

# voices

of MEXICO

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

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## This Issue

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We are mainly concerned with three subjects in this issue. The first is our economic and political relationship to the rest of the world. As we were closing this number, Mexico finally reached an agreement with its international creditors. This means that the ongoing internal debate concerning payment of the foreign debt has temporarily quieted down, especially when compared to the storm of statements and points of view unleashed previous to the change-over in the Ministry of Finance last June, which we covered in our previous issue. Now the discussion seems to be centering on other points, such as whether the specific way in which the Mexican government renegotiated the huge debt was the most suitable. VOICES contributes to this debate with an article by well-known economist Ifigenia Martínez called "Facing the Present Crisis."

At the same time, the year came to a close with changes in several governorships and municipal elections in different parts of the country. Some of these elections — such as the case in Chihuahua, Durango and Oaxaca — stirred up national public opinion and even deserved certain international notoriety. We believe that once the most acute and decisive period in this process is past, it is our duty to provide critical and dispassionate analysis of recent elections in Mexico, including aspects such as possible future trends in our political system. Besides the informative articles we present on voting in Oaxaca and Tlaxcala, we are including two essays that take a more in-depth look at what is really happening in Mexican elections: "A Crying Need for Regional Movements" by Manuel Villa, and "Unfettered Democracy" by Silvia Gómez Tagle.

Finally, we have taken an overview of the earthquake Mexico City suffered on September 19, 1985, one of the worst catastrophes in our modern history. The earthquake shook a lot more than the city's buildings. Its effects moved Mexican society to the core, raking up traditionally neglected problems such as excessive urban concentration, Mexico City-dwellers' lack of voice in city government, unequal access to services, etc. To this surfacing of old wrongs must be added the difficulties created directly by the earthquake, such as the thousands of victims left homeless, the loss of whole neighborhoods that were part of the city's personality, the disappearance of some of our urban landscape's dearest signs of identity. But the most fundamental aspect in this sense is the intense social and political mobilization of the sectors hardest hit by the earthquake, people who are no longer willing to wait for traditional solutions to urban demands. This new, highly active and articulate actor on the political scene points to the presence of a vigorous people moving behind the facade, and announces deep changes to come in Mexican society. These are processes we need to follow closely, and this is why we offer our readers a special section on the earthquake and its aftermath.

Mariclaire Acosta