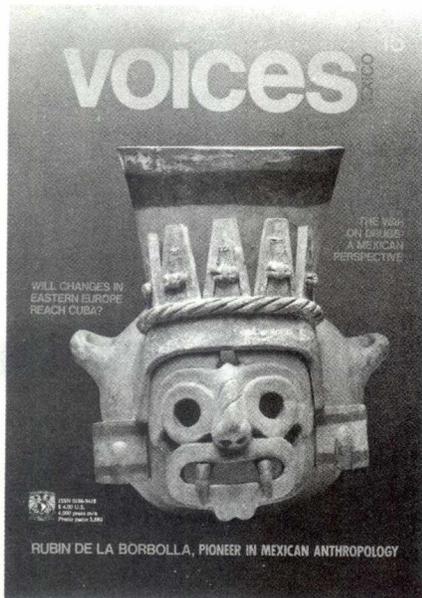


THIS ISSUE



Cover: Photo by Michel Zabé
Design by Angélica Hernández

The last decade has seen an increasing pauperization of Latin American societies as governments have struggled against high inflation rates and heavy debts, in an attempt to fulfill the policies of their creditors, the international banking organizations. In Mexico, the processes of economic modernization undertaken by the present administration, have begun to register improvements in some economic indicators (such as investment levels), but salaries do not reflect this recuperation; on the contrary, they have fallen dramatically over recent years, according to figures and the daily panorama. Mexicans, meanwhile, continue to prove their inventive capacities in confronting the crisis with numerous survival strategies, which is proven here by journalist Enrique Vargas in a report on activities of the so-called underground economy. Economists Teresa Rendón, Carlos Salas and José Antonio Rojas Nieto complete the framework by analyzing current economic trends, while efforts to better the living conditions of the very poor in the National Solidarity Program (Pronasol), are evaluated by Julio Moguel, who considers this kind of program a limited one, since it does not reach the very heart of the problem.

In reference to the course of relations between Mexico and the United States, former Mexican Senator and Ambassador, Hugo B. Margain, presents those issues of conflict in the common efforts to combat drug production and trafficking - a joint struggle often made difficult by what Mr. Margain considers unilateral decisions imposed on Mexico by the United States, although his criticism is accompanied by recommendations on each point in conflict. On the other hand, recent changes in socialist nations have led to eager discussions on the "death of socialism"; political analyst Sol Arguedas examines the case of Cuba in this context, arguing that all social changes are part of a very human search for freedom and fulfillment, and clarifies the meaning of such changes, as well as their repercussions all over the world and particularly in Cuba and Latin America.

The fifth anniversary of the Spaniards' arrival in America, to be celebrated in 1992, has already provoked polemics about what this celebration means for Latin America today. Recalling the greatness of former Indian societies, *Voices* presents an interview with Daniel Rubín de la Borbolla, one of the archeologists who discovered the ruins of Monte Albán in Oaxaca in the 1930's, and this is followed by a linguist's appreciation of the effects of the Conquest on the writing of Indian languages.

The celebration of the fifth centenary brings us another opportunity to evaluate the position of indigenous peoples in our societies, beyond the appreciation of their ancient monuments and folkloric customs. Indian groups are working today to revindicate their rights and the moment is ripe for *mestizos* to accept and support their claims.

Mariclaire Acosta