyze the decision-making capacity of UN institutions ❧

# The Third Ibero-American Summit: another exercise in rhetoric

**T**he third meeting of Ibero-American heads of state ended without coming to any concrete agreement on how to confront the many problems facing the region—among them the problem of extreme poverty, which was the summit's central theme.

Meeting on July 15 and 16 in Salvador de Bahía, Brazil, the leaders of 21 of the region's nations recognized that the economic policies of "structural adjustment" which have been applied in recent years have had negative effects on the living standards of the majority of the region's inhabitants. They underlined the necessity of reformulating social development policies in order to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of the population, especially those sectors that live under the poverty line (more than 300 million people in Latin America, according to CEPAL's calculations).

## Topics at the summit

Among subjects addressed in work sessions were: the need for concrete actions to respond to the population's social needs; the defense of democracy; rejection of the developed countries' protectionist policies; and the importance of reforming the UN in order to permit greater participation by Ibero-American countries in the UN's decision-making process.

Colombian president César Gaviria stated that the "neo-liberal" economic system, which has been



*The central theme of the summit was the problem of extreme poverty.*

central to political and economic discourse over the past decade, has worn itself out and needs to be modified so that the population's most urgent needs can be attended to. He noted that the main topic for the future must be how to reform governments in order to strengthen their social welfare functions and broaden democratic participation in decision-making.

Cuban head of state Fidel Castro attacked the neo-liberal policies that have been imposed on Latin America with the aim of overcoming the region's economic crisis: "There is talk of a decade of hope because some indicators, such as those relating to inflation, budget deficits and capital inflow, have improved. But we shouldn't fool ourselves; there have never been as many poor and marginalized people in Latin America as there are today.... Almost half the Latin American

population lives at critical poverty levels, unemployment has grown, and real wages have fallen."

Venezuela's representative recognized that neo-liberal "adjustment" programs have underestimated the magnitude of the social and political problems facing the region. Referring to the fall in living standards and the increase in social violence in his country, he remarked: "We are mistaken if we believe that good economic results will have an immediate impact on social problems."

A range of opinions were expressed in debates on the role of government in guiding the economy and the social responsibility of the state. Spanish president Felipe González and Argentine president Carlos Saúl Menem spoke in favor of the free market and rejected any government participation in economic affairs.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Fidel Castro defended the role of the state in organizing economic production, noting the Cuban government's achievements in the fields of health, science and sports.

An intermediate stand was taken by Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who said that market forces and the state must complement each other in promoting economic development together with social justice. The representatives of Brazil, Colombia and Chile spoke against extreme views on this issue and in favor of a measured interpretation of the role of government in economic life.

Among the significant proposals put forward—which were not concretized in the summit's final declaration—was President Salinas de Gortari's advocacy of a joint project aimed at reforming the UN in order to broaden the active participation of all nations and democratize the decision-making process. The Cuban president also spoke in favor of such reforms.

The proposals of the Venezuelan delegation, as well as those put forward by Spain's Felipe González, did not find a place in the final declaration either. The Venezuelans suggested freezing a small part of Latin American countries' foreign debt and investing the resulting resources in educational programs for children and young people, under the

administration of the Inter-American Development Bank. González spoke of using 10% of taxes collected on GNP for social programs.

Fidel Castro's call for aid to Cuba was received with declarations of solidarity from a number of countries, but no formal commitments were made. Bolivia's president Jaime Paz Zamora, whose term in office was about to end, spoke against all forms of intervention and stated that the U.S. blockade is no solution to Cuba's problems.

The summit's final document includes a paragraph rejecting the unilateral application of economic and commercial sanctions by any state against another. While it does not explicitly mention Cuba, this passage was viewed as favorable to the island nation.

*The Declaration of Salvador*—the official document signed by the 21 heads of state, consisting of 73 articles—lays out the multitude of problems besetting the region. Upholding the principle of democracy, the document calls on governments to commit themselves to promoting economic and social development while making the eradication of poverty a top priority. It condemns drug trafficking, corruption, terrorism and racism and calls for greater participation in the United Nations. The document also

criticizes protectionism and trade barriers and states that the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT trade negotiations is an unpostponable task, without which Latin American nations' economic projects cannot be made viable. Nevertheless, nobody seemed interested in having the document include concrete action proposals on how to translate words into deeds.

Thus, the Third Ibero-American Summit demonstrated participants' concern for avoiding confrontations and making unanimous declarations, even though this meant not making joint decisions that would commit their respective nations to taking positive action.

The widespread skepticism as to the relevance of these conclaves was most clearly expressed in Fidel Castro's remark that "it seems there is still insufficient clarity about what the overall strategic purpose of our meetings should be." Spain's representatives stated their opposition to signing development programs which do not have real possibilities of being put into practice. For his part, shortly before the summit Uruguayan president Luis Alberto Lacalle said there was no point in meeting each year for the sole purpose of talking.

The question which remains in the air is whether the Ibero-American governments believe there is a real possibility of carrying out coordinated regional actions. If they do not, the usefulness of these annual meetings will remain in doubt.

### The stage and the actors

The 21 heads of state chose the perfect place to symbolize their joint commitment to making the struggle against poverty a priority: the Colonial city of Salvador de Bahía.

Located in the north of Brazil, it was the capital of that country until the middle of the 18th century. Salvador was the headquarters of the *Pelurinho*, the 16th-century Colonial



Carlos Salinas and Fidel Castro.



*The Declaration of Salvador calls for greater participation in the United Nations.*

Portuguese tribunal charged with punishing Europeans who broke the law. The standard punishment was whipping, which sometimes caused the malefactors' death. However, moneyed whites could avoid punishment by having a black slave whipped in their place.

Today, slavery and whippings have been replaced by poverty, which finds its expression in unemployment, violence, hunger, prostitution, and the thousands of homeless children, particularly among the black population.

However, summit participants enjoyed a city free of beggars, street children, prostitutes and criminals. According to press reports, a few days before the visitors arrived the Brazilian army took over the city, carrying out raids and evictions and temporarily relocating street children and beggars about 15 miles outside the city limits.

Their place was taken by soldiers equipped with bayonets and automatic weapons; sharpshooters with high-powered precision rifles, dressed in black and with their faces covered by woollen ski-masks; trenches, jeeps outfitted with non-recoil artillery, and armored helicopters.

As was the case at the two previous summits, the main protagonist was Cuban president Fidel Castro, due to the U.S.-imposed commercial blockade which is strangling Cuba's economy as well as to the criticisms of those who call his government a

dictatorship. Castro arrived at the summit prepared to defend Cuba's right to carry out its internal affairs without foreign interference. According to the press, on this occasion Castro got his own back, making up for the harassment he received during the 1991 summit, held in Madrid.

Presidents Felipe González of Spain and Carlos Saúl Menem of Argentina were unsuccessful in pushing their openly anti-Castro stand. Menem, viewed as a spokesman for the United States government since George Bush's presidency, openly criticized the Cuban regime, stating that "it is intolerable that in today's world there are dictatorial regimes which destroy man's dignity and ability to work." Yet Menem failed in the attempt to have harsh sanctions against Cuba's government included in the official document adopted by the summit.

Before the Salvador conclave, rumors abounded that there might be a meeting between Castro and Menem in which the two presidents would discuss the possibility of Argentina playing the role of mediator in the conflict between Cuba and the United States, but such a meeting did not materialize. Faced with the Argentine government's hostility, the Cuban delegation stated that it did not need intermediaries in order to establish a dialogue with Washington.

Castro's presence led to tensions due to rumors that an attempt would

be made on his life; but he received an outpouring of support from Salvador's population, the majority of which backs Brazil's Communist Party.

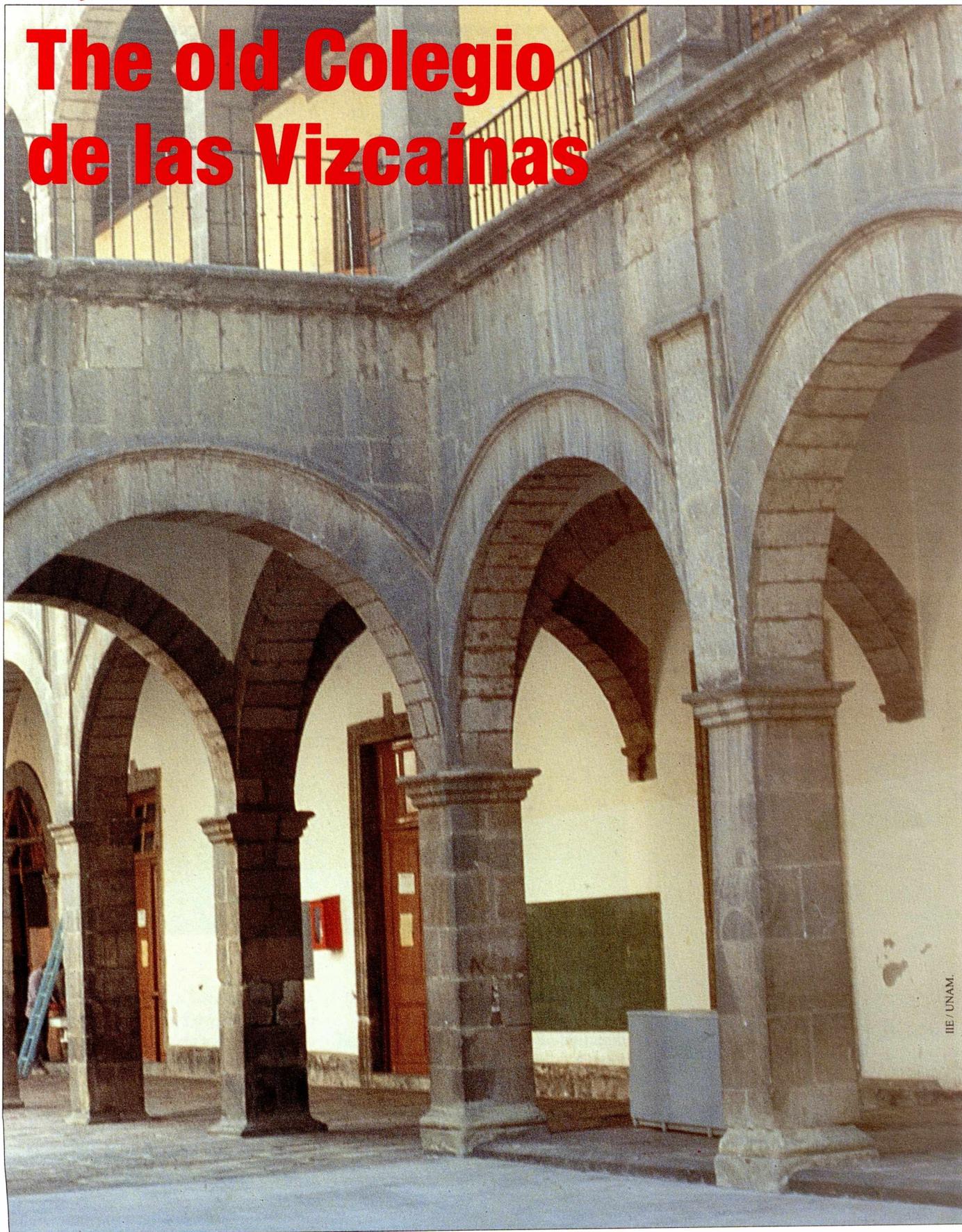
Another difference overcome during the summit was that between the meeting's host, Brazilian president Itamar Franco, and Peru's Alberto Fujimori, over Franco's declarations that he would not allow his government to become the sort of authoritarian regime headed by Fujimori. The Peruvian president threatened to cancel his trip to Salvador de Bahía, but ended up attending in order to defend his *autogolpe* ("self-made coup d'état"), stating during a press conference that the *Fujimorazo*, as his takeover is popularly known, is not intended for export to other countries.

Former heads of state who were striking for their absence provided another key feature to this summit. Ex-presidents Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil and Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela naturally did not put in an appearance, since both have been charged with corruption and removed from office thanks to the mobilization of the populace of their respective countries. Also absent was the Guatemalan Jorge Serrano Elías, who failed in his attempt to carry out an *autogolpe*. The removal of these three rulers is considered a small victory in the fight against corruption and an advance in Latin American governments' efforts to regain credibility.

Since prognoses on the region's future are far from promising, participants at the next summit—slated to be held in Cartagena de las Indias, Colombia—must seek to confront the diversity of interests at play, making concrete proposals for regional collaboration. This is the only way these meetings can begin to play a useful role. ❧

*Elsie L. Montiel*  
Assistant Editor.

# The old Colegio de las Vizcaínas



### Background and history

Considered one of the most important Colonial monuments of the 18th century due to its immeasurable historical and artistic value, the Colegio de las Vizcaínas (Biscayans' School) is located in the downtown Mexico City area known as the "Historic Center."

During the Colonial period, religious fraternities (*cofradías*) played an important role in the economic and social life of New Spain (as Mexico was known under the Spanish empire). Originally conceived as societies for mutual aid, they also organized pious activities, processions and some ecclesiastical functions. When their treasuries were full, the *cofradías* carried out charitable works of considerable importance.

This was the case with the Cofradía de Aránzazu. Formed by Basques resident in Mexico, it founded the Colegio de las Vizcaínas, an economically self-sufficient, secular educational institution for girls. The Colegio would provide lodging for young girls, widows and teenagers, so long as they were legitimate children, born in Spain or daughters of Spaniards who were living in Mexico.



Main altarpiece.



Stairway of the main patio.

The Colegio's quarters were built between 1734 and 1752, under the direction of Miguel José de Rivera and using blueprints drawn up by Pedro Bueno Basori.

The Basques' vision and their independent spirit, quite modern for the 18th century, led them to envisage, as part of the plans for the Colegio, the construction of sixty annexes known

as "cup or plate," since each one consisted of two rooms, one atop the other (lodgings above, workshops below), which would be used as shops or workshops. The rent from these annexes would provide economic self-sufficiency.

Inside the annexes' workshops, students made lace and trim from gold and silver thread, as well as embroidery



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*Altarpiece of the Virgin of Guadalupe.*

which was highly prized and much in demand because of its low price and high quality. Eminent members of the nobility had their clothing made there.

A unique structure was worked out for the Colegio, making it independent from both the Church and the Spanish Crown. Because of this financial and institutional independence, during the Reform

period —when religious schools were closed— the Colegio de las Vizcaínas was the only one to remain open.

The students' life was rather akin to that of nuns who had not taken vows. There, strictly cloistered, they were taught all the skills and offices which would suit them for domestic life. At the same time they received an education closely bound up with the

religious precepts and moral principles of their era.

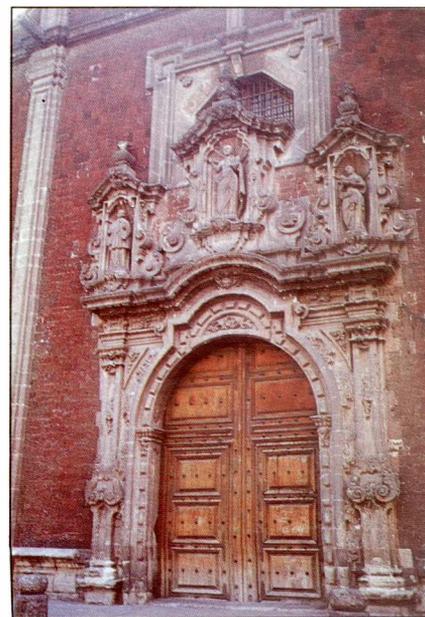
Only in 1793 did the Colegio open its doors to day students, for whom a special section was organized, and only in the 1950s, adapting to the needs of the community, did the Colegio de las Vizcaínas begin a new epoch as a coeducational school.

### Architecture

The Colegio covers an entire block situated between the Plaza de las Vizcaínas and the street of the same name. Three large doorways are set into the façade of *tezontle* (volcanic rock) and masonry. The doorway at one end is the entrance to the Colegio, while at the other end stands the doorway to the Chaplain's House; both are of a simple baroque style.

The first section of the doorway to the Colegio is framed in molding and crowned with the Spanish coat of arms. The second features a niche flanked by pilasters, while the third presents another niche at the height of the cornice, topped off with a flanked cross.

The doorway to the Chaplain's House is distinguished from that of the



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*Church façade by architect Lorenzo Rodríguez.*



*The chapel's upper archway, belfry and cupola.*

Colegio by the sculptures occupying the niches. Here the principal niche is home to a sculpture of Saint Francis Xavier, while the upper one belongs to the Virgin of Begoña, whereas the Colegio's doorway is graced with figures of Saint Ignatius Loyola and the Virgin of Aránzazu.<sup>1</sup>

The annexes, used principally as workshops, are located in the exterior eastern, western and southern parts of the building.

Crossing the threshold of the main door and passing through two vestibules, one enters the central patio with its double archway of finely worked masonry, making up a truly majestic whole.

In the central part, on the northern side of the great patio, three arches give way to a huge, monumental bifurcated stairway; this central area ends in three more arches and a high corridor covered with a cupola.



*Fountain in the main patio.*

Six more patios provide an enormous beauty to the building: the patios of the Tiles, the Clock, the Star, the Chaplains, the Cedars and the Arch. This last patio is adorned with a lowered arch which supports the iron balustrades of two low balconies.

Opposite the central patio we find the classical 18th-century Chapel, which consists of a single nave without a transept and with upper and lower choirs; this is one of the loveliest places in the Colegio. It was originally conceived as a private oratory. However, the subsequent



*Altarpiece of the Virgin of Loreto.*

plan to open the building's doors to the public made ornamentation necessary. This in turn led to the creation of the chapel's marvelous altarpieces, which are attributed to José Joaquín de Sayagos.

These altarpieces, covered with a thick coat of burnished gold, have the same overall characteristics: a central part housing a niche with the titular

<sup>1</sup> Begoña is a town near Bilbao, in the Biscay area of Spain; the Virgin of Begoña is the patron saint of the Basque people. Aránzazu is a 16th-century sanctuary, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, in Guipúzcoa, Spain. (Editor's note.)

saint, and at the sides a series of vaulted niches filled with full-length statues. All this is profusely decorated with medallions as well as leaf and floral motifs.

The central part of the Main Altar is occupied by a crucified Christ of a distinctly Mexican type. At the sides are two sculptures representing Saint Nicodemus and Saint Joseph, while the lower part holds sculptures of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic—all in ornamented wood.

While the altarpieces devoted to Our Lady of Aránzazu, Our Lady of



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Altarpiece of Our Lady of Aránzazu.

Dolores, Our Lady of Loreto and Our Lady of Guadalupe were made at different times, they all clearly show the influence of the 18th-century baroque style.

The first two evidence certain holdovers from the Balbasian style, while the latter two are more original works bearing the stamp of the artist's personal style. The whole of the altarpiece of Our Lady of Guadalupe, made up of altarpiece, door, confessional and tribune, is one of this era's most beautiful creations.

In what was the Chaplain's House, a museum is being built which



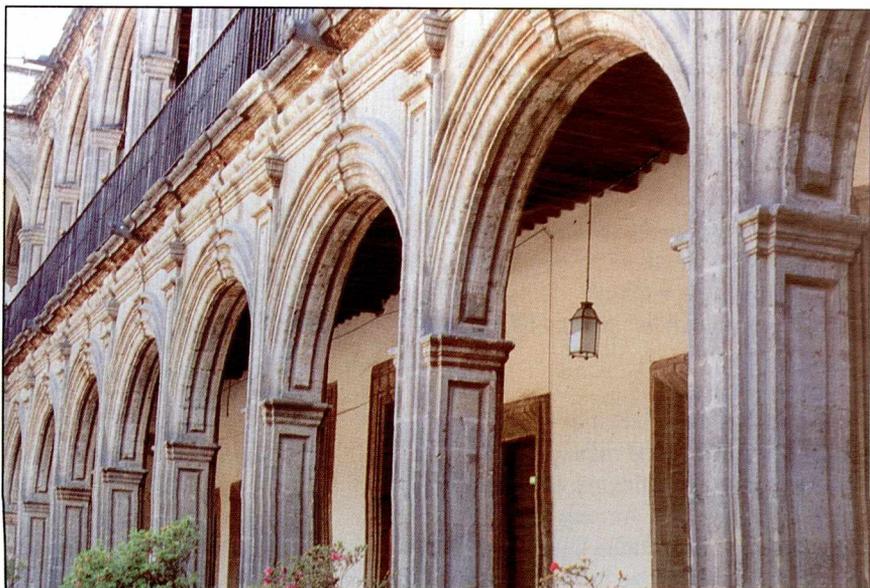
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Detail of arches in the first patio.

will exhibit valuable pieces of furniture from this era, ranging from typically Spanish to characteristically French pieces; manufactured artwork in silver, crystal, porcelain and wax; an extremely rich collection of embroidery made by the Colegio's students; and some very well-made paintings from the Mexican school of the 17th and 18th centuries, including works by Cristóbal de Villalpando, Miguel Cabrera, Ibarra, and others.

#### Time, nature and looting

The Colegio de las Vizcainas has had to withstand the storms of nature and society. In addition to the ravages of time, it has faced natural disasters such as the torrential rains and floods of 1789-1790; the "San Juan de Dios" earthquake of 1800; and the devastating September 19, 1985 earthquake, in which a large part of the building collapsed. Political events have also affected the Colegio, among



IIE / UNAM.

Detail of the main patio's archway.



IIE / UNAM.

*Main patio.*

them the American and French invasions during the middle and late 1800s, respectively, in which troops from both countries occupied and destroyed large parts of the building; the 1913 “Decena Trágica” events during the Mexican Revolution, in which the building was fired upon by troops stationed in the Ciudadela; and the anti-clerical drive of 1926, which led to serious looting. Yet this important monument continues to form part of the historical and cultural heritage of the Mexican people, thanks to the remarkable work of reconstruction that has preserved it.

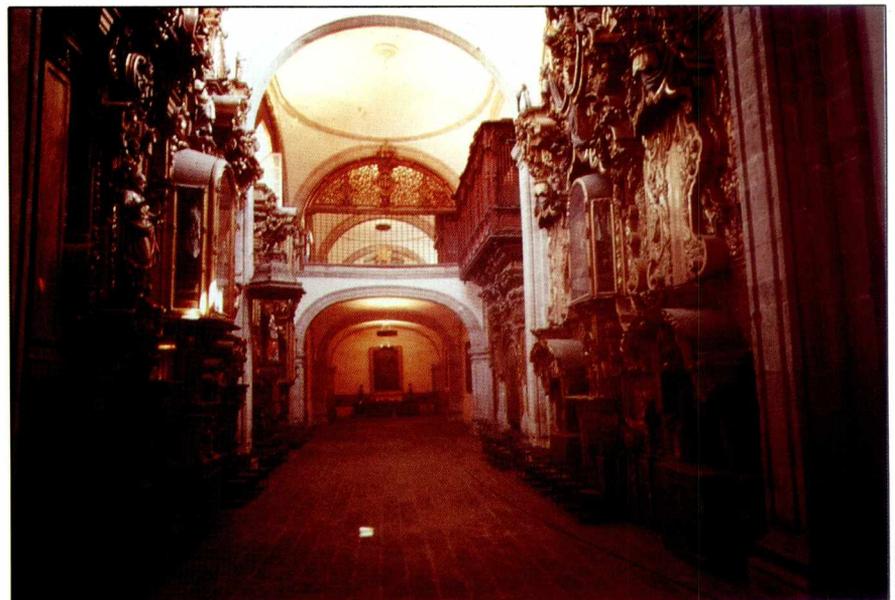
### **Activities**

Thanks to the enthusiasm of the Colegio’s trustees and management, non-academic activities are presently held on the grounds. Among them is the project for the “Bidea Izartu” Women’s Institute (the Basque words mean “fill the path with stars”), which

is to occupy part of the Vizcainas building. After restoration and remodeling work, this institute will feature workshops in arts and crafts,

as well as academic courses adapted to Mexico’s end-of-the-century needs.

Also planned is the creation of an orientation center to be used by



*View of the chapel choir.*

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IEE / UNAM.

Main façade.

women seeking legal, psychological, educational and health-related advice and counseling, and a skills workshop for handicapped women.

The Colegio also provides workshops on restoration and on Basque music, principally aimed at students and their parents.

Concerts are held in the chapel from time to time. The Chaplain's House Museum will begin its activities at the end of this year, with guided tours for members of the public.

The Historical Archive, whose holdings include specialized documentation on education from the 16th century on, remains open for researchers' consultation.

The great Colegio de las Vizcainas remains in its place with the same steadfastness that has characterized it since its "first stone" was laid, despite all the political, economic and ideological changes it has weathered. On a par with such buildings as San Ildefonso, it has been preserved as one of the most valuable architectural jewels bequeathed to us by the 18th century ✕



IEE / UNAM.

Second-floor corridor, door and window with stone frames.

*Maricarmen Velasco Ballesteros*  
Staff Writer.

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# Problems and challenges facing NAFTA

Luis González Souza \*

## U.S.- Mexican relations in the post-Cold War era

The post-Cold War era is many things to many people. But what it certainly is not is the end of history, as some have suggested—either in a sophisticated vein (such as the views put forward by the current led by Francis Fukuyama)<sup>1</sup> or through a rather simplistic approach (like that of George Bush, for instance).

Instead, the post-Cold War era is the beginning of a new and more challenging history. It is the eruption of both old and new conflicts as well as a unique opportunity to advance the most crucial interests of mankind. In philosophical terms, it is a double-edged turning point of history: either the prelude to a big step towards Kant's "perpetual peace," or the antechamber to another chapter of the "jungle-type world" envisioned by Hobbes.

Further, and as a matter of common sense, the post-Cold War era demands a new way of thinking—one which, leaving behind all dogmas, gives way to new ideas, new behaviors and—why not?—even new utopias. None of this means forgetting history. On the contrary, if the new thinking is to be solid and creative, it has to be rooted in the best chapters of history.

The U.S. and Mexico face a unique challenge today: to demonstrate that the North-South conflict can be resolved. Not solved according to repressive theories of conflict, but rather through techniques which help eradicate structural violence, leading towards a positive peace—techniques like those promoted by Johann Galtung and the "Peace-Solution Movement" as a whole.

Of course, this challenge is no small potatoes. Nor is it a piece of cake. Now that the socialist world has collapsed, the East-West conflict is yielding the stage to North-South conflict. From the Persian Gulf War to the tragedy of Somalia, from the invasion of Panama to the tragedy of Haiti, it is clear that the relations between the rich and poor, powerful and powerless, developed and underdeveloped nations will be the defining relations of a

new world order, if indeed such an order is to come about in the near future.

If the North-South conflict is creatively solved, we will be able to say that the post-Cold War era finally put an end to the historic, worldwide crisis we have been living through. This crisis might be summed up in a terrible paradox: although a good many people seemed to find the door to paradise in socialism, that system collapsed; yet while that door seemed to lead back to a primitive form of capitalism—capitalism *à la* Reagan-Thatcher-Bush—these ideologues are all gone now too, together with the dogmas they espoused—dogmas as old as Adam Smith himself.

Accordingly, if the U.S. and Mexico are to succeed in the face of such a formidable challenge, many things need to change. First of all, there must be a new way of thinking about both nations, including the interaction between them and their role in the world.

In a nutshell—in line with a consensus that might well range from Octavio Paz to Carlos Fuentes—Mexico has to stop blaming all its calamities on the U.S. If Mexicans are to escape at last from their "labyrinth of solitude," they have to stop regarding the U.S. purely as an "old gringo." Metaphors aside, Mexicans have to start assuming their own responsibility for their country's backwardness. In line with this, they should start regarding the U.S. as something more than a monolithic fortress of imperialism.

In turn, the U.S. should stop regarding Mexico simply as its own backyard. Or, what amounts to the same thing, as an endless subsidiary of American wealth—be it subsidies through cheap oil and lucrative *maquiladoras*, or even home-delivery subsidies, such as the *bracero* workforce. Not to mention such stigmas as portraying Mexico as a huge nest of laziness and corruption and even the main culprit for U.S. problems, such as drugs, unemployment or overpopulation.

Peter Smith has put it in a remarkable way: in the long run, the "U.S. has a lot to win from a prosperous and independent Mexico, and much to lose from a weak and subordinated neighbor."<sup>2</sup> Yet this is far from a new discovery. Similar points have been made at least since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt—even, if you will,

<sup>1</sup> Fukuyama's article "The end of history?" (*The National Interest* No. 16, Summer, 1989) became a sort of best-seller in Mexico and other Latin American countries.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter H. Smith, "México y Estados Unidos. Vecinos incómodos" in *Nexos* No. 115, Mexico City, July, 1987, p. 41.

since the days when Abraham Lincoln gave moral support to Benito Juárez.

Having cited the need for new thinking as the first challenge—or the old thinking as the first problem—let us review the key aspects of reality which have nurtured, and continue to nurture, both kinds of thinking.

### **The main problem: disparities; the key challenge: equalization**

Mexicans are fond of saying that nothing is like Mexico. An extreme application of this saying might be found in the traditional excuse for the Mexican government's refusal to join the Non-Aligned Movement: Mexico is so unique that it does not align itself with anybody, not even the Non-Aligned countries.

For their part, Americans love to think of their country as so unique that it is predestined to spread its culture (including its democracy and, of course, its power) all over the world.

If both conceptions were true, there would be little room for improvement. As long as the U.S. keeps on insisting on telling every country how to behave, Mexico will keep on regarding the U.S. as the closest and foremost threat to its uniqueness, not to mention its sovereignty.

Fortunately, these conceptions are not true or, at most, are half-truths. Above and beyond all their peculiarities, neither the U.S. nor Mexico can escape from the cardinal challenge of today's world, namely the North-South conflict.

Moreover, the two countries have leading roles in this play. Rhetoric aside, Mexico is still part of the so-called Third World and, if you will, at the front line of the border with the industrialized world. On the other hand, regardless of "declinism" theories (as espoused by Paul Kennedy *et al.*), the U.S. is still a paramount representative of the northern nations.

Thus, if increasing disparities lie at the core of the North-South conflict, the only way to deny that this breach is the key problem in U.S.-Mexican relations is to assert a false uniqueness.

The North-South gap is confirmed time and again by the reports of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations as well as by reports of the World Bank. Not surprisingly, the disparities between the U.S. and Mexico continue to grow as well—not only in economic matters, but also in their social and political by-products.

Elsewhere we have elaborated on this point.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to recall a handful of indicators. According to recent data

<sup>3</sup> Most recently, in "México ante la integración de Norteamérica: entre la democracia y el vasallaje," essay published in Benito Rey Romay (editor), *La integración comercial de México a Estados Unidos y Canadá. ¿Alternativa o destino?* Siglo XXI-UNAM (IIEc), Mexico City, 1992, pp. 344-370.

from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the U.S. approaches 6,000 billion dollars, whereas the Mexican GDP barely reaches 300 billion.

The average hourly wage in the manufacturing industry—the key industry of any modern economy—is \$14.77 dollars in the U.S. and only \$1.80 dollars in Mexico. The official literacy rate is 99% in the former and 87% in the latter, while infant mortality is 10 and 29 out of 1,000 respectively.

More importantly, such disparities tend to grow as the relations between the U.S. and Mexico increase. This fact in itself speaks eloquently to the existence of deep problems in the relationship, which is corroded by the cancer of inequality.

From 1980 to 1989—i.e., during the period when Mexico began to open economically to the U.S., under the Mexican counterpart of Reaganomics—the size differential between the two economies changed from a ratio of 16 to 1 to a ratio of 27 to 1. At the same time, the differential in per capita income increased from 6:1 to 10:1.<sup>4</sup> A similar trend has been seen in the wage differential—whereas the ratio of compensation (wages and benefits) between the two countries was about 3 to 1 in 1980, it is nearly 10 to 1 in 1993.<sup>5</sup> Yet bridging this wage gap is the highest priority task of all.

As for political byproducts of U.S.-Mexico disparities, suffice it to say that the power of the U.S. has increased to the point that it considers itself to be the only remaining superpower. In sharp contrast, the sharp decline of Mexican sovereignty has become a major complaint by the opposition—even prominent leaders of the conservative PAN, such as José Angel Conchello,<sup>6</sup> not to speak of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the PRD.

In fact, the increasing erosion of Mexican sovereignty has already led to the formation of new organizations like the National Patriotic Front (Frente Patriótico Nacional), and the Mexican Network for Action on NAFTA. Together with the demand for more democracy, it is one of the key issues fueling efforts to build a new coalition backing the 1994 presidential bid of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas—a campaign which organizers hope will proceed without the failures and electoral transgressions of 1988.

<sup>4</sup> To avoid any suspicion of bias, we chose these data from an authorized source from the current Mexican government: Minister of Foreign Relations Fernando Solana's widely-publicized inaugural speech at the Fifth Conference of ALADI (Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración), Mexico City, April 30, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> AFL-CIO, "Labor rights and standards and NAFTA" (discussion paper), Task Force on Trade, Washington, D.C., February 14, 1993, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> With a long record as a leader of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN—National Action Party), Conchello recently published a book harshly criticizing NAFTA, above all as a threat to Mexican sovereignty. See José Angel Conchello, *El TLC: un callejón sin salida*. Editorial Grijalbo, Mexico City, 1992.

Clearly, increasing disparities between the U.S. and Mexico are not only a moral issue but the source of major problems between the two nations. In the long run, these problems will dramatically affect the U.S. itself. Needless to say, for Mexico the inequality breach vis à vis the U.S. is tantamount to being sentenced to perpetual underdevelopment.

The migration issue is the clearest, but far from the only, example. *Bracerismo* continued to be a mixed issue for the U.S. —half problem, half blessing— and a curious relief for Mexico —a security valve against unemployment, albeit one which means losing one of the nation's richest resources. In any case, this remains an explosive issue.

Yet *bracerismo* will continue, and even increase, so long as the wage differential between the two countries remains. Even Mexicans with jobs, including professionals and highly-skilled workers, increasingly emigrate to the U.S. in search of better pay.

By the same token, as long as the flow of braceros continues under present conditions —repressive policies and persistent racism, among other things— we can only expect an upsurge of violence and anti-Mexicanism along the American border.

Movements such as Light Up the Border, and the kind of police brutality witnessed in recent years, may be but a preview. A preview of a movie which, by the next century, might be entitled "The stupid destruction of an otherwise promising relationship."

Something similar might be said about other major problems on the U.S.-Mexican agenda. The drug issue will remain as long as Mexican poverty makes growing narcotics an economic lifesaver for many Mexican peasants. But it shall remain so as well so long as the power differential prevents Mexico from forcing the U.S. government to do its own homework better (i.e., reducing the demand for drugs) and respecting elementary rights of sovereignty, such as freedom from extraterritorial kidnappings of would-be drug dealers (recall the Alvarez Machain affair).

Cross-border pollution is also related —although only partially— to Mexico's lack of resources, as well as to America's power to treat Mexico as a sort of toxic-waste dungheap.

Similarly, Mexican foreign debt will continue to increase as long as Mexico does not find the key to healthy growth. Thanks to the IMF *et al.*, we all know that this kind of debt can easily become an explosive issue of sovereignty as well.

Energy —specifically Mexican oil, that historic bugaboo— will not help fuel a constructive relationship insofar as Mexico lacks other sources of economic self-reliance. In other words, so long as Mexico remains a midget standing next to a giant who is addicted to foreign oil.

To sum up, the present trend towards an increase in the U.S.-Mexico gap could eventually lead to a wide range of calamities, analogous to those stemming from a sado-masochistic relationship. Such calamities range from an eventual explosion of anti-Americanism to the destabilization of Mexico. And everybody knows that the latter is the least desired outcome, both for Mexico and the U.S.

But for the U.S. itself, that is not the only adverse scenario. It is already a cliché that a market depressed by poverty, as the Mexican market certainly still is, is no good for the U.S. —even with the new opportunities attributed to NAFTA. The U.S. faces another, overriding danger, namely its addiction to a false competitiveness based upon Mexican cheap labor, lax environmental standards and, in short, all the distinguishing vices of a *maquiladora* economy. Sooner or later, this addiction could prove to be even worse than drug addiction.

Choosing the easy road of artificial competitiveness, instead of the one based on high-tech jobs, high wages and living standards, civilian-technology innovations and so on, will eventually put the U.S. at the very tail of Europe and Japan. It would put the U.S. in a position closer to the Third World than to the peak of the much-proclaimed all-round world hegemony.

Such a prospect would mean the U.S.-Mexico gap would finally begin to be bridged, but in the worst possible way: dragging the U.S. down towards Mexico rather than pulling Mexico up towards the U.S. In the long run, both countries would end up falling behind many other countries.

We can already observe the first sparks from this false competitiveness. Not long ago, the U.S. had the highest wages in the world, while Mexico was doing a decent job among countries of its size.

Nowadays, after more than a decade of Reaganomics —in both the American and Mexican version— the U.S. has fallen to tenth or fifteenth place, while Mexico is in the running for having the lowest wages in the world. Both countries —albeit with different magnitudes and implications— now excel in topics which used to be peculiar to Third or even Fourth World countries, to wit: foreign debt, trade deficit, urban crisis, crime rates, homelessness and so forth.

### **NAFTA today: legitimizing the U.S.-Mexico gap?**

Up to the present day, no better mechanism than treaties has been invented in order to provide accountability, predictability —in sum, legitimacy— to the relations between countries. But the bottom line is: what are we legitimizing?

Since NAFTA leaves the roots of inequality between Mexico and the U.S. untouched, it can be characterized as anything but a good agreement. Even worse, in the next century this kind of NAFTA might end up being seen as

# HIGHLIGHTS OF EIGHT YEARS

## March 1985

U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney meet. They agree to request their respective ministers to explore the possibilities for reducing and eliminating trade barriers.

## September 1985

President Reagan and Prime Minister Mulroney exchange letters of resolution to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

## October 1987

U.S. and Canadian negotiators sign a draft of the Agreement.

## December 1987

The heads of both delegations ratify the text of the Agreement. The final version is sent to the U.S. Congress and the Canadian Parliament.

## January 1989

The FTA between the U.S. and Canada goes into effect.

## March 1990

The *Wall Street Journal* publishes an article asserting that Mexico and the United States have agreed to initiate negotiations to develop a Free Trade Agreement.

## April 1990

The Mexican Senate establishes a forum for consultations on the FTA.

## June 1990

The U.S. Senate opens hearings on a "fast track" bill that would allow President George Bush to negotiate directly with President Carlos Salinas. Both presidents issue a joint communiqué announcing their intention to negotiate an FTA, and instructing their respective trade representatives to explore the possibilities.

## August 1990

The Mexican Secretary of Commerce and the U.S. Trade representative meet and issue a joint recommendation to President Bush, urging that the U.S. and the Mexican president initiate FTA negotiations.

## September 1990

President Salinas appoints an Advisory Committee for FTA negotiations and informs President Bush that Mexico intends to sign a Free Trade Agreement. President Bush sends a bill to Congress to open negotiations. Canada expresses its desire to join the largest trade bloc in the world.

## February 1991

President Salinas, President Bush and Prime Minister Mulroney agree to start trilateral negotiations for a North American FTA.

## May 1991

The U.S. House of Representatives votes in favor (231 to 192) of approving the "fast track" for negotiating the FTA with Mexico. The U.S. Senate also approves the motion (59 to 36) to give President Bush the authority to negotiate.

## June 1991

Trilateral negotiations between Canada, Mexico and the U.S. open in Toronto, Canada. The issues discussed include access to markets, trade regulations, investment, technology transfer, services and settlement of disputes.

## August 1991

The Ministers of Commerce of the three countries meet in Seattle, Washington. They agree on a gradual reduction of tariffs, to be carried out in three stages, on all products to be imported and exported between the three countries. They resolve to make an in-depth analysis of the restrictions on government purchases in the three nations. The governors of the fifty U.S. states express their support for the negotiations.

## October 1991

The Ministers of Commerce of the three countries meet in Zacatecas, Mexico. They review the progress of the

# OF FREE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

working groups assigned to each of the nineteen major sections of the agreement and call for a draft by January of 1992. They agree to approach labor and the environment as parallel issues, but not to include them in the text of the agreement.

## February 1992

Presidents Bush and Salinas meet in San Antonio, Texas. Progress is reported by 8 of the 18 working groups. Differences persist in such key areas as energy, agriculture and the automotive industry.

## March 1992

Agreement on 14 subjects in the general text is sought at meetings held in Mexico, Canada and the U.S. Joint declaration, by the three chiefs of state, after a telephone conference call, to the effect that negotiations are proceeding as planned.

## April 1992

Trade representatives meet in Montreal to discuss and eliminate differences in the key areas of energy, agriculture and livestock, automotive products and conflict resolution, as a step toward the final phase of negotiations.

## May 1992

Most working groups are closed, leaving only energy,

rules of origin, and agriculture and livestock pending. The automotive sector is reported to be almost concluded.

## August 1992

The end of negotiations is formally announced, after 200 meetings between negotiating teams and 7 ministerial sessions. Complete agreement is reached on the agenda's 22 points, and final revision of most chapters already closed is completed. In a three-way telephone conversation, the U.S. and Mexican presidents and the Canadian prime minister express their approval. They issue a message to their respective nations announcing the results of the negotiations.

## October 1992

The trade representatives of the three countries "initial" the final legal text of the treaty in San Antonio, Texas. Presidents Bush and Salinas and Prime Minister Mulroney are present as witnesses. It is agreed the NAFTA will enter into force on January 1, 1994, but the date remains subject to two further requirements: its signature by the chiefs of state of the three countries and ratification by their respective congresses.

## December 1992

In their respective countries, Presidents Bush and Salinas

and Prime Minister Mulroney sign the final NAFTA negotiations.

## January 1993

President Salinas and President-elect Clinton meet in Austin, Texas, where they agree that the NAFTA will not be renegotiated.

## March 1993

The formal negotiations for agreements running parallel to the NAFTA begin in Washington.

## May 1993

Canada's House of Commons approves the text of NAFTA by a vote of 140 to 124. The treaty is turned over to the Senate for consideration.

## August 1993

Negotiators for Mexico, Canada and the United States announce the conclusion of NAFTA's parallel agreements on labor and environmental issues, begun in March of this year. Negotiations produce a two-in-one accord. Mexico and the United States decide to apply commercial sanctions in extreme cases of repeated non-compliance with environmental and ecological standards; Canada rejects this mechanism, while agreeing to open its courts to hearing Mexican or U.S. complaints.

the event that propelled U.S.-Mexican relations to the point of a virtual inferno.

It is difficult to find quantitative indicators to make this point; but there are qualitative or privileged references. It is revealing that at the beginning of NAFTA negotiations, the Mexican government insisted on provisions to take into account the countries' unequal stages of development.

The Mexican government demanded preferential treatment due to its backwardness vis à vis Canada and, of course, the U.S. Such preferential treatment could represent a first step towards equalization of Mexico's situation with that of the U.S., but it is far from all that is needed in terms of policy. There are many other steps to be accomplished, as we shall see below.

On the other hand, deep concerns about the current level of U.S.-Mexican disparities could also be heard—but only by those who were listening—from the very summit of the American power structure. It is worth quoting the opinion of the Committee for Economic Development—a prominent think tank sponsored by several huge American corporations, among them ITT, IBM, General Motors, Dow Chemical, Texaco, Citicorp and Chase Manhattan Bank:

*The obstacles to the negotiation of a formal free trade agreement between the U.S. and Mexico in any short time frame are probably insurmountable. The two countries' levels of economic development are too disparate. Equally important, the politics of such a proposal in both countries, but particularly in Mexico, would be potentially explosive....<sup>7</sup>*

Similar warnings were made by a wide range of institutions: from the *Washington Post* (before its editorial line dramatically changed) and members of Congress like Richard Gephardt and Donald Pease, to the AFL-CIO, Public Citizen and the Sierra Club. They were heard in Mexico as well, although Mexico's shortcomings with regard to democracy made them even less audible.

All these concerns, warnings and judgments notwithstanding, a non-equalizing NAFTA was signed by presidents Bush and Salinas. It is true that the present NAFTA includes some reservations, safeguards and exceptions which entail some sort of special treatment for Mexico.

But it is true as well that the current NAFTA also confers a good deal of reservations, safeguards and exceptions upon the U.S. and Canada. Thus, the special benefits obtained by Mexico tend to be canceled out by those obtained by the U.S. and Canada.

<sup>7</sup> Committee for Economic Development, *Breaking new ground in U.S. trade policy (a statement by the Research and Policy Committee)*. Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1991, p. 105. Despite this publication date, this chapter of the book seems to have been written before the public announcement of NAFTA negotiations in June 1990.

A second problem has to do with the content of the special treatment for Mexico. Basically, it refers to quantity, but not quality—yet qualitative issues must be resolved in order to rebuild U.S.-Mexican relations. The quantities dealt with involve time—longer periods for liberalization of trade barriers—and quantities (percentages) of goods to be liberalized.

Moreover, these concessions do not always refer to key industries. Their limited scope can be appreciated when we recall that the Mexican economy, even before NAFTA was ever mentioned, was already one of the most open in the world.

A third and final problem, a condensed indicator of all these limitations, resides in the silence of the text of NAFTA itself regarding the principle of special treatment for the less advanced nation. The only "principles" mentioned as guidelines for the agreement (first chapter) are: the principle of most-favored nation, the principle of transparency and the principle of national treatment.<sup>8</sup>

The latter principle puts us face to face with an even worse prospect: the current version of NAFTA tends to widen the Mexican-U.S. gap, not only by omission but also through commission. Far from being granted truly special treatment, Mexico has committed itself to granting the stronger parties (U.S. and Canada) exactly the same treatment granted to nationals. And it has accepted this principle of national treatment as virtually the overriding principle guiding the agreement.

Far from discouraging the ongoing growth of the *maquiladora* industry in Mexico—which indicates, in a nutshell, the country's backwardness—NAFTA as it stands today tends to accelerate the consolidation of Mexico as an export platform. The Amerimex affair speaks loud and clear in this regard.<sup>9</sup>

Some provisions—and silences—of the present NAFTA speak on their own. Notably, the provisions awarding a very generous protection to foreign investors' intellectual property rights—from copyrights, trademarks and patents to industrial designs and secrets.<sup>10</sup> After all, that means that the transfer of technology, let alone know-how, will not be as fluid as Mexico needs it to be in order to move out of the underdeveloped world.

<sup>8</sup> *Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte* (two volumes), Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial, Mexico City, 1992, Volume I, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> As widely publicized both in Mexico and the U.S., the Mexican government—through Nafinsa—was participating (with 25% of the stock) in *Fondo Maquiladora Amerimex*, an enterprise devoted to promoting the relocation of American factories to Yucatán so as to take advantage of low wages, among other things. As soon as the Clinton administration complained—through its commerce representative, in February 1993—Nafinsa cancelled its participation.

<sup>10</sup> *Tratado de Libre Comercio...*, Vol. I, pp. 282-290.

So at best, NAFTA seems to spoon out a little bit of weak medicine for the gap between Mexico and the U.S., and a good deal of strong poison tending to widen this gap—leading eventually towards the point of self-destruction. In other words, towards the point where such a gap turns into an abyss, thus pulling not only Mexico but the U.S. itself down towards the basement of the new world building.

NAFTA, as it stands today, could make this come to pass sooner rather than later. Right after the contents of NAFTA were finally publicized, two serious studies were published in the U.S.—one by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment and the other by the Economic Strategy Institute.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly enough, despite their contrasting approaches, both studies agree on the possibility that NAFTA, in the long run, could lead to a “low-wage competition” between Mexican and American workers, thus pressing downward the living standards of both countries.

The Congressional study’s title is quite revealing: *U.S.-Mexico Trade: pulling us together or pulling apart?* In our view, a still more compelling way of posing the question is: pulling us up, or pulling both countries down?

The latter danger cannot be overestimated. And as we have sought to stress, the need to start bridging the U.S.-Mexico gap is truly a matter of national security for the United States itself. Understandably, most of the American studies carried out before NAFTA was signed took an optimistic view.<sup>12</sup> But now that we know more about the pact, there is growing consensus on the need to improve it, if not to remake it altogether. Let us then pass to the last challenge: how to improve NAFTA?

### Towards an “equalizer NAFTA”

It is necessary to specify what we mean by equalization, even at the risk of stating the obvious. First of all, equalization should be understood as a process rather than a goal achievable overnight. Mexican underdevelopment has to do with a long history; yet it is not an insurmountable

problem. The new thinking presently required must also bury any and all dogma about underdevelopment being a matter of destiny or fate.

Likewise, equalization should be understood as relative rather than absolute. While the latter is impossible and even undesirable, since diversity is itself an asset of democracy, the former has to be sufficient to allow Mexico’s entrance—in deeds, not just rhetoric—into the industrialized world.

Hence a third and last specification: equalization must be upwards, never downwards. Equalization that allows the U.S. itself further development, although this time a safer and healthier development—not one based upon Mexican underdevelopment, among other self-defeating flaws.

Here we have space to suggest only a handful of alternative provisions. An “equalizer NAFTA” should establish mechanisms and objectives such as the following:

- Preferential treatment for Mexico which would help it begin to approach the level of development already reached by the U.S. and/or Canada—whichever is at a higher level in the given field.
- Promoting a genuine competitiveness, i.e., one based not on cheap labor and lax standards for environmental and consumer health protection, but rather on increasing worker productivity, training and income, as well as an ever-growing-quality of life for everybody.
- Discouraging any tendency towards transforming Mexico into a giant *maquiladora*, as well as the transnational relocation of businesses interested only in taking advantage of the countless vices of a *maquiladora* economy. During the course of Mexico’s transition to a truly industrialized economy, measures should be implemented to humanize working conditions in the *maquiladoras*.<sup>13</sup>
- Harmonizing standards, according to the highest ones in force in North America, related to labor, environmental, health, safety and human rights at large—to be sure, not only rights but above all practices and realities. Subsequently, promoting further improvements in such standards.
- A broad set of stimuli for investors, be they national or foreign, willing to comply with standards and goals such as the above. Correspondingly, sanctions for investors insisting on perverting free trade and making it a free

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Congress. Office of Technology Assessment, *U.S.-Mexico Trade: pulling us together or pulling apart?*. ITE-545, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., October, 1992; and Lawrence Chimérine & Robert Cohen, *NAFTA: making it better*. Economic Strategy Institute, Washington, D.C., 1992.

<sup>12</sup> To mention what seem to have been the most influential studies during the year of their publication: U.S. International Trade Commission, *Review of trade investment liberalization measures and prospects for future United States-Mexican relations*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., October, 1990; KPMG Peat Marwick (an international accounting firm), *The effects of a free trade agreement between the U.S. and Mexico*. Policy Economic Group, Washington D.C., March, 1991; and Gary Hufbauer & Jeffrey Schott, *North American Free Trade*. Institute for International Economics, Washington, D.C., 1992.

<sup>13</sup> Good examples of the measures required may be found in the “*maquiladora* standards of conduct” drafted by a U.S.-Mexican coalition of labor, environmental, religious, Latino and women’s organizations. In sum, they demand “socially responsible behavior” from *maquiladora* owners. The whole text may be consulted in *Economic and environmental implications of the proposed U.S. trade agreement with Mexico*. Senate Hearings 102-116, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1991, pp. 52-54.

ride through exploitation of workers, consumers and the environment. "The polluter pays" is an increasingly accepted guideline/principle. We need only add: "Exploiters and/or poisoners pay too."

- Transferring sound technology so as to accelerate Mexico's development. No more outdated, overpriced or polluting technologies. And not just technology, but know-how, so that Mexico can eventually walk on its own two feet as part of the industrialized world.
- Some sort of barriers both against capital flight just for the sake of private speculation as well as governmental corruption, so as to prevent the sterilization of any foreign aid at the very moment of its arrival—which has occurred frequently, and still does, in Mexico.
- Also, some type of barrier against NAFTA being capitalized on by oligarchical groups. Otherwise, it will be impossible for the "democratization of capital" to advance. On the contrary, the present NAFTA tends not only to legitimize but to give privileges to giant corporations, even in Mexico. For instance, Telmex and Televisa—the closest thing to pure monopolies—are the archetypal beneficiaries intended by liberalization schedule exceptions in the area of telecommunications.
- Not only special safeguards and reservations, but systematic stimuli in favor of the small and medium business sectors in all countries involved in NAFTA.
- In sum, mechanisms to guarantee that NAFTA primarily benefits majorities within each country. Here, the range of mechanisms would go from the liberalization of worker mobility—not only of capital and "business people" mobility, as current NAFTA provides for—to democratic mechanisms helping prevent the transfer of national sovereignty in favor of a supranational bureaucracy disengaged from principles such as electivity and accountability.

As long as an elite, by now virtually a bi-national elite, continues to drive and benefit from the U.S.-Mexico relationship, the gap between and within the two countries will continue to grow. In point of fact, political as well as economic elites of the signatory countries have been the major supporters of the current NAFTA, through big-business coalitions like USA-NAFTA.<sup>14</sup>

In our judgement, an equalizer NAFTA is not only desirable but feasible. The integration experience of the European Economic Community (EEC) is a good example. Over time, the less developed nations—Portugal, Spain and Greece—have approached the most advanced nations' level of development. But that has not resulted from lucky

<sup>14</sup> This coalition, headed by such giant corporations as Eastman Kodak and American Express, as well as powerful organizations of the big-business community like the Business Roundtable, was created right after the inauguration of the Clinton administration, in order to reinventorize defense of the Bush-Salinas-Mulroney NAFTA.

circumstances. On the contrary, it is the result of sound and deliberate measures, such as the creation of the so-called structural-adjustment funds (nearly 68 billion dollars) aimed at strengthening the weakest parties.

This is all the more significant given that the aforementioned countries are not as weak as Mexico is vis à vis the U.S. and Canada: whereas the per capita GDP of Spain, Greece and Portugal is 75% of the EEC average, Mexico's barely amounts to 15% of the American and Canadian per capita GDP.

There are other indicators of the feasibility of an equalizer NAFTA. According to a traditional reading of the history of U.S.-Mexican relations, one would suppose that the main resistance against such a NAFTA would be found on the American side. Surprisingly enough—or pointing to the need to set aside conventional wisdom about the U.S.—broad sectors of American society do favor one, two or perhaps all the ingredients of an equalizer NAFTA herein suggested.

This is certainly the case with the labor movement, first of all the AFL-CIO. It is also the case with major organizations within movements struggling in favor of the environment (Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Wildlife National Federation), or in favor of consumers (Public Citizen, National Consumers League, Public Voice for Food & Health Policy) or human rights (American Friends Service Committee, Americas Watch).

Likewise it is the case with liberal and progressive think tanks (Economy Policy Institute, Institute for Policy Studies, World Policy Institute), and surely with countless intellectuals within academic and journalistic circles.

Moreover, it is also the case within the business community itself, in particular non-giant entrepreneurs associated with organizations such as the Small Business Exporters Association and the National Family Farm Coalition. But even within the business elite it is possible to find organizations sensitive to the need to bridge the gap between the U.S. and Mexico, such as the Emergency Committee for American Trade, the U.S. Council of the U.S.-Mexican Business Committee and, believe it or not, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, usually known as a very conservative organization.<sup>15</sup>

Undoubtedly, what we have here is a fundamental issue. Whereas an equalizer NAFTA could be the airplane the U.S. and Mexico ought to take if they want to fly high, a gap-widening NAFTA will, sooner or later, prove to be a sinking boat ❌

<sup>15</sup> To properly appreciate progressive views in American society, one has only to review the Congressional hearings related to NAFTA since its announcement in June 1990, as we did while preparing the book *Mexico within U.S. strategy, approaches in the light of NAFTA and democracy*, presently being printed in Spanish (still in search of a publisher in English).

# The buried mirror

Carlos Fuentes \*

**O**n October 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus landed on a small island in the Western Hemisphere. Against all evidence, he had put his wager on a scientific hypothesis and won: since the earth is round, one can reach the East by sailing west. But he was wrong in his geography. He thought that he had arrived in Asia. His desire was to reach the fabled lands of Cipango (Japan) and Cathay (China), cutting short the route along the coast of Africa, south of the Cape of Good Hope and then east to the Indian Ocean and the Spice Islands.

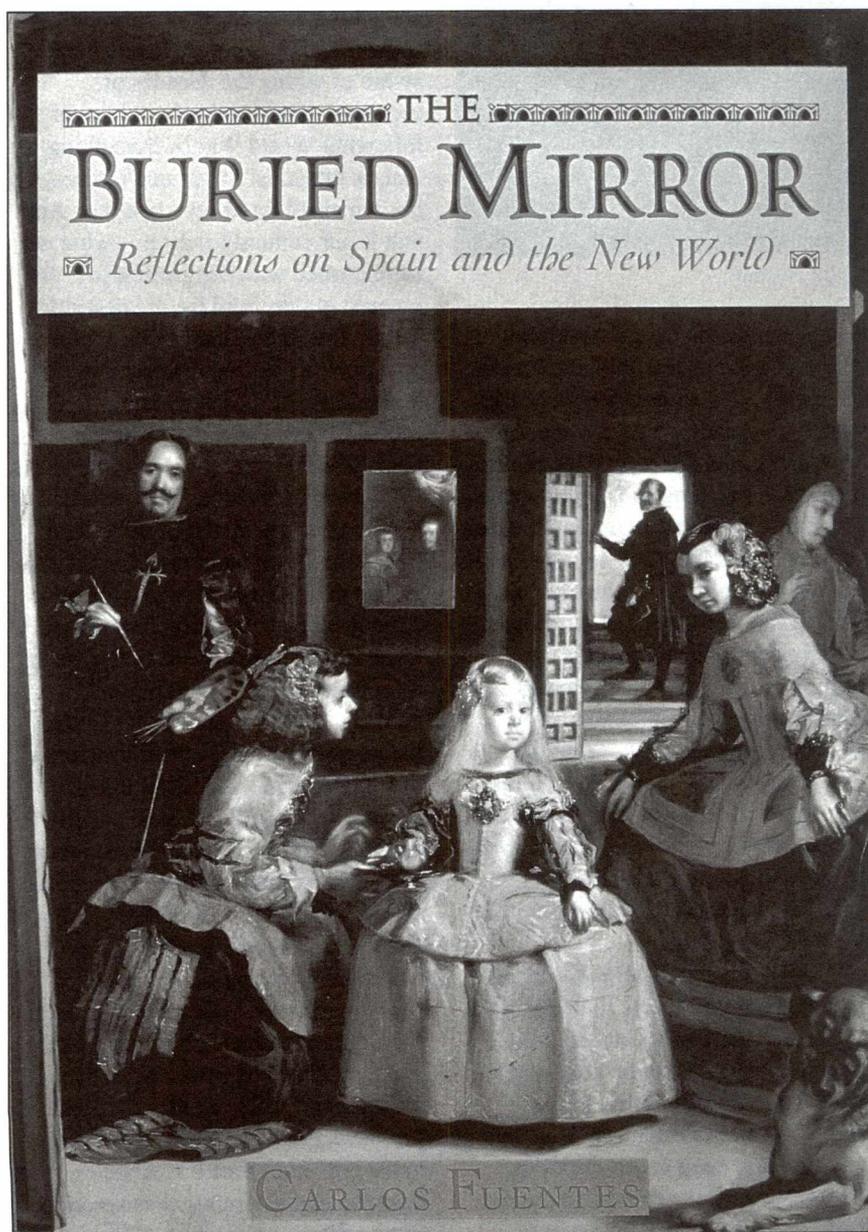
It was not the first or the last Occidental dis-Orientation. In these islands, which he called the Indies, Columbus established the first European settlements in the New World. He built the first churches, and the first Christian masses were celebrated there. Finding a domain empty of the Asian wealth that he had hoped for, he invented and reported back to Spain the discovery of great richness in forests, pearls, and gold. Otherwise, his patroness, Queen Isabella, might have thought that her investment (and her faith) in the highly inventive Genoese sailor had been misplaced.

More than offering gold, Columbus offered a vision of the Golden Age: these lands were Utopia,

the happy place of the natural man. He had come upon the earthly paradise and the noble savage. Why, then, was he immediately forced to deny his own discovery, attack the people he had so recently described

as "naked, unarmed and friendly," hunt them down, enslave them, and even send them back to Spain in irons? In fact, young women who were taken prisoner in Cuba all died before they even reached Spain.

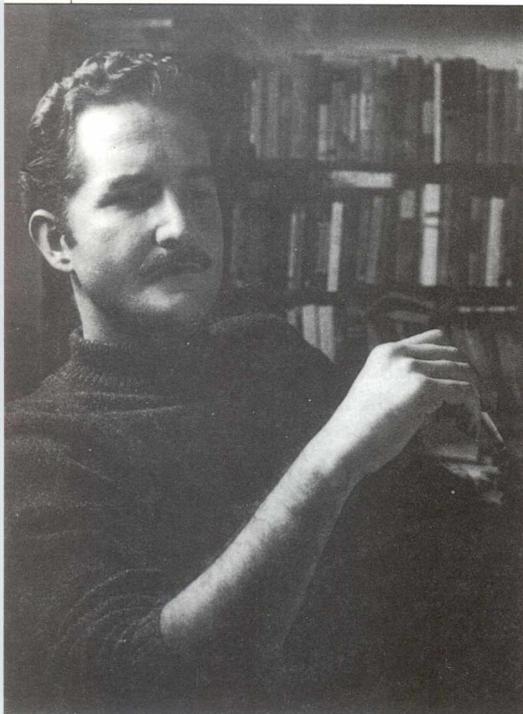
At first Columbus did step into the Golden Age. But very soon, through his own doing, the earthly paradise was destroyed and the formerly good savage was seen as to be ordered about and made to work, to sow and "to do aught else that may be



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Introduction to the book *The buried mirror: reflections on Spain and the New World*, by Carlos Fuentes, Houghton Mifflin Company, 399 pp.

Lola Alvarez Bravo.



Carlos Fuentes.

needed.” Ever since, the American continent has existed between dream and reality, in a divorce between the good society that we desire and the imperfect society in which we really live. We have clung to Utopia because we were founded as a Utopia, because the memory of the good society lies in our origins, and also at the end of the road, as the fulfillment of our hopes.

Five hundred years after Columbus, we are being asked to celebrate the quincentennial of his voyage—undoubtedly one of the great events of human history, a turn in events that heralded the arrival of the modern age. But many of us in the Spanish-speaking parts of the Americas wonder whether there is anything to celebrate.

A glance at the Latin American republics would lead us to reply in the negative. Whether in Caracas or in Mexico City, in Lima or in Buenos Aires, the fifth centennial of the “discovery of America” finds us in a state of deep, deep crisis. Inflation, unemployment, the excessive burden of foreign debt. Increasing poverty

and illiteracy; an abrupt decline of purchasing power and standards of living. A sense of frustration, of dashed hopes and lost illusions. Fragile democracies menaced by social explosion.

Yet I believe that in spite of all our economic and political troubles, we do have something to celebrate. The present crisis throughout Latin America demonstrates the vulnerability of our political and economic systems, which have come crashing down around our heads. But it has also revealed something that has remained standing, something that we were not acutely aware of during the decades of economic boom and political fervor following World War II. Something that, in the midst of our misfortunes, has remained on its own two feet. And that is our cultural heritage—what we have created with the greatest joy, the greatest gravity, and the greatest risk. This is the culture that we have been able to create during the past five hundred years, as descendants of Indians, blacks, and Europeans in the New World.

The crisis that has impoverished us has also put the wealth of our culture back in our own hands and forced us to realize that there is not a single Latin American, from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn, who is not an heir to each and every aspect of our cultural heritage. This is what I wish to explore in this book. It ranges from the stones of Chichén Itzá and Machu Picchu to modern Indian influences in painting and architecture. From the baroque art of the Colonial era to the contemporary literature of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez. From the multifaceted European presence in Latin America—Iberian, and through Iberia Mediterranean, Roman, Greek, and also Arab and Jewish—to the singular and suffering black African presence. From the caves of Altamira to the graffiti in East Los Angeles. And from the earliest immigrants across the Bering Strait to the latest

undocumented workers crossing the U.S. border at Tijuana-San Diego.

Few cultures in the world possess a comparable richness and continuity. In it, we Spanish Americans can identify ourselves and our brothers and sisters on this continent. That is why we find it so striking that we have been unable to establish a comparable economic and political identity. I suspect that this has been so because all too often we have sought or imposed on ourselves models of development that are scarcely related to our cultural reality. For this reason, a rediscovery of cultural values can give us, with luck and effort, the necessary vision of cultural, economic, and political convergences. Perhaps this is our mission in the coming century.

This book is therefore dedicated to a search for the cultural continuity that can inform and transcend the economic and political disunity and fragmentation of the Hispanic world. The subject is both complex and polemical, and I will try to be evenhanded in dealing with it. But I shall also be passionate about it, because it concerns me intimately as a man, as a writer, and as a citizen, from Mexico, in Latin America, who writes in the Spanish language.

Searching for a guide through this divided night of the soul of the Hispanic world, I found it near the site of the ancient Totonac ruins at El Tajín, in Veracruz, Mexico. Veracruz is the native state of my family. Its capital has been the port of entry for change, and at the same time the abiding hearth of Mexican identity. Veracruz is a city that holds many mysteries. The Spanish, French, and North American conquerors have entered Mexico through it. But the oldest cultures—the Olmecs to the south of the port city, dating from 3,500 years ago, and the Totonacs to the north, 1,500 years old—are also rooted here.

In tombs surrounding the religious sites of these native peoples, mirrors have been found, buried,

ostensibly, to guide the dead through the underworld. Concave, opaque, polished, they contain the spark of light in the midst of darkness. But the buried mirror is not only an Amerindian occurrence. The Catalonian poet Ramón Xirau has titled a book of his *L'espil soterrat*, the buried mirror, recovering an ancient Mediterranean tradition not far removed from that of the ancient Amerindians. A mirror: looking from the Americas to the Mediterranean, and back. This is the very sense and rhythm of this book.

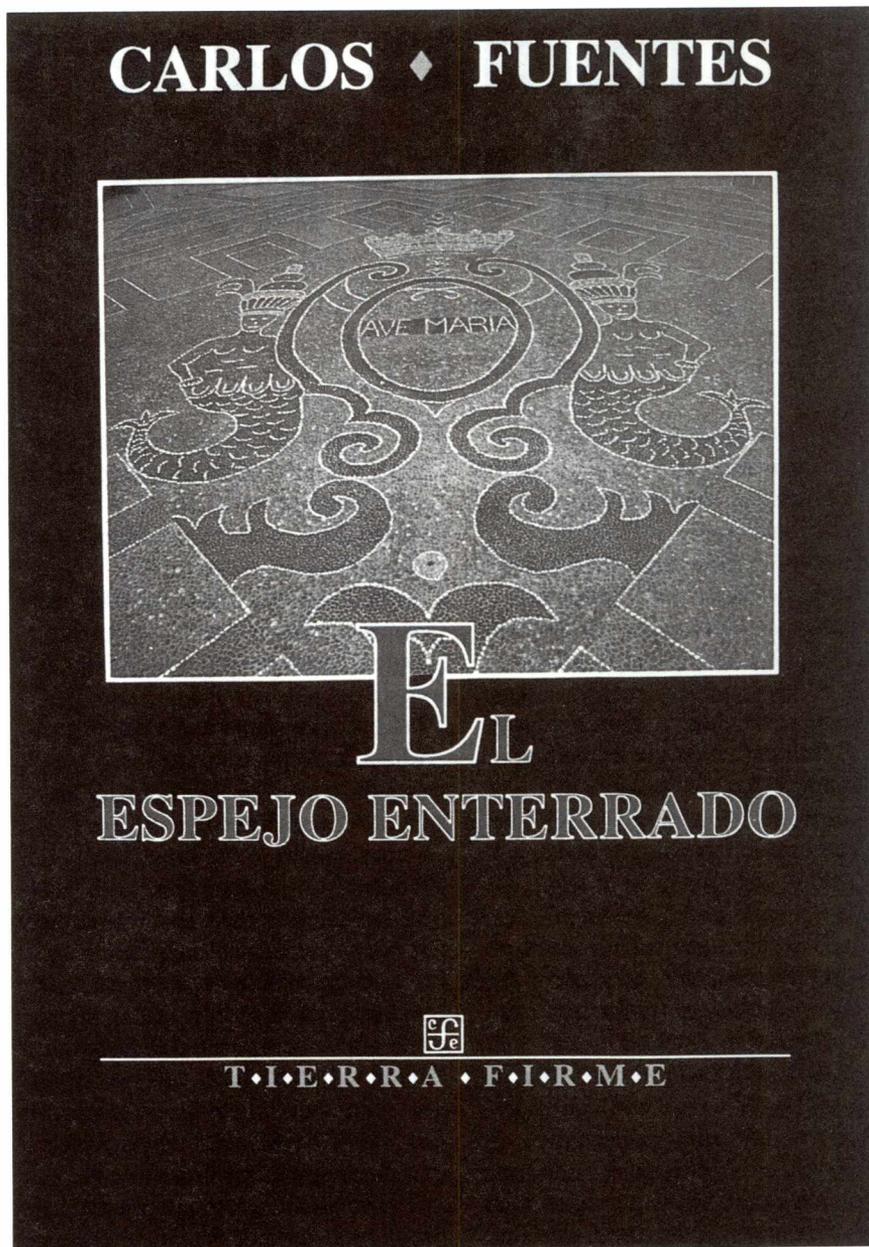
On this shore are the slate-black pyrite mirrors found at the pyramid of El Tajín, an astounding site whose name means "lightning." In its Pyramid of the Niches, rising 82 feet on a base of 115 square feet, 365 square windows open out, symbolizing, of course, the days of the solar year. Created in stone, El Tajín is a mirror of time.

On the other shore, Cervantes' Knight of the Mirrors does battle with Don Quixote, attempting to cure him of his madness. The old *hidalgo* has a mirror in his mind, reflecting everything that he has ever read, which, poor fool, he considers to be the truth.

Nearby, in the Prado Museum of Madrid hangs a painting by Velázquez in which he pictures himself painting what he is actually painting, as if he had created a mirror. But in the very depth of his canvas, yet another mirror reflects the true witnesses of the work of art: you and I.

Perhaps the mirror of Velázquez also reflects, on the Spanish shore, the smoking mirror of the Toltec god of night, Tezcatlipoca, as he visits the god of peace and creativity, Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, to offer him the gift of the mirror. On seeing himself reflected, Quetzalcoatl identifies himself with humanity, and falls, terrified.

Does he find his true nature, both human and divine, in the House of Mirrors, the circular temple of the



Toltec pyramid at Teotihuacan, or in the cruel social mirror of Goya's *Caprichos*, where vanity is debunked and human society cannot deceive itself as it gazes into the mirror of truth? You thought you were a dandy? Look, you are truly a monkey.

Mirrors symbolize reality, the sun, the earth, and its four corners, its surface, its depths, and all of its peoples. Buried in caches throughout the Americas, they also cling to the bodies of the humblest celebrators in

the Peruvian highlands or in the Mexican Indian carnivals. As the people dance, with scissors hanging from their legs and arms and bits and pieces of mirrors embedded in their headdresses, they now reflect the world, salvaging this reflection of their identity, which is more precious than the gold they gave Europe in exchange.

Are they not right? Is not the mirror both a reflection of reality and a projection of the imagination? **M**

# Thomas Gage's vision of the New World

*Andrés Henestrosa \**

**T**wo kinds of travellers have wandered the Americas: men of science like Humboldt and La Condamine, and men of imagination, like Gage and Stephens. The former have left a wealth of information and serious research on man and his natural environment in this hemisphere; the latter have done the same, although in their own way.

One can never tire of reading Thomas Gage, that mixture of pleasure-seeker and adventurer, liberal and monk, anthropologist and spy. Much, in fact almost all of what he wrote is what a well-informed European in a strange land could, in good faith, discover and observe about a continent that for Europeans, was still cloaked in distorted myths.

Although Gage was ordained in Spain, his childhood was shaped by the views prevailing in his native England, in direct opposition to the interests of the Spanish Empire. One should not forget that the Europeans came upon Romanticism by imagining the Americas as a land of strange beings, fountains of youth, Amazons and cities of gold; a land of enchantments and hidden paradises, monstrosities and nightmarish visions. The Spanish chroniclers themselves—Bernal Díaz, among others—associated what they began to see with their own eyes in the empires of the New World with the most wildly imagined tales of the Middle Ages.

Some—a fair amount—of what Gage wrote is deliciously false; this is sometimes due to a lack of information, while at other times it is the product of an over-active imagination. We will leave aside the names put down incorrectly, as the logical consequence of an ear which could not perceive the phonology of indigenous tongues and a language which could not translate these sounds. However, together with the unintentional distortion of these names, as part of the automatic tendency to associate them with what writers knew of their own world, there is even more erroneous information.

Gage maintains that there were salt mines in the Tenochtitlan lakes, and after a complicated description, states that these lakes had two kinds of water that did not mix together. He says that the Alvarado River which (according to him) flows into the Gulf of Mexico, also ran practically under the gates of the city of Oaxaca, while boats arrived at the city by sailing up river. He states that the city of Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala was destroyed as the result of a curse cast upon it, due to the blasphemies of a Spanish woman, María de Castilla, who had lost her husband. (This Spanish lady is none other than Doña Beatriz de la Cueva, wife of the conquistador of Guatemala, Pedro de Alvarado.)

Curiously, Thomas Gage always noted military information referring to distances, coasts and cities. It may

have been that even in the 17th century, when Gage wrote, the monasteries were constructed a bit like forts, while the monks felt themselves at war with the infidels who surrounded them. It may also be that Gage was what so many have called him: an English spy.

Gage made numerous observations of this type: with a handful of men one could take this fort; such-and-such a city is not fortified, and would practically fall by itself into the hands of an enemy; all of the colonists of a given zone could not raise an army of more than this number of men; that river lacks forts along its course, and enemy ships could penetrate inland and take control of this or that zone.... We, of course, share the first hypothesis, because it would be childish to assume that such confidential information as this would be included in a book destined for publication.

An area that does not reflect errors on Gage's part, but rather unmistakable English national pride, is the treatment he affords the pirates. He calls Francis Drake and John Oxenham "gentlemen." However, this is not totally irrational if we consider that, in those days, England officially promoted piracy, decorating pirates with medals for their massacres of Spaniards in the New World. Thus it makes sense that Gage saw such indiscretions as legitimate "services rendered to the nation" ❧

\* Writer, essayist and journalist.

# Opera and the Conquest

*Fernando Alvarez del Castillo \**

**T**he oldest opera to take up the theme of Cortés and the Conquest seems to be *Montesuma*, written in 1733 by the celebrated cleric and renowned composer Antonio Vivaldi.

Yet Vivaldi's 38 operas never attained the level of his chamber music. His style lacked a powerful dramatic expression, making up for this with a rich musicality. His *Montesuma* debuted in Venice's San Angelo theater. Unfortunately the music was lost; all that remains is the libretto, by G. Giusti, and the opera notes.

The second composer to take up this controversial topic was Karl Heinrich Graun, who probably heard Vivaldi's opera in Venice. Only some excerpts from this opera have been recorded. Graun was born on May 7, 1704, to an aristocratic Saxon-Polish family in Wahrenbruck.

His two older brothers were also musicians. Johann Gottlieb, the middle brother, was one of the best violinists of his era, a disciple of Tartini, and concert master for Frederick the Great.

As a child, Graun had a beautiful voice; later, in 1724, he was hired as a tenor in the theater of the Brunswick court, a position he held until 1735. He was so disappointed by the first opera he sang in that he replaced the arias with his own compositions, achieving such success that he was commissioned to write his own opera, *Sancio und Sinilde*, in 1727.

This opera-writing debut was followed by *Polydorus* (1728-29), *Iphigenia in aulis* (1731), *Scipio africanus* (1732) and *Lo specchio*

*The Conquest of Mexico has inspired more than a dozen operas. While these have included not only serious works but also light comedies with some musical accompaniment, this article focuses on the significant lyric dramas.*

*della fedeltà* (1733), which was presented at the marriage of Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia, later Frederick II (the Great). This was also his first opera in Italian.

The prince was so impressed with Graun that in 1735 he took him into his service in Rheinsberg, where he remained until the coronation in 1740, when he went to Berlin as Frederick's own choirmaster.

The king was an ardent admirer of Italian music. He sent Graun to Italy to hire singers for one of his favorite projects, the construction of a new Italian opera house in Berlin. During his sojourn, Graun was warmly received as a singer in his own right for his brilliant tenor voice. After visiting Venice, Bologna, Florence, Rome and Naples, he returned to Berlin with a complete company of singers.

The theater project was so far behind schedule that Frederick constructed a temporary theater in his palace. *Rodelinda* was the first opera Graun wrote for Berlin, where it debuted. The following year, on December 7, 1742, he opened the new theater with his *Cesare e Cleopatra*. This marked a new

beginning for Graun, as a prolific composer of operas; he wrote at least one a year, and sometimes two or three.

During this period he wrote 27 operas for Berlin; *Montezuma* was the twenty-fourth, debuting in 1755. The long list of his works came to an end only with the turmoil of the Seven-Year War, the beginning of which, in 1756, shortly preceded Graun's death on August 7, 1759.

After the Seven-Year War, the Berlin opera reopened with Graun's *Merope*. In 1785 his *Orfeo* was staged—apparently the last time one of Graun's works was staged in this theater.

Graun had a special gift for melody and an exact understanding of how to write for the human voice, although only highly-skilled singers can overcome the numerous vocal difficulties his music presents. Oddly, his contemporaries, when comparing Graun to his rival Hasse, considered him more a lyricist than a dramatist, although his *Montezuma* holds together quite well dramatically. The librettist for Graun's *Montezuma* was Frederick the Great himself, who wrote the entire, magnificent libretto

\* Assistant Director of the Library of Mexico.



*Cortés and Moctezuma (18th-century engraving by G. Gallina).*

in French; it was later translated into Italian by court poet Tagliazucchi.

Six of Frederick's letters reveal his ideas regarding *Montezuma*. Writing to Count Francesco Algarotti in October of 1753, he said: "You will understand that my feelings will be on the side of Montezuma and that Cortés will be the tyrant; consequently one is able, albeit in music, to throw some darts at the Christian religion. But I forget that you are in a country which has the Inquisition. I feel sorry for you, and

hope to see you soon in a country of heretics, where opera may assist in reforming customs and destroying superstitions."

The king was also in favor of abolishing *da capo* arias in favor of the simpler *cavatina*. In 1754, he wrote to his sister, the Margravess of Bayreuth: "I am taking the liberty of putting at your feet a Mexican whose form is, as yet, not completely shaped. I have taught him to speak French; now he must learn Italian.... Most of the arias have been written to

be sung without repetitions. The only ones which have to be repeated are two arias for the emperor and two for Eupaforice."

In a later letter, also written in 1754, he added: "Repetitions are unnecessary, unless the singers know how to vary the music.... Repeating the same thing four times seems like an imposition to me."

Graun began the opera in May of 1754 and finished it at the beginning of November. It debuted on January 6, 1755; five more performances were given before the end of the winter opera season. *Montezuma* was a big success, and Frederick thought Graun had surpassed himself with this work.

The opera's recitatives are quite long. Frederick had a lot to say, and used the figure of Montezuma to express many of his own feelings. This 16th-century Hispano-Mexican story was still presented in the form of

18th-century Italian theater.

*Montezuma's* plot was vaguely modelled on Voltaire's *Alzire*.

Of the explorations carried out in the New World by Spanish conquistadors during the reign of King Carlos I of Spain (Charles V of Germany), those of Cortés were the most important and had the most far-reaching effects. His conquest of what is today Mexico brought about the fall of an ancient civilization, that of the Aztecs, and one of the first to suffer the consequences was the Aztec emperor.

As Frederick II saw it, Montezuma allowed the Spaniards to disembark in good faith. He realized too late that his generosity would cost him his life. The plot of the opera centered on the tragic death of this monarch, the story of his fiancée Eupaforce, queen of Tlaxcala, and the cruel behavior of the Spanish general Hernán Cortés.

Another important work from this period was the *Moteczuma* of Francisco di Majo, although the composer and his opera are little known today. Di Majo was born in Naples around 1740 and died in Rome in 1771. His *Moteczuma*, with a libretto by Vittorio Amadeo Cigna-Santi, debuted in Turin in 1765. While it achieved great popularity in Barcelona and Valencia, it never made it to Madrid.

The plot of this opera seems to have been based on *The Conquest of Mexico* by Antonio Solís, but with the usual variations and adaptations. The action begins with the Spaniards' approach to a great lake (Texcoco?), and ends, not with the complete conquest of Mexico, but with the death of Moctezuma. A number of dances composed by Francesco Guardini were added to the opera's three acts.

One of the outstanding operatic productions dealing with this theme was, without a doubt, the *Montezuma* composed by Giovanni Paisiello of Tarento, who was among the most prolific and remarkable composers of his time. Paisiello was born in 1740 in Roccaforzata and died in Naples in 1816. His *Montezuma*, the libretto for which was also written by Vittorio Amadeo Cigna-Santi, debuted in Rome in 1772.

Music history has not been kind to Paisiello—several of his operas are virtually unknown—but during his lifetime he was in the forefront of Italian and French opera, as well as achieving the distinction of being named choirmaster to Catherine II of Prussia. It was even feared that Rossini's *Barber of Seville* would flop

because of the success of Paisiello's work of the same name.

Three years after the debut of Paisiello's *Montezuma* in Rome, another *Moteczuma* made its debut in London—this time by the renowned Antonio Maria Gasparo Sacchini, who was born in Florence in 1730 and died in Paris in 1786. The libretto was by Botarelli. This opera, now fallen into the most complete oblivion, enjoyed a certain prestige in its day.

With the passage of time, the theme of the Conquest continued to attract Europeans' interest. As the story was filled with myths, tragedies, adventures and mystery, even the name of the Mexican emperor changed from one work to another.

In 1781 a new *Montesuma* appeared, once again with a libretto by Vittorio Amadeo, and this time with music by Nicola Antonio Zingarelli, who was born in Naples in 1752 and died in 1837 in a town near his native city.

The high posts that Zingarelli held, such as Vatican choirmaster and director of the Naples Conservatory, give us an idea of his remarkable ability as a composer.

In 1786, Rome witnessed the debut of the Italian opera *Fernando nel Messico* (Ferdinand in Mexico), by the Neapolitan composer Giuseppe Giordani, known as Giordanello so as to distinguish him from his brother Tomasso, who was a more important composer. Giuseppe, who lived from 1753 to 1798, wrote approximately 35 operas.

While the Conquest was an attractive topic for many composers, it was never as popular as the stories of Orpheus or Mithridates, for example. European audiences found it more exotic than dramatic, and therefore less attractive.

Despite the printed narratives of the Conquest that circulated throughout Europe, librettos on the topic were scarce. The fact that the Conquest was a "Spanish event" may have led other

countries to view it with a certain disdain, albeit not with total disinterest.

Italy, for example, always displayed a certain interest in operatic productions related to the Conquest. In Venice's San Benedetto, another opera on Cortés made its debut in 1797, also with the title *Fernando in Messico*. This opera, with a libretto by Traducci, was written by the Portuguese composer Marcos Antonio Portugal, who Italianized his name as Marc'Antonio di Portogallo.

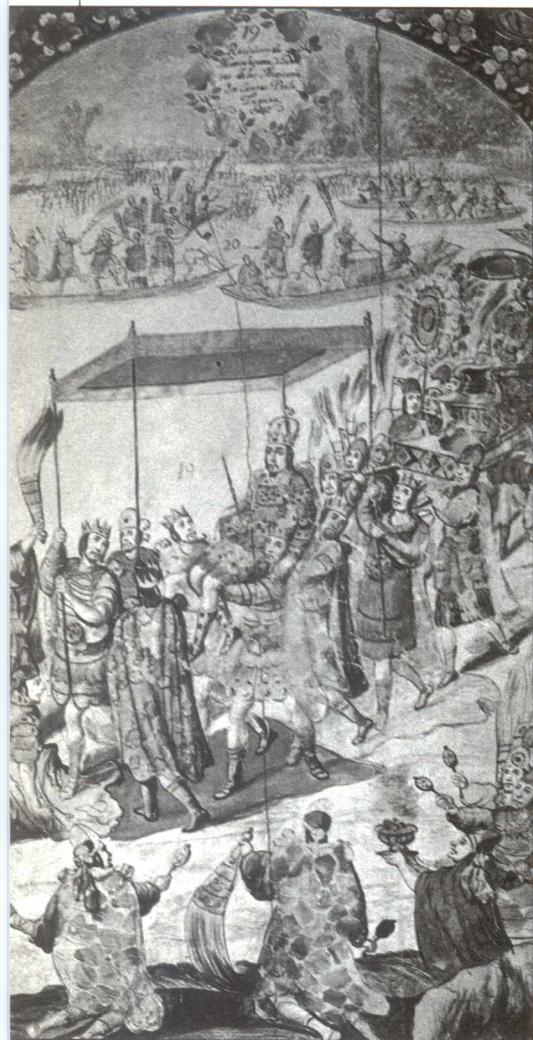
Born in Lisbon in 1762, Portogallo wrote 40 operas before his death in Rio de Janeiro in 1830. One of his works debuted in 1801 in Paris at the opening of the Italian theater, in accordance with the orders of then-consul Napoleon Bonaparte.

One of the most singular and important productions in the history of opera is Gasparo Spontini's *Hernán Cortés or the Conquest of Mexico*. Spontini was born in Maiolati on November 14, 1774, and died in the same city on January 24, 1851. The son of peasants, his talent led to a brilliant career; he was even made a member of the nobility, with the title of Count of San Andrea.

Spontini spent many years in France, where he presented his best operas: *La vestale*, *Olimpia* and *Hernán Cortés*. Private composer for the Empress Josephine and later music director for the king of Prussia, he was also a member of the Institute of France and would surely have been awarded further honors if his prickly and ill-tempered personality had not gotten in the way.

*Hernán Cortés*, which was dedicated to the Count of Pradel, debuted in Paris on November 28, 1809, and was an instant success. Nevertheless, the transition between scenes left much to be desired, leading the librettist Jouy (also known for his work with Rossini) to reverse the order of the acts.

In the original version, the first act was extremely vigorous and made



Moctezuma as depicted in a Colonial screen painting.

a big impact on the audience, while the following acts were less interesting. The new version of the opera made its debut on May 8, 1817, and was even more successful than the original.

Berlioz, not an easy man to please, declared that the uprising scene and the second act were so moving that when he heard them he felt overcome by emotion. Wagner praised the opera as well.

Spontini noted that "In *La vestale* I dealt with a Roman theme; in *Hernán Cortés* with a Hispano-Mexican drama; in *Olimpia* with a Greco-Macedonian legend; and in *Inés de Hohenstaufen* with a German brawl. All the rest is worthless."

England did not remain entirely aloof from the epic of Cortés. London's Convent Garden was the scene of the debut, on December 5, 1822, of an opera entitled *Cortés or the Conquest of Mexico*; the music was by Henry Rowley Bishop (1786-1855), almost universally considered the best English composer of his day. The libretto, written by Planche, was based on the work of the illustrious blind American writer Prescott.

Bishop took the post of director of Convent Garden in 1810, with a five-year contract which was renewed for another five years. He also devoted himself to teaching in Edinburgh and was so highly regarded that in 1842 Queen Victoria awarded him a noble title, a distinction which had not been given to any other musician.

The Viennese composer Ignaz Xaver Seyfried, who was born in 1776 and died in 1841, was a disciple of Mozart and Albrechtsberger and, for thirty years, director of the Schikaneder theater (named for the theater's founder, the librettist for *The magic flute*). Highly regarded in Austria and other countries, by the time of his death at the age of 65 he had received awards from the Austrian states as well as the cities of Paris, Nuremberg, Prague and Stockholm.

His renown was due in part to his famous "melologues," a theatrical production in which the actor or actors interrupted their speeches to listen to pieces of instrumental music which expressed the feeling of the given scene. His *Montezuma* was one of his most famous "melologues," debuting in Vienna in 1825.

Spain has not produced many operas, and few indeed on the subject of the Conquest—in part because of the popularity of the *zarzuela* (musical comedy). Still, there are a few.

On July 14, 1832, in Madrid's Príncipe Theater, an opera on the Conquest made its debut; entitled *La heroína de México* (The heroine of Mexico), it was a serious melodrama

in two acts. The libretto, by Ferretti, carried the following notation: "The plot of the melodrama is pure invention, although it rests upon a number of universally recognized historical characters. As protagonist, the author chose a Spanish hero already celebrated in other poems, and presented the fable in the way he considered most favorable for creating an illusion." The music was written by the Italian master Luigi Ricci.

The opera *Hernán Cortés o la conquista de México*, by the Spanish composer Ignacio Ovejero—who was only 18 years old—was presented for the first time in Madrid's Circus Theater, on March 18, 1848. The work was a failed attempt to combine different texts and attitudes. After this production, Ovejero devoted himself exclusively to writing *zarzuelas*.

This very brief list must necessarily include a Mexican opera which is directly related to the topic of Cortés: the symphonic drama *Tata Vasco*, by Miguel Bernal Jiménez, a composer from the state of Michoacán. The opera, with a text by Manuel Muñoz, made its debut in 1941.

*Tata Vasco* was composed to commemorate the fourth centenary of the arrival in Pátzcuaro of Michoacán's first bishop, Vasco de Quiroga, an illustrious figure who was made a member of the church hierarchy virtually overnight as a result of his intellectual qualities and good works on behalf of the Indians.

Also worthy of mention is a simple work entitled *Malinche*, which lasts 45 minutes and was recently presented for the first time in Great Britain. It was written by the English composer Paul Barker. The plot unfolds in 1519. The chorus sings in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, while Cortés switches back and forth between Spanish and Latin.

As background for this text, I have used José Subirá's article "Hernán Cortés in theatrical music" **M**

# The true history of the Conquest of Mexico

*Bernal Díaz del Castillo*

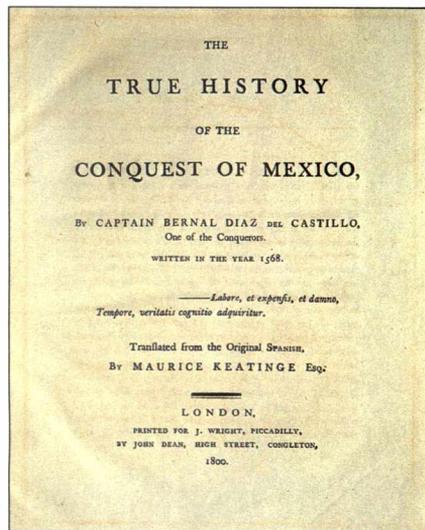


One of the first European witnesses to the grandeur of Tenochtitlan.

*Bernal Díaz del Castillo accompanied Hernán Cortés on his expedition to Mexico from 1519 to 1521. Together with the other soldiers, he was among the first European witnesses to the grandeur of Tenochtitlan, capital of the Aztec empire. In his memoirs, he describes the arrival of Cortés and his men at Tenochtitlan, marveling at the buildings, canals, gardens and the overall beauty of the capital city. The English version is taken from the book The true history of the Conquest of Mexico, translated from the original Spanish by Maurice Keatinge, Esq., printed for J. Wright, Piccadilly, by John Dean, London, 1800.*

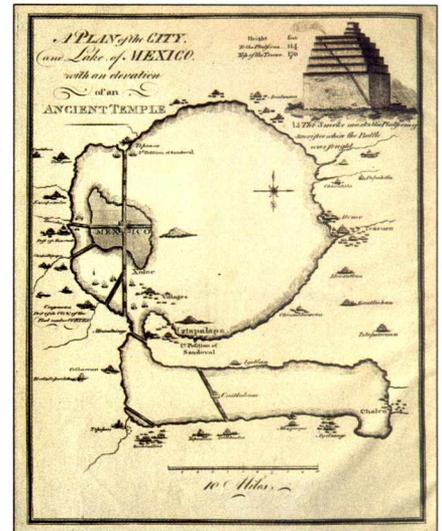
### The Spanish army proceeds on its march to Mexico

Early in the morning, when we were on the point of marching, a centinel came to inform us, that a great number of Mexicans, richly dressed, were upon the road. Cortés therefore ordered us to return into our quarters, and at that instant four of the principal courtiers of Mexico arrived, and waiting on Cortés with great respect informed him, that Cacamatzin lord of Tezcuco, the nephew of the great Montezuma, was



*Mural of Tenochtitlan (detail)  
by Diego Rivera.*

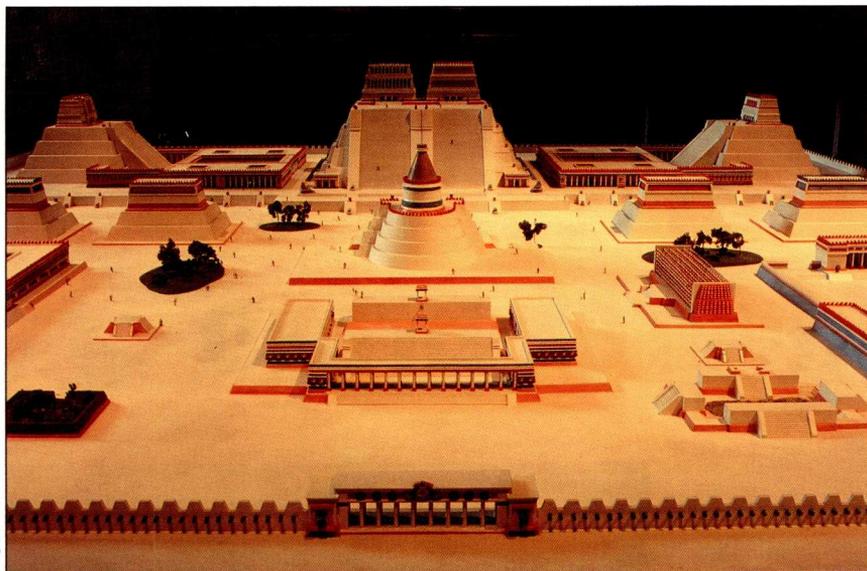
*A plan of the city and lake of  
Mexico with an elevation  
of an ancient temple.*



*Jorge González Camarena, The embrace, 1980.*

approaching, and requested that he would wait to receive him.

Cacamatzin followed in the greatest pomp, carried in a magnificent litter adorned with green plumes, and enriched with jewels, set in the branched pillars of solid gold. He was borne by eight lords, who assisted him out of the litter, and swept the way by which he was to pass. When he came into the presence of Cortés he said to him, "Malintzin, here am I and those lords to attend you



Sergio Dorantes.

Model of Tenochtitlan in the National Museum of Anthropology.

to your residence in our city, by order of the great Montezuma.”

Cortés embraced the prince, and presented him with three jewels of that kind called margajitas, which are figured in different colours. We then set forward on the road to Mexico, which was crowded with multitudes of the natives, and arrived at the causeway of Iztapalapa, which leads to that capital.

When we beheld the number of populous towns on the water and firm ground, and that broad causeway, running straight and level to the city, we could compare it to nothing but the enchanted scenes we had read of

in Amadis of Gaul, from the great towers and temples, and other edifices of lime and stone which seemed to rise out of the water.

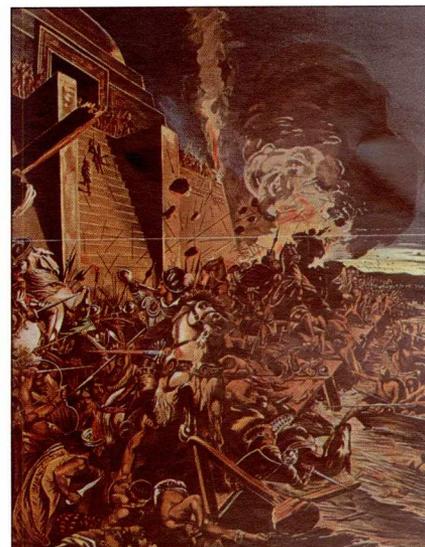
To many of us it appeared doubtful whether we were asleep or awake; nor is the manner in which I express myself to be wondered at, for it must be considered, that never yet did man see, hear, or dream of anything equal to the spectacle which appeared to our eyes on this day.

When we approached Iztapalapa, we were received by several great lords of that country, relations of Montezuma, who conducted us to our

lodgings there, in palaces magnificently built of stone, and the timber of which was cedar, with spacious courts, and apartments furnished with canopies of the finest cotton.

After having contemplated these noble edifices we walked through the gardens, which were admirable to behold from the variety of beautiful and aromatic plants, and the numerous alleys filled with fruit trees, roses, and various flowers.

Here was also a lake of the clearest water, which communicated with the grand lake of Mexico by a channel cut for the purpose, and capable of admitting the largest canoes.



This place was so destroyed that the natives themselves could hardly know it.



Never did man see, hear or dream of anything equal to the spectacle which appeared to our eyes on this day.

The whole was ornamented with works of arts, painted, and admirably plaistered and whitened, and it was rendered more delightful by numbers of beautiful birds.

When I beheld the scenes that were around me, I thought within myself that this was the garden of the world! This place, was at the time of which I am speaking, with one half of the houses in the water, and the other half on dry land; but all is destroyed, and that which was a lake is now a tract of fields of Indian corn, and so entirely altered that the natives themselves could hardly know it. ❧

# Olga Costa and Lola Alvarez Bravo

## The bittersweet painting of Olga Costa

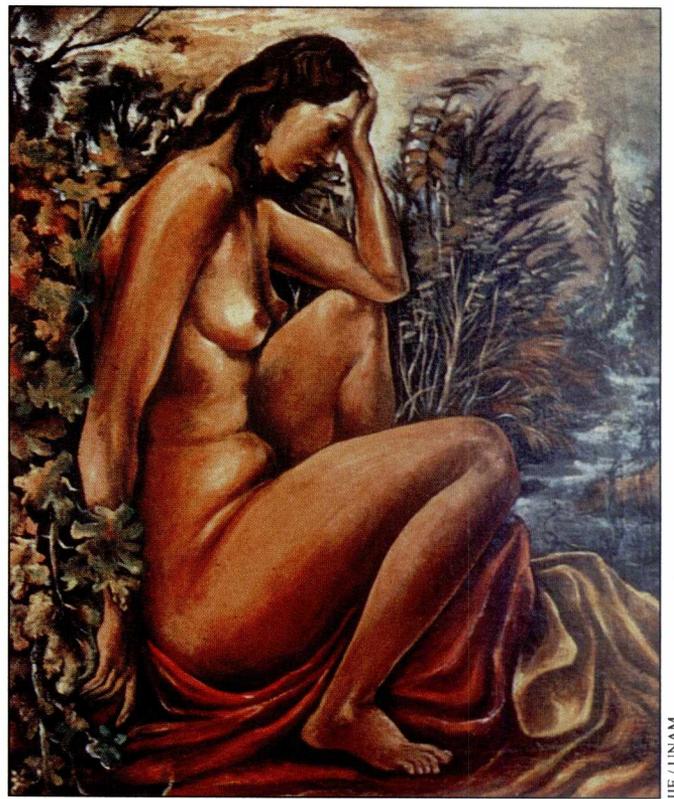
Olga Costa (1913-1993) used to say that painting had a bittersweet taste, since it was both pleasure and suffering. Her favorite subjects were flowers, fruit and landscapes; her paintings are filled with color.

Costa's still life *Mexican fruits* (1951, approx. 6 1/2' x 8') is one of the best to have been painted in this country. Renamed *Fruit vendor*, it is much admired abroad and is rightly considered a classic of 20th-century Mexican painting.

Olga was born in Leipzig, the first child of Anna and Jakof Kostakowsky, who had moved to Germany from Odessa. When World War I broke out the family moved to



*I went to the field and picked them, 1986, oil on masonite.*



*Girl of Janitzio, 1951, oil.*

Berlin, emigrating in 1925 to Mexico, where Olga became a Mexican citizen.

The Kostakowskys were an artistic family. Olga's father was a violinist and composer of symphonic music. Olga participated in the chorus at the Colegio Alemán (German School) until she decided to take up painting. Her sister Lya was a writer and the wife of Luis Cardoza y Aragón, who died recently (see *Voices of Mexico* 22).

Olga's contact with the foremost artists of her time, such as Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and Rufino Tamayo, was key to her decision to dedicate her life to painting. As an artist she was self-taught, having attended classes at the San Carlos National School of Fine Arts for only four months. It

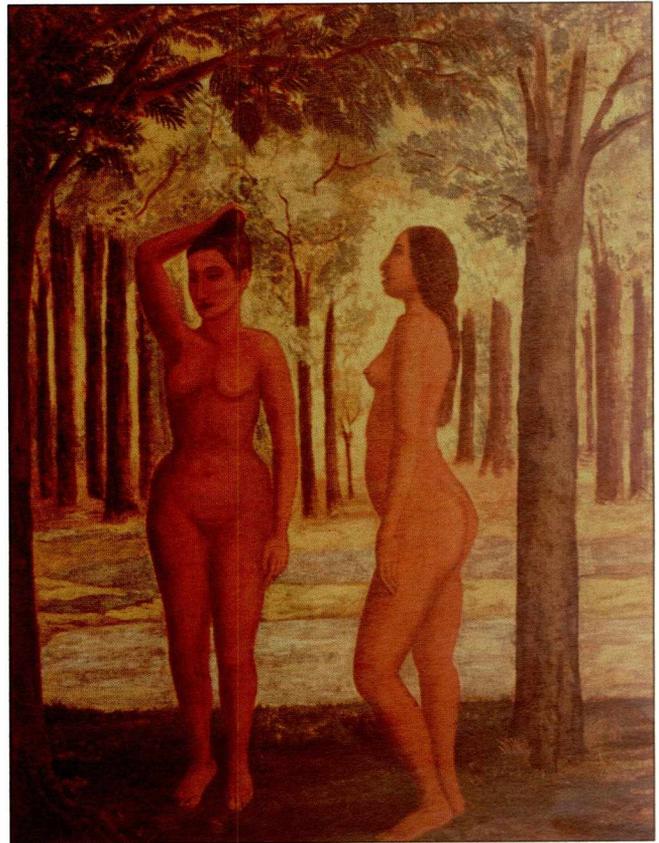
was at San Carlos, in 1933, that she met the man she would marry two years later: José Chávez Morado, a fellow student of hers in the lithography workshop who was to become an important muralist (see *Voices of Mexico* 22).

“With her teacher at home” she went through several phases, according to Sergio Pitol: scenes infused with humor, what she called “the irony of affectation,” still lifes and portraits, scenes of Mexican customs, an immersion in open spaces, up to the phantom gardens she painted during her last years.

In 1943 she founded the Society for Modern Art, the first Mexican gallery to show significant foreign exhibitions. Olga presented her first one-woman exhibit in



Blue flowers, 1987, oil on canvas.

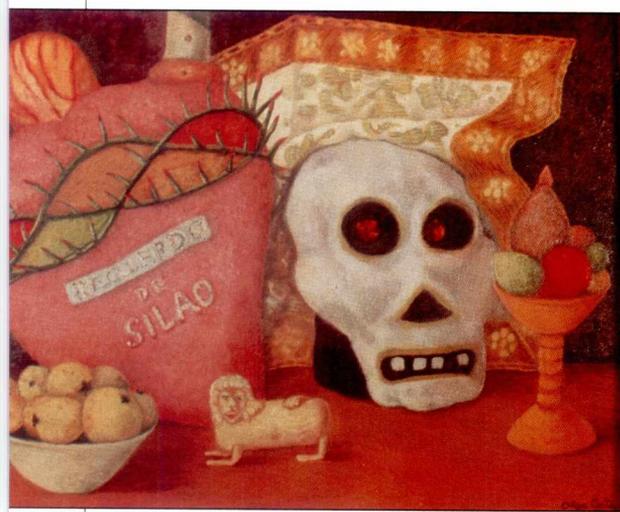


Two women in the forest, 1945, mixed media on paper.

1945; in 1952 she did her only mural, a mosaic which decorates the Agua Hedionda spa in Cuautla, Morelos.

At the beginning of her career she was attracted by the human figure, but later abandoned it almost completely: “I used to really like painting people, but now, this overproduction —masses who overwhelm you— horrifies me. I am truly terrified by crowds and public transport; places filled with people just kill me.

*Two distinguished Mexican women artists died earlier this year. Both lived long lives (Olga died at the age of 80 and Lola at 86) devoted to the fine arts, and married men involved in the same artistic disciplines as they were. While Olga, the painter, used her maiden name (albeit in Hispanicized form) and considered her husband to be her teacher, Lola, the photographer, used her married name and never felt herself to be a disciple of her husband. The ashes of one were scattered on land and those of the other at sea.*



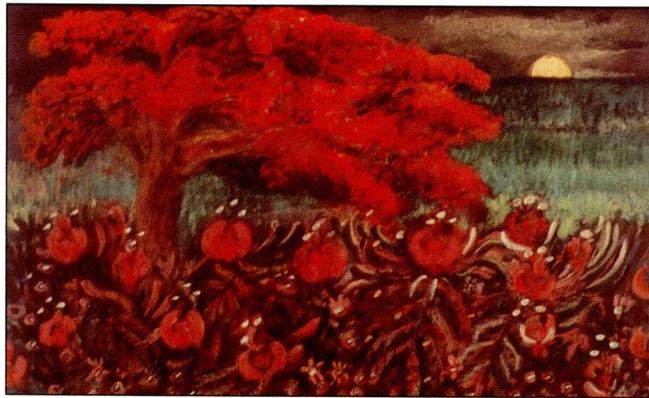
IIE / UNAM.

*Souvenirs of Silao, 1954, oil on masonite.*



IIE / UNAM.

*Dead child, 1944, oil on canvas.*



IIE / UNAM.

*Tropics, 1990, mixed media on paper.*

*Girl with cat.*



IIE / UNAM.

*The duel, 1942, oil on canvas.*



IIE / UNAM.

IIE / UNAM.



*The Valenciana mine, 1955.*

IIE / UNAM.



*Selfish heart, 1951, oil.*

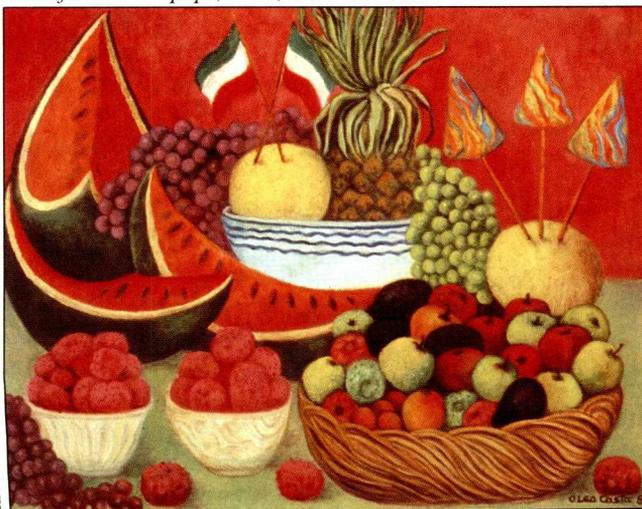
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*Pilgrims, 1957.*

*Still life with lollipops, 1983, oil on canvas.*

IIE / UNAM.



*Garden with poinsettias, 1985, oil on linen.*

IIE / UNAM.



"It's the brute force of the mass which invades everyplace and goes around destroying nature, like ants. And their noise, their radios. I have often thought about why I stopped painting people, and the truth is there is a sort of rejection there."

Olga Costa had other passions in addition to painting. She cultivated exotic and delicate plants—the sort that gardeners usually want nothing to do with; and she collected idols and art books, "well-made books," even at the cost of going broke sometimes.

In 1966 Costa and Chávez moved to Guanajuato, where they participated in setting up the Alhóndiga de Granaditas Museum. In 1975 they donated their rich collection of pre-Hispanic, Colonial and folk art to this museum, and in 1979 they founded the Museum of the People of Guanajuato, to which they also donated pieces from their collection.

Recognition for Olga Costa's art was late in coming. Only in the 1980s were there significant retrospective exhibitions of her painting, as her pictures began to fetch high prices at New York auctions.

A tribute to her work was presented at the 1989 International Cervantine Festival, and the following year she was awarded the National Prize for Science and Art in the field of fine arts, becoming the second woman to receive this honor (the first was Guillermina Bravo, in 1979).

The jury considered that she deserved this distinction "since for five decades she has carried out work of high artistic quality..., in recognition of her special calling as a collector, devoted to gathering objects of historical, cultural and artistic value for public enjoyment..., and because Mexico unambiguously wishes to claim as its own those personalities who, although born abroad, have carried out work in this country which is of significance to the life of our nation."

Olga Costa died on April 28.

Her body was cremated and the ashes were placed in the garden she cultivated in her home, which today houses the Museum of the House of Olga Costa and José Chávez Morado. The museum, inaugurated two months before her death, exhibits the 293-piece collection gathered by the couple over the course of their life together. Visitors will find it at the former Hacienda de Guadalupe de Pastita in Guanajuato.

### The photographic heritage of Lola Alvarez Bravo

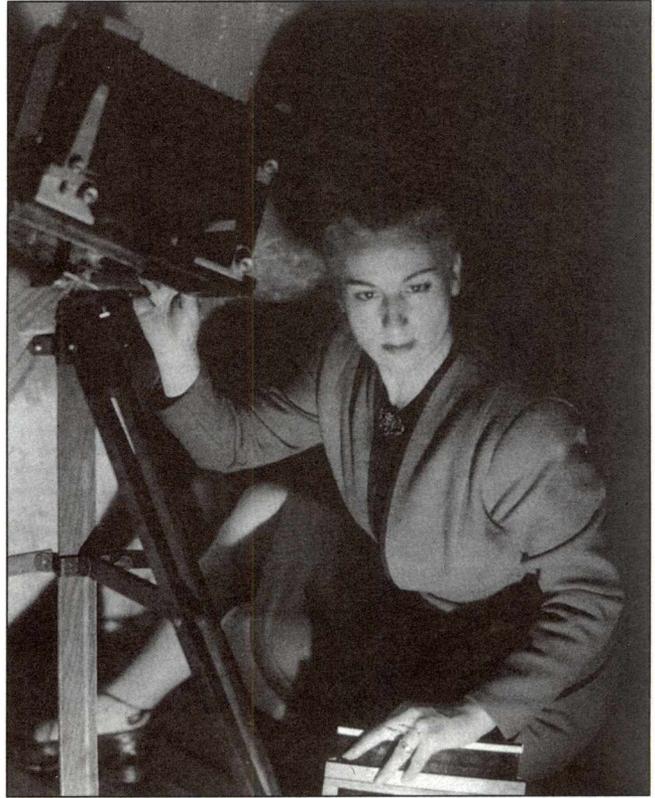
Dolores Martínez de Anda was born on April 3, 1907, in Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco. At the age of 18 she married the photographer Manuel Alvarez Bravo, from whom she separated in 1934 (the divorce was formalized 15 years later). Speaking of her former husband, she said: "He is the best photographer there is, yet he was not my teacher but my companion in developing intuition." The two were the only photographers included in the exhibit of "20 centuries of Mexican art" shown in 1940 at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Since she was known as Lola Alvarez Bravo, she decided to continue using her married name after her separation.



*The drowned man's dream.*



Olga Costa. Portrait by Lola Alvarez Bravo.



The photographer teaching a class, 1947.

Raúl Abarca.

For a woman in 1930, working meant standing up to all of society. Woman as a shotgun, loaded and standing in a corner. Lola, whose separation was supposed to destroy her completely, threw herself into the streets to take photographs. Only Tina Modotti had dared to do this and that's how things went for her; they landed on her like a ton of bricks. God save us from deciding about our own lives; that idea was the devil's work. Damn communists. All the women who dared to break taboos -Lupe Marín, Nahui Olin, María Izquierdo, Antonieta Rivas Mercado, Concha Michel, Aurora Reyes, Frida Kahlo and the wayfaring Benita Galeana, who went to meetings carrying her bedroll- they would all wind up very badly indeed. Keep at it, keep at it, daughters of Eve, and you'll just see where you end up, in hell, getting your behinds burned in a bonfire, in the ground. Her heaven among her friends who couldn't live without her, her hell in the daily challenge to go out in the streets to see. Lola took on all the dangers, all the difficulties, the suffering and solitude; she accepted the challenges, the "what will everybody say," she jumped over all the puddles, captured the textures of misery, and above all knocked down obstacles. She saw herself just as she was -a young, beautiful and free woman. She decided that nobody would tie that young woman's hands or shut her eyes.

Elena Poniatowska  
La Jornada, August 1, 1993.



*Lya Kostakowsky de Cardoza y Aragón.*

*Ruth Rivera Marin.*

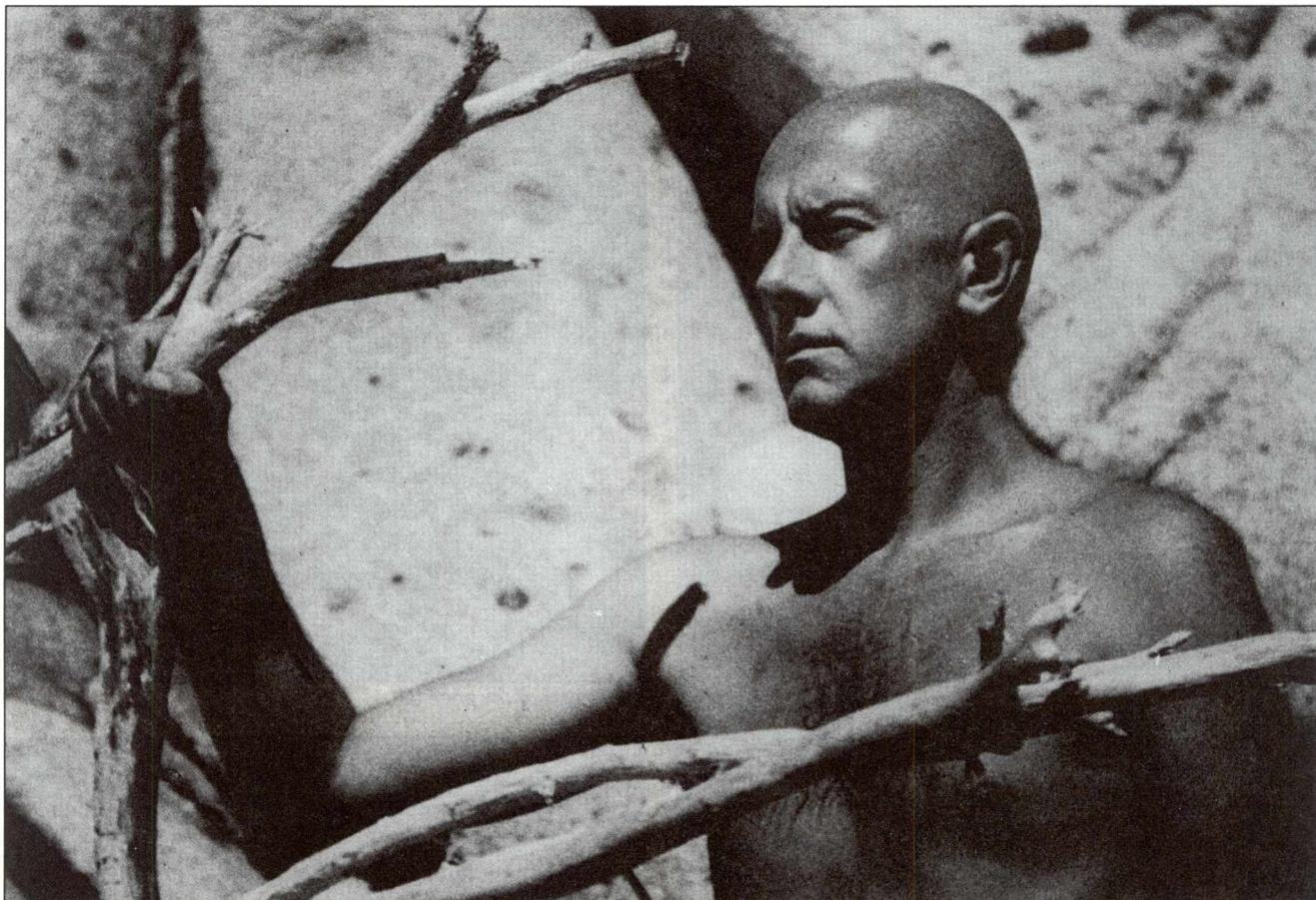


She admired couples such as Luis and Lya Cardoza y Aragón, whose life together was based on mutual trust and security. The break-up of her marriage was caused by Manuel's predilection for women. There was an attempt at reconciliation. He proposed that she stop working and stop seeing her friends. Yet when she asked what he would do in return for her agreeing to such foolishness, "nothing" was his response. He would keep on doing whatever he wanted, since after all he was a man.

A free woman, called a "libertine" by some of her contemporaries, friend to the great writers and artists of her day, tireless traveler, gifted with the sight of her photographer's third eye, Lola's life was filled with vivid experiences. Those who had the opportunity to listen to her anecdotes describe her as a great conversationalist. When she died she left us the legacy of approximately seven thousand negatives.

The main tools of her trade were two cameras: an "8 by 10" and a Graflex which was extremely valuable since its previous owners were Edward Weston and then Tina Modotti. When Modotti was deported from Mexico in 1930 she sold the camera to Lola.

Lola said that when she took her first photo as an employee of the Publications and Press Office of the



Francisco Tario.

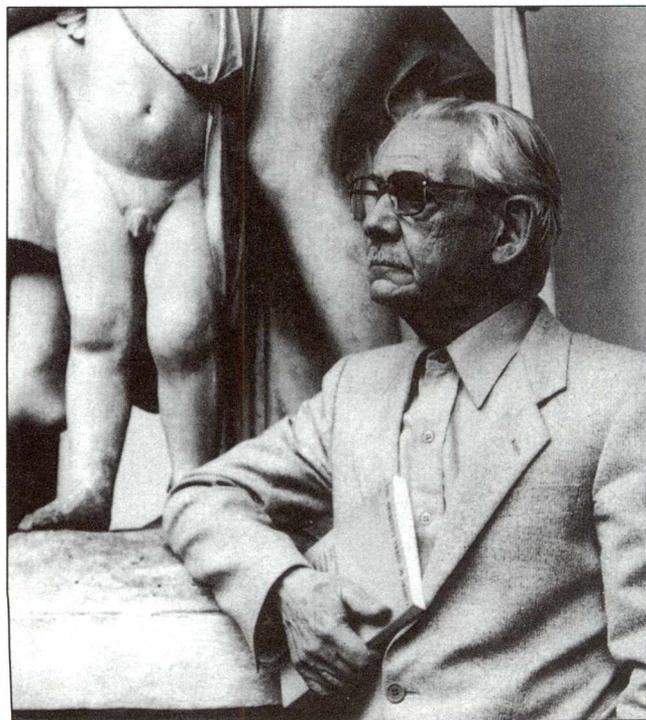
Secretariat of Public Education, soon after her separation from Manuel, she was so nervous and her arms were shaking so violently that two of her friends had to hold her up to keep her from falling.

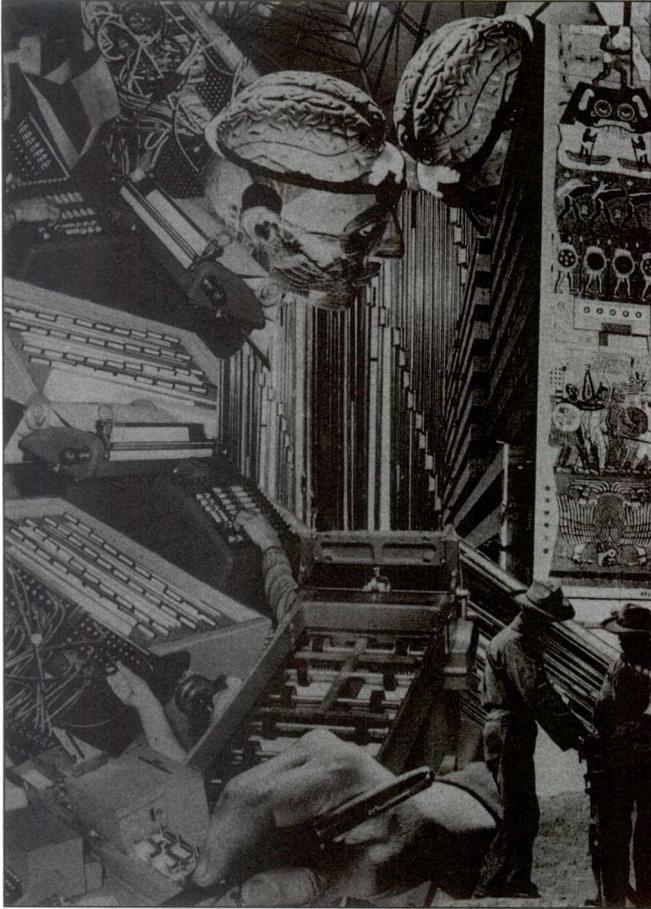
After renting a room in the painter María Izquierdo's house in Tacuba, in the mid-1930s she introduced photo-montage to Mexico. Among her outstanding works in this medium are *The dream of the poor II*, *Making a path*, *Women's university*, *Northern threads I*, *Computer I*, *Architectural anarchy of Mexico City*, *Railways*, *Mermaids of the air* and *The drowned man's dream*.

She also specialized in portraits. Her exhibit of Indian portraits, "The family of man," was shown in several countries, and some of her portraits are on exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The best photos of Frida Kahlo are considered to be those taken by Lola.

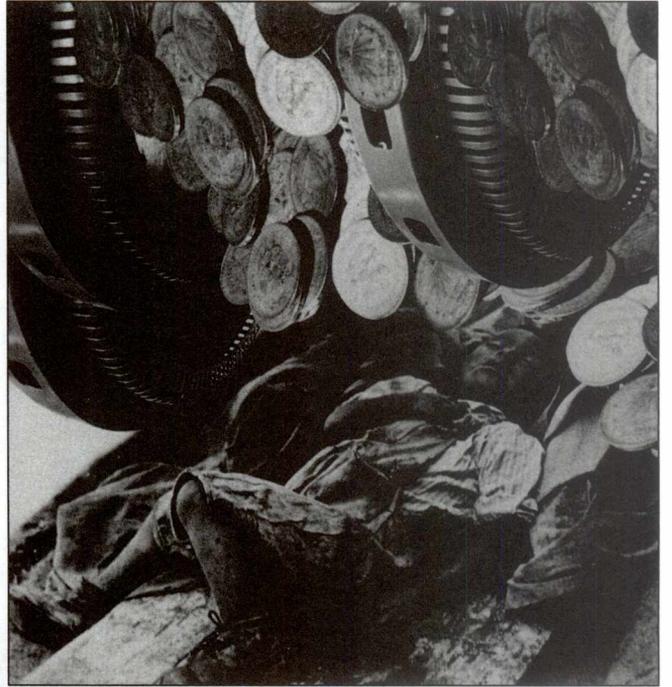
In 1950, with the support of Juan Soriano and Diego de Mesa, she opened the Gallery of Contemporary Art, better known as "the gallery of Lola Alvarez Bravo," presenting 50 exhibitions by more than 150 artists. In fact, the only individual exhibition of Frida Kahlo's paintings shown during Kahlo's life was presented at this museum, in 1953, a few months before the painter's death.

Manuel Alvarez Bravo.





Computer I.



The dream of the poor II.



Manuel Alvarez Bravo.



Some go up, some go down.



Lola's son Manuel at the age of two.

In 1945 she succeeded Manuel Alvarez Bravo as senior professor of photography at the San Carlos art school. She was considered an excellent teacher because of the enthusiasm she inspired in her students. During the same year she moved to an apartment on Juárez Avenue in downtown Mexico City, where she was to live for more than 40 years. One of her last visitors there was pop music star Madonna, who came seeking information on Frida for the movie she wanted to make on the celebrated Mexican painter's life. Lola said she did not think Madonna would be able to portray Frida well, since she lacked the latter's intensity.

Lola was the first photographer in Mexico to publish a book of her own photos (*Acapulco en el sueño* [Acapulco in dreams], 1951). Despite her role as a pioneer in her field, responsible for professionalizing photography in this country, her first one-woman show was held only in 1965, in the Palace of Fine Arts.

During this period Lola made a brief foray into the movies. The subject of her one short feature was Diego Rivera's murals in the chapel of Chapingo. Other projects did not materialize; the one she planned to carry out on Frida, with the artist's personal participation, did not come to fruition because of Frida's illness and death.

Speaking of her fellowship with the great intellectuals and proximity to their work, she said: "If I had not

*Mermaids of the air.*

*The daydream. Portrait of Isabel Villaseñor.*





Rogelio Cuéllar.

Lola decided that nobody would tie her hands or shut her eyes.

followed the painters' work so closely and put so much into studying how to reproduce their paintings and murals, the sense of composition and balance, perhaps it would have taken me longer to make the photos that I do. This helped me to educate myself, to have the ideas I have and to be what I am, if indeed I am something."

Old age and illness robbed her of her love of life. She spent her last years in virtual seclusion in her last home, on Sinaloa street, where she moved so as to be close to her son (Manuel Alvarez Bravo, also a photographer), who was her only child. A bad fall, in which she broke her legs and ribs, left her in a wheelchair. Interviewed in October of 1992, she said she no longer loved life "because I am tired now; I am just bearing life, I see it and no longer love it since, with so much illness, I can no longer work as a photographer."

On July 31 death brought this extraordinary woman the rest she desired, and her ashes were spread on the beach at Chachalacas, Veracruz, which she had often visited with many of her celebrated and beloved friends **M**

Marybel Toro Gayol

Managing Editor.

**XX**  
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la creación literaria

**EN ABIERTA OSCURIDAD**

Juan GELMAN

En esta antología personal, el autor reúne en orden cronológico, poemas escritos en los últimos 30 años y publicados en diferentes libros. Cada libro es obediencia a una obsesión particular que buscaba agotarse. De ahí la diversidad de expresión de estos poemas, cuya unidad tal vez resida en el deseo —y su fracaso— de dar con la palabra que calla lo que dice.

sociología y política

**EUROPA DEL ESTE: DEL  
STALINISMO A LA DEMOCRACIA**

Jan PATULA

En este trabajo de tipo histórico, se busca reconstruir las diferentes dinámicas del proceso de cambio a lo largo de más de treinta años, que se inician con una modalidad nacional, como fué el caso yugoslavo, pero que pronto se amplió al conjunto de los países de la región. El autor nos describe el itinerario de las muchas 'sublevaciones' intelectuales y físicas contra el socialismo dogmático y autoritario.

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Novedades

# Sonata and fugue

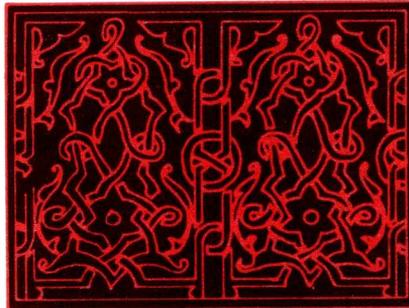
*Rosamaría Casas*

**I** It's the best thing that could have happened to us, Federico told me when they assigned him to the Mexican embassy in Brussels. Some time in the First World will smooth out the rough edges.

Our differences only moved to a new climate, although now I'm able to study restoration. In Mexico I had to help make ends meet. The meticulousness of this work allows for abstraction and erases the tedium of superficial flirtations at receptions and meetings with the wives of functionaries from other embassies. I never manage to fit into those sad groups of women who live through their husbands' diplomatic exile, worn out by the problems their children have in adapting, the difficulty of communicating with the help, and the language, which few of them bother to study.

One day I forget the tea organized by the ambassador's wife. Federico's annoyance is of such magnitude, his insults so wounding and his fear that I will leave him so acute, that we decide to separate for several days. Alone, each of us will regain their serenity and the proper perspective of our love, which is stifling at times. Maybe with a rest this sensation of emptiness, which is beginning to overpower me, will diminish. My daily life belongs to unknown people and the shell of my fragility is beginning to crack.

**II** I feel like a note detached from the scale. It is impossible to know whether what I am seeing through the window is the scenery of a rainy afternoon, or if I am on a bridge, and my eyes, which are on the brink of overflowing,



bring me this impression of a fragmented landscape. What is holding up my ankles?

When I regain my balance I see that I am holding a post card from Brussels, showing the alleyways of the Rempart des Béguines, which we walked through so many times; then I throw it in the wastebasket.

I came to Istanbul to lose myself in anonymity. My long, black hair, dark eyes and dark skin will let me pass unnoticed, despite my blue jeans, down jacket and thick-soled shoes.

I don't want an American-style hotel, with its smell of air recycled through ducts and its distant employees, where, moreover, I would run the risk of meeting people I know.

I am in the Pera Palas. Agatha Christie stayed here to get the ambience for one of her novels. Greta Garbo was a frequent guest. Pierre Loti might have stayed in this very room. When I run into their ghosts I will ask them why the channel of love always passes through torrents of adversity.

It's delightful to walk barefoot through these silken carpets, filled with flowers and colorful birds; the bathroom looks like it's made of slices from the blue mosque shown in the guidebook, and the soap smells of patchouli.

It is November, cold and foggy. With map in hand, I walk to the mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent. I am surprised to find it virtually hidden in a motley residential neighborhood. From far off one sees only the minarets and some of the cupolas. Nobody is there but a little boy who watches over the shoes left in the entranceway. Inside, it is intensely cold. I stay to one side, sitting cross-legged, afraid of venturing into areas forbidden to women. From this corner I can admire all the splendor of the mosque.

### III

My eyes were fixed on the dome when I felt a presence at my side. A tall man, dressed in a black tunic and a burgundy turban, held out his hand to me.

—Come, I will show you my city —he said in an authoritarian voice.

I felt no fear. When I looked into his eyes I saw they were very green. He is handsome, I thought. I took his hand and let him lead me. We climbed into a kind of carriage drawn by a horse and adorned with multicolored carpets.

—What is your name?

—Isabel.

—I am Abdul, he said smiling, and began to tell me the history of the Turkish capital.

I cannot recall the paths we took through the city, but I know Istanbul as if I had seen it a thousand times in a travel documentary. I know the names and locations of each of its museums, mosques, bazaars, palaces, parks. I smell the aromas of the spice market, the fish stalls, the perfume shops; I feel the swaying of the boat that took us across the Bosphorus as we

contemplated the Golden Horn while twilight fell.

Night was drawing near when the carriage stopped in front of the Topkapi Palace. Abdul led me to the flank of one of the walls, to a little door far from the main entrance. It must be a direct entry to the seraglio, I said to myself.

(If Federico only saw me now, I thought, and right away forgot about him; it wasn't the right time for uncomfortable memories.)

We were received by a group of women, who laughed and chattered amongst themselves in an incomprehensible language, but I understood their malicious looks of complicity. Drawing me away from Abdul, they led me through a series of tiny rooms, furnished with little tables, braziers, vases and cushions.

We reached an area surrounded by walls covered in mosaics of blue and white flowers, like those of the mosque. They began to remove my clothes. Many hands undressed my docility, throwing each article of clothing into a corner, amidst laughter and grimaces of disgust.

I felt as if my skin were coming off when they made me get into a bathtub filled with almost-boiling water. They wouldn't let me get out, and when I thought I was about to faint, in the midst of clouds of steam that came I knew not from where, they began to lash my body with streams of icy water. I was about to lose consciousness from the pain of this water-lashing when they submerged me once again, this time in a milky liquid, perfumed and warm; dozing from fatigue, I felt those unknown hands washing and brushing my hair.

I soon understood the wisdom of this ancient ritual, each of whose facets I would learn to enjoy. My muscles came back to life with the vigorous massage as they rubbed my skin with a ointment of geraniums, jasmine, roses and sandalwood,

which took away my body hair and penetrated the epidermis, softening and beautifying it.

Facing a mirror of burnished silver, I saw the reflection of a different woman, with shining hair and a completely hairless body, like that of a girl, with slightly protuberant breasts. The new line of my eyebrows made my eyes look larger; my face had been transformed by the powders they used as makeup for my eyelashes, cheeks and lips.

They dressed me in loose pants of light, almost transparent silk, fastened at the ankles and waist by bands embroidered with gold and precious stones; a muslin blouse with matching cuffs and a short jacket made of the same material. My hair, loose and reaching to my knees, was covered by a white veil, held in place by a round cap made of the same material as the jacket and blouse. I did not recognize the image I saw in the mirror; it was like seeing another woman, who followed my movements and copied my smile. Each night the clothing would be more luxurious and the person in the mirror would be further from the old Isabel.

The day's fatigue had disappeared. They took me by the hand through rooms and passageways. I was left alone facing an entrance covered by a flowered carpet.

Abdul drew aside the carpet and led me into the room, lit by the fire of a brazier which gave off changing shadows and the aroma of Oriental oils. We lay down on soft damask cushions made in primary colors and with the texture of flower petals. From a little table laden with plates he chose tidbits which he fed me little by little; I swallowed them hungrily. We drank something warm which tasted of fruit.

Enveloped in the slightly threatening shadows, I had a sense of well-being and felt no fear. Immersed in the green of his gaze, I was aware

only of his hands and his lips. As he covered me with his body, his hair fell across my eyelashes and the softness of his voice rose, together with my panting breath, up to the dome of ocher-colored glass, only to return and cover us with the chords of a sonata.

Each night I learned a new poem, I sang unknown melodies and knew the intoxication of tenderness.

The note detached from a scale became part of an arpeggio and would remain part, forever, of the harmony and counterpoint of Abdul's sonata.

#### IV

I was awakened by the ringing of the telephone and a voice reminding Madame Federico Corvalán that the flight she had booked returns to Brussels today. The taxi would be coming to pick me up in an hour.

Nothing has changed in the room at the Pera Palas. The suitcase is still packed, and on top of it lie the blue jeans, the jacket, the thick-soled shoes. The only thing different is the carpet. The flowers and birds are no longer made of silk; they are real.

I walk barefoot, taking care not to bother the birds.

When I come out of the bathroom and brush my hair, I smell its fragrance. I pick some flowers from the carpet and weave them into my braids.

Above, the magnificent atmosphere. Below, the grey of Belgian skies.

Federico receives me with reproaches. He was never able to reach me by phone, I didn't tell him I was canceling my reservation at the Hilton and going to the Pera Palas. I forget what I answered; I see only his look of surprise when he sees my nakedness. He raises his voice, yelling harshly as he asks, why did you remove all the hair on your body?; you smell so strange; and why the hell is your hair filled with dried flowers? ❧

# “Traditional” reproduction continues to lose ground

Juan José Barrientos \*

**A**ccording to statistics published by the United Nations last year, cloning continues to gain ground at the expense of natural or “traditional” reproduction—not only in the most technologically advanced countries but also among the wealthier classes in other parts of the world.

Of every ten people questioned in a survey carried out a few years ago in the United States, five stated their attachment to traditional procreation, three were undecided and only two preferred what is considered the latest thing in the propagation of the species. Nevertheless, recent surveys show that cloning is becoming increasingly accepted.

While “traditional” reproduction is based on an embryo that develops from a fertilized ovum, cloning uses various techniques to convert any one of an individual’s cells into an embryo.

Once in the womb, embryos produced by cloning develop in the same way as those produced by the fertilization of ova. Since it is virtually impossible to distinguish

between clones and “traditionally”-conceived children, clones do not tend to suffer discrimination.

Initially, clones were rejected, particularly on the theoretical level, since genetically speaking they are genuine reproductions or copies, while “traditionally”-conceived children are always new individuals whose genetic potential is different from their parents’.

Some groups, such as orthodox Catholics, continue to hold that “normal” children are the product of the love between two people who seek to go beyond themselves through procreation, while clones are born of the egotism of one individual who seeks to repeat him- or herself. However, a number of theologians have come out in favor of cloning as a form of self-improvement; some go as far as to claim that it is authorized by the Book of Genesis (“Go forth and multiply”).

Cloning was bound to revolutionize customs and mores. To begin with, traditional concepts of paternity and maternity are inappropriate when it comes to relations between a person and his clones. Legislation had to be updated to take into account new types of

kinship and to recognize the rights of the growing clone population.

It has even been necessary to revise notions such as incest, since there were those who fell in love with, or abused, or in any case had sexual relations with their clones (without necessarily engaging in homosexual acts, since twenty years ago it became possible to obtain clones of a different sex from the original cell donors).

Narcissism is also a much broader concept nowadays, given clones’ tendency to form couples (and even more frequently, small groups) with others cloned from the same person, as revealed by the famous Batis Report.

Distinguished clones have made their presence felt in all professions, but their success has been especially noteworthy in the fields of entertainment and sports. This is particularly striking in the case of the extraordinary teams of clones that some countries have sent to the Olympics and other international competitions, and also in the new generations of chorus singers and dancers.

There have also been cases in which gangs of clones have robbed passersby in certain neighborhoods, committed rapes, and even robbed banks, although it turned out that some of these gangs were made up of impostors using make-up or masks.

According to several demographic and sociological studies, the number of births through cloning is steadily on the rise.

Of course, there are some voices of dissent and some cries of alarm. One prominent French politician declared that “humanity has blundered into the cul de sac of cloning, which impedes evolution and stands in the way of the renovation of the human species.”

The same ideological viewpoint was the backdrop to the murder of the Gleich family in Beverly Hills. On the walls of their mansion their murderers inscribed the bloody slogan of the enemies of cloning: “new faces” **M**

\* Recipient of the 1985 José Revueltas Literary Essay Prize for the book *Borges y la imaginación* (Borges and the imagination).

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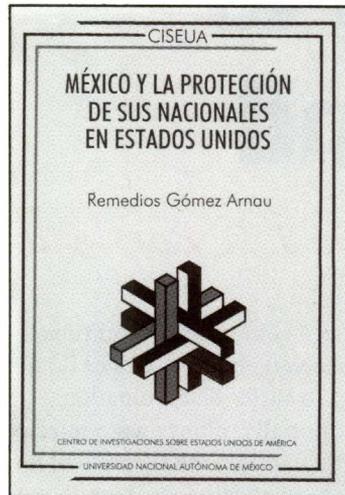
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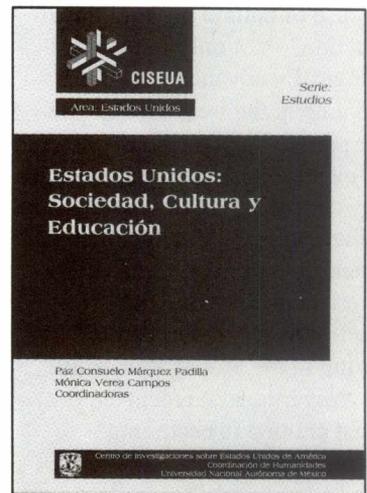
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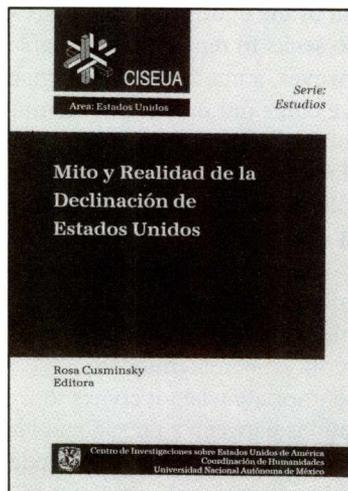
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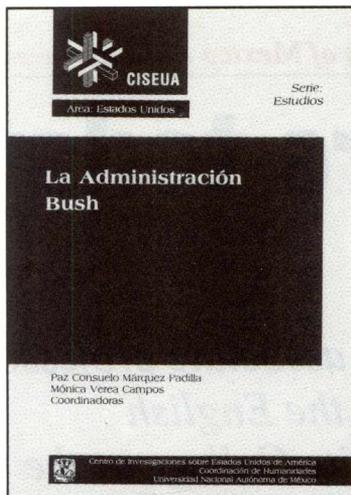
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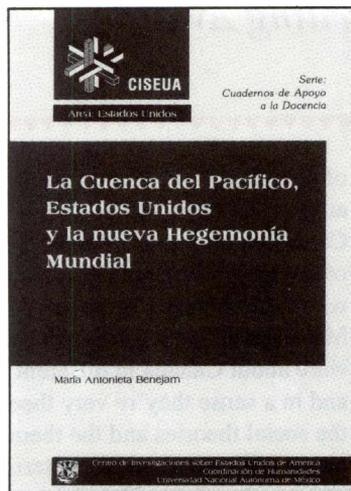
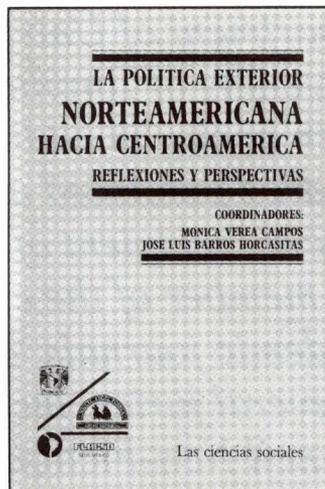
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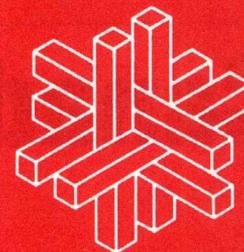
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Claire Joysmith \*

● *Claire Joysmith*: Could you give us a brief survey of Canadian literature?

■ *Elsbeth Cameron*: I'll start with a brief historical perspective. I think one of the most important things in the beginning was the fact that Canada, unlike the U.S., was not based on a revolution that brought with it a desire to have a new literature for a new country. In Canada it was quite different because we remained within the British Empire as a colony, and were very loyal to Britain. Our literature began by being very, very imitative of British literature. British literature was literature as far as the early writers were concerned, and the poets imitated the British Romantics like Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and so on. They're derivative, but competent; they're not an embarrassment, but they're not exceptional either. The early novelists, on the whole, also imitated Victorian fiction. Indeed, there's still a strain today of very British literature and very British writers, the most famous of whom is Robertson Davies, who is now in his 80's or something, and he writes these long novels like Dickens, Thackeray, or George Elliot.

That's the first stage, a sort of British imitation stage in English literature. In French literature, we have very little until a bit later. There's more on the English side because the written tradition is stronger in English Canada than in French Canada, which, in the beginning, had much more of an oral tradition—there are songs and so on, and that, too, has continued because we have a lot of French singers and French dramatists. They are much more productive of drama, which I think

*Elsbeth Cameron is an associate professor of Canadian Studies in the English Department of University College at the University of Toronto. Author or editor of seven books, in addition to some one hundred published articles, essays, and reviews, recipient of numerous awards, she is a member of the editorial boards of two academic journals, and has been a member of several juries, including the Canada Council Non-Fiction Writing Awards Jury (1986).*

comes from Roman Catholicism and the rituals of the Church—singing, the mass and all the rest of it. So, you have a difference, not only of heritage and tendency, one written and one oral, but also between two religions and a quite different sensibility.

The next major stage is the building of nationalism in Canada after World War I, when Canadian soldiers had excelled in Europe in the war. Then that nationalism developed in waves, sometimes stronger and sometimes not so strong, leading to a real culmination in 1967 with the centennial, the hundred years' celebration of Canada's confederation.

During that period, especially around World War II, a lot of mainstream novels were very nationalistic and they started to differentiate Canada from Britain; there's still a British aura but it's much more, "Who are we? What kind

of people are we?" And there's an attempt for novels to be very Canadian, almost in a forced way. One of the major writers then is someone whose biography I've written, Hugh MacLennan. He wrote six novels that were about Canada in different ways, and in a sense they're very theoretical: the social theories and the themes are more important than characterization, style, and so forth. He's fairly typical.

At the same time, there had begun to develop by then, in French Canada, different kinds of novels, different kinds of poetry and so on, but expressing what it was like in French Canada. And there's not so much a tendency for grand pan-Canadian themes. Much more than Canadian nationalism, it was of the province of Quebec, of course; it was in the French language, it wasn't concerned with all the rest of Canada, it was concerned with Quebec. And the

\* Researcher at the CISAN, UNAM.



It does seem with hindsight that the nationalistic novels were overly ambitious, and in a country so diverse as Canada it isn't possible to speak of Canada as one thing without getting so abstract that it doesn't mean very much.

● **CJ:** And how is the multicultural trend reflected in literature in Canada?

■ **EC:** Well, it's now a question of anybody writing about anything, and we have lots of writers of different backgrounds. For example, Neil Bissoondath from Trinidad has become fairly well known, and Janette Turner Hospital, who's Australian. She has one novel about an immigrant who comes from Latin America through the U.S. in a refrigerated meat truck and is taken illegally across the border into Canada. We claim Hospital as a Canadian writer, and we claim this as a Canadian novel, although it's not about Canada.

And the fellow who's just shared the Booker Prize (1992), Michael Ondaatje: he's from Sri Lanka and of Dutch ancestry, and his novel, that won the award—*The English patient*—doesn't have any Canadian characters; it has a Bulgarian, a Sikh, and it isn't set in Canada. But that's typical now, that anyone from anywhere and writing about anything is in no way un-Canadian.

There's much more recognition of just the excellence of whatever the work is. At least we hope that's the ideal. I think there are still a number of people who feel that there's systemic discrimination against certain groups. The aboriginal peoples have not been in the mainstream of our literature, although recently there are a number of voices that are coming forward. A funny dramatist called Thompson Highway, for example, is very good, and we also have David Daniel Moses, a wonderful aboriginal poet and playwright.

● **CJ:** Are these aboriginal voices similar to the Native American voices that can be heard now in the U.S.?

■ **EC:** Yes. They are emerging now; a lot of women, too.

● **CJ:** And do these voices try to salvage their traditions?

■ **EC:** They try to, yes. They're attempting to draw on their own traditions, but these have been so modified. First of all by not being continuously expressed and, secondly, because they're living in a context which is North American and English.

● **CJ:** And does this aboriginal literature depend on oral tradition, such as oral story-telling forms, for instance?

■ **EC:** Oh, yes, some of it's oral: different ways of telling stories, different narrative structures, devices, and so on.

● **CJ:** So this is a phenomenon in Canada, parallel in a sense to what's going on in the U.S.

■ **EC:** Yes, it's very interesting.

● **CJ:** And what can you tell us about gender role issues in Canadian literature?

■ **EC:** We have at least two first-class writers who put forward alternative sexuality. One is Timothy Findley, who lives in Ontario and writes frequently about homosexuality. And then, on the West Coast, we have a woman named Jane Rule, who writes about lesbian sexuality, going as far back as the sixties, and this writing is highly thought of. It really is open, it's very, very free in terms of who can write about what, and there's very little pressure to conform to some kind of literature.

● **CJ:** You mean there's no mainstream now?

■ **EC:** Yes. Even the old mainstream is coming under a sort of reassessment in the light of all this political movement of multiculturalism and so on. People are now looking back at writers like Hugh MacLennan, and wondering how come he was in the mainstream, but this woman who wrote about Jewish life in Montreal, Gwethalyn Graham, wasn't in the mainstream, though her book sold as much, and this kind of

thing. So, a reexamination of the canon is going on.

● **CJ:** This is happening in the U.S. as well; it's a big thing right now and is only quite recent. What is the cause?

■ **EC:** I think it's a result of post-modernism, because it tells us to look at how things are put together, that everything is a constructed and self-conscious object and this leads us, in turn, to ask, "How was the mainstream constructed?" Not just how was this book constructed and what is the interaction between the reader and the text but, in a larger framework, how was the canon constructed and the interaction between society and the canon? That's where I think it's come from.

● **CJ:** Why is Canadian literature so popular?

■ **EC:** I think Canadian literature appeals to many non-Canadian readers today because many people the world over have begun to feel what Canadians have always felt. That is, powerless. We were first a colony of Britain, then an economic satellite of the United States. This tends to make us feel that, as Northrop Frye has said, "head office is somewhere else." So the Canadian literary sensibility has always reflected this powerlessness. It has been from the beginning a literature *from* the periphery even when it has been *about* something central. It has favored a view from the margin that is suspicious of power.

Today almost everyone everywhere feels like this, to a greater or lesser degree. Problems of the environment, of nuclear disarmament, of feeding the world's population, the proliferation of human rights issues, feminism—all the ways in which human beings have become more vocal about abuses of power—these issues on which we now focus internationally have contributed to the development of a universal sensibility that Canadians have always experienced ❧

# Collectors and patrons of Mexican art

*María Teresa Márquez \**

In the last few decades, major Mexican artists have enriched our national art collection by making important donations of their work.

Diego Rivera donated Frida Kahlo's picturesque house in an old quarter of Coyoacan after her death in 1958. It is now a museum where some of Frida's paintings are shown, as well as works by Rivera, Clausel, and others. The brilliant Rivera designed his own museum, a pyramid of volcanic rock named *Anahuacalli*. The museum's main attractions are the building itself, the architectural sketches for the building, and the splendid "altars of the dead" that the museum's director, Dolores Olmedo—herself an important collector of Rivera's work—has displayed every November since it opened. Ms. Olmedo recently turned her house in Xochimilco into a museum to exhibit her collection of 127 works by Rivera, five by Frida Kahlo, 600 pre-Hispanic pieces (including some marvellous Mayan figurines), a splendid stele, distinctive Zapotecan funeral urns, and some unusual examples of popular handicrafts.

The Tamayo Museum opened in 1981. The great Oaxacan painter struggled for years to establish a

museum in the tree-lined Chapultepec area, Mexico City's museum district, to house his own paintings and his collection of other internationally-known works of art. The museum was originally designed as a mixed government and private-enterprise institution, with a board of directors composed of private individuals. Later, Tamayo handed the museum's administration over to the government.

Tamayo donated a beautiful house in the city of Oaxaca to exhibit his own works, with their distinctive colors, as well as his superb collection of pre-Hispanic art.

Francisco Toledo, another Oaxacan painter and patron of the arts, founded the Oaxaca Institute of Graphic Arts in the state capital, encouraged the creation of the Oaxaca Museum of Contemporary Art, and set up the Oaxaca Cultural Center in Juchitán, his birthplace.

In Zacatecas, the Rafael and Pedro Coronel Museums exhibit the works of the two brothers. Manuel Felguérez's works will probably soon be housed in another old mansion in this beautiful Colonial city in the center of our country. Pedro Coronel spent years collecting European, Asian and American art from all periods so that the inhabitants of his native city could enjoy some of civilization's great works.

The Rafael Coronel Museum has a splendid collection of popular masks and puppets from Rosete Aranda's company, well-known to Mexican children since the mid-19th century. They appear in picturesque scenes of everyday life from different periods in history.

No list of artist-patrons would be complete without the painter José Luis Cuevas, who opened his museum last July. The Cuevas



Diego Rivera.

\* Director of the Foreign Affairs Cabinet of the Presidency.

Museum occupies the former Convent of St. Ines, in Mexico City's "Historical Center." Visitors can admire works from the so-called "break-away period" in Mexican painting (the departure from muralism), as well as prints by Picasso.

There is a growing number of private firms and collectors in Mexico with an interest in acquiring and promoting national art. Prominent examples are Mexico City's Center of Contemporary Art and the Monterrey Museum of Contemporary Art. The former, a superb enterprise that has brought prestigious foreign exhibitions to our country, was created by the Televisa Cultural Foundation. It has acquired important contemporary works by Mexican and international artists.

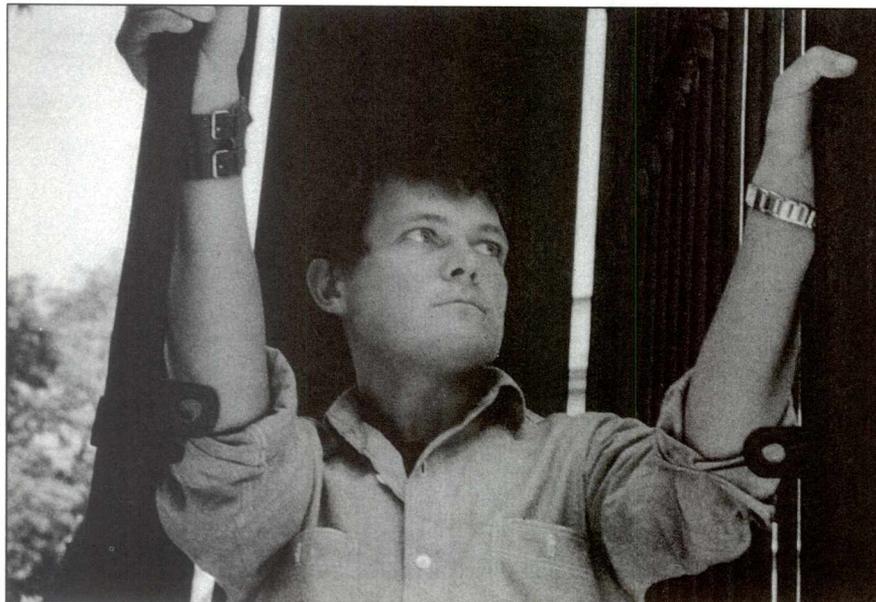
Monterrey's Museum of Contemporary Art opened in 1991. Monterrey is an industrial city whose thriving business community has enriched the region's cultural life with museums, ballet groups, and symphonic orchestras. The museum is housed in a magnificent building designed by the noted Mexican architect, Ricardo Legorreta. It was originally intended for temporary



*Frida Kahlo in her house in Coyoacán.*

Lola Alvarez Bravo.

*José Luis Cuevas.*



Lola Alvarez Bravo.

exhibitions, but its patrons now plan to acquire works on a regular basis as well.

Mexican art is experiencing a revival in the international art market. The 1930s and '40s were a period of heightened pan-Americanism in the United States. There were many exhibitions of Latin American art, and particularly Mexican art. Americans later succumbed to the fascinations of Abstract Expressionism,<sup>1</sup> however, and it is only recently that there

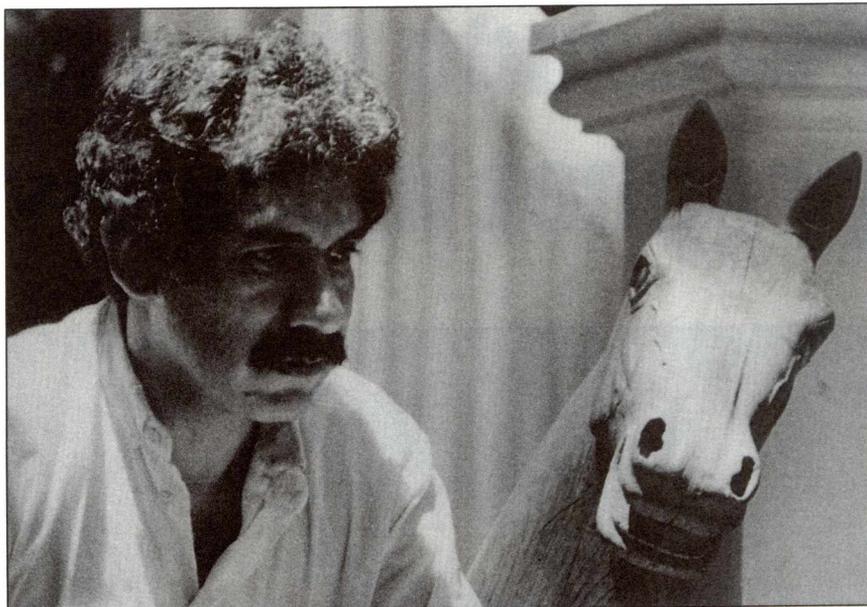
<sup>1</sup> Mexico boasts distinguished exponents of this trend, but Americans never regarded them as sufficiently "intellectualized" or intelligent artists, preferring more visceral, naïve or folkloric forms of Mexican art.

has been a revival in their interest in Mexican art.

In the last several years, Mexico has again taken her place in American art magazines. Prestigious galleries in the United States, Europe and Japan compete to represent Mexican painters, and auction houses boast of obtaining unprecedented prices for our artists' work.

Mexican collectors, who continue to be the main purchasers of Mexican art, still travel to auctions at Christie's and Sotheby's to bid for works by Mexican artists. This suggests that prices are lower there than in Mexican galleries.

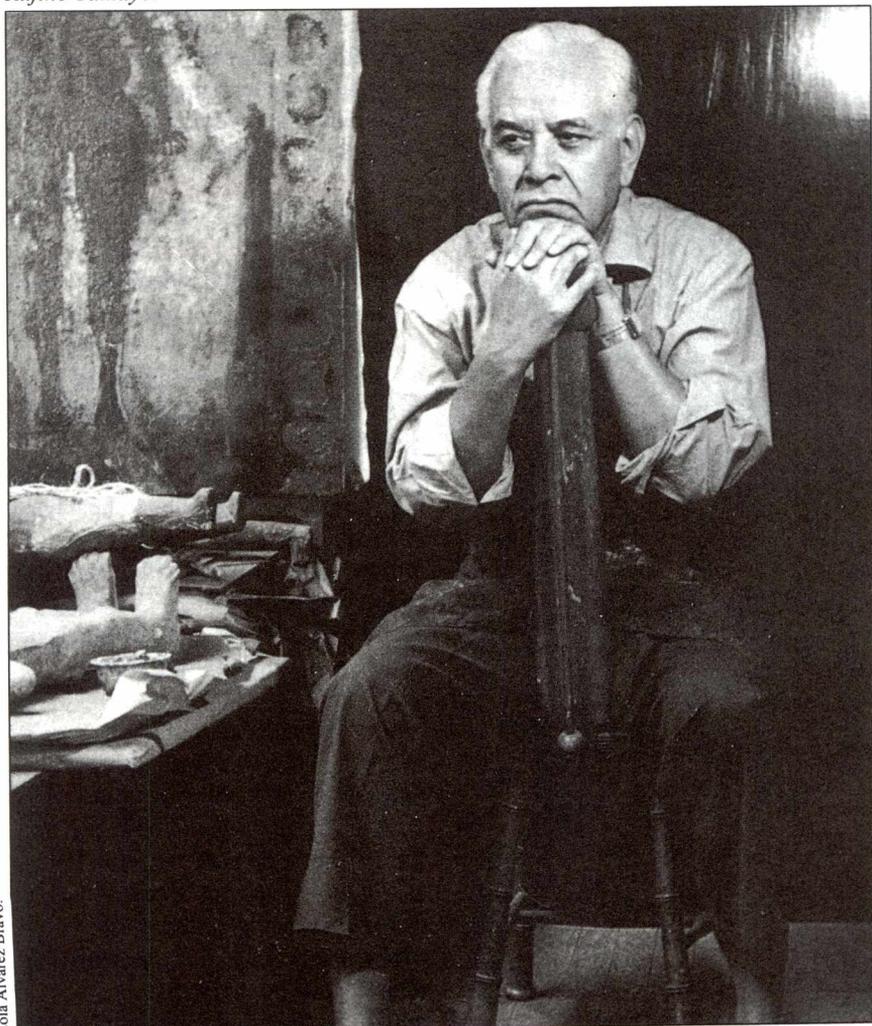
The promotion carried out by government and private galleries, as



Rafael Coronel.

Lola Alvarez Bravo.

Rufino Tamayo.



Lola Alvarez Bravo.

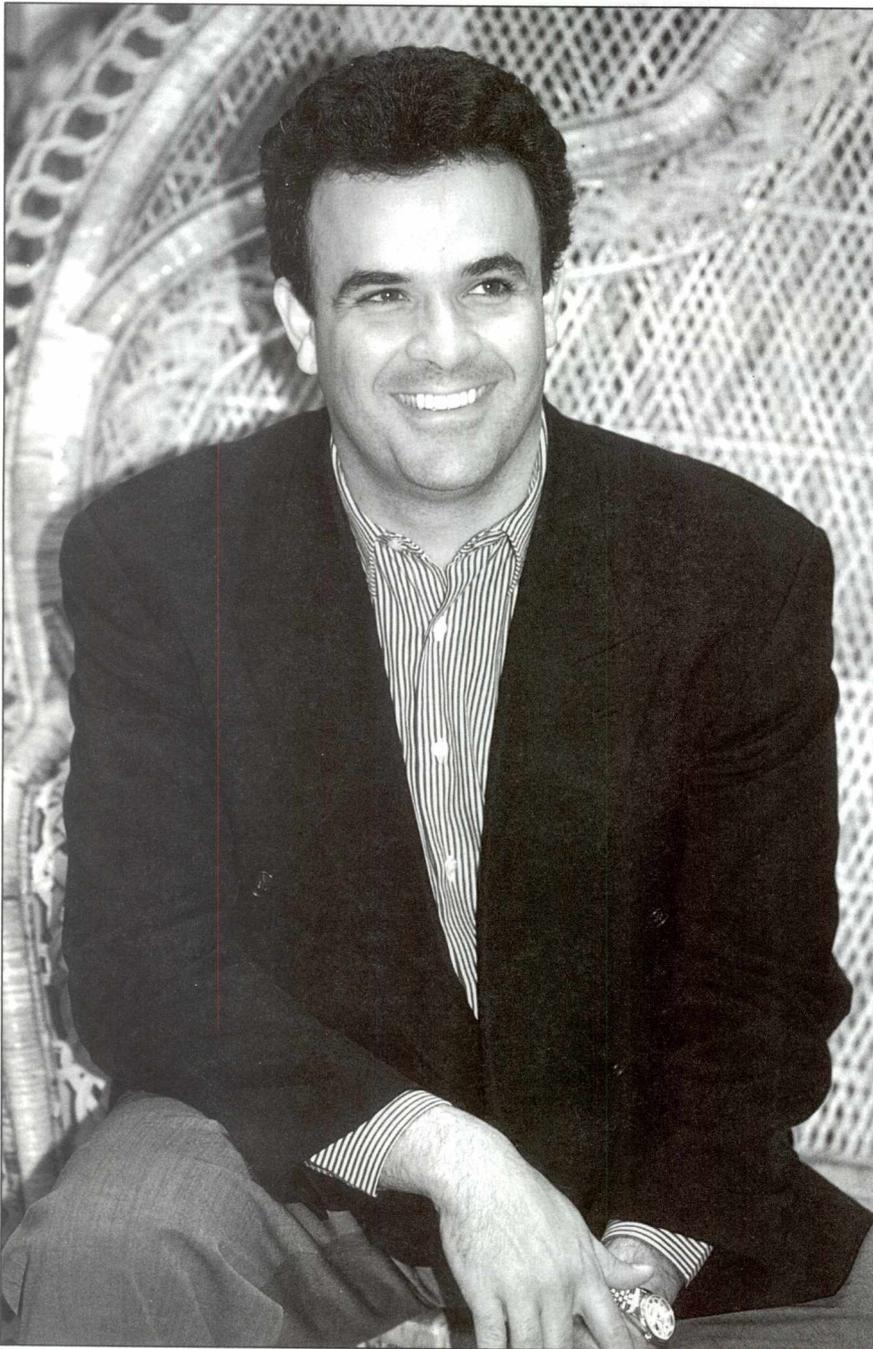
well as the acquisition of contemporary artists' work by various museums throughout the world (including the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, as a result of the "Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" exhibition), have resulted in skyrocketing prices for Mexican art.

This has happened not only with the work of such recognized figures as Frida Kahlo, who is presently in vogue, but that of young painters who find themselves unable to keep up with the demand for their work from galleries and private collectors.

Magazines all over the world now contain paid announcements of gallery exhibitions by a large variety of Mexican artists, and reviews of works by Nahum Zenil, Alejandro Conga, Adolfo Patiño, Laura Anderson, José Luis Romo, Rocío Maldonado, Roberto Márquez and Julio Galán, among others.

It is striking that the new exponents of Mexican art have returned to hyper-realism, which combines primitive religious traditions and votive offerings with the artist's own message, but which foreign critics often find outrageous **X**

# Fernando de la Mora, a prophet in his own land



Elsa Escamilla

Fernando de la Mora, 34, plays leading roles in operas throughout the world.

**H**e was named Fernando in honor of his uncle Fernando Romo, bishop of Torreón, and given the middle name Alfonso, after his great-uncle, also a member of the clergy. Thus did Fernando Alfonso de la Mora's father—who died five days before the tenor's birth—express the wish that his son would be a man of the cloth. Yet Fernando Alfonso's calling turned out to be a different one: given the gift of a beautiful voice, at the age of 34 he plays leading roles in performances at opera houses throughout the world.

● *Gabriela Rábago Palafox*: How would you describe your voice?

■ *Fernando de la Mora*: I am a natural and clear lyric tenor. My voice is exactly in between light and *spinto*. If I didn't take care of myself and became careless about my voice, I think I could become a strong *spinto* lyric tenor in a matter of four or five years. But if I maintain my voice at a high level, I will continue to be a lyric tenor for at least a dozen years.

● *GRP*: Is there a choice between conserving one's natural voice and converting it into that of a *spinto* lyric tenor by forcing it to sing roles it's not suited for?

■ *FM*: Absolutely. And it's dangerous to opt for the *spinto*, because over time one's voice becomes more opaque. In Italian the word *spinto* is derived from the verb "to push." It's very easy to push one's voice since, in fact, one uses it by pushing air outward. But the technique of singing which I consider most appropriate consists of "floating the sound."

● **GRP:** Would you say that is the most intelligent way to sing?

■ **FM:** Yes. Singing also means using your brain constantly. You have to think about what you're doing. Only rarely should you give free rein to emotion when singing. You have to analyze what the song is, what the emotion is, in order to put it on a conscious level and repeat it technically. This means that singing must be cerebral, with very little heart and a lot of brain. When I say "with little heart," I mean that the heart must be allowed to intervene only at specific times which the brain has chosen.

● **GRP:** Then how do you get the audience to hear such enormous feeling in your performances?

■ **FM:** It's very difficult for me, especially when singing Mexican music, to break the ties of the heart and measure the feelings out, as a resource which must be applied with care so as not to damage the throat. The majority of popular singers destroy their voices very quickly. The voice deteriorates. In Mexico, the color of these extremely beautiful voices runs out, is quickly spent. Joaquín Pardavé said that the voice is like a very fine crystal goblet. And the better the voice is, the more this goblet is filled with gold dust. Each time you make your voice hoarse, every time you force it, you are using up that gold. And every time you exercise and educate your voice, you add a little bit

of gold, which means beauty, sweetness, feeling and much more. Far from dulling feeling, study enlarges it, since your voice has more to choose from. Your instrument becomes more flexible, sweeter, stronger, more muscular to a certain degree. The vocal cords become more muscular through study. They can become a tireless athlete or a weak athlete, a "tired old lady" without the strength to move. And, for an opera singer, the voice must be able to respond when you want it to: it has to jump sixty feet in the air if called upon to do so.

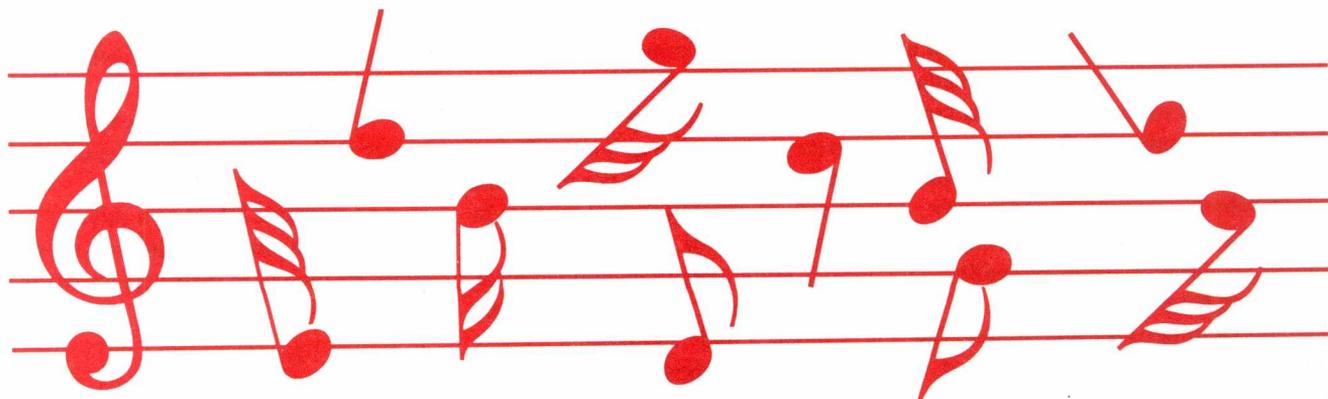
Plácido Domingo is a great example of what I've been saying about correct singing technique. He's a tenor who has been singing since he was 15 or 16 years old. He educated his voice when he was 19, and when he was 20 he was already singing small roles in opera houses. At 21 he performed in Israel. At 22 or 23 he debuted in New York. At 26 he made his Metropolitan debut. He's 50 years old now and has a marvelous voice which is more beautiful than ever. He sings better than he did ten or fifteen years ago and, while a singer's artistic life does not go beyond the age of 70, Plácido seems like he'll be in form when he reaches seventy.

● **GRP:** In the career of every outstanding tenor there is a crucial moment marking the passage from being one of many good singers to being an opera star. When was your crucial moment?

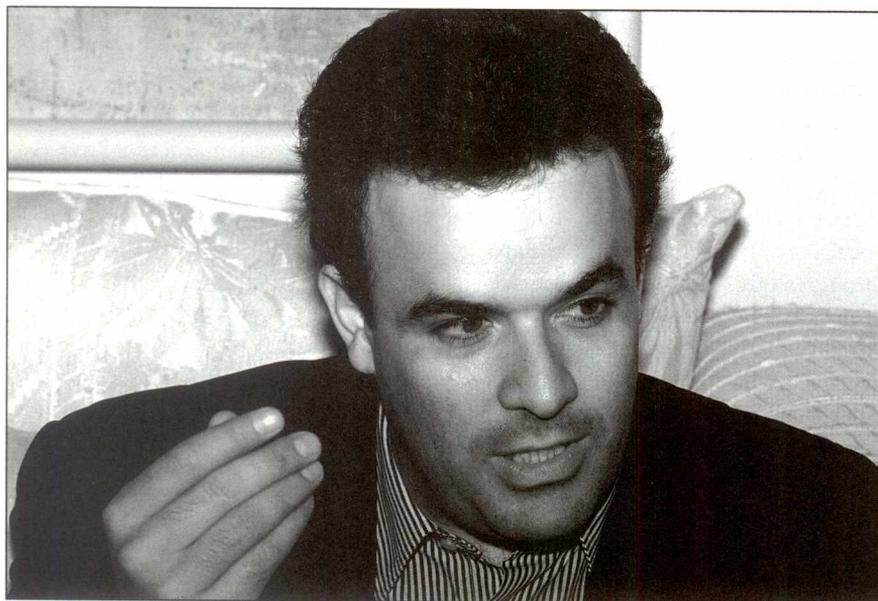
■ **FM:** A singer stands out if their voice has a special quality. In the world of opera there are many singers, but the Latin color—which many Mexican singers in particular have—makes the voice different. This is the case with tenors like Flavio Becerra (who has the most beautiful voice in Mexico, in my opinion), Ignacio Clapés, Miguel Angel Cortés, Ramón Arturo Vargas, Octavio Arévalo and Ricardo Sánchez, as well as many Spaniards who have become world-famous. Plácido and Carreras are examples of this.

The singer must also have a good, healthy voice which gives him security. That's one of the marvelous things about Plácido Domingo and Pavarotti: whenever they sing, they sing well. It's very unusual for them not to be one hundred percent. And that makes the difference between being a good singer and an outstanding one. To a certain degree that was the case with me. I've been stable as a singer, although I've had my slip-ups like anybody else. On a number of occasions I've had throat infections that made it difficult for me to fulfill contracts. I've also gone through periods when my voice has lost its bearings, when I wasn't one hundred percent and had to intensify my studies in order to resolve the problem, and that went on day after day.

At the beginning of my career I sang very little. I "marked time" too



Elsa Escamilla.



"Singing also means using your brain constantly."

much. In other words, I sang with a soft voice, supposedly so I wouldn't get tired. Now it's the other way around: the more I sing, the healthier my voice is. It's like everything in life: the more you use something in an appropriate way, the better it functions.

● **GRP:** Some say —perhaps as an excuse— that having a big belly makes it easier to support the diaphragm and sing better.

■ **FM:** That's not true. At this point, the skinniest opera singer can have as much volume as the fattest one. In the opera, dramas are what's most commonly performed. And dramas often have to do with cheating, as in *Clowns*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Il tabarro*, the various versions of *Manon Lescaut*.... The story has to do with a woman cheating on her husband or lover and leaving him for a more attractive man. In *Clowns*, Neda leaves the old owner of the circus for a handsome young man. And what happens when the new beau is a little piggy who moves slowly and is ugly to boot? Nobody believes that the woman is going to leave the really handsome tenor (who might be Plácido Domingo) for this person. The audience isn't so ready to make that kind of concession.

● **GRP:** How do you conquer stage fright?

■ **FM:** Feeling nervous about singing can be a completely positive thing. It can make you direct an enormous amount of positive energy at the audience. Now, what can also happen is that your nerves can wreck your life; they can cause such tension that your throat closes up and you lose your voice —you just fall apart. Every opera singer has to deal with nerves; the question is how you handle it. Backstage, Plácido Domingo is like a brave bull. He talks and jokes around with everybody, and there's nothing he likes more than for you to tell him "*In bocca lupo!*" ("in the mouth of the wolf") backstage. Personally, there are some things that make me nervous in a negative way. It bothers me when people come to talk to me in my dressing room before I'm ready. I love it when people say "*mucha mierda!*" ("lots of crap") to me before a performance, since in our milieu this is a way of expressing best wishes. In Germany it's "*toi, toi, toi!*" ("lots of luck"), and I already mentioned what they say in Italy. In the United States it's "break a leg!" In France it's "*merde!*" If anybody wishes you good luck, anywhere in the world, you have

to throw salt over your shoulder to get rid of the bad luck.

● **GRP:** Is it a privilege to have a good voice?

■ **FM:** Of course. But at the same time we singers are unfortunate, because our instrument is in constant use. You eat, breathe, swallow, salivate, all in the same place that you sing.... You don't have a case at home that you can keep your instrument in. A singer's throat is very susceptible to illness. The most important thing in singing is to have a positive outlook, because a singer is very exposed to sickness, to weakness, to bad vibes, to everything. It's very unlikely that somebody will get sick if they handle metaphysics in the right way and have a positive attitude. Bad vibes won't get to you if you're in favor of everything: of yourself, your loved ones, any living thing around you. That way you attract money, success, work, friends, everything.

● **GRP:** Why have you made recordings of Mexican songs that are more or less folk music?

■ **FM:** First of all because I love Mexican music. Something which has been frustrating for me is that I never met María Greever, Jorge del Moral or Agustín Lara. To me they were glorious people. I would put María Greever side by side with Tamayo, Orozco, any illustrious Mexican. Can you imagine what she must have felt in order to compose *Promise me?* Or what Jorge del Moral felt when he wrote *Don't deny that you loved me?* And Agustín Lara when he composed *Granada?* That is Spain's most famous song, thanks to the feeling a Mexican gave to it.

● **GRP:** Do you include Mexican music in the concerts you give in other countries?

■ **FM:** Always. I do it as a rule. I want to show that fine Mexican music holds its own with the finest music of the world ✕

Gabriela Rábago Palafox  
Staff Writer.

# Dr. Atl, maker of myths

**A**n excellent cook, promoter of other painters, dedicated herbalist, knowledgeable geologist, ill-tempered politician and ultra-rightist, the Mexican muralist Dr. Atl was also a volcanologist who never tired of painting eternal peaks, who climbed the snowy summits of Popocatepetl innumerable times, followed the birth of Paricutín, wrote a splendid monograph on the subject and, working with pencil and paintbrush, came to understand the fury of this volcano.

Today, few people remember that Dr. Atl was the author of many books. Some of these books were devoted to promoting Mexican art; among them were team efforts such as the six-volume series *Iglesias de México* (Churches of Mexico), which included watercolors by Atl and photographs by Frida Kahlo's father Guillermo.

Atl said he provided important assistance to Guillermo Delhora (an odd personage who came to Mexico from Italy and unexpectedly committed suicide) for the publication of *La Iglesia ante la crítica, en el pensamiento y el arte* (The Church in light of criticism, in thought and art). This 400-page book was published in an edition of 10,000 copies which, despite their high price, sold out quickly.

Atl promoted handicrafts through his research for *Las artes populares en México* (Folk art in Mexico, 1921), which went through a second edition in a larger format, with numerous illustrations. He published pseudo-scientific essays such as *Oro más oro* (Gold and more gold, 1936) and *Petróleo en el Valle de México* (Oil in the Valley of Mexico, 1938).

In "Eight pages from Dr. Atl's unfinished autobiography" (published posthumously in *Novedades*' "México en la cultura" supplement, No. 829, February 7, 1965), the painter ventured into the realm of memoirs, achieving one of his most notable literary successes. The same can be



Dr. Atl. Portrait by Edward Weston.

## What the Mexican Renaissance owes Dr. Atl:

- The first blush of enthusiasm —both in Mexico and abroad— for mural painting, which meant returning to a feature of what we now call public art, civil art, new muralism. This occurred within an art world created by domesticity for domestic appropriation, with all the fatal consequences this implies for the intrinsic value of artwork, its scope and social significance.
- The second key revolutionary assault on the fake academic pedantry of the old San Carlos school, now known as the Institute of Fine Arts. The first campaign for the intellectual regeneration of this school was undertaken by his own students, who went on strike in 1911. Without the nihilism of this movement, it would have been difficult to establish the current doctrine of a new classicism, which rightly considers any teaching that does not conform to the daily process of production for a functional and social requirement to be intellectual suicide on the part of the teacher and intellectual assassination of the student.
- The first direct political activity by Mexican artists within the ranks of the Revolution —which was the focus for uniting our national cultures. In other words, our renaissance owes Atl the beginning of the demise of that apocalyptic bohemian parasite, the typical Montparnassian or pro-Montparnassian, typical of the present-day intellectual snob-world. Thus it is indebted to him for the birth of the artist as a citizen, the civil artist in the widest possible meaning of the term, similar to those who created the most outstanding epochs in the history of art.
- The first, clearest and most public admiration for Mexican folk art —which had been underestimated and often unappreciated by the pro-French oligarchical intellectuals of the pre-Revolutionary period— and the first government policies aimed at encouraging such art. There is no doubt that Atl preceded the later coterie of admirers and defenders, both governmental and private, of Mexican folk art who emerged as a result of the political transformation of the entire country.
- The first questioning of traditional media in Mexico. In other words, he is responsible for the first concern for finding the correct physical media for his time, in a world mired in a mystical, backward-looking, archaic domain controlled by traditional methods. Thus he is the forerunner of efforts stressing the importance of the materials and instruments used in the production of plastic art, as opposed to the feeling, the routines of purely sensualist speculation, that characterize snobs and academics, together with the pseudo-Modern and pseudo-Classical movements of contemporary Europe.
- He was the first Mexican to take a stand against the academic routines of composition and perspective. This occurred in a world where the physically domestic and chic character of artistic production prevents artists from finding dynamic solutions corresponding to developments in science.
- A systematic distancing from museumism, from primitivism, from retrospectivism. In short, from all the basic characteristics of plastic arts production throughout the world at the moment, whether created by the so-called academics or —what a shocking thought— the modernists.
- A persistent spirit of the monumental, or more precisely of rejection towards the homey, the domestic, and the lack of a powerful lyrical aspect, in a world where such domesticity sets the general tone for tastes and determines the production of plastic art. His firmness in physically heroic and seriously professional work, in the era of the apotheosis of informal work and snobbish dilettantism, was an exemplary act for artistic production in our country and the world as a whole.
- The contribution of a sense of the cosmogonic and panoramic, if such terms really apply, in landscape. This is a direct consequence of his understanding of the poetic aspect that, for example, the aircraft gives to still life in a world populated by immobile academics and moderns; or the monocular view of the confined space formed by a window opening out onto the countryside... or better still, to a detail of the countryside, a group of trees, a cow... your own small yard. This is a path —the path shown by Dr. Atl— which leads to true modernity in the poetic-plastic contemplation of the universe.

**David Alfaro Siqueiros.**

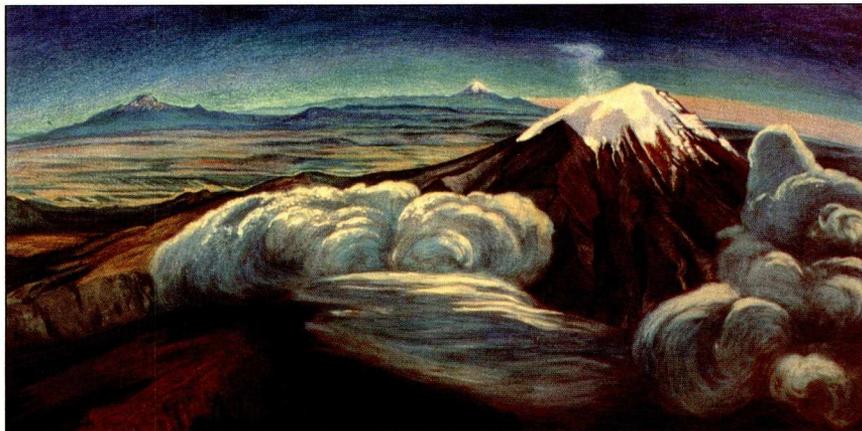
said of *Gentes profanas en el convento* (Blasphemers in the convent), a curious work which is dazzling in some parts, moving in others, and readable throughout.

In *Gentes profanas* Atl recounted a number of stories from his youth, including a long stay at the Convento de la Merced, which he turned into his personal fiefdom, using it entirely according to his whims as the scene for his tumultuous love affairs, painting exhibitions and sumptuous banquets.

Of particular interest to students of Mexican literature and mythology are the chapters relating the most violent passion of his life, chapters which include excerpts from the letters



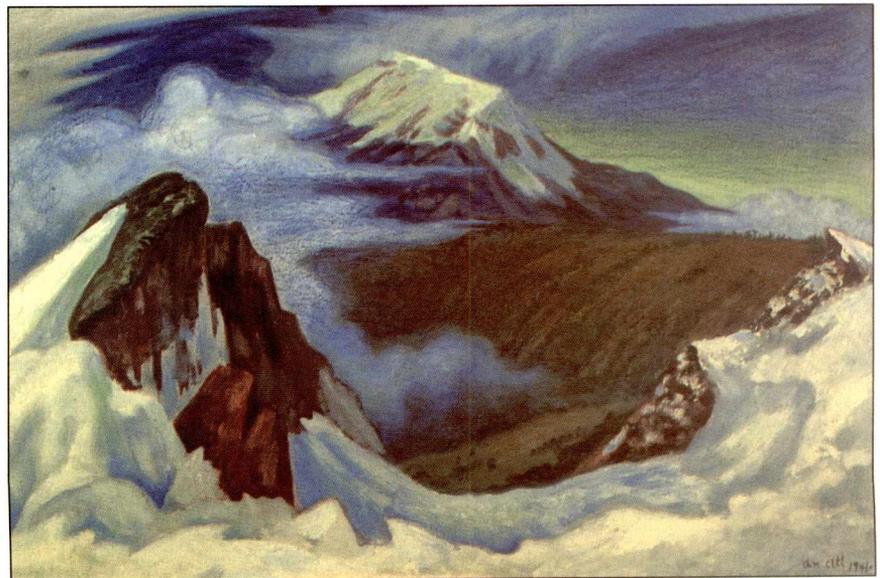
*Crater and Milky Way, 1960, mixed media on masonite.*



*The volcanos, 1950, Atcolors on masonite.*

sent to him by Carmen Mondragón, a painter, poet and artist's model often pictured with a blonde pageboy haircut. Atl gave her the name Nahui Olin (in the Nahuatl language this means the fourth sun or fourth movement). She moved in with Atl, who did several portraits of her capturing the depth of her gaze and the striking beauty of her madwoman's looks.

In *El padre eterno, Satanás y Juanito García* (The eternal father, Satan and little Juan García) he gave a fictional form to his atheism and his idea that man is an accidental force of nature. Atl said he was excommunicated because of this



*Volcano with clouds, 1941, oil on masonite.*

novel, a claim that may have been part of the myth he built around himself. In *Un hombre más allá del universo* (A man beyond the universe) he sought to explore the possibilities of science fiction, which had captivated him since childhood, but the story's 124 pages are overloaded with speculations and descriptions of futuristic scenarios.

He paid homage to his most beloved volcano in his book of poems,

Dr. Atl is one of the strangest people to have been born on the American continent in modern times. His is the most picturesque history of all painters, and it would be impossible to tell the whole story without filling many volumes. When Atl returned from Europe, he immediately stirred up the waters of all of old Tenochtitlan's swamps; he threw methylene blue into the eyes of those he said suffered from blindness; he preached aesthetic theories, used his paintbrush to create incredibly fine color sensations, led strikes, wrote scathing criticism, aroused the people, swindled a bunch of fools, pawned the cameras of all his friends and acquaintances, organized exhibitions and, without a cent to his name, served up pots of excellent pasta and provided financial assistance to dozens of young artists. He championed the color divisionism of the Neo-Impressionists and reinvented the solid oil colors of Raphael, using domestic copal resin.

He planned business deals, formulated government programs, educated presidents, got all the paintings in an exhibition of mine sold, so that I could go to Europe; he captivated intellectuals, even Don Justo Sierra; he lost respect for Fabrés, Ruelas and Gedovius, taught the young people to be insolent, proved himself as a prose writer and poet, volcanologist, botanist, miner, herbalist, astrologer, magician, materialist, anarchist, totalitarian—all with a speed greater than that with which Frégoli, then at his peak, changed clothes.

Before accompanying Don Venustiano [Carranza] to his final defeat, he edited newspapers, organized Red Battalions, sacked churches, invited beautiful ladies to tea in the sacristies, and drew around him a group of the greatest young artists of the day. Among them were José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros, who spoke favorably of him in their autobiographies. There were other important critics, but they have all died. Atl is definitely the creator, or at least the animator, of one of the greatest figures in Mexican painting: Joaquín Clausell.

**Diego Rivera.**

Excerpt from *El Dr. Atl, hombre del renacimiento artístico mexicano*, by Antonio Luna Arroyo; recently published by Salvat, Grollier and Hachette.

*Las sinfonías del Popocatepetl* (The symphonies of Popocatepetl) and in the monograph *La actividad del Popocatepetl* (The activity of Popocatepetl), of which only 24 copies were sold in 24 months.

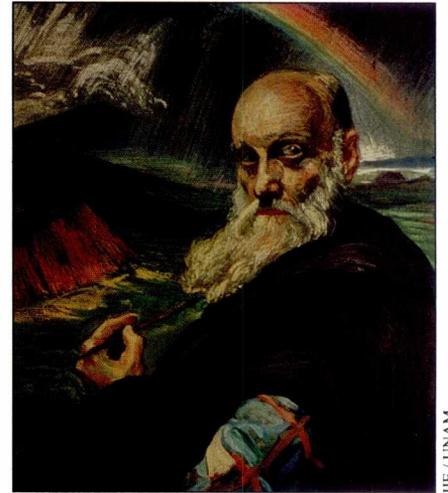
In contrast, many copies were sold of *¡Arriba! ¡Arriba!*, whose twenty brief chapters sum up Atl's views on the family, free will, death and life.

Anybody who reads this book, a sort of credo, sees that Atl lived in

accordance with his beliefs. Like his work and his life itself, Atl's writings range over a wide variety of interests.

His collections *Cuentos bárbaros* (Barbarous tales, 1930) and *Cuentos de todos colores* (Tales of all colors, in three volumes: 1933, 1936 and 1941) were widely read, translated and imitated.

The American writer John Steinbeck based an entire novel on the plot of "The man and the pearl." One of B. Traven's stories was inspired by



Self-portrait.

IIE / UNAM.



The ray on the wave, Atlcolors on plywood.

IIE / UNAM.



Dawn in the mountains, Atlcolors on cardboard.

IIE / UNAM.



The volcano on a starry night, oil and Atlcolors on plywood.

IIE / UNAM.

## A brief biography of Dr. Atl

Gerardo Murillo was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco in 1875, and died in Mexico City in 1964. He studied painting in his native city until 1890, and while in Mexico City he was a student at the Fine Arts and Preparatory Schools.

When Murillo finished these studies, Mexican president Porfirio Díaz sent him to Europe on a scholarship, to study painting. However, instead of devoting himself to art, he attended classes given by the philosopher Antonio Labriola and the sociologist and penologist Enrico Ferri at the University of Rome.

He participated in the Italian Socialist Party and wrote for the party newspaper, the daily *L'avanti*. He travelled from Rome to Paris on foot, taking classes given by the sociologist Emile Durkheim, as well as attending classes in psychology and the theory of art given by Henri Bergson at the School of Higher Education.

Leopoldo Lugones gave him the name Dr. Atl (Nahuatl for "water") in Paris in 1902. Atl then travelled from Paris to Madrid, once again on foot, for exercise.

He returned to Mexico in 1904, and in 1906 organized an exhibition of paintings called *Modern sap*, in which the works of Ponce de León, Francisco de la Torre and Diego Rivera were exhibited for the first time. The exhibition sparked great interest in Impressionism and the death of the *pompier* style.

In 1910 he helped organize the Artistic Center, the purpose of which was to obtain wall space in public buildings for mural painting. This initiative was soon frustrated by the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution that same year.

Atl returned to Europe in 1911, founding the newspaper *Action d'art* in Paris, which served as a vehicle for publicizing his artistic theories and the social objectives of the Mexican Revolution. For several months, he also published the magazine *La révolution au Mexique* and carried out several duties on behalf of the Constitutionalist faction of the revolutionary forces.

When Atl came back to Mexico in 1914, Constitutionalist leader Venustiano Carranza commissioned him as an intermediary in the negotiations with Zapata aimed at unifying the revolutionary forces. Nevertheless, his efforts failed, and he was on the point of being executed by a firing squad. (The correspondence between Zapata and Dr. Atl dealing with their talks and disputes has been preserved.)

During Carranza's stay in Veracruz, Dr. Atl founded *La vanguardia*, in whose pages José Clemente Orozco's caricatures and illustrations were published. He also organized the Revolutionary Confederation, comprised of ten civilians and ten military men, which was later dissolved because it was regarded as too influential, although it did give rise subsequently to the Bloc of Intellectual Workers.

During this period, Atl was director of the Academy of San Carlos, general treasurer of the Constitutionalist forces, and head of the Department of Fine Arts. At the end of the armed struggle, he dedicated himself to painting full time, promoting the appreciation of popular art, studying volcanology, and writing.

His inventions include innovations in encaustic, oil-fresco, as well as the "Atlcolors." These are dry, resin-based and are worked like pastels, but without the latter's fragility. Like pastels, they can be used, according to their creator, for painting on paper, canvas or stone.

Explorer and tireless walker, he settled in the ex-convent of La Merced, where he painted a good part of his work, above all the large canvases of the Valley of Mexico.

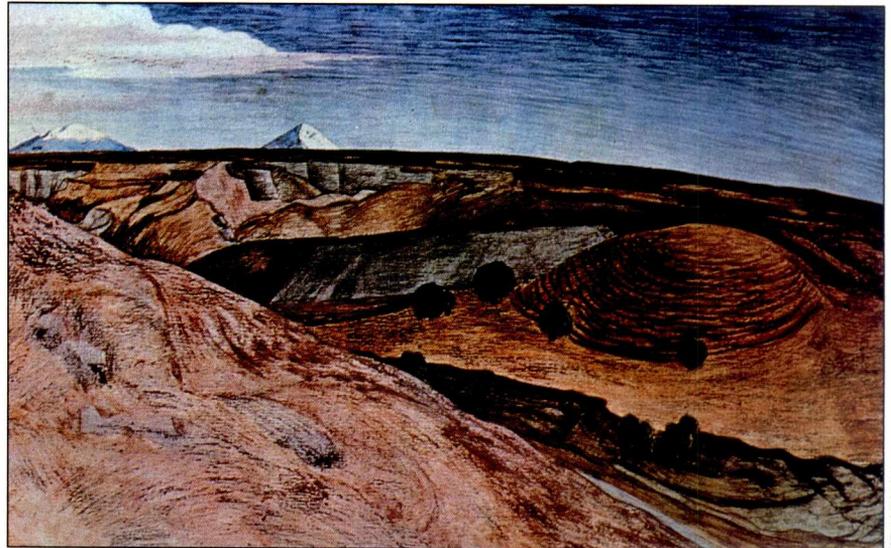
In 1943 he was present at the birth of the Parícutín volcano, taking notes and painting. His canvases on this phenomenon were exhibited at the Palace of Fine Arts in 1944. In addition to a number of portraits, architectural drawings and sketches for murals, his works include hundreds of drawings and a large number of landscape paintings.

He adopted the curvilinear perspective proposed by Luis G. Serrano, a technique which adds a constant note of monumentality to his work. In his last years, he spent long periods of time in Pihumo, Tepoztlán and the Santiago river gorge, recreating landscapes and working on his project for Olinca, a world cultural city—a dream which was never realized. He began the genre of aerial landscapes, that is, large-scale views of geographical features as seen from the perspective of an airplane.

He was named a member of the National College, an honor he declined because it had been granted in the name of Gerardo Murillo rather than Dr. Atl. He is buried in Mexico's Rotunda of Illustrious Men.

"The unknown philosopher." Ramón del Valle Inclán copied terms, entire sentences and the basic story line from "The *ki*' boy passed that way," presenting them with a greater literary sensibility and more streamlined style in his famous novel, *Tirano Banderas*. William Spratling translated 45 of Atl's stories into English, while General Juan Azcárate, director of the EMA film company, wanted to make movies out of several of them.

As its title indicates, *Cuentos de todos colores* is made up of a number of widely diverse stories. Many are autobiographical, relating childhood or adolescent memories. All the stories are short. Most revel in a



A landscape from his curvilinear period.

IIE / UNAM.



The rain, 1945.

IIE / UNAM.

crude form of realism. Many dialogues phonetically imitate the speech of the Mexican people. Taken one by one, they have made worthy components of anthologies. Taken together, they seem repetitive due to the constant use of the same plot device: the heroes' violent death.

In his literary work, more than a stylist of novels and stories, author of striking images, cadences and metaphors, or builder of structures, Atl was a creator of myths.

He captivated his readers with the plots of his stories, not the way he presented them. He specialized in scenes from the "barbarous" side of Mexico, scenes of poverty, of *machismo* and *hembrismo* (*machismo*'s female equivalent), of vendettas and vengeance. He belonged to the old school of smiling narrators dedicated to relating what they had seen and heard.

Perhaps this is why I always imagine him as an old man, with lively eyes and unruly hair, facing head-on the tempests of his long, complex and prolific life. **M**

Beatriz Espejo

Excerpt from an article published in  
*Universidad de México*, No. 508,  
May 1993, pp. 45-49.

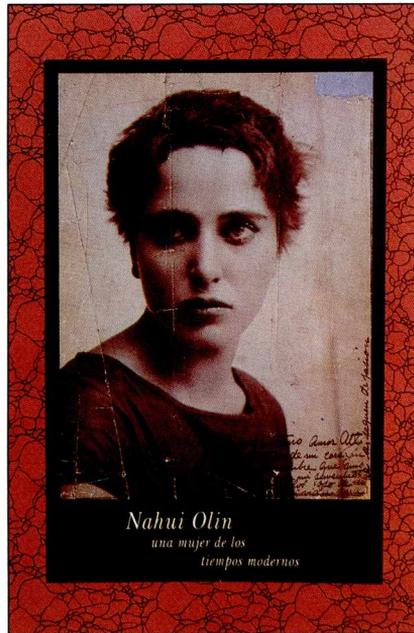
# Reviews

**Nahui Olin: una mujer de los tiempos modernos (Nahui Olin: a woman of modern times)**

Tomás Zurian

Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes and Museo Estudio Diego Rivera Mexico City, 1992. 165 pp.

Nahui Olin is the latest of a group of women artists, writers and intellectuals active in Mexico in the 1920s to be spotlighted. The passion for Frida Kahlo and fascination with Tina Modotti have been underway for some time. Meanwhile, an in-depth view of the life of Katherine Anne Porter in Mexico by Thomas Walsh

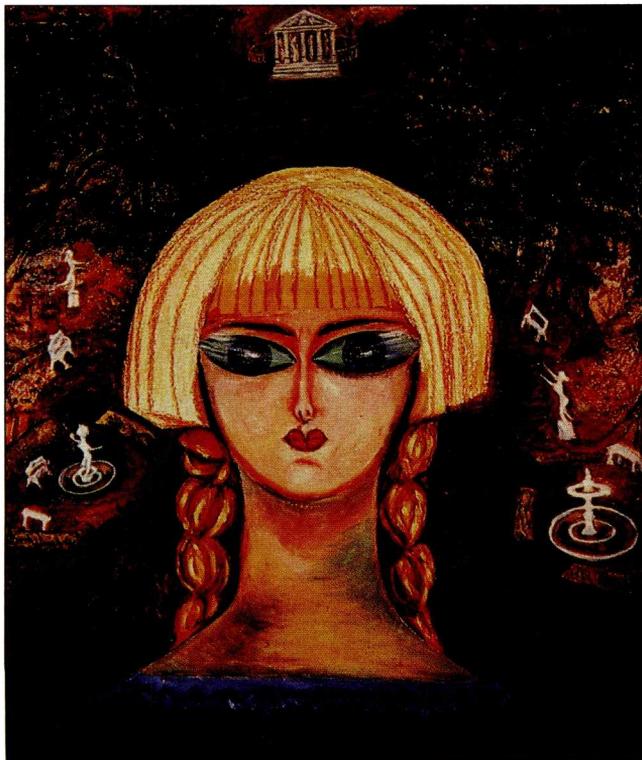


was recently published by the University of Texas Press (see *Voices of Mexico* 23, April-June, 1993).

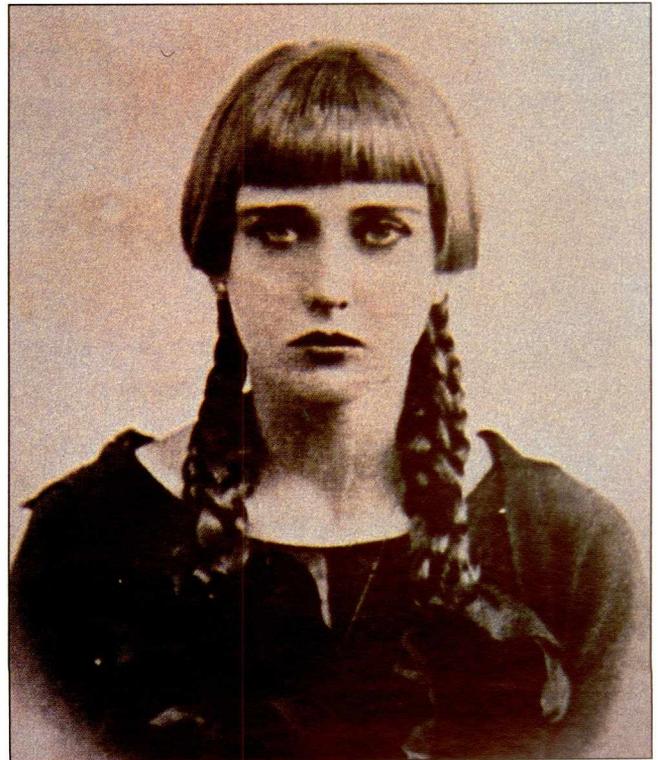
Last fall, the Diego Rivera Studio Museum honored Olin with a retrospective exhibit which coincided with the publication of a biography-catalogue of her work that included some of her poetry.

Nahui Olin (1893-1978) was born Carmen Mondragón. She was the daughter of a well-known general who invented a rifle during the Porfirio Díaz regime in Mexico (1876-1910) and later became Secretary of Defense for a brief period in 1913. Her family was part of the pre-Revolution Establishment.

Nahui was an outstanding woman who received the kind of education



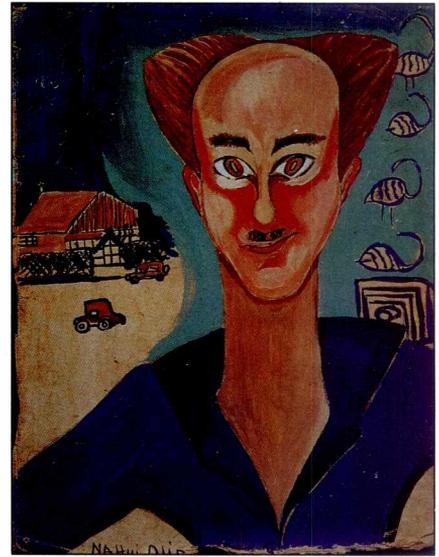
*Self-portrait in the gardens of Versailles.*



*Carmen Mondragón as an adolescent.*



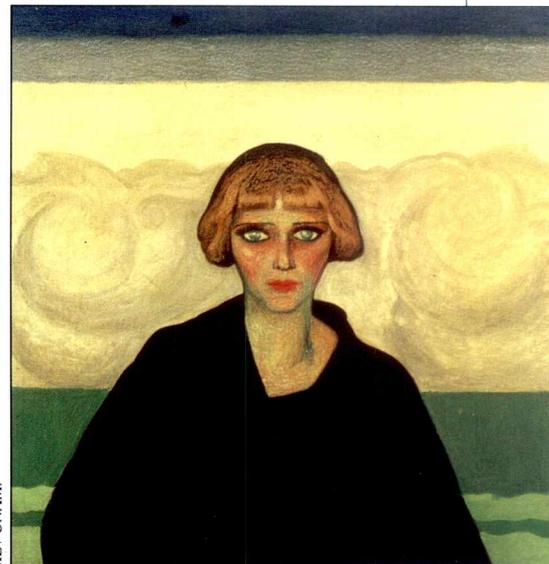
*Nahui and Agacino dancing on the bow of the Habana in New York harbor.*



*Edward Weston.*

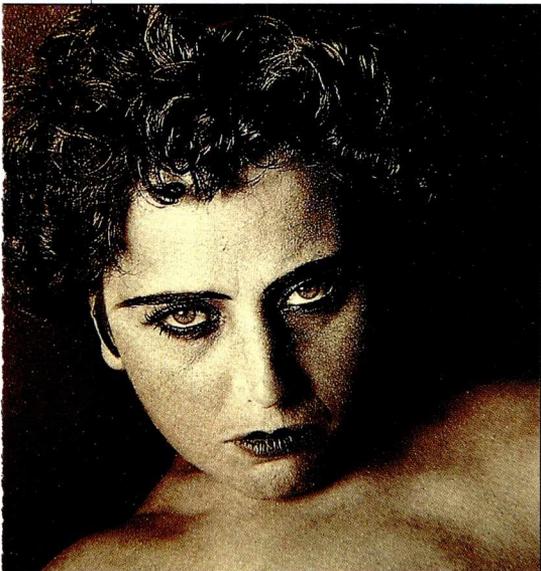


*Caricature of Atl and Nahui  
by Matías Santoyo.*



IIE / UNAM.

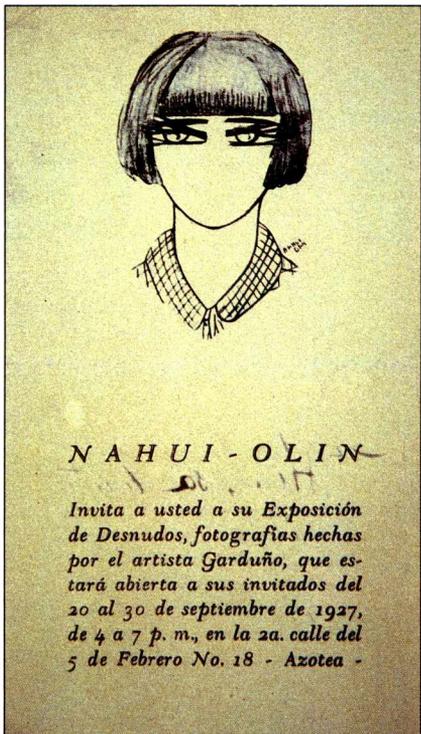
*Dr. Atl, Portrait of Nahui Olin,  
Atlcolors on cloth.*



Nahui Olin. Portrait by Edward Weston.



Caricature of Nahui by Matias Santoyo.



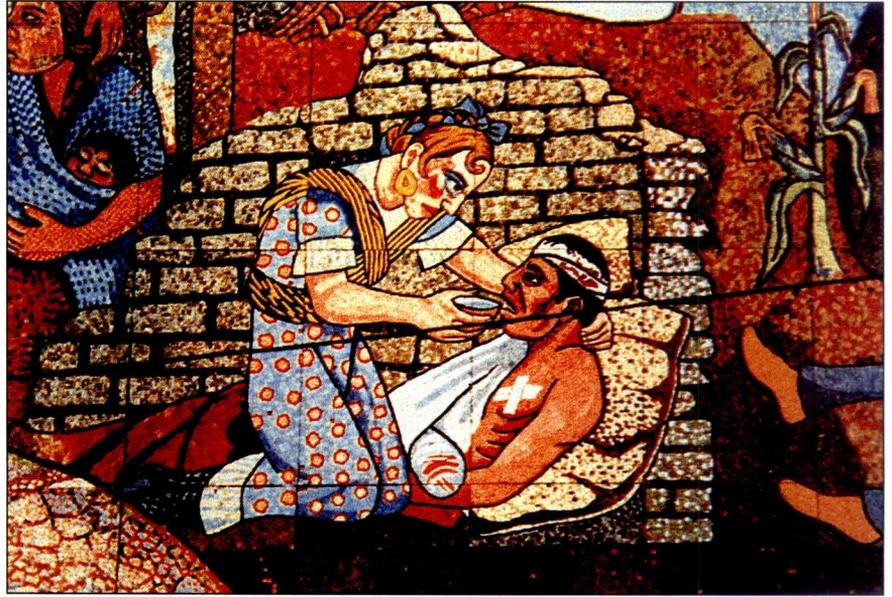
Nahui's invitation to her exhibition of nudes by photographer Antonio Garduño.



Wedding portrait of Carmen Mondragón and Manuel Rodríguez Lozano.

reserved for the elite. She wrote poetry, played the piano and composed music as well as being an accomplished artist. Growing up in Paris, she became familiar with the art world of the turn of the century. When she returned to Mexico in 1905, her teachers were astounded at her talent for writing and her familiarity with French art.

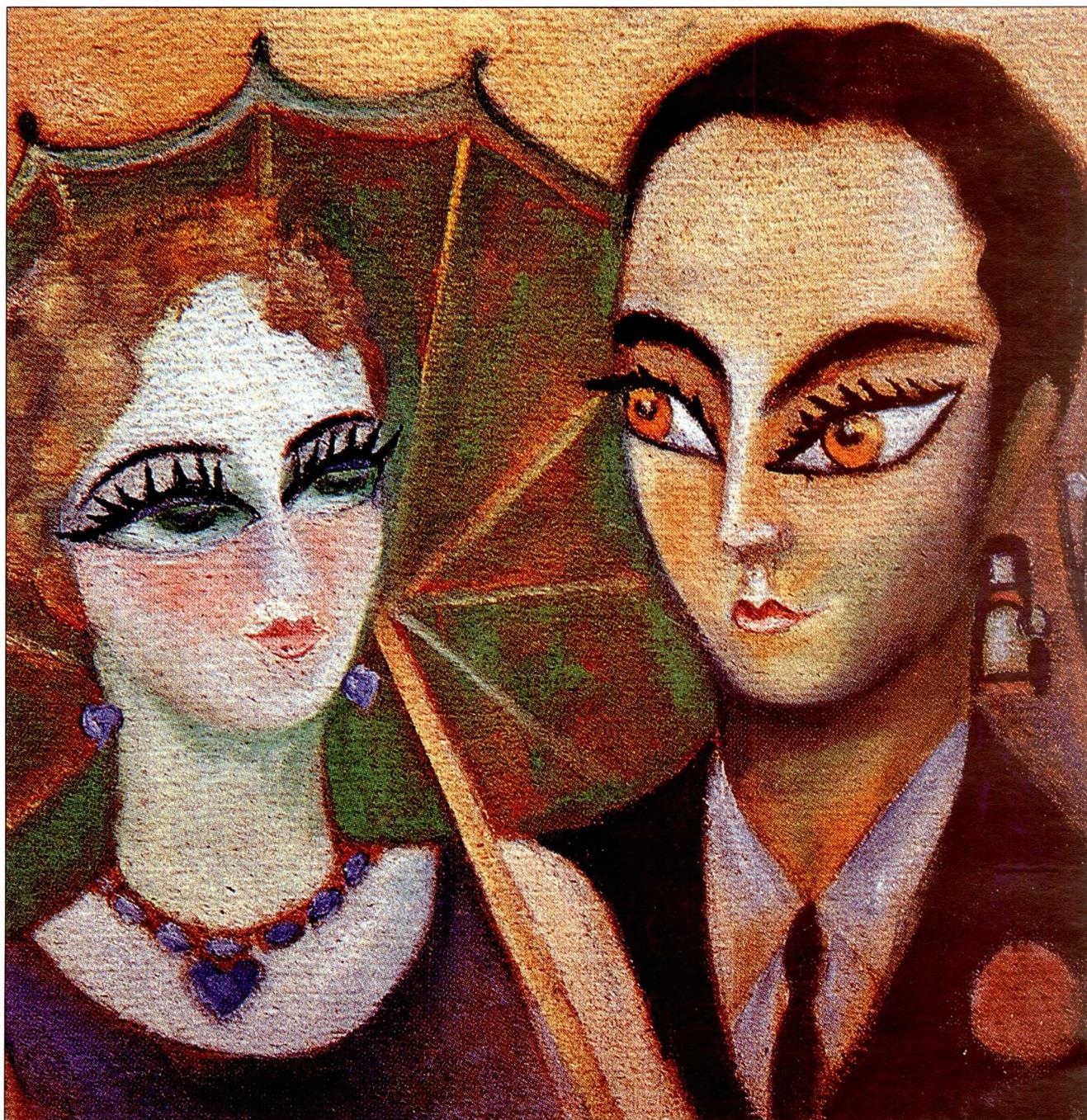
Mystery and legend are woven into the life of Nahui Olin. Her marriage to Manuel Rodríguez Lozano in 1913, which lasted nine years, is part of the enigma. Some say that the couple had a child, who died in infancy; others say there never was a child. Nahui claimed that the child fell off a ladder during a marital



*She was the muse for important artists of her day.  
Mural at the Insurgentes Theater (detail) by Diego Rivera.*

*Town plaza.*





*Nahui and man with carnation.*

tussle. Rodríguez Lozano has a different version.

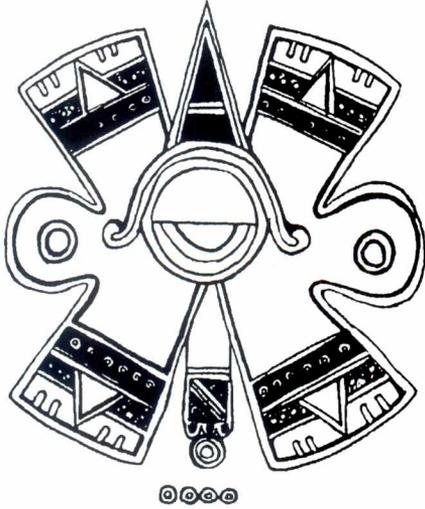
The marriage ended in 1922 when Carmen Mondragón, driven by passion, scandalized Mexico City society by going to live with the painter and volcanologist Gerardo Murillo, who had taken the name Dr. Atl (Nahuatl for “water”) and in turn named her Nahui Olin —“the fourth

sun or fourth movement.” Both artists are best known by their adopted names. The stormy, short-lived relationship with Dr. Atl thrust Nahui into the circle of artists and intellectuals active in what is called the Mexican Renaissance. She painted, published her poetry and lent support to the artistic community. Nahui joined the Union of Technical

Workers, Painters and Sculptors,<sup>1</sup> but did not actively participate in politics.

Nahui Olin was a spectacular and sensuous beauty. Her main feature, other than her body, was her beautiful, intense green eyes. This is well-documented in the many portraits of

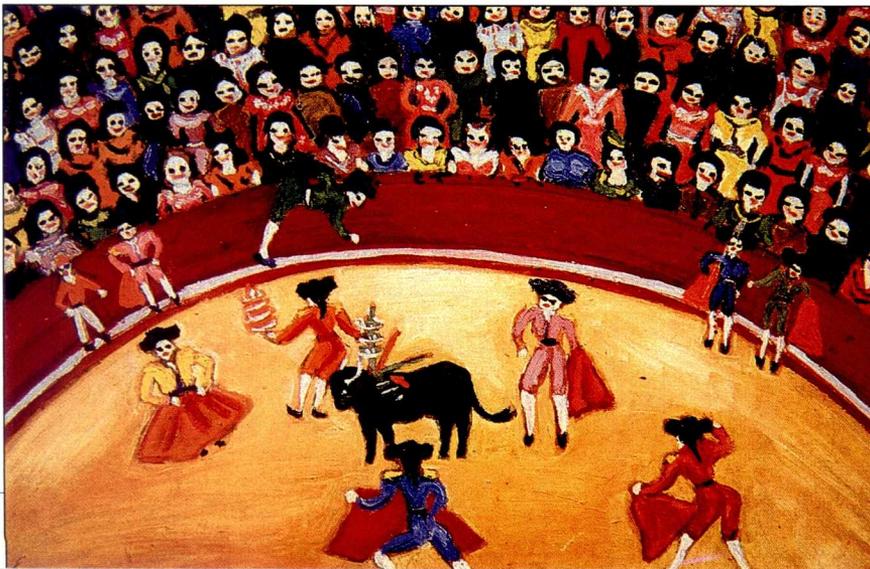
<sup>1</sup> See *The fabulous life of Diego Rivera* by Bertram Wolfe.



NAHUI-OLIN

her made by artists active at that time, as well as her appearance in three of Diego Rivera's murals. Her body became well-known when dramatic nude photographs of her were published by a major daily in 1927, adding fire to the sensational controversy she ignited when she left her husband to live with Dr. Atl.

Intense jealousy and conflict led Nahui to leave Atl late in 1927 to go to Hollywood in pursuit of a film offer which did not materialize. She floated from one relationship to another until she met the sea captain Eugenio Agacino in 1929, with whom she lived until his death in 1934.

*Bullfight.*

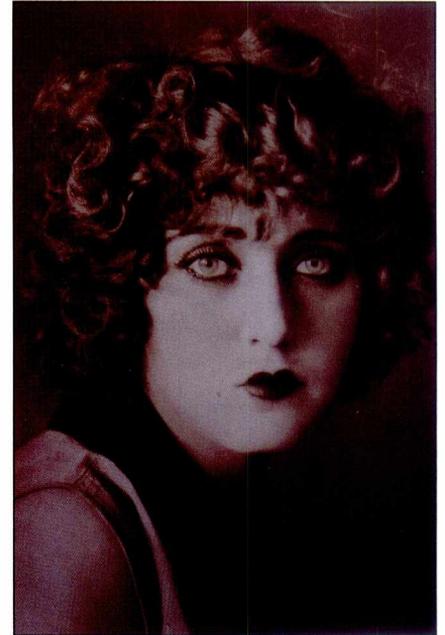
This woman recorded the loves of her life in her painting. In contrast to Frida Kahlo, who documented her life with self-portraits, Nahui painted couples. The brief passages of poetry included in the book provide a glimpse of her search for freedom and exploration of sensuality.

When Agacino, the sea captain, died, Nahui sank into despair. No further important relationships are documented. Although Nahui initially refused to see friends, she did recover sufficiently to paint and exhibit her work. The lively, colorful and charming scenes of nature, circuses, parks and bullfights reflect a cheerful personality, although there are no further scenes of lovers.

Time passes, beauty fades and the sensuous body gives way to sagging middle age, but the striking green eyes remain. The years roll by and Nahui stops painting. She teaches art in a public school and survives by eating at a government soup kitchen—a routine broken only by impulsive splurges of fabulous meals on payday.

Cats were the trademark of her eccentricity. She adopted them, stuffed them when they died, and covered her bed with a bizarre spread made of cat skins, including their heads!

Most of *Nahui Olin, una mujer de tiempos modernos* was written by

*Nahui Olin. Portrait by Antonio Garduño.*

Tomás Zurian. Rafael Tovar y de Teresa, president of the National Council for Culture and the Arts, contributed an interesting forward. Gerardo Estrada Rodríguez and Blanca Garduño, the directors of the National Institute of Fine Arts and the Diego Rivera Studio Museum respectively, have written short introductions.

The reproductions of Nahui Olin's work greatly enhance the book. They follow Zurian's narrative, treating the reader to the artwork mentioned in the text. Zurian, a well-known expert in art restoration and evaluation, carried out his goal of presenting the information he has gathered, without the pretense of providing a full biography. His style is a real pleasure, making the book a splendid experience—the story and pictures of a beautiful, sensuous woman accompanied by excellent reproductions of her art and appropriate inserts of poetry.

The book is a refreshing glimpse of the life of a woman artist and poet active in the 1920s, in sharp contrast with—and yet parallel to—the lives of Frida Kahlo and Tina Modotti. This is a welcome addition to the literature on women artists active in Mexico.

**Tinísima**

Elena Poniatowska  
Ediciones Era  
Mexico City, 1992. 660 pp.

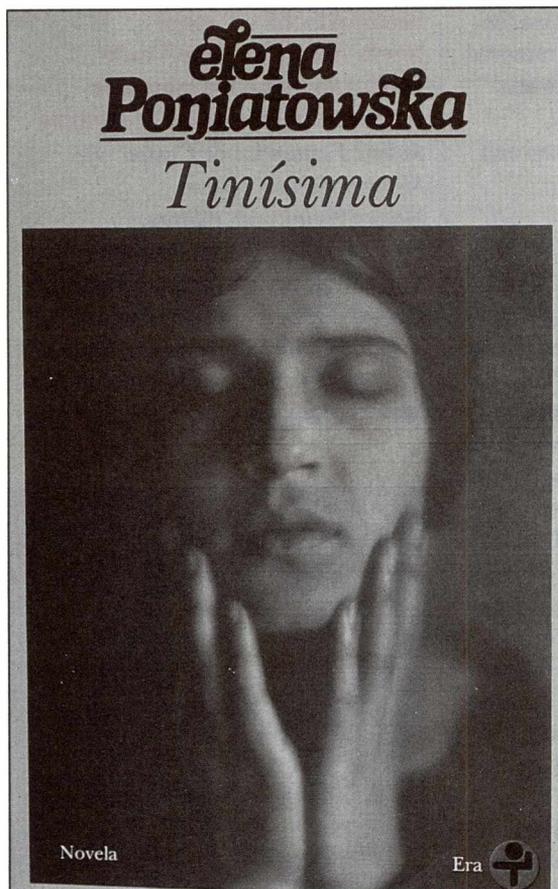
*Tinísima* is a biographical novel that tells the story of Tina Modotti (1896-1941) and her times. Modotti, already the subject of two books<sup>1</sup> and a British documentary, closely follows Frida Kahlo in the current fascination with enigmatic, creative women active in the Mexico of the 1920s. Although several scholars and journalists are still plugging away at unraveling and researching Tina's life, Elena Poniatowska, a well-known and highly respected journalist and fiction writer, hit the local best seller list with her book last winter.

Tina, an Italian immigrant to the United States, was a factory worker, movie star, photographer and active member of the Communist Party. She arrived in Mexico in 1921 with Edward Weston and one of his sons, shortly after the death of her first husband. She learned the art of photography as an apprentice to Weston while living with him.

Modotti and Weston joined the group of artists and intellectuals active in the Mexican Renaissance.<sup>2</sup> They were committed to change, to improving the worker's lot and to producing socially conscious art. When Weston returned to the United States, Tina threw herself into the activities of the Communist Party. She lived first with Xavier Guerrero, and when he left for Moscow, fell deeply in love with the Cuban Julio Mella, who worked, from Mexico, towards the overthrow of the Cuban dictator Machado.

<sup>1</sup> Constantine, Mildred, *Tina Modotti, a fragile life*. New York and London, Paddington Press, Ltd. 1975; and Hooks, Margaret, in press.

<sup>2</sup> Newhall, Nancy (ed.), *The daybooks of Edward Weston*, Volume I. Rochester, New York, George Eastman House, 1961. Beals, Carleton, "Tina Modotti," *Creative Arts*, New York, February, 1923.



Tina was known for her beauty and for her commitment to the Communist Party. She is remembered as enigmatic, sensual and caring. Modotti was embroiled in two scandals by the press in Mexico City: the first when Mella was murdered and the second when she died.

Her commitment to the Party was so complete that, although Diego Rivera helped her clear her name and regain her freedom when she was accused of killing Mella in 1927, she turned on Rivera when the Party expelled him in 1929. She was imprisoned in Mexico in 1929 and deported in 1930.

Deportation meant an immediate struggle for survival. Although her family lived in San Francisco and she could have gone to the United States, traveling there meant immediate imprisonment. The doors to Mussolini's Italy were also open, but

with the same fate awaiting her. Tina went to Berlin, where she survived<sup>3</sup> until Hitler's rise to power threatened her safety and the Party helped her get to Moscow.

Poniatowska's description of life in Moscow, working for the International, portrays a dreary life of survival. Tina's commitment is firm. She carries out dangerous missions to rescue others or travels to deliver documents and funds. It isn't easy to survive under Stalin. Fellow members are deceived, double-crossed, betrayed, some murdered from the inside. Tina's companion Vittorio Vidali is denounced, his future is uncertain. He is

sent to Spain, to collaborate with the Party during the Spanish Civil War.

Under the pseudonym of Maria, Tina joins Vidali in Spain and works tirelessly throughout the Civil War. The author dramatically weaves war, politics and woman's personal tragedy. Tina experiences the same jealousy she had provoked in Weston when Vidali sees other women. She is devastated by learning of her mother's death months after it occurred. She is worn down by caring for others, untiring until the bitter end.

The once sensual woman aged prematurely; physically and spiritually she was tired, old and burned-out when she managed to get out of Europe and return to Mexico. There is no spark, no interest in seeing her friends, no love for popular art or people who had once been the source of joy and fascination.

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished letter, Anita Brenner archive.

Her death in a taxi brings on the second scandal, and Vidali is rumored to have participated in her demise. Tina, the woman who traveled throughout Mexico with Weston and could talk to people, no longer witnessed the scandal.

Enigma and energy are fused with sensuality into a portrait of the young Tina: attractive, alive, pulsating with desire and activity when she first arrived in Mexico. Poniatowska skillfully transmits fear, deception, danger and the pain of the wounded and war dead. The time and place need not be Spain during the Civil War, but Mexico during the tragic massacre of Tlatelolco or the devastating earthquake of 1985.

*Tinísima* is a book for the layman and a respite for the historian or scholar. The cast of characters of the intellectuals active in Mexico during the 1920s is complete. Some are identified, others are simply there, part of the stage set for action.

Fantasy weaves the trip from Europe to the United States into the one from California to Mexico. Publications such as *The Nation* travel from New York to England. Living writers such as Nahum Megged are transposed to a different time and setting. It can be disconcerting for those immersed in footnotes and the rigors of academic pursuits.

Personally, although the book is long, I craved more. I wanted to hear about Tina the woman, from the Tina that Poniatowska, the woman, interpreted. The caring woman who befriends and consoles others appears old and tired to the man's perspective. Having read and enjoyed Poniatowska's earlier books, I craved a woman's perspective on life when youth and physical attractiveness are worn down by an intense life—what are Tina's thoughts, feelings and reactions?

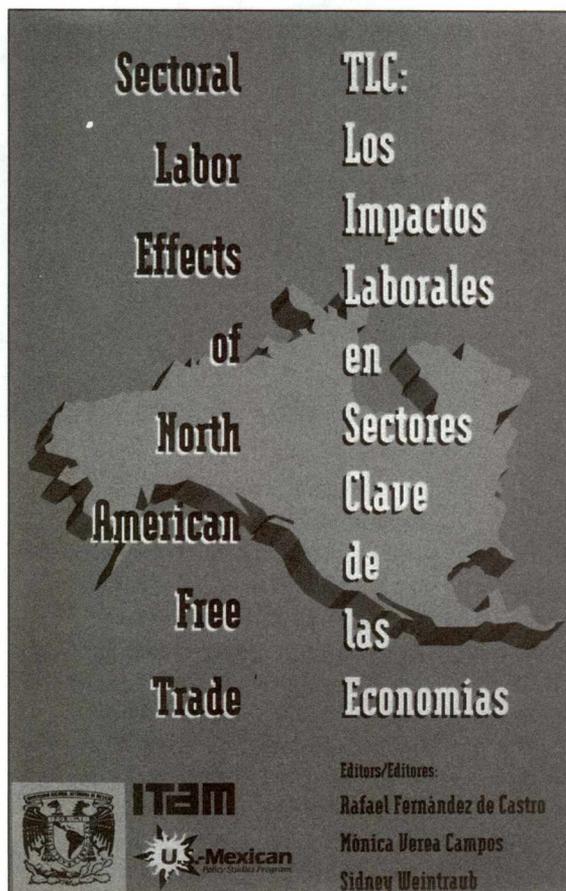
*Susannah Glusker*

Free-lance writer, working on a Ph.D. on the relationship between U.S. and Mexican intellectuals.

**Sectoral labor effects of North American Free Trade TLC: Los impactos laborales en sectores clave de las economías**

Rafael Fernández de Castro  
Mónica Vereza Campos  
Sidney Weintraub, editors.

U.S. Mexican Studies Program,  
The University of Texas at Austin;  
Centro de Investigaciones sobre  
Estados Unidos de América, UNAM;  
Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de  
México, Mexico City, 1993. 368 pp.



Negotiations for a trilateral Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada have faced strong opposition from various economic sectors, labor unions and grass-roots organizations in all three countries.

Despite repeated assurances by these countries' governments

regarding the benefits the treaty would bring to their respective nations, groups opposed to the agreement maintain that the inequalities between the three countries make a negative impact predictable. One of the most controversial topics being debated is the impact the treaty would have on the workforce once it enters into effect—especially in labor-intensive sectors such as textiles, agribusiness and the auto industry. Wage

controls, which are a touchstone of the Mexican government's economic policy, are the main source of opposition from unions and other labor groups in the United States and Canada, which fear that many companies will move their operations to Mexico in order to take advantage of low wages, leading to massive plant closures "at home."

In October of 1991, three academic institutions from Mexico and the United States organized a seminar in Acapulco, bringing together specialists from Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to evaluate opinions and projections on the labor impact of the Free Trade Agreement. This volume consists of the presentations to that

seminar. The authors delve into concerns about the treaty's labor, social and environmental impact, as well as discussing alternatives and making proposals aimed at lessening possible negative effects in their respective countries.

The editors, while recognizing that debate on these issues is far from

over, express the hope that this publication will help facilitate dialogue and discussion with the aid of the multiplicity of viewpoints presented in the book. Each presentation is published in the original language it was written in; the only bilingual part of the book is the introduction, which is published in both Spanish and English.

### Science policy in developing countries: the case of Mexico

*José Luis Boldú and Juan Ramón de la Fuente, editors.*

Ediciones Científicas Universitarias, UNAM/FCE, Mexico City, 1993. 272 pp.

Every "developing" nation which seeks to transform itself into a "developed" nation must establish effective policies for stimulating scientific and technological research. This effort, essential for generating adequate responses to problems and shortfalls in fields such as education, health care and industrial development, is a motor force for progress and economic independence.

An indispensable element for the advancement of scientific research is cooperation among government, institutions of higher education and the private sector, as well as international cooperation. Yet despite developing countries' awareness of the benefits of solid science and technology policies, the process of establishing firm conceptual foundations and effective, practical strategies is a complex one.

This book, published in the English language, compiles several experts' points of view—put forward in early 1991 during a workshop organized by UNAM in Cocoyoc, Morelos—regarding science and technology in the developing nations, with particular emphasis on the case of Mexico.

In evaluating the current state of science in developing countries,

these experts point to a serious shortage of scientific production. In the case of Mexico this is associated with a lack of investment in scientific research, the inefficient use of existing resources, as well as the lack of economic and social incentives for scientific professionals.

Moreover, in contrast to industrialized countries, in developing nations science and technology "interface" with the

private sector, face the task of changing this state of affairs. Policy-makers likewise need to promote the results of scientific research.

Also debated are the costs, benefits, risks and consequences of technology transfers, using the example of the health-care field. Contributors stress the importance of having an adequate infrastructure, trained personnel and essential equipment before the decision is made to import leading-edge

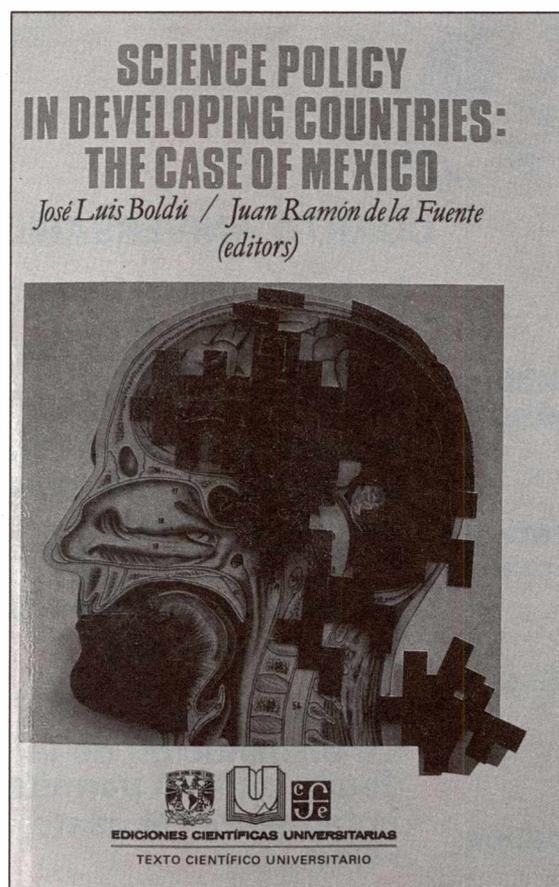
technology. A deep-going knowledge of the given country's concrete health problems, and real limitations, is key to evaluating the usefulness of such technology. In many cases imported technology has turned out to be an unwise investment.

It is indispensable that developing nations establish formal evaluation procedures for the rational acquisition of new equipment. These countries must also explore possibilities for designing their own technologies that would eliminate their dependence on the industrialized nations.

Lastly, the specialists contributing to this volume debate the links that should exist between industry and

science, as well as the role played by international cooperation among scientists from developed and developing nations, as part of the effort to reduce the technological and scientific gap that separates them. ❧

*Elsie L. Montiel*  
Assistant Editor.



domestic production of goods and services only at an incipient level, if at all. In other words, scientific knowledge is not an integral part of the economic system. Because of this, overall development is dependent on imported technology.

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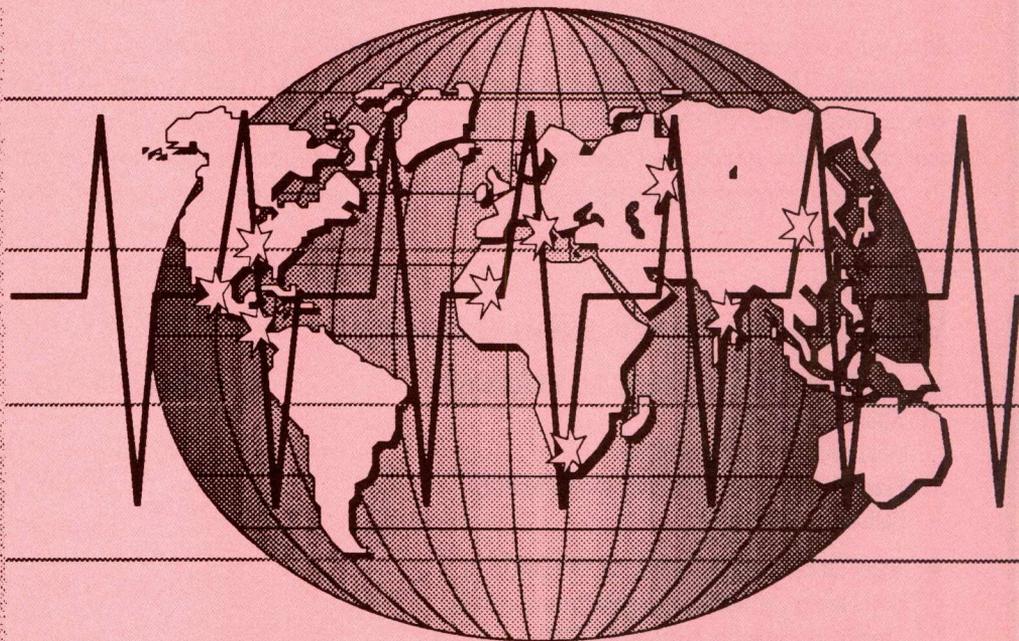
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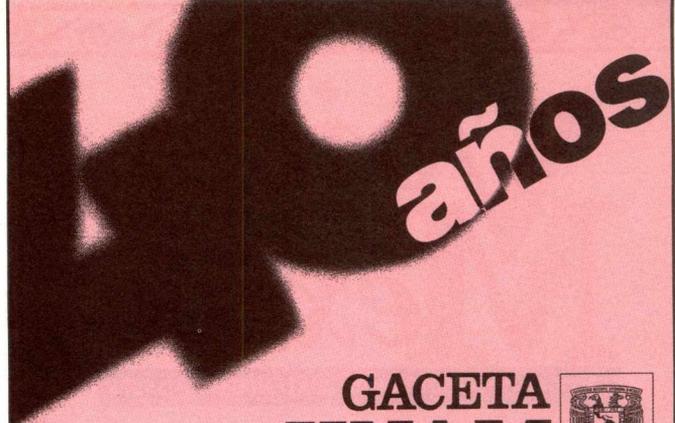


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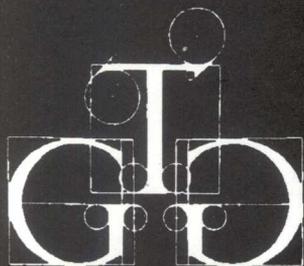
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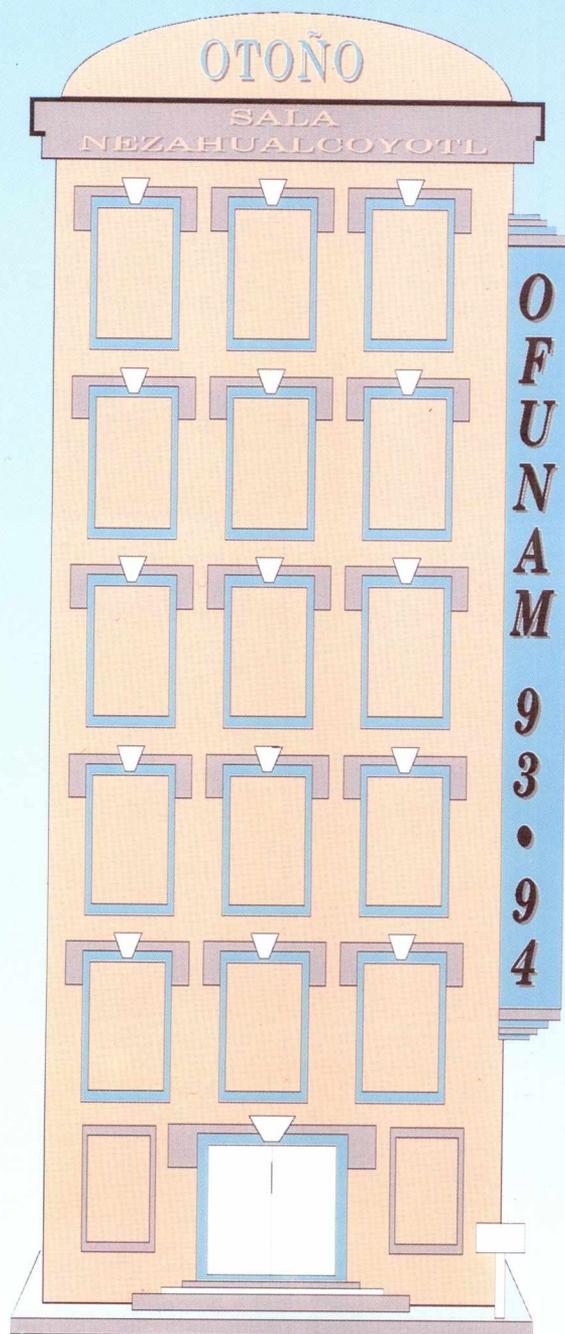
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