

Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Jean Charlot
in Mexico

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**Historic debate between
presidential candidates**

Chiapas update

**Remedios Varo's
magical journey**



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Voices of Mexico

MEXICAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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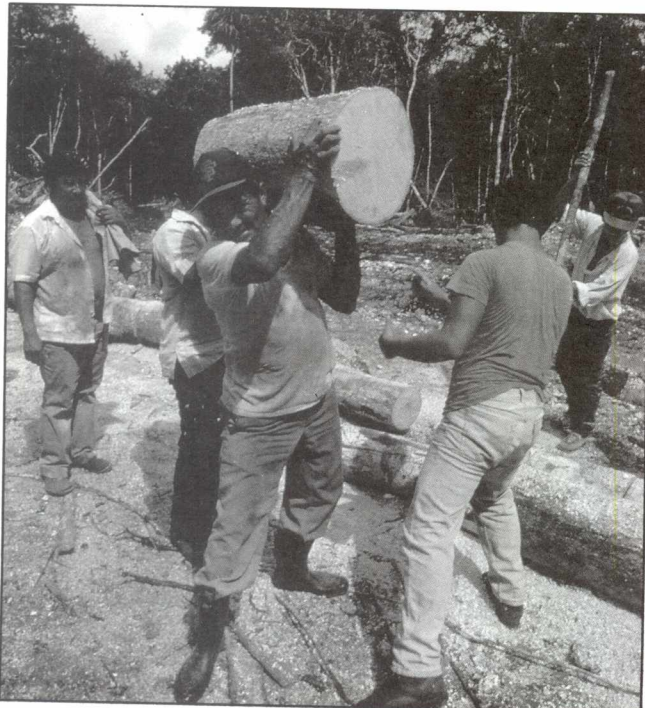
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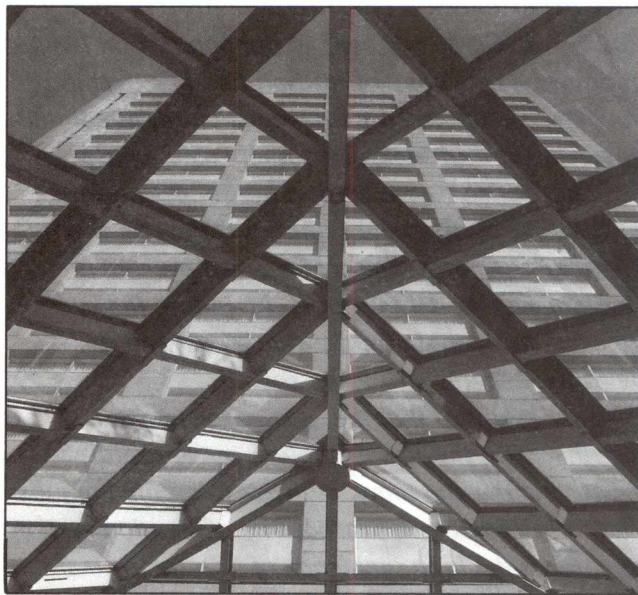
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Cover: *Remedios Varo, Spiral Transit, oil on masonite, 1962.*

Photo by Arturo Piera.

Our voice

One of the world's most widespread problems today concerns the economy. In Mexico, the Gross Domestic Product for last year was low, while the GDP for this year will be lower than expected and less than the rate of population growth.

In addition, wealth has been concentrated in the hands of a few, while the majority of the poor have experienced a considerable drop in living standards. Forty per cent of the population lives in poverty, of whom 14 million live in extreme poverty. This poses an enormous challenge to the government and Mexican society as a whole.

The Banco de México, a highly prestigious institution, publishes an annual report on the Mexican economy. In this issue we present a summary of the 1993 report, including the government's main achievements as well as negative aspects still to be solved.

It is essential that the next government, together with the rest of society, move rapidly to reactivate the economy, in order to create the jobs that are needed and overhaul the education system to combat the high incidence of illiteracy. Democracy is the appropriate context for achieving these aims. To this end, political parties should try to establish firm bases to ensure that the forthcoming elections will be faultless.

Miguel Angel Ortega comments on the conclusions of the bank's report, as well as its predictions for the Mexican economy this year.

NAFTA has sparked a growing interest within Mexico, the United States and Canada in learning more about each other. Two Canadians, Thomas Legler and Linda Hossie, contribute descriptions of the Canadian government from the time of Mulroney until Chrétien's current administration, and Canadians' view of Mexico, respectively.

Now is the time for these three countries to get to know each other better in every aspect. Knowledge of another country, as well as enriching one's culture, leads to a profound respect, which is the basis for civilized coexistence.

The Center for Research on North America at the National University of Mexico receives distinguished young researchers from other countries.

Santiago Benítez Pérez, a distinguished Cuban researcher, contributes an article on a subject ever-present in Mexicans' minds: United States-Cuban relations. Mexico still hopes it will be possible to achieve a solution respecting the key principles of non-intervention and self-determination for countries as outlined in the United Nations Charter, rather than destructive confrontations.

The figure of Subcomandante Marcos has sparked worldwide interest. Instead of using force against the rebels, the government has decided to seek peace in the region through dialogue and agreement. Fernando Chamizo, Assistant Director of Radio Universidad, was granted an extensive interview with Subcomandante Marcos somewhere in the mountains of southern Mexico.

Chamizo himself summarized the highlights of the interview, together with which we provide an account of the current state of the peace talks.

This issue contains an article on a historic event that took place in Mexico: the first debate between presidential candidates.

A tribute was recently paid to Octavio Paz, Mexican writer and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990, for his eight decades devoted to poetry, politics and history. His complete works, published in both Spain and Mexico,



are a valuable contribution to Spanish, the main language of this continent.

From the outset, the Mexican Muralist Movement, started by Dr. Atl (Gerardo Murillo) and continued by Diego Rivera, Clemente Orozco and numerous others, attracted a French painter, Jean Charlot, who was honored this month at the Colegio de San Ildefonso, a jewel of Colonial architecture. Charlot's muse was Luz, an Indian woman who introduced him to our great culture. Two of Luz'

grand-daughters, Raquel and Laura Villanueva, are members of our editorial staff.

Mexico boasts several exponents of the historical novel. Mariano Azuela (*Los de abajo* — *The Underdogs*), Martín Luis Guzmán (*La sombra del caudillo* — *Shadow of a Caudillo*), Fernando del Paso (*Noticias del imperio* — *News of the Empire*) and Carlos Fuentes are some of the writers who have excelled in this literary genre, as the article by Eugenio Aguirre demonstrates.

Remedios Varo, a painter with an extraordinary imagination, spent her finest years in Mexico. A very complete exhibition of her works was held recently and Dinorah Isaak presents a new view of the artist, based on interviews with her widower and biographers. Numerous visitors have now been able to explore Remedios' dream world.

In keeping with the magazine's tradition, this issue presents a description of the San Carlos Museum by Elisa García Barragán, as a further example of the plurality of the culture of Mexico, a mestizo country in constant fusion ✘

Hugo B. Margáin
Editorial Director.

The Mexican economy in 1993

Positive aspects

During 1993, the Mexican economy made great progress in the following fields: curbing inflation; structural change; labor productivity and raising average real wages; increase in financial brokerage and external accounts.

The total balance of payments surplus was much higher than in 1992 and was accompanied by more dynamic exports of non-oil products as well as a lower deficit in the trade balance and current accounts.

The considerable growth in Mexico's non-oil exports represents the continuation of the favorable trend experienced in recent years, especially since trade policy was effectively liberalized. This performance is proof of the Mexican economy's increasing competitiveness, which has placed it among the world's highest-growth exporters.

The points made in this and earlier reports, together with the country's economic history, support the conclusion that high, sustainable rates of economic growth are possible if inflation is kept at low levels. Experience also shows that income distribution worsens when prices rise very rapidly. This accounts for the emphasis given to controlling inflation in current economic policy.

For the first time in 21 years, the annual inflation rate has dropped to below 10%. Thus Mexico came closer to the goal of preventing prices from rising more rapidly than the current inflation rate in the countries which are our main trading partners.

The inflation rate was 8%, the lowest figure that the majority of the population had ever known. This result was obtained through persistent, years-long efforts at fiscal reform—making possible a surplus in the public sector and effecting a considerable reduction of that sector's internal and external debt burden—through prudent handling of monetary policy and the strengthening of exchange-rate policy within the framework of increasing liberalization of the Mexican economy.

In order to help control inflation, the Banco de México continued to seek reduction of excessive pressures on money-supply growth. It is worth noting the "monetary sterilization operations" carried out with the aim of partially compensating for the expansion of liquidity produced by monetarization of the considerable capital

inputs the Mexican economy received from abroad.

The objective was growth that would be correctly balanced between monetary-base supply and demand.

As in previous years, these resources were attracted to the country by the yields that could be obtained from direct investments and financial instruments. Similarly, monetary policy aimed at providing a buffer for erratic movements in interest rates, while at the same time avoiding interference with basic market trends.

Exchange policy continued to contribute to price stability by favoring a steady nominal exchange rate, without detriment to the flexibility required to adapt to temporary imbalances between supply and demand for hard currency. This flexibility was ensured by means of the gradually increasing range of flotation which is part of current exchange-rate strategy.

The contraction of the Banco de México's net internal credit demonstrates that, far from being a source of inflationary pressures, monetary policy has made it possible to neutralize other types of pressure. The basic middle-range goal of this policy was a growth in monetary-base supply that would—with neither surplus nor shortage—satisfy the economy's demand.

With this in mind, in recent years the bank has carried out "sterilization operations" aimed at partially compensating for the expansion of liquidity caused by considerable inflows of capital—which reached a new high in 1993.

Setting public finance on a sound footing not only helped drastically reduce inflation but also had two other highly positive effects.

First, since the government is no longer a net consumer of resources, more have been available to finance increased private investment. This is shown by rapid growth—in real terms—of the financing channelled to this sector.

Secondly, due to the considerable drop in the total amount and servicing of public debt, it has been possible to give greater attention to major social objectives, such as reduction of the tax burden for lower-income brackets and a considerable increase both in public spending on social development and support for the most underprivileged classes of Mexican society.

Thus, whereas in 1988 public spending on social development programs was 6.1% of GDP, by 1993 it had

risen to 9.2%. Spending on education, one of the most important categories, expanded considerably, from 2.6% of GDP in 1988 to 4% in 1993.

Assigning resources to education has particular importance: it helps bring about more rapid economic growth—and, consequently, an improvement in living standards; moreover, providing greater opportunities for receiving quality education is the most efficient way to achieve a fairer distribution of income.

The policy of structural change implemented in the last few years, the intense investment process carried out by both the public and private sectors, and the transformations that all this has brought about in the production system, have produced substantial increases in the overall efficiency of the Mexican economy. Greater efficiency has meant higher labor productivity; this in turn has given rise to higher average real wages.

1993's negative employment trend was not an across-the-board phenomenon. Employment in the manufacturing firms whose stocks are quoted on the

Mexican Stock Exchange remained relatively stable, and the number of workers grew significantly in firms where the pace of investment was maintained.

Certainly these firms and many others, regardless of size, are making more progress than the economy as a whole, insofar as the modernization of their production processes and their adjustment to structural change is concerned. In fact, it is the modernizing firms that, in the long run, create new job opportunities insofar as they manage to consolidate their market position.

In order to establish an institutional framework that would help macro-economic stability, the Mexican Constitution was amended to grant autonomy to the Banco de México, and a new Central Bank Act was approved, aimed at controlling credit growth and providing price stability.

Thus the Banco de México's objective is to avoid the ills brought about by inflation, which remain very vivid in Mexicans' memory: its regressive effect on income distribution, the innumerable distortions that it provokes,

its harmful impact on savings and investment, and the gradual stagnation of the economy.

Several laws governing the rest of the financial system were altered and, for the first time in many years, new banks were authorized to begin operations. These measures sought to promote efficiency and competition in the financial market, while protecting users' interests. At the same time, oversight functions were reinforced.

Policy-makers have made great efforts to ensure that the highest degree of liberalization is accompanied by an improvement in the legal framework defending Mexican productive plant from unfair trade practices, as is seen in the Foreign Trade Act of 1993. The new Foreign Investment Act makes it easier for foreign capital to participate in the economy, by simplifying

GROWTH OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND ITS COMPONENTS¹ In hundreds

CATEGORY	1992	1993	Variation
Growth of:			
Private consumption	3.9	—	-3.9
Government consumption	2.3	3.0	0.7
Gross capital formation	10.8	-1.4	-12.2
Inventory variation ²	—	—	—
Exports	1.6	3.5	1.9
Goods	2.0	4.2	2.2
Services	-1.0	-0.3	0.7
Imports	20.9	-1.2	-22.1
Goods	24.0	-0.2	-24.2
Services	3.6	-8.1	-11.7
Gross Domestic Product	2.8	0.4	-2.4
Contribution to GDP growth derived from variation in:			
Private consumption	2.6	—	-2.6
Government consumption	0.3	0.3	—
Gross capital formation	2.1	-0.3	-2.4
Inventory variation	0.7	-0.5	-1.2
Exports	0.3	0.7	0.4
Goods	0.3	0.7	0.4
Services	—	—	—
Imports	-3.2	0.2	3.4
Goods	-3.1	—	3.1
Services	-0.1	0.2	0.3
Total	2.8	0.4	-2.4

¹ These results are derived from national accounts measuring aggregate supply and demand at constant 1980 prices.

² Figures (whether plus or minus) not indicated due to high percentage level.

MANUFACTURING SECTOR: PRODUCTIVITY, COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN 1993
(Annual percentage variation)

Productivity growth	Participation in mfg production	Mean productivity	Wage mass	Personnel employed	Production	Mean real comp'n
I. High	34%	19.5	-4.0	-10.3	5.5	7.4
II. Low	32%	3.1	-4.4	-7.3	-4.4	3.5
III. Negative	34%	-7.2	1.0	-4.5	-11.6	5.5

the regulatory framework and extending the number of sectors open to foreign investment.

Other structural change measures are aimed at encouraging economic efficiency. Thus, a new education act was promulgated, in which the state's obligations are more clearly defined, as are the functions of the different levels of government.

In the agricultural and stock-raising sector, the Federal Competition Act and the commission for putting it into effect were created to combat monopoly practices, encourage competition and modernize the programs which provide support for farmers, so as to capitalize on our comparative advantages and see that lower-income producers benefit from them.

Finally, the new policy on ports will make for more deregulation and a wider role for the private sector in this branch of the economy.

Without a doubt, the economic strategy and the perseverance with which it has been applied have helped eliminate the deep-seated macro-economic imbalances that existed in the early eighties, as well as providing solid groundwork for a new stage of economic growth—a growth that is satisfactory and sustainable and that goes hand in hand with a better distribution of its benefits.

Negative aspects and goals

In spite of these achievements, several factors had a negative influence on the gross formation of capital, economic growth and job creation.

- The uncertainty that began to be felt in the second quarter of 1992 as to whether the U.S. Congress would ratify NAFTA.
- An inflation lower than that predicted by the majority of economic agents. This discrepancy was the reason why real interest rates for many debtors were higher than those anticipated when their loans were taken out. Higher interest rates similarly increased the risk premium implicit in yields. A considerable number of businesses were affected by the fact that real wages also rose more than originally projected. The drop in profits, or resulting

losses, made debt service difficult; in extreme cases this forced a number of firms to reduce or suspend operations.

- A more cautious credit policy on the part of commercial banks.
- The slowing of sales, particularly in small and medium-sized firms, due to the policy of opening up to foreign trade.
- Temporary interruptions of production in a variety of industries due to restructuring of production processes.
- Lower consumer spending due to unemployment, and over-indebtedness of a considerable number of firms and private individuals.

Some of these factors are of a transitory nature, and thus their negative impact on economic activity will be temporary.

One consequence of the significant slowing of economic activity was that, for the first time in the last five years, the demographic growth rate was higher than that of the GDP. Per-capita product therefore went down.

To a large extent, the reason for this slower pace of economic expansion was the shrinking of private investment after several years of remarkable growth. Another was the considerable outlays made by private individuals to purchase banks, non-financial enterprises and other public-sector assets.

Both the new banks which have been authorized to operate and the entry of U.S. and Canadian branches, as allowed by NAFTA, meant a greater diversification of these institutions and an increase in the competition they face—to the benefit of the country's economy. Increased competition in financial markets will put pressure on them to narrow their margins, as has already begun to occur.

With NAFTA going into effect on January 1st, 1994, there will be greater liberalization of the Mexican economy, and its different sectors will face increasing competition. Mexican products will likewise have better access to U.S. and Canadian markets and foreign investment will be promoted.

Unfavorable economic developments also meant a decline in the number of jobs. Experience shows that some of the structural change measures, and the modernization

process itself, mean short-term adjustments in employment for some firms. A turn-around in the situation can, however, be predicted as improvements in efficiency and productivity consolidate and these firms begin a new period of growth.

Policy-makers have recognized that price stability is merely a middle-term —albeit essential— objective in economic strategy, oriented toward achieving more basic goals: economic growth at a satisfactory and sustainable pace, accompanied by higher income levels and more equitable income distribution.

Bringing about a suitable rate of job growth in the immediate future is one of the principal challenges facing the Mexican economy, the main objective of which is alleviating poverty and achieving decent living conditions for all Mexicans.

This process takes time; it involves improving or changing the ways workers are trained in order that they be able to undertake new tasks. The process will be more rapid if it encourages the efficiency and flexibility of labor markets and supports the mobility and retraining of labor.

The progress made in consolidating the macro-economic framework in which production evolves has been accompanied by significant improvements in micro-economic aspects. However, it should be stressed that attention to micro-economics also requires great perseverance, since it is the basis for continued increases in productivity. In the final analysis, productivity is the formula for raising Mexicans' standard of living.

The policies for perfecting the regulatory framework of economic activity increase markets' social utility, give more clarity to the signals that prices send to producers, and consequently favor the reassignment of production factors to more profitable sectors of the economy. In spite of this, it should be recognized that Mexican markets still need to combat a host of imperfections and undesirable practices.

In recent years, the agricultural and stock-raising sector has also undergone far-reaching structural change, oriented

toward modernizing agricultural activities and achieving greater productivity. It will thereby become possible for the rural population to enjoy higher levels of income. The reforms have considerably facilitated collaboration between the private and social sectors in agricultural production.

Prevalent distortions in the relative prices and inputs of several agricultural products have diminished, as has the difference between these prices and the rest of the economy. In general, such measures make for greater efficiency in the use of human, physical and natural resources, in the short, medium and long run.

However, the complexity of the changes required indicates that some difficulties will arise during this adjustment process, particularly as it involves not only the restructuring of crops and of agricultural and stock-raising production in general but also some modification in the input mix, the adoption of new technologies and better forms of association in production.

All this takes time. The pace of these transformations will no doubt be slower than in the industrial sector, given that many farmers manage their agricultural and stock-raising production the same way they did years ago. Furthermore, in some agricultural activities structural transformations have been hindered by the fact that over the last few years international prices for several products have been at a historic low.

The modernization of the agricultural and stock-raising sector is essential in view of its importance

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS CAPITAL ACCOUNT (Millions of dollars)

CATEGORY	1992	1993
CAPITAL ACCOUNT	26,542	30,882
Foreign investment	22,404	33,331
Direct	4,393	4,900
Portfolio	18,011	28,431
Stock market	4,783	10,716
Domestic currency securities	8,117	6,867
Public sector	8,117	6,485
Private sector	0	382
Foreign currency securities	5,111	10,847
Public sector	1,552	4,872
Private sector	3,559	5,975
Credits and deposits	-1,413	1,630
Public sector	-3,530	-2,209
Banco de México	-460	-1,175
Commercial banks	449	2,203
Non-banking private sector	2,128	2,810
Assets	5,552	4,079

and wide potential. This is shown by its capacity for contributing to economic development and, particularly, for improving the income and employment levels of the very large segment of the country's population that lives in rural areas. This modernization involves increasing efforts on the part of both public and private investment in this sector.

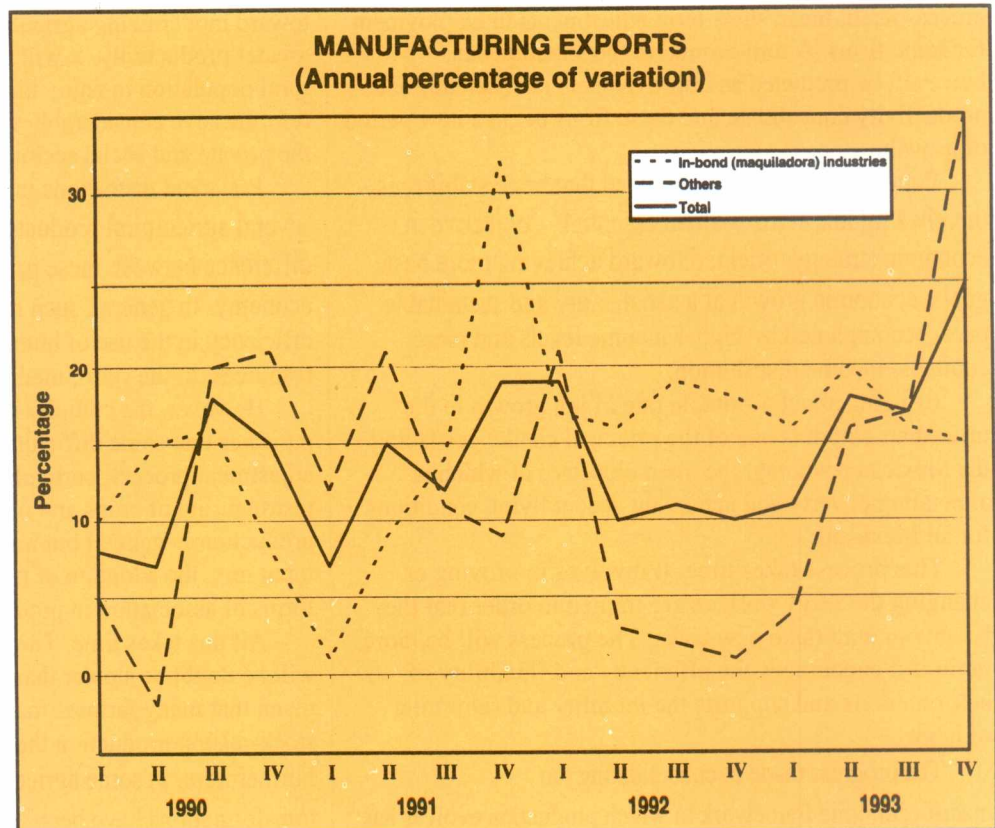
We must similarly intensify measures for facilitating the mobility of production resources between different agricultural and stock-raising activities; promoting the use of technology; increasing and perfecting the training of human resources, through both general and specialized education in agriculture and stock-raising; correcting existing imperfections in marketing and distribution mechanisms; and improving other aspects of agricultural and stock-raising policy.

Particular emphasis must be given to credit, insurance, research and technical assistance; indeed to everything which affects the well-being of the rural population, such as health care and other social services.

Investment oriented toward developing human resources plays a very important role in structural change, since it facilitates the reassignment of production factors between different sectors and productive activities. Investment in schooling, vocational and other forms of training, health, etc. —with the aim of raising human potential— is of the greatest importance for increasing the productivity of both labor and capital.

Therefore, in the Mexican economy —as in any other— assigning resources to education is one of the most profitable kinds of investment, laying the foundation for higher levels of development. Education through schooling and training, whether on or off the job, is also of great value in strengthening economic agents' capacity to adapt promptly to transformations in the economic environment.

This element is especially key in the case of an economy immersed in a deep-going process of structural adjustment. Quality education for all of society is the most efficient means of promoting equality and consolidating



economic development. Hence, Mexico must make a supreme effort in the field of education.

The benefits deriving from stabilization and structural change policies, particularly in terms of an overall increase in social well-being, take time to materialize, as shown by the economic history of many countries. However, these benefits are impossible to achieve if the country does not obtain high productivity from its available resources.

Economic policy, both in its macro- and micro-economic aspects, has been oriented toward achieving this goal. Nevertheless, given that the costs of transition appear more quickly than its benefits —particularly in a conjuncturely unfavorable situation— public opinion has tended to emphasize the former and underestimate the latter, despite the fact that the present strategy is already bringing about a number of beneficial effects that will become increasingly clear over time.

It is therefore essential to repeat that we must maintain our fiscal discipline, monetary prudence, liberalization of the economy and development of efficient markets. All this must be in conjunction with a great effort to bring about social improvement, especially in the field of education. Perseverance and coherence in these matters will lead to a reduction in the costs of restructuring and enable us to reap its benefits more quickly. ✕

Marybel Toro Gayol
Managing Editor.

Comments on the Banco de México's Annual Report (1993)

Miguel A. Ortega *

The Banco de México's annual report is undoubtedly one of the most important documents on the behavior of the Mexican economy.

I therefore consider it relevant to offer some comments and observations on the bank's 1993 report.

Because it is issued by the country's central bank, the document presents a record of the overall course of the economy—in particular that of some macro variables and, very specifically, Mexico's financial position. These comments will concentrate on the first two aspects of the report, as they seem most important for observing the country's overall situation and its short-term prospects.

Perhaps I should begin by explaining that the Banco de México is not responsible for Mexico's economic policy. Through its monetary and financial activities, however, the bank does help the federal government achieve the goals it has set for itself. With its recently acquired autonomy, its mandate is now, "above all, to bring about stability in the purchasing power of the peso."

It is important to clarify this point, so that comments made here will not be interpreted as a criticism of the bank. It reports on what has taken place and on how it used the instruments at its disposal to contribute to the goals set.

Another pertinent clarification is that, from January 1 until now, some unfortunate occurrences have taken place in Mexico which are already influencing the economy and will have a negative impact on the bank's relatively optimistic forecasts for 1994. As this observation is made in defense of the institution, it is also only fair to say that the report is as revealing for what it says as for what it leaves unsaid, as we shall now see.

Fighting inflation

The basic aim of President Carlos Salinas' economic policy has been to fight inflation. The understanding is

that "price stability is merely an intermediate —albeit essential— objective in economic policy strategy, which is oriented toward achieving more basic goals: economic growth at a satisfactory and sustainable pace, accompanied by higher income levels and a more equitable income distribution."

It should be stressed that the amendment to the Constitution which grants autonomy to the central bank "is motivated by the need to avoid the ills that inflation brings with it..., namely: its regressive impact on income distribution; ...its negative impact on savings and investment; and the gradual stagnation of the economy."

“The report is as revealing for what it says as for what it leaves unsaid”

These concepts are in line with orthodox economic policy but, unfortunately, have not been ratified by the behavior of the Mexican economy. Indeed—as noted previously (*Voices of Mexico* 26)—as the fight against inflation went forward, all the indicators that the bank stated should have registered an improvement continued to decline instead. This was particularly the case with those relating to economic growth, employment and income distribution.

This has given rise to a debate on whether the policies adopted are the right ones, as well as on these policies' extremely high cost/benefit ratio. Although the bank's conclusion that "high, sustainable rates of economic growth are only possible if inflation is kept low" is debatable, it is certain that Mexico's economic history in the last five years proves that fighting inflation is not the sole condition for

* Political analyst.

achieving this growth. Moreover, if it is not accompanied by other measures it may have exactly the opposite effect (see table).

Insufficient flexibility vis à vis lowered expectations on inflation

A part of the report that has caused a good deal of comment is its stress on the “insufficient flexibility vis à vis lowered expectations on inflation” as a factor discouraging production and employment.

The document says that “another factor that contributed to the slowdown of the economy was the disparity between 1993’s real inflation rate and the higher rate

predicted by economic agents. This discrepancy was the reason why real interest rates for many debtors ended up higher than those anticipated when their loan was taken out. Similarly, a considerable number of businesses were affected by the fact that real wages also rose more than what had originally been projected, as it was predicted that inflation would be higher than what it actually was.”

It is somewhat difficult to interpret this concept, since it would mean—if one were to apply the argument the other way around—that production and employment benefit when real inflation is higher than predicted. This, of course, would imply a contradiction: that it is better to fall short of one’s goals than to surpass them.

The foreign trade sector

As one of the positive aspects of the “structural change” policy that has been implemented, the document stresses “the remarkable growth in Mexico’s non-oil exports.” The report repeatedly refers to the “favorable performance of sales abroad” and a “remarkable dynamism in exports and a drop in the growth of imports.” According to the bank, the reasons for such “dynamism” are “the benefits brought by structural change” and “that the country has now achieved a satisfactory level of competitiveness.”

However, there is more here than meets the eye; these statements should be qualified to a certain extent.

The document says that “in 1993, sales to the American continent grew considerably, by 15.8%.... In contrast, those to

MEXICO Inflation, Growth and Unemployment 1989-1993

	Inflation ¹ %	Growth of GDP ² %	Unemployment ³ %
1989	19.7	3.3	2.9
1990	29.9	4.5	2.7
1991	18.8	3.6	2.7
1992	11.9	2.8	2.8
1993	8.0	0.4	3.4

¹ Source: Banco de México

² Source: Banco de México and INEGI.

³ Source: Banco de México and INEGI. INEGI’s National Survey on Urban Employment defines the unemployment rate as its proportion in relation to the economically active population, that is, people 12 or older who in the reference period did not work even 1 hour a week, but did look for paid employment or seek to carry out self-employed activity. This methodology is widely considered to underestimate the problem. It does not include underemployment.

the rest of the world fell 16.2%.... Non-oil exports.... to the United States grew by 17.7% ...those to Europe fell 12.9%.”

This means that Mexico’s foreign trade continued to be dangerously concentrated on one market and that the demand from that market determines the variation in Mexican exports. A more detailed analysis should be made of the variables influencing the increase in U.S. purchases of Mexican products, before stating categorically that our competitiveness has increased.

It should also be stressed that the behavior of Mexican exports to the United States in the last four quarters has been identical to that of the U.S. economy (*Reforma*, April 29). (See graph of the summary of the report.)

Conspicuous by its absence from the report is the total amount of the country’s external debt, which, according to the Inter-American Development Bank, has now reached a historic high of about 118 billion dollars. Consequently, “Mexico devoted \$10.5 billion in 1993 to interest payments on its external debt, the largest amount used for this purpose during the present presidential term” (*La Jornada*, April 25).

Another aspect relating to the foreign trade sector that should have received additional comment on the part of the bank is the capital account in the balance of payments.

The report points out that in 1993 the capital-account surplus reached \$30.882 billion, due mainly to an influx of foreign investments (FI) amounting to 33.331 billion. This was made up of 4.9 billion (15%) in direct investment and 28.431 billion (85%) in portfolio investment.

This composition of FI bodes ill. If 85% of the FI entering the country can be considered as speculative or short-term investment, then from the point of view of job creation the benefit that the economy receives is nil. That is what the figures show: an unprecedented surplus in the capital account in this six-year presidential term, with an unemployment rate that is also at a record high.

On the other hand, the high volatility and quantity of portfolio FI have an impact on interest rates. When there is instability in the stock exchange—which has recently been the rule rather than the exception—interest rates rise so as to prevent the flight of this type of capital. These increases in interest rates have grave repercussions on an over-indebted economy, especially on small economic agents who have a real need for financing.

Financial margin and interest rates

What the bank does not say about the margin of financial intermediation is also significant. Recognizing that “it continues to be wide and is one of the factors explaining the relatively [sic] high level that active rates maintain,” the document gives long explanations of why this is so: inefficiencies in the banks (which “are energetically fighting [governmental] institutions”); lack of competitiveness in the financial market; the absence, until recently, of rules and regulations making it possible to have reliable information on potential credit users, etc.

One can only wonder why the Banco de México never mentions the extraordinary profits that banks are making in Mexico, which, according to *The Banker*, have placed Banamex, Bancomer and Banco Mercantil del Norte among the 10 most profitable institutions in the world, in terms of yields (*La Jornada*, July 12, 1993).

Thus, it is difficult to agree with the bank’s claim that “it sought to promote efficiency and competition in the financial market, while protecting users’ interests.” One can only state that the banks have put priority on their own

profitability rather than providing businesses with access to credit—particularly the small and medium-sized businesses that cannot obtain financing abroad.

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMSBs)

This leads us to point out another remarkable omission in the report: the host of SMSBs that shut down in 1993.

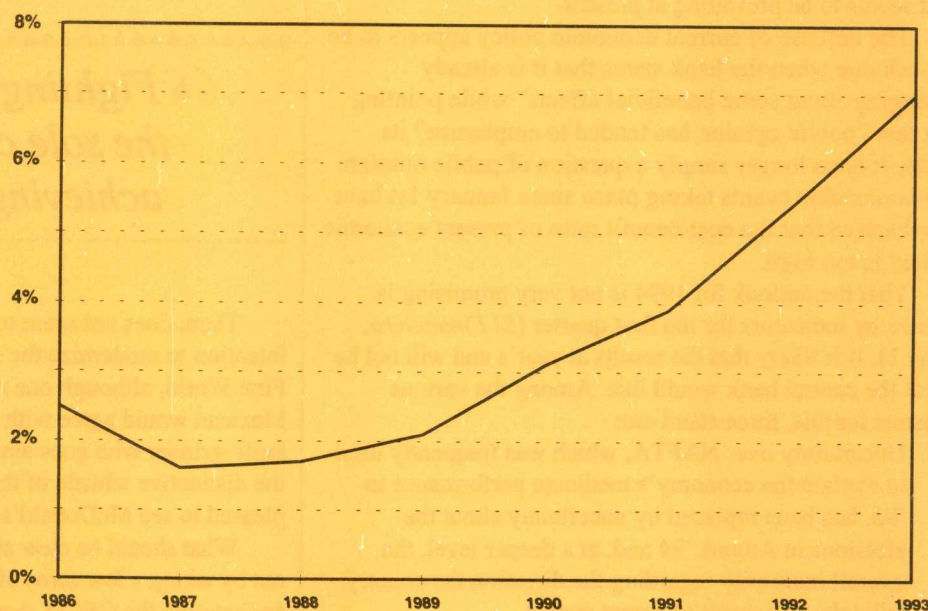
The bank states that “larger businesses and... those which carried out their modernization processes in a timely fashion... actually carried out outstanding productive activity... and increased their labor force.” It also declares that “among the group [of 80 manufacturing firms quoted on the Mexican Stock Exchange] employment remained relatively stable.” Needless to say, these are the largest firms.

The document does not tell us how many SMSBs were affected by the credit policy adopted and by banks’ extraordinary profitability. The veiled criticism of firms that did not “carry out their modernization processes in a timely fashion” also seems unfair. The first requirement for doing so would have been the availability of financing.

Prospects

In my view, the Banco de México’s report is an incomplete document, since—as is characteristic in this

COEFFICIENT OF PAST-DUE ACCOUNTS TO TOTAL ACCOUNTS OF COMMERCIAL BANKS, 1986-1993
(Percentages) *



* End-of-period balances.
Includes capital and interest.

SHARING THE WEALTH ■ Helguera

SI NO SE
HUBIERAN ALEPRESTADO,
ORITA HABRÍA UN
MC. DONALDS EN LA
SELVA ¿EH?



If you hadn't made so much trouble there'd be a Mc Donald's in the jungle by now.

Administration— it presents only one side of present-day Mexico's reality and ignores the other, which is the one that seems to be prevailing at present.

The defense of current economic policy appears to be a weak one when the bank states that it is already "bringing about some beneficial effects" while pointing out that "public opinion has tended to emphasize" its costs. It is no longer simply a question of public opinion: the lamentable events taking place since January 1st have emphasized that the cost/benefit ratio of present economic policy is too high.

That the outlook for 1994 is not very promising is shown by indicators for the first quarter (*El Financiero*, May 3). It is likely that the results at year's end will not be what the central bank would like. Among the various reasons for this, three stand out:

1. Uncertainty over NAFTA, which was frequently used to explain the economy's mediocre performance in '93, has been replaced by uncertainty about the elections in August '94 and, at a deeper level, the overall insecurity regarding the direction the country will take as a result of recent events.
2. The over-indebtedness of the economy. In addition to the above-mentioned figures on external debt, it should be recalled, as the central bank does, that "in

real terms, from the end of 1988 to the end of 1992, the banks' personal loan portfolio increased 388%." With the prospect of higher interest rates in order to keep speculative foreign capital in Mexico, one can hardly expect a recovery of domestic demand this year.

3. The slimmed-down state apparatus has lost some instruments for the kind of economic direction it is supposed to carry out, and indications are that private enterprise has not yet developed a modern entrepreneurial spirit that would enable it to take the place now allotted to it, apart from generating profits without consideration for the national interest.

A final comment

I fully agree with the importance the central bank gives to education, not so much because the "assigning of resources to education is one of the most profitable investments," but because it is indeed essential "for achieving higher stages of development."

“Fighting inflation is not the sole condition for achieving growth”

There does not seem to be any disagreement on the intention to modernize the country and bring it into the First World, although one must admit that not every Mexican would agree with the disappearance of the knife-grinder who goes along the streets on his bicycle, or the distinctive whistle of the sweet-potato man's cart, or be pleased to see McDonald's famous M near his home.

What should be clear at this stage of the game is that it is not by taking a few zeros off the peso, nor signing NAFTA, nor entering the OECD, that we will enter the First World. It is the education of the long-suffering Mexican people that will lead us to the place which Mexico can and must, by right, occupy on this new international stage. ✎

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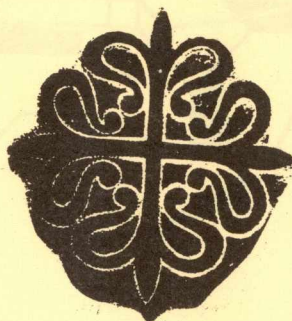
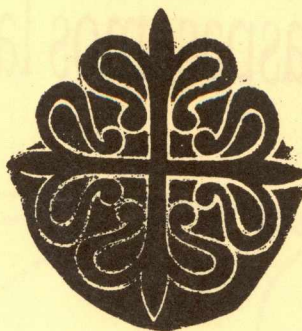
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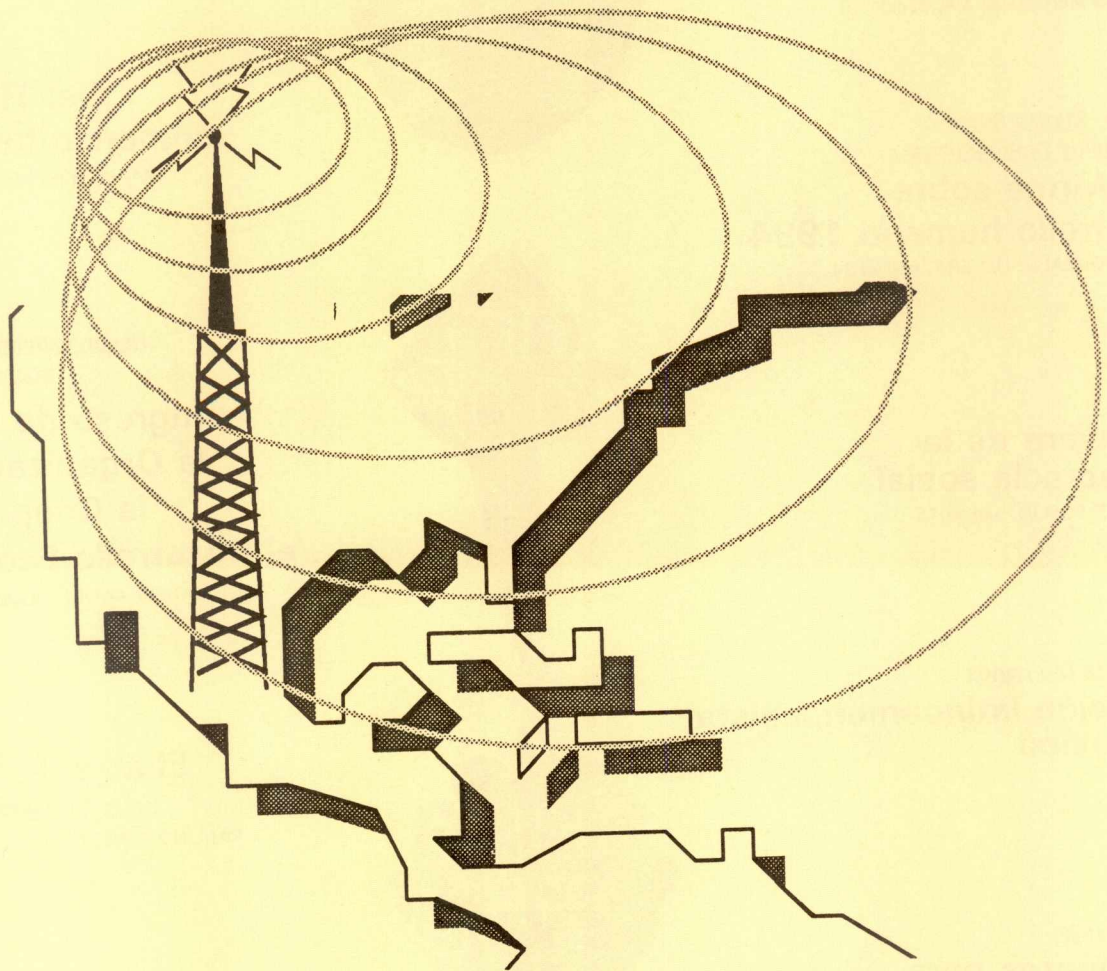


México **INTERNACIONAL**

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Las ondas no necesitan visa,
por eso traspasamos las fronteras.



XEPPM, Onda Corta

Largo alcance de México al mundo

Cultura con imaginación

Remedios Varo, a magical journey

In the first decade of this century, the dance of the universe formed a constellation under the sign of Sagittarius among its planets and stars.... In 1908, a child cloaked in the magic of the angels and marked by starry paintbrushes as a tireless searcher for hope was born in the city of Angles in the province of Gerona, Spain. Her earthly name: Remedios.... Her definition: creator of paintings, that, like eternal windows, would look out onto the world towards infinity.

During her lifetime, Remedios Varo gathered friends and true loves, but her magic as a weaver of paintings has transcended time and space, creating an embroidery of forget-me-nots that to this day links her loved ones with people interested in her life on this earth.

Thirty years after her death in 1963, the Mexico City Museum of Modern Art held an exhibition on "Remedios Varo: 1908-1963." The 172 paintings make this the largest show of the artist's works to date. Varo's works lead us to unexpected encounters with the wonderful, magical world of our minds. Seeing these encounters captured in meticulously crafted paintings with their unique colors produces indescribable emotions leading viewers to wonder who this woman was, why she painted with such magical skill and beauty, where so much sensitivity emerged from, who accompanied her and whom she loved and was loved by—and how it is that, despite the passage of time, she continues to reveal the fantastic reality of being.

Many of the answers can be found in the books written about Remedios Varo and her works. However, it is now possible to find out much more about her by listening to the thoughts of someone who knew her and shared the last ten years of her life. I am of course referring to her widower, Walter Gruen, who for many years has been involved in the task of making Remedios Varo's work known to new generations.

Along the same lines, I also interviewed Janet Kaplan, author of *Viajes inesperados, El arte y la vida de Remedios Varo* (Unexpected Journeys, The Art and Life of Remedios Varo), and Isabel Castells, whose recent publication *Remedios Varo, Cartas, sueños y otros textos* (Remedios Varo, Letters, Dreams and Other Texts) reveals the most intimate thoughts of this much-loved painter.

Before reading the interviews, it is as well to remember that the forties was a decade marked, yet again, by unnecessary violence. The then president of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, threw open the country's doors to receive all those seeking refuge in our land, where the sun shone every day and where the flavors and colors of a prosperous Mexico would ease their tormented but dignified souls.

Walter Gruen is a man with a magnetic smile. His gaze reflects the peace acquired after years of experience and his warm, friendly voice, with its Austrian accent, invites conversation.

● How did you manage to get out of Europe alive?

Arturo Piera.



Useless Science or The Alchemist, oil on masonite, 1955.

■ I've often wondered. I was in the Nazi concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald. They suddenly released a number of people and I was one of them. To this day, I don't really

Arturo Piñera.



Towards the Tower, 1960.

Arturo Piñera.



Embroidering the Earthly Mantle, 1961.

In this triptych one of the embroiderers changes the mantle so as to flee with her beloved.

Arturo Piñera.



The Flight, 1961.

know why they chose me, but I feel fortunate because those who didn't get out then were never able to do so. I left before the Czechoslovakian crisis, before war was declared.

- How did you come to Mexico?

- I had managed to obtain an emergency visa for my wife and myself to go to the United States. But when we went to the American Embassy in Marseille to pick up the visa, we were unable to do so.

The embassy was closed, because it was precisely the day of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States entered the Second World War. Months later I was sent a visa for Mexico through the "League for German Culture" which had its headquarters in Mexico, and that was how we were fortunate enough to be able to come to this country.

- In the forties, several areas of culture flourished in Mexico and many of you who arrived as refugees helped to expand the frontiers of knowledge....

- Particularly the great avalanche of Spanish refugees, who were the best that Spain had and did a lot to enrich Mexico's cultural life. They included Remedios Varo and Benjamin Péret, her husband, the French Surrealist poet. Upon settling in Mexico,

although we were very poor, we obtained our freedom and lived in a happy atmosphere. Intellectuals in particular were very much at ease. Remedios often used to say, "This is my adopted country. This is where I feel at home."

- Did you know Remedios Varo when she was married to Benjamin Péret?

- Remedios Varo came to Mexico at the end of 1941 on a Portuguese ship,

Arturo Piñera.



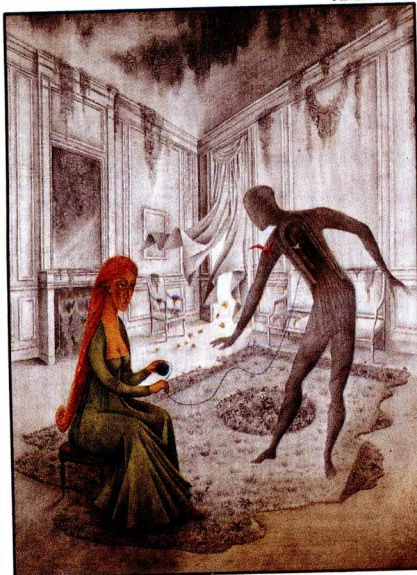
Solar Music, oil on masonite, 1955.

since Portugal had not entered the war. My first wife and I arrived on the following boat, on March 2, 1942. We disembarked at the port of Veracruz. There were people like us, of different nationalities and political ideologies. Those of us travelling on those boats felt persecuted not just by Hitler but also by Stalin. Since Europe, we felt a certain spirit of solidarity and made plans to start our new lives together. The four of us began house-hunting with a couple we knew: he was Spanish and she was French. This couple shared the same political tendencies as Péret and it was through them that we met him and Remedios. She was never politically-minded, but Péret started off as a Communist. Afterwards, like Bréton, he changed to Trotskyism, and despite the fact that by the time they reached Mexico Trotsky had been assassinated, they became friends with his widow. Remedios and my wife became good friends. Afterwards, Remedios separated from Péret and went to Venezuela for two years, starting in 1947. During Remedios' absence from Mexico, my wife tried to save a person's life in a storm. She was drowned in the attempt, although I managed to save the other person's

life. When Remedios came back after her long journey, we met up again and eventually decided to marry.

- What was Remedios Varo like as a wife and companion? Why did you love her?
- Remedios was a very attractive woman, beautiful, pleasant and extremely intelligent. She had a very full life, which made life with her very interesting. There was never a dull moment. That is really what filled those ten years we shared, and it was wonderful.
- We know that for years Remedios was unable to devote herself fully to painting for financial reasons, and that when she married you she found the necessary support to be able to dedicate herself to her artistic work free of anguish. How did that transformation really come about?
- Many people think I was a patron of the arts and Remedios was my chosen artist, but that is not true. When I approached Remedios, I had a fairly badly paid job, although it was enough to live on. I tried to persuade her to leave her commercial work and start painting seriously. However, she was extremely independent and refused to be a kept woman. She always insisted on contributing to the household expenses and the upkeep of her cats, since she was used to having to fend

Arturo Piera.



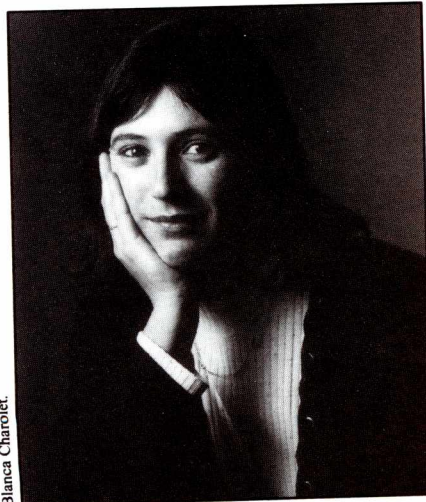
Les Feuilles Mortes, oil on cardboard, 1956.

for herself. I had no option but to accept. Afterwards I was lucky and started a business, but in the beginning, it was a struggle for both of us. So she didn't sell herself to a rich man.

- What did Remedios look for in you?
- She wanted emotional, not financial, security and support. Her anguish went much deeper than material concerns. It came from some other side that I was never fully able to fathom. She used to talk about nocturnal anxiety and nightmares, but she never recounted those dreams to me. One person who must know about them is Leonora Carrington, but she guards her secrets faithfully and never discusses the

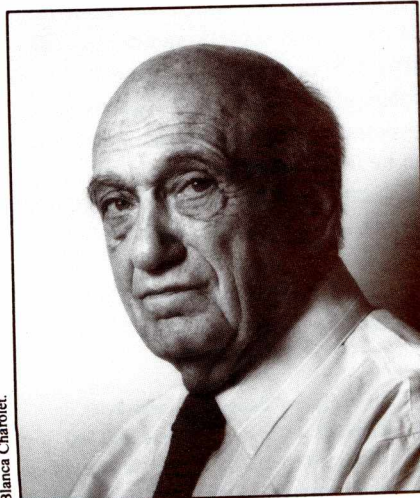
matter. I say this because Remedios always regarded Leonora as a twin sister, with whom she had total understanding.

- What things drew you together?
- Perhaps the appreciation I always had for her painting and the security I gave her so that she genuinely felt **more sure of herself and was able to paint.** Because what she painted was marvelous, right from the start.
- What did Remedios think when she realized that her works were sought after by collectors and that they were prepared to pay for them, sometimes even before she had painted them?
- It gave her a certain sense of security. She wrote to her mother, "I'm as wealthy as a bull-fighter," but in fact, money didn't impress her, because it had very limited value for her. From her first to her last painting in Mexico, Remedios maintained the same level of quality and perfection. She didn't mind working on a painting for a month or more. I think that in Remedios the search for perfection was a religious ritual. All her paintings were allegorical plays. For example, in her painting *The Great Theater of the World*, she makes it clear that everyone gives a performance for God and God asks each person to fulfil his mission. "Do it well, because that is the way God wants it," and that is precisely how



Blanca Charolet.

Isabel Castells.



Blanca Charolet.

Walter Gruen.



Blanca Charolet.

Janet Kaplan.

Remedios painted. She had no religion or dogma or security in her life because her life was a continual search.

● Did Remedios believe in magic and destiny?

■ Absolutely. As far as destiny was concerned, doubt ruled supreme. She painted a picture that expressed determinism, but sometimes thought about free will. In other words, she didn't know where we were but she did know where we wanted to get to.

● How would you describe Remedios Varo's paintings?

■ I would say that her world is simply magical. She experienced a sort of magic, good magic or white magic as they call it. In fact, all the magical symbolism she uses in her works is white.

● She made references to Hinduism and the different schools of the occult, especially cabalistic symbolism and alchemy, didn't she?

■ Yes indeed. And now that you mention the Cabala, in *El catálogo*

razonado (The Reasoned Catalogue), which is about to be published, there is an article by Dr. Grimmer that describes *The Juggler*, using a totally cabalistic interpretation. I find it fascinating because it reveals a facet that is completely new to me.

● How did you manage to get over Remedios' death?

■ The shock was so great that I wanted to die right then. Apart from my personal grief, I felt a total failure, because she was so full of ideas and creativity. Her life was cut short and I used to think about all the other things she could have done. Afterwards I devoted myself to promoting her works. We are about to publish *El catálogo razonado* after years of effort and research, but the main achievement has been the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.¹

Alexandra Varsoviano de Gruen listened attentively as her husband was being interviewed. Seeing that she was paying close attention, I asked her:

● What can you tell us about this world that exists between your husband and all of us who approach you to find out more about Remedios Varo's life and works?

■ I find it almost a miracle that Remedios' work actually draws us closer together. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to meet wonderful people, and Remedios always seems to conjure up something that makes friendships develop. It's almost magical. I find it very satisfying to promote her work because it deserves to be better known.

● It can't be easy working to promote Remedios Varo's work, given that she was Walter Gruen's previous wife.

■ I know some people find this difficult to understand, but I am a

singer and I really appreciate all kinds of art. I always found Remedios' works fascinating, and consider it my duty to do everything in my power so they will gain international recognition.

Remedios' biographer and the most extensive researcher of her work, Janet Kaplan, came to Mexico for the inauguration of the "Remedios Varo: 1908-1963" exhibition and stayed with the Gruen family. I was thus able to interview her.

● Reading the biography of Remedios Varo fills one with enthusiasm for her life and works. How did you become interested in Remedios and how long did it take you to write the book?

■ While I was researching another subject, I came across a little book on the works of Remedios Varo. The book impressed and interested me because I realized that her works were very

narrative. Right from the start, I knew there must be a very interesting life behind these works. She was part of destiny. I had to go to Guatemala, but I decided to stop off in Mexico beforehand to find out more about her. When I started to do the research I fell more and more in love with her work. And it wasn't just me, because when people see her works they fall in love with them too. It's quite extraordinary and different. I was able to write the book as a result of the people who knew her and shared their lives with her. I put the pieces together. It wasn't an easy task, but it was certainly very exciting. I worked on the book for eight years, and my research took me to Spain, France, Morocco and Mexico.

● What did you most want the book to express?

■ I wanted the book to be very comprehensive and of high quality, because I was sure people wanted to know about Remedios' life, to understand her and find out more about her works. Her paintings are ideal for everyone, for children and adults alike. She uses many scientific and technical illusions. She was a

Arturo Piera.



Disquieting Presence, oil on canvas, 1959.

¹ At the close of this edition (mid-June), the exhibition has drawn more than 169,000 visitors to the museum. In fact, because of the public's enthusiastic response, the exhibition has been extended. (Editor's note.)

person of many different interests. There is a richness and an absolute discipline there. So I wanted the book to make the reader experience the same surprise, anguish and beauty as there were in Remedios' life. When I say high quality, I mean that I wanted the book to be something valuable and lasting for people. It was a great responsibility to write, especially as it is not easy to interpret Remedios Varo, although anyone who knows her work provides his own interpretation and no one can say he doesn't like her works.

● What can you say about the woman within Remedios Varo?

■ I never met her personally, but through her paintings and life I believe she was always recognizable in the women she painted, always expanding something. These women were full of beauty, with no evil in them, and were always connected to a part of life.

● Has the book been translated?

■ Yes. It was originally written in English and has been published in Spanish, German and recently in Japanese. It has been of great interest to the Japanese, because they have discovered something different and marvelous in Remedios' work.

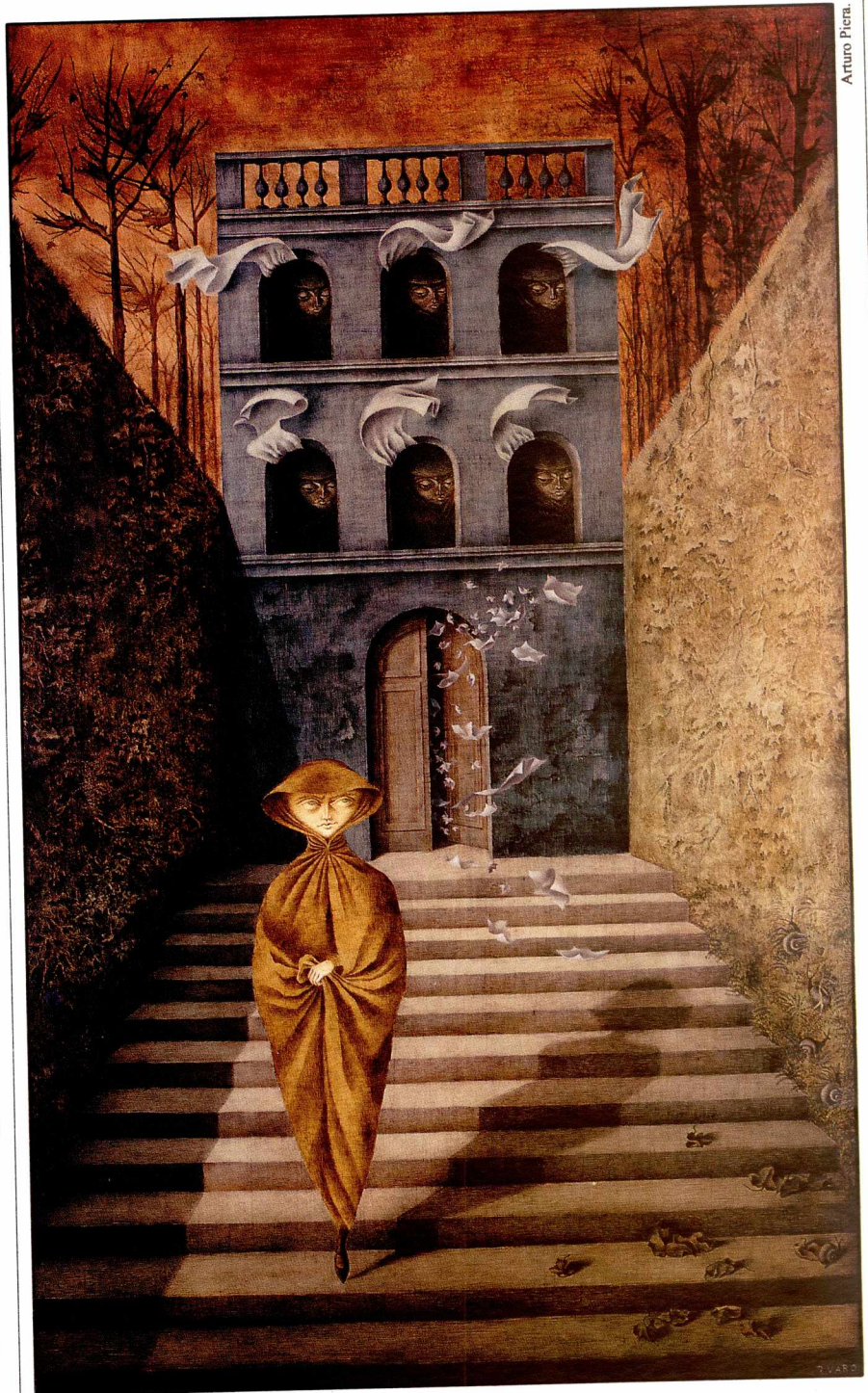
● To conclude, what has been more important for you, Remedios Varo's life or her works?

■ I think it is important to know about both her life and works since both are imbued with sweetness and the difficulty of experiencing life.

Isabel Castells came into the living-room and sat beside me. She seemed to be both nervous and happy, since it was now her turn to talk. She showed me her latest book, published by the University of Tlaxcala and the National Institute of Fine Arts.

● What gave you the idea of compiling this book and writing the introduction?

■ To start with, Remedios Varo is not as well known in Spain as she is in Mexico, but I had the opportunity to



Arturo Pietsa.

Rupture, oil on masonite, 1955.

visit an exhibition of her works organized by the Banco Exterior de España and I fell in love with her paintings, as everyone does. A year later, I was given a grant to study the Surrealists in Mexico. During my stay here, I came across Remedios Varo

again. I discovered Janet Kaplan's book, which I devoured. It was precisely in this book that I first found out about Remedios Varo's manuscripts, letters and dreams. I wanted to read them, first out of personal curiosity. But then I realized

how wonderful they were and how they would be the perfect way to complete the picture of Remedios Varo.

- What did you find most striking about the texts and what encouraged you to try to have them published?

- The value of texts that were not intended for publication. As a result, they are intimate, spontaneous, secret and personal, which made them more valuable. Anyone interested in Remedios Varo can fill in his knowledge of her through these texts. But afterwards I realized, when I read them in more detail, that they have an unintentional literary value, which is no less important. The texts are not complete, except for one called "Homo Rodans," the only one to have been published previously.

- When you compiled *Remedios Varo, Cartas, sueños y otros textos*, did you change or correct the texts?

- No, the texts have been reproduced just as they were, complete with grammatical errors, because if Remedios hadn't altered them, I was certainly not going to do so. The entire edition has been left exactly as I found



Tailleur Pour Dames, oil on masonite, 1957.

it and the original texts by Remedios have hardly any corrections, reflecting the perfection there is in her paintings. There are no crossings out, hesitations or unsteadiness. Her thoughts flowed onto the paper.

- Which of Remedios Varo's writings do you prefer, and why?

- I find the part on her dreams most fascinating. When I was reading it for

publication, I felt a sense of remorse, and thought, "What right do I have to go prying into someone else's dreams?" But then I thought that they would have a lot to say to readers, and so I included the letter on dreams. The tenth dream is a marvelous one in which Remedios Varo has achieved perfect knowledge. An executioner says he is going to kill her. She becomes very frightened and he asks her why she is scared, since she has achieved truth and absolute knowledge, and why she is afraid of dying. Remedios asks him for ten minutes to be able to weave her destiny and that of her beloved. She is given ten minutes and creates an egg in which she hides with her beloved. She then tells the executioner she can die now, since she and her beloved are joined for eternity. I chose this dream for the end, since it is the one where Remedios Varo has attained immortality, knowledge and love, and I associate them with the "triptych" in which the protagonist weaves a trap so she can flee with her beloved, and with the painting *Weaving, Space and Time*. I thought it was a symbol of the perfect colophon ✎



The Flautist, oil and inlaid mother-of-pearl on masonite, 1955.

Dinorah Isaak
Staff Writer.

Feliciano Béjar: the poetry of all things

Feliciano Béjar goes beyond the frontiers of fantasy. What in Akira Kurosawa is a dream—the person who “enters” the various paintings exhibited in a gallery—in Béjar is a fact of daily life. Combining diverse artistic talents, the love of nature and inexhaustible energy, he built the house he shares with his three adopted children: Susana, Martín and Carlos. The importance of Feliciano Béjar’s living space is clearly shown in Martin Foley’s book *El recogedor de soles* (The Collector of Suns), published in 1992.

We chatted in front of the fireplace where logs crackle—although the fire was unable to overcome the invasive cold of the living room. Surrounded by *magiscopios* (“magiscopes”) of



Elisa Escamilla.

He built the house he shares with his three adopted children.

different designs and sizes, accompanied by carved-wood images of saints, clay figures, paintings and lamps of leaded glass, Béjar begins to speak of the terrible experience he went through in a psychiatric hospital.

His denunciation was published in the press in 1992. Now, two years after having overcome the nightmare, Feliciano has begun a campaign against psychiatric hospitals and medical specialists in charge of the patients. This theme (the memory, the pain which he has been unable to alleviate) breaks out repeatedly during the interview.

Béjar wishes he could be omnipotent so he could do away, once and for all, with the abuses medical authorities commit against defenseless human beings. In the depths of his heart he may know that it’s easier to make a desert town green—something he is doing at Llano Grande, in the state of Mexico’s municipality of Jilotepec—than it is to sow compassion and harmony among our fellow men.

But he is not one to give up. There is no doubt that this artist’s struggle for a psychiatric system that does not violate human rights will continue as long as he continues to draw breath.

—One of the pills they made me take in the psychiatric hospital left me unable to speak—says Feliciano Béjar in a vibrant yet serene voice—so I kept a diary. Gina Batista is going to make a book out of it. The book will also contain the complete history of what happened.

A telephone call interrupts the conversation and he turns away.



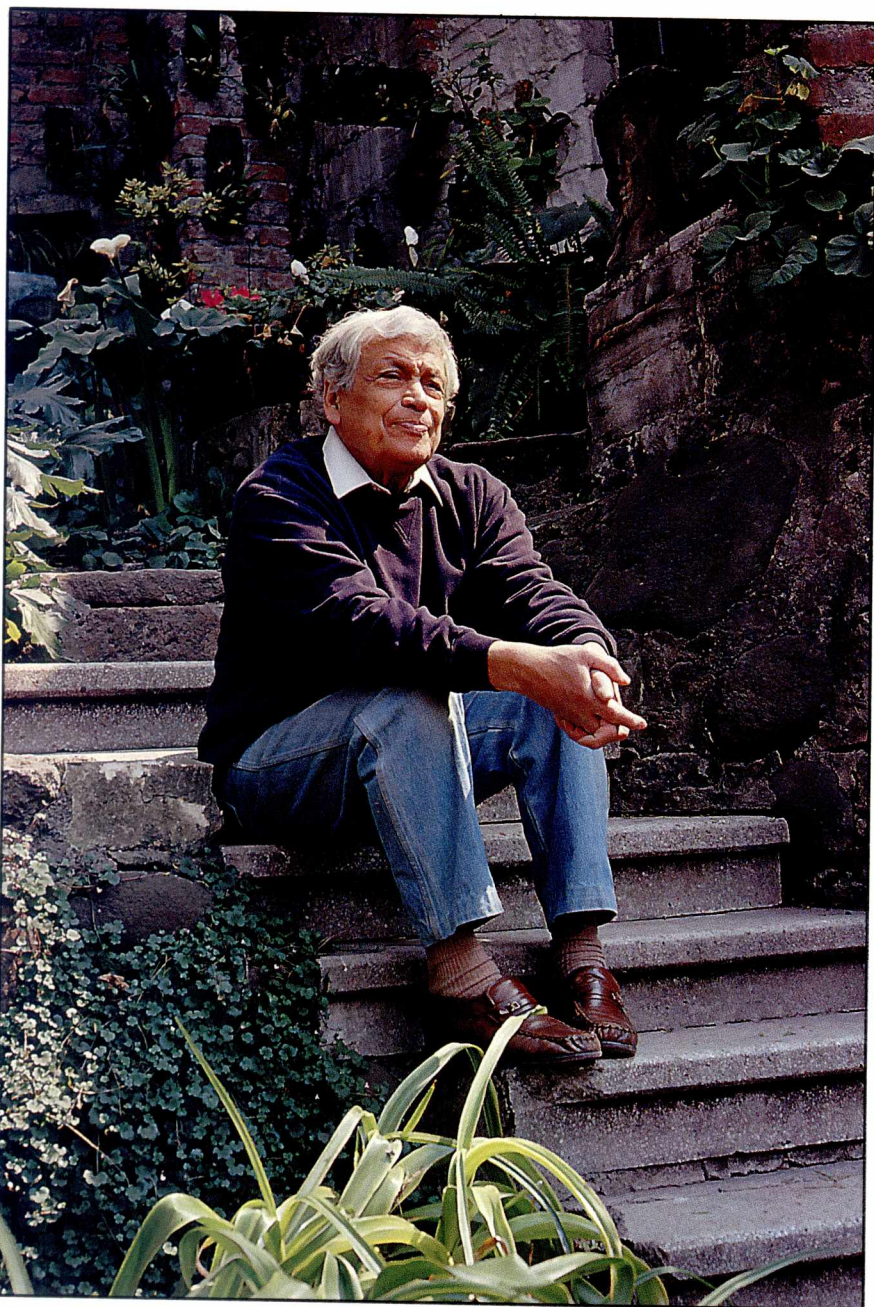
Elisa Escamilla.

An Indian woman taught him love and respect for materials.

When he returns, Béjar shows us one of the first magiscopes he made, and we soon accompany him to his studio. On the walls are enormous paintings with religious themes; there is a large table where magiscopes flower at different heights; on the floor—strewn as if by accident—are hand-sewn tapestries.

Béjar continues to make magiscopes, but is also doing engravings.—I intend to put them in order, because maybe I’ll present an exhibit made up only of prints. Look at these tapestries. For some reason there was a time when artists abandoned them, but to me this seems like a valuable genre, which I’m interested in collecting. Some that you see now were saved from the flood we had here in the house in 1981; others are from later on.

In August of 1991, Feliciano Béjar suffered a nervous breakdown due to the kidnapping of a member of his family. His doctor decided to commit him to the Mendao Institute Psychiatric Hospital. The artist was confined there from August 29 to September 17, 1991. The "treatment" cost him one million old pesos (over 300 dollars) per day, despite the vexations and abuses he suffered in that institution. He is now suing the hospital and the psychiatrist who serves as its director. If he wins the lawsuit he will donate the proceeds (3 million new pesos, almost one million dollars) to the program for treating children with cancer and a project for renovating the pavilion of the Health Secretariat's Manuel Ramírez Moreno Psychiatric Hospital.



Elsa Escamilla

The most interesting thing in life is to experiment.

The artist sits on the floor, the position he most often works in.

—I had polio as a child, he explains, and since then, I don't know why, but I'm comfortable like this, on my heels.

—Did you stop working only during the period you were confined?— I ask this man of 73 years, straight body and jovial laughter.

—Yes. It's the only time in my life I haven't worked. This shows the bad planning of the system in psychiatric hospitals. They play fifteen hours of rock and roll every day; they say that's what the patients ask for. In fact, the majority are young people who are there due to drug problems. But apart from listening to rock and roll, there is absolutely nothing to do... nothing. Once in a while some people would go do dance therapy. On one occasion a person arrived and tried to have us do theater, but only a few people participated. Regarding myself, I fell into a severe depression because I couldn't work. I made the suggestion... but if they see you're interested in something, they disapprove of it. They don't want you to get well. While you're there, that means money. There are young girls who have been confined for ten years. I hope the authorities find a way to pay unplanned visits to these hospitals, so they can see how they really are.

—Maestro, how do you divide your time between such diverse expressions: magicscopes, sculpture, prints...?

El recogedor de soles

(The Collector of Suns)

Martin Foley

Centro Cultural San Angel
Mexico City, 1992. 165 pp.

Feliciano Béjar's family moved to Jiquilpan in the state of Michoacán shortly before he was born, in an attempt to escape the arson and looting their hometown, Cotija, suffered during the Revolution. "We were always outsiders in Jiquilpan," the painter recalls, although his family was well-loved in the village that gave them refuge.

From the time he was born in 1920, Feliciano was destined to become a prolific artist with the ability to use the most varied materials to express himself. The son of a "vendor of illusions" (who sold mirrors, ribbons, perfume and love letters), as a child Feliciano used to decorate, with multicolored drawings, the traditional letters that circulated among the young people of Jiquilpan.

His "formal" education was limited to two years of elementary school, and a further two when he was a boarder at the Italian School of Arts and Crafts in Guadalajara. In 1933 and 1934, Feliciano held an exhibition of his works and obtained the prize for painting awarded by that school. Very soon, however, the course of his life was to change: in 1934, the school was closed for political and religious reasons, and Béjar returned to Jiquilpan to work at his parents' store, called "El Porvenir" (The Future).

Despite these ups and downs, Feliciano was always at work on some artistic creation. He is a person who has managed to forge deep links with nature, readily embracing an ecological view of life, which he projects as much in his work as in his relation with the rest of the world.

At the age of eight, he was stricken with an acute attack of polio. His mother took on the task of rehabilitating him. She would bury him in hot sand, make him move his legs for several hours in hot water, massage his muscles with a mixture made from "ferocious ants, scorpions and marijuana" and take him to the corn mill to be given electric shocks. This went on for four years. In 1949, the tenacity of both mother and son enabled Feliciano to go on a cycling trip across Europe which went on for two years.

When he was about thirteen, Béjar, leaning on crutches, used to accompany his sisters to embroidery classes together with "La China" Cervantes, an Indian woman who knew a lot or a little about just about everything. There he developed a love and respect for materials, which was instilled in him by "La China" with an almost religious fervor.

She taught Feliciano to mix colors, prepare cloth, bake clay and make papier mâché sculptures; her influence was a decisive factor in his artistic education. The English critic Edward Lucie-Smith summarizes this as follows: "Feliciano Béjar's great achievement is that he has managed to keep one foot in the world of artisans and another in the world of art."

Of the numerous books tracing Béjar's development as an artist and an outstanding person, Martin Foley's *El recogedor de soles* (The Collector of Suns) occupies a special position.

The author, the artist's close friend and representative, talks readily about the book and how it survived a flood:

"Sergio Galindo originally asked me to write the text, which was to be published by the University of Veracruz. It would only have had eight or ten pages of photos. I initially turned Sergio's invitation down, because I felt I was too close to Feliciano to be able to write about him, but Sergio saw this as an advantage. This closeness was precisely what he was looking for. 'Feliciano is not a person who should be treated as a clinical case, coldly analyzed and virtually dissected,' Galindo told me. He knew that the book would be very subjective, but thought that would be a valuable thing.

"So I started to write... and found it very hard. I was involved in so many aspects of Feliciano's life that, in the beginning, the book was virtually an autobiography. At the same time, I wanted to make it quite clear to the reader that our relationship prevented me from being objective. Once the book was finished, I included a highly personal prologue, describing my initial reaction to Feliciano when I first met him and how I became involved in his work and life. Once this was established, I decided to 'disappear' from the book forever."

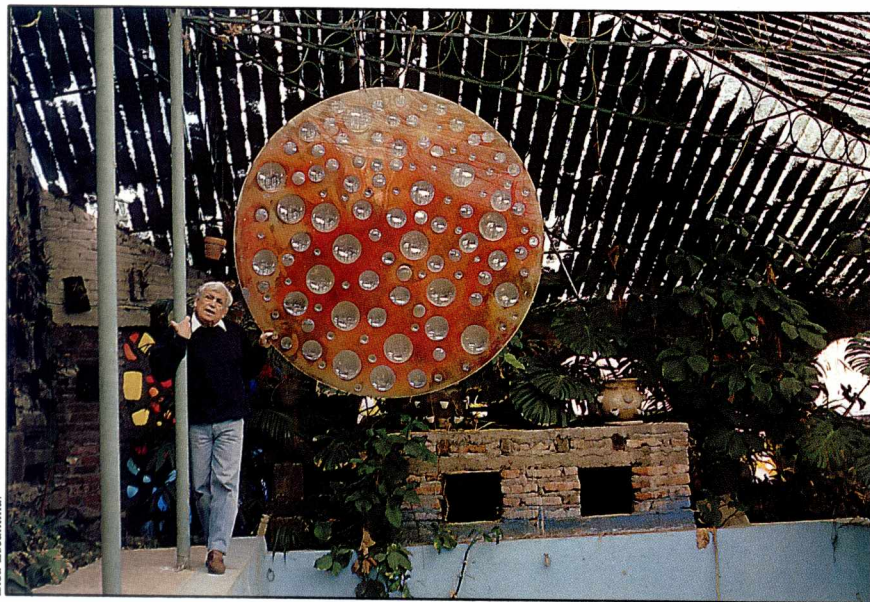
Martin Foley wrote *El recogedor de soles* in Spanish. He thought it would be absurd to write down Feliciano Béjar's ideas in English and then have them translated. Spanish captured the original flavor of the artist's language. The book was a learning experience in which Foley was helped by first one and then another copy editor. He got along better with the second one, who was very respectful of Foley's work. However, it fell to the first corrector to save the book from being lost forever.

Sergio Galindo commissioned the book in the late '70s. Foley began writing it in 1980, and when a lot of work had already been done on the manuscript, there was a flood which destroyed much of Feliciano Béjar's house and work. Pages of the text were floating in the garden, but Martin felt that, of all the losses, this was the least important. David, the corrector, rescued as many pages as he could and set about reconstructing the book, until one day he was able to hand Martin a clean copy.

"A funny thing happened," says Foley. "The flood marked the end of a period in Feliciano's life. I felt that the book's approach should change. The events in his life remained the same, but the interpretation I gave them later was very different. The original manuscript was kept for ten years, until 1990, when the Del Carmen Museum wanted to hold an exhibition to celebrate Feliciano's 70th birthday.

"The curator, Juan Carlos Ruiz, asked me so many questions that I decided to lend him the manuscript so he could find out about Feliciano's life. Both Juan Carlos and the museum's director were very enthusiastic about the book. It was thanks to their intervention that the San Angel Cultural Center decided to publish it. It was my job to add the ten years that had elapsed since the first manuscript was finished, and then shorten the text and work against the clock so the book could be taken to the printer. I handed it in exactly on the date we had set."

Feliciano Béjar's personality, works and house are skillfully captured in Martin Foley's *El recogedor de soles*, a lavishly illustrated book that demands to be read.



Elsa Escamilla.

The pool welcomes visitors with scents of fragrant wood.

—I believe there is an error in the present definition of what an artist is. Long ago, during the Renaissance for example, the concept of an artist was different. Michelangelo was a man who cultivated sculpture, painting, architecture and also poetry. To me, what is most interesting in life is to experiment. My work is constantly changing and, despite my age, I believe the changes will continue. I'm currently working on sculptures which resemble sea shells or which are based on the erosions of the earth. There is a paradox here: the erosions of the earth are very beautiful and at the same time very destructive. It is very pleasant to see or photograph them.

—How many hours do you work a day?

—I begin around 7:30 in the morning and take a break around two in the afternoon, when the kids return from school. We eat together and I return to work at 5:00 in the evening or I receive visitors or reporters.

Feliciano Béjar has a cold, which makes his voice even deeper. I ask how his health influences his creative work.

—I work every day, even when I feel very sick. The difference is that I reduce the number of hours.

There's a lot of the artisan in what I do. The days when I'm not well I use for the artisan part of my work. When you arrived I was polishing a magic scope. I say that on Saturdays I'm a Christian and on Sundays I'm Jewish. That way I'm able to work seven days a week. On the weekends I go to the country, to Llano Grande, where I work as a farmhand: I plant trees, rake the ground, whatever needs doing. But I've installed a fabulous

studio there for painting. It's better than any other: windows make up the bulk of both floors, and a marvelous light comes in. I think these are two things that go together completely: creative work and the preservation of the environment. My maternal grandmother was Indian and taught me a lot about the kind of work people do in the countryside. She had an enormous knowledge of herbs and plants, something which, sadly, I did not learn. When we were out together, if I complained of a pain, my grandmother would say: "Pick this little plant and chew it," and the pain would go away.

—Despite the remarks you've made at various times on the existence of artistic mafias in Mexico, you yourself are an outstanding and well-known creator. Does this mean that it's possible to excel without group support?

—For some reason, in recent years I haven't been invited to participate in anything. I'm referring to the Fine Arts and Modern Art Museums, among other institutions. But I believe what has helped most in my career was precisely living for years outside my country, which



Some of his works emerge from amongst the plants.

Elsa Escamilla.

provided me with a very large foreign audience. I also believe that whatever I do may or may not be well-received, but it is different from what other artists produce. One of the biggest examples of what the art mafias represent are the awards given by the National System of Creators. It seems like an insult to me, because the majority of those favored are not young. Besides their age, they have greater economic possibilities and they should not be granted life-long economic support. It also appears to me that there is a lack of dignity in some artists' acceptance of these awards. For me the concept of scholarships involves young people, without economic resources. There is an interesting point I would like to make: among the few young people who have received this or that scholarship from the National Council for Culture and the Arts, there are children from very wealthy families who don't need monetary help to carry out their work. Something else: very few of the students awarded scholarships come from the provinces, and very few are women. This is clearly scandalous. This scandal continues, and hopefully the time will



Elsa Escamilla.

His open-air theater resembles a Roman forum left to the whims of nature.

come when the people who distribute that money will really think things over. The fact that there is no money to maintain works of art strikes me as an insult to the people of Mexico. There is no money to be found for restoration, among other things, while on the other hand they award scholarships to people who are fabulously wealthy.

—In the distribution of these awards, Béjar continues, the idea of

“buying” artists was imposed. For example, since I started writing Thursday editorials dealing with various topics, affirming truths that certain people don't like, many people from the current government have called me up to discuss recently-published articles. They give their points of view, but don't try to get revenge or act hateful because I said this, that or the other. They're not all like that. There is a large number whose only concern is that you speak well of the government and current situation in Mexico, even if you're lying. They are interested in having artists on their side. And you see this in what Mexico has faced in Chiapas. If the government had not allowed itself to be deceived, or if they did not want to be deceived, maybe history would be different. Last year, after visiting Chiapas, I wrote an article which said something very serious was going to happen. You could see it. You would have to be blind not to realize it would happen. But, in truth, the authorities prefer not to pay heed to this type of warning.

These artistic mafias have inflicted serious damage on Mexico. I say this over and over. When we talk about painting's three greats, that was



Elsa Escamilla.

My work is constantly changing.

a time when the country had a whole group of people with enormous talent, but nonetheless they were all forgotten. Only three are recognized: Rivera, Siqueiros and Orozco. But there were also Montenegro, Castellanos, María Izquierdo.... Given time, I could make a list of 25 or 30 great artists who are now beginning to be "revived," but sadly they're already dead. Now they're trying to promote María Izquierdo and Castellanos. It's sad to see that Castellanos' greatest works are in Philadelphia, not in Mexico, and this is because he was ignored. I believe the same thing is happening right now.

I'm very distant, a bit on purpose, from the artistic movement, because it's so frustrating to see the envy and the intrigues, and I don't have time to waste out of the few years I have left in my life. I think when you analyze things, there must be a great number of artists today with a lot of talent who are completely ignored and forgotten. It's because for some reason Mexican politicians have frequently used the intellectuals. Politicians who have no culture whatsoever, at the moment



Elsa Escamilla

He uses the most varied materials to express himself.

they rise to a higher position want to be surrounded by intellectual people, as if to be legitimized. It's as if they said: "These important people are on my side. They support me". To me, it's a sorry fact that in every six-year presidential term talented artists (I'm not going to name names) allow themselves to be bought off. And they sell themselves for oddly low prices. Because receiving a scholarship, or even an ambassadorship, is not enough to silence their consciences... which they should have, I believe.

—What distinguishes Feliciano Béjar from other artists?

Elsa Escamilla.



A magicoscope by "the collector of suns."

—That I not only speak and write, but am also doing things. I've been very involved with the Indians of the Tarahumara mountain range for about fourteen years, and this year it was my pleasure to make a considerable donation for building a shelter for the children of that region. My own children are Indian and I am very proud to be able to send them to excellent schools. They also receive music classes three times a week and have already given concerts, including outside of Mexico.



Elsa Escamilla.

Béjar has one foot in the world of artisans and another in the world of art.

Béjar moves happily around the garden of his house-sculpture, showing us the works that emerge from amongst the plants, like another manifestation of nature. He explains the way he uses scraps in his works; he speaks of his first paintings, "necessarily" linked to Catholicism; he leads us to the marvelous open-air theater, where performances used to be held, which now bears a certain resemblance to a Roman forum left to the whims of nature. At every step there is the footprint of this artist's explosive creativity, from the interior pool which used to be filled with rainwater to the main entrance door which welcomes visitors with its scent of fragrant wood.

Béjar, the magician, is understandable perhaps only through the lens of his magicscopes. Feliciano, the fighter to whom defeat is unknown. A good man with whom one would like to spend many an hour, reconciling oneself with the worth of those beings and things which the rhythm of present-day life is leaving in oblivion. ❧

Gabriela Rábago Palafox
Staff Writer.

The San Carlos Museum

Elisa García Barragán *

The San Carlos Museum in Mexico City contains one of the most important collections of Western art from the 14th to the 20th century, and is the largest of its kind in Latin America.

The paintings in the museum came mainly from the galleries of the former Academia de San Carlos; additions have gradually been made through acquisitions, direct commissions of Spanish painters (such as Mariano Salvador de Maella), donations and the use of a number of paintings expropriated from

time as the school was founded, painting and sculpture galleries were built on the school's premises.

According to Abelardo Carrillo y Gariel, the "Jacob of Rivera," later known as *Laban Pasturing His Sheep*, as well as *The Seven Virtues*—then ascribed to the school of Raphael and now correctly attributed to Peter de Kempener—have formed part of the museum's collection since its inception in 1785.

Another important collection is the group of Spanish paintings acquired by Porfirio Díaz' government



Oval courtyard.



Main façade.

monasteries closed during the 19th century. The museum also holds some copies of works by the great masters made by students at the academy.

The Academia de San Carlos, which dates from the late 18th century, was founded by order of Charles III as the Real Academia de San Carlos (1783). At almost the same

in 1910. Paintings by the most distinguished artists of the time, including Sorolla, Chicharro and Benlliure, were selected for the museum. These paintings were exhibited in the Pabellón Español, built to commemorate the first centenary of our independence.

The former Academia de San Carlos proved too small to house the already large and varied collection of



Rear façade.

* Museum Director.

paintings, much of which had to be stored in a cellar for lack of space. As a result, then-president Gustavo Díaz Ordaz decided to provide a more suitable site: the building known as the Palace of the Count of Buenavista. The museum, known as the San Carlos museum because of its origins, was inaugurated on June 12, 1968.

The paintings needed to be arranged in chronological order, which was done taking styles and schools into account. Many of the paintings' former attributions were carefully reviewed and in some cases changed, in accordance with the opinion of curators from such museums as El Prado in Madrid and other experts and scholars. Nowadays the collection, for which an inventory has duly been made, is exhibited in the San Carlos Museum in all its splendor.

A tour of the museum begins with the Spanish school, the oldest and best represented. This first hall, showing Catalan and Valencian Gothic, boasts a superb display of oil paintings of both regions — *The Life of Saint Lazarus*, by an anonymous Catalan painter (14th century), *The Christ of Mercy*, by an anonymous Valencian painter (15th century) and other paintings surrounding the splendid 15th-century *Altarpiece of the Incarnation*, by the Catalan Pere Espallargués.

Pedro Berruguete's *Adoration of the Magi* (15th century) is an example of the transition from Gothic to Renaissance art. From this point onwards, the distinctive features of each school begin to display attractive modifications, such as those that can be seen in *Madonna and Child* and *Saint Anne with Donors* by Jan Provost, master of the Flemish Renaissance.

Almost Mannerist in style is the work of the Extremaduran Luis de Morales, known as "The Divine," whose spiritual sense, reduction of images and elongation of figures can be seen in *The Madonna and Child Writing in a Book*. The same subject, but more in keeping with the tenets of

Mannerism — the intellectualized disproportion and defiguration of classical forms — is shown on a large scale in the *Madonna and Child* (1525) by Jacopo Carucci, "El Pontormo."

The religious story, together with an elegant sensuality, places Lucas Cranach's *Adam and Eve* in a different category of Mannerism. Cranach modified the female figure, making it slimmer, with small breasts and an elongated neck, and adding childish or Chinese-like features. Cranach further individualized his work by placing his signature — a tiny serpent with bats' wings — on the trunk of the



Francisco de Zurbarán, *The Supper at Emaus*, oil on canvas, 1639.

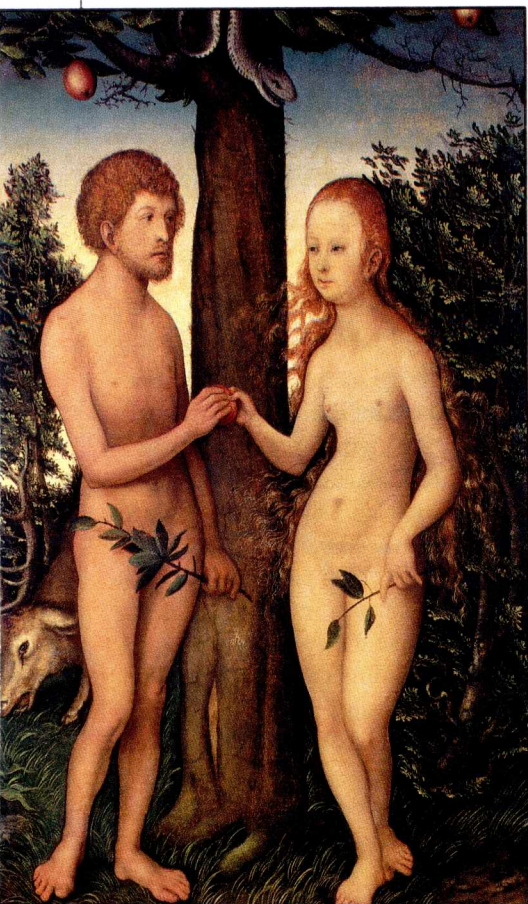
"tree of knowledge." His portrait of *Frederick of Saxony* is equally impressive. Dominating this work are features denoting a great personage: sumptuous vestments, and the coats-of-arms of the House of Saxony at the top of the painting.

Next in this attractive sequence of styles come the dazzling Baroque paintings, with their Italian and Spanish exponents almost equally represented. Leading the way into these halls is the Belgian Hendrick van Balen's *Don Alvaro de Bazán Giving*

Thanks for the Taking of La Goleta, a monumental oil painting in which, in keeping with the Baroque spirit, time seems to have frozen in the three stages of the triumphant Marqués de Santa Cruz' life and the boundaries between earth and heaven seem to have disappeared.

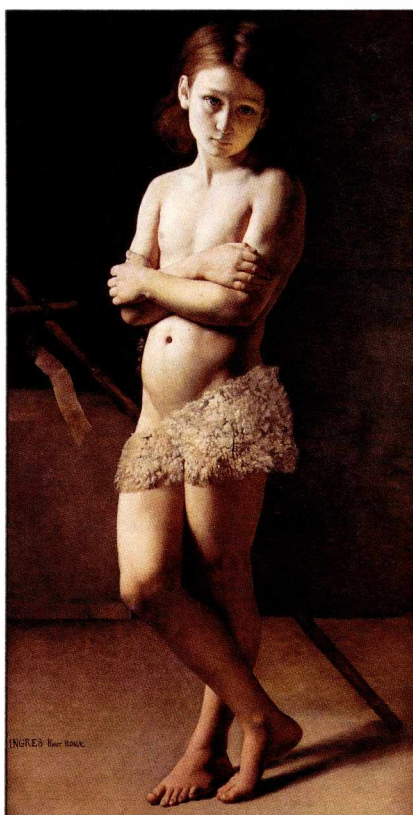
Once again, Spain, whose artists were masters of the Baroque, displays several of the main features of this style: superficiality as well as ornamental and decorative excess, together with depth, gravity and significance — in other words, natural and poetic truths. Examples include *Mary Magdalene and the Angels* (ca. 1660) by Ciro Ferri; Luca Giordano's *Astronomer of Antiquity*, *St. John the Evangelist and the Poisoned Goblet* and *St. John the Evangelist Giving the Virgin Communion*, both by Alonso Cano, a native of Grenada, superb oil paintings probably painted for the altarpiece at the Church of St. Paula in Seville. Spanish portraits, regarded as some of the finest examples of court painting, reach their apogee in the splendid *Philip II* from Sánchez Coello's studio. Four superb paintings by Francisco de Zurbarán are displayed in a hall that visitors have already dubbed the Zurbarán Room. The most outstanding of the four, *The Supper at Emaus*, is a magnificent painting that has often been lent for exhibitions by European and American museums. Next to this mystical brilliance one observes humble, everyday objects: fish, kitchenware, meat and bread jostle for space amid the shining copper saucepans in Mateo Cerezo's two still-lives.

Among the milestones of Spanish painting, two of Francisco de Goya y Lucientes' works contribute to this museum's international standing: the portrait of *La Marquesa de San Andrés* and the delightful *Water Carrier* reveal the artist's predilection for capturing typical Spanish figures. The portrait artists represented here



Lucas Cranach,
Adam and Eve, oil
on wood, ca. 1530.

Luis de Morales,
The Madonna and Child
Writing in a Book.

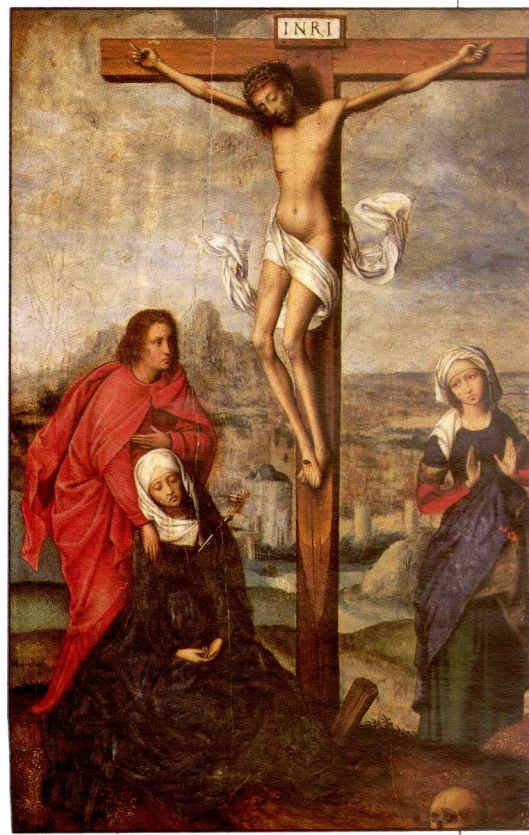


Juan Auguste Dominique Ingres
(1780-1867), St. John the Baptist As a Child,
oil on canvas.



Francisco de Goya Lucientes, Water
Carrier, oil on canvas, ca. 1810.

Marcellius Koffermans,
The Crucifixion.





Mateo Cerezo, Still-life with Fishes.

also include a selection of painters from various countries; Franz Hals, “Tintoretto”; Peter Paul Rubens; Thomas Lawrence and John Opie.

Three essential stages of French painting are embodied in Jean Honoré Fragonard’s courtly-style paintings, the dramatic symbolism in Pierre Puvis de Chavannes’ *Allegory of Grief* and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres’ paradigmatic Classicism, visible in the beautiful, melancholy *St. John the Baptist*.

19th-century works include European landscape paintings such as Eugenio Landasio’s *View of Rome from Villa Freborn Along the Via Cassia* as well as quintessentially Mexican scenes captured by the same Italian painter, such as *The Valley of Mexico from the Cerro de Tenayo*.

A truly exceptional work is the diptych *The Annunciation, The Visitation*, by the German painter Johann Friedrich Overbeck, founder of the Nazarene group, whose purist theory, imported by the Catalan Pelegrín Clavé, was used as the basic teaching principle at the Academia de San Carlos and opened new vistas for

art. Pelegrín Clavé’s best work includes his mid-19th-century portraits of the Mexican upper classes. Particularly noteworthy is his canvas *The Early Years of Queen Isabella at the Side of Her Sick Mother*, based on important historical events.

A walk through the museum’s permanent collection leads one past works of unabashed romanticism, combined with demonstrations of verisimilitude and technique, such as Ladislás de Czachorski’s *Confidants*. Further on the visitor reaches other, less refined works by a group of 20th-century Spanish painters: Benedito and Vives, Benlliure and Gil, Chicharro and Sorolla, with their idealized versions of humble tasks, embodied in the study of women weaving fishing nets by the Valencian Sorolla.

Another point of interest is the group of European sculptures placed in areas easily accessible to the public. In the San Carlos Museum, works of art are enhanced by their physical surroundings. The mansion, originally intended for the Count of Buenavista, was designed by the

Valencian architect Manuel Tolsá, in a style influenced by Neo-Classicism. This provided the artist with a sober setting contrasting with the exceptionally “monumental” design of the central oval courtyard.

The architect and sculptor from Enguera, Valencia, trained in the Baroque, did not totally abandon this style. Characteristic of this unforgotten sentiment are the decorations of the building’s main façade, which display features of Classicism: curved and triangular gables, balustrades and other adornments used with great freedom and movement, with particular emphasis given to hollowing out the façade so as to complement the oval courtyard.

This beautiful construction—with all the formal and architectural virtues of an edifice built for the nobility or moneyed classes—has a long history. It belonged to several families, among them the Counts of Pérez Galvés and Regla. In the mid-19th century, its owners were members of the political aristocracy, including General Antonio López de Santa Anna. Later the Emperor Maximilian gave it to Marshal Aquiles Bazaine as a wedding present. Other distinguished residents contributed to the splendor of the building with its then spacious gardens.

The 20th century saw the arrival of occupants seemingly at odds with the building’s original purpose: the Tabacalera Mexicana tobacco company, the National Lottery, Express International’s offices and, from 1958 to 1965, UNAM’s National Preparatory School No. 4. It was not until 1968 that the palace recovered its splendor and was inaugurated as the San Carlos Museum.

Visitors also flock to the museum’s temporary exhibitions, the quality of which matches that of the permanent collections. Children and young people are particularly well-served by the educational department, designed, among other things, to attract future friends of the museum ✨



Francisco Olvera / La Jornada.

Brian Mulroney.

From Mulroney to Chrétien: more of the same?



Raul Fajardo / La Jornada.

Jean Chrétien.

Thomas Legler *

On October 25, 1993, it was “payback time” for the Canadian electorate. After enduring nine years of disappointing Conservative rule—accompanied by economic deterioration, record unemployment, excessive taxation, and a highly unpopular Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement—Canadians finally had their chance to “get even.” The Progressive Conservative Party was virtually annihilated: whereas in 1988 it won a comfortable majority of 169 seats, it managed to capture just two in 1993.

On the other hand, the Liberal Party, under the leadership of Trudeau-era veteran Jean Chrétien, won a handsome majority: 178 out of the 295 seats in the House of Commons. The issue on everyone’s mind was whether Chrétien’s new government represented a genuinely new direction for the country, or just “more of the same” from the Mulroney era.

During the Mulroney years (1984-1993) and the brief tenure of his successor, Kim Campbell (June-November 1993), Canada took a visibly pro-business, market-oriented course. While large corporations

represented by the elite Business Council on National Issues benefitted from a close working relationship with the Canadian government, conditions for ordinary Canadians declined dramatically.

The Canadian business community profited from “Tory” policies of privatization, deregulation and the North American Free Trade Agreement, but Canadians were subject to record taxes, excessive mortgage and interest rates, declining social benefits and unprecedented job losses and plant closures.

During the election campaign of 1993, Jean Chrétien and the Liberal Party promised a significant departure from the previous Tory policies and record. Among the Liberals’ most prominent pledges were to “renegotiate” the North American Free Trade Agreement more to Canada’s liking, to review and take action on a controversial Tory plan to privatize two out of the three terminals of Lester B. Pearson International Airport in Toronto, and to shelve the Tories’ commitment to purchase \$4.8 billion worth of new EH-101 military helicopters.

The overall Liberal strategy was released during September 1993 in a 112-page document entitled *Creating Opportunity*. The Liberal “Red Book,” as the document is more commonly known, is a mix of

campaign vows, twenty new governmental programs, and a general overview of the philosophy the Liberals would follow once in office.

Among its highlights were promises to cut federal spending to the tune of \$7.1 billion by 1998, reduce the federal deficit to three percent of Gross Domestic Product within three years, undertake \$5.3 billion worth of job-creating programs over four years, replace the despised Goods and Services Tax (GST), and ease the Bank of Canada’s “tight money” policy. The Liberals pledged new programs including a “Canada Investment Fund” to channel funds to small firms and new apprenticeship and work programs for Canada’s unemployed youth.

Overall, the image projected by the Liberals in their “Red Book” and during the course of the election campaign was one of a government that would be prepared to make difficult decisions but with much more concern than the Conservatives about their impact on the Canadian public. While clearly a far cry from Trudeau’s brand of interventionism, it seemed that Chrétien’s campaign platform was also far from the Tory brand of “neo-liberalism.”

Jean Chrétien’s government has managed to follow through on several of its campaign promises since the

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elections. The order to purchase new helicopters for the military has been canceled, as has the Conservative plan to privatize the greater part of Pearson Airport in Toronto.

With the appointment of Gordon Thiessen as the new Bank of Canada governor, the Liberals have further signalled their intention to depart from their predecessors' policies.

Thiessen's selection symbolizes the Liberals' desire to shift monetary policy from the zero-inflation extremes of ex-governor John Crow to a more pragmatic and flexible future course. It also seems that they intend to make good on their vow to reduce the influence of powerful lobbies that grew fat during the Mulroney era.

For all the promising signs, there are also indications that things will probably not change a great deal under the Liberals. For starters, pro-free traders control economic policy within the Liberal cabinet: Paul Martin Jr. is Minister of Finance, Roy MacLaren is Minister of International Trade, and André Ouellet is Minister of External Affairs.

As for the Liberals' promise to "renegotiate" the North American Free Trade Agreement, Chrétien and company gained nothing from the Americans last December. Canadian concerns about American exploitation of the energy sector and water resources, as well as on the need for concrete definitions of subsidies and dumping, remain unresolved. Consequently, Canada will go ahead with the same weak agreement negotiated by the previous Conservative government.

A number of serious structural constraints face the Liberal regime. Soon after taking office, the new finance minister, Paul Martin Jr., discovered that the country's federal deficit was far in excess of the estimate of his Conservative predecessor, Don Mazankowski: it is currently estimated at \$46 billion. The federal debt now stands at roughly \$511 billion, with

combined federal-provincial debt standing at some \$630 billion.

The record deficit and debt load not only throw the Liberal plan to cut the deficit to three percent of Gross Domestic Product out the window, but also seriously constrains plans outlined in the "Red Book" for new job creation and training programs, as well as spending on research and technology.

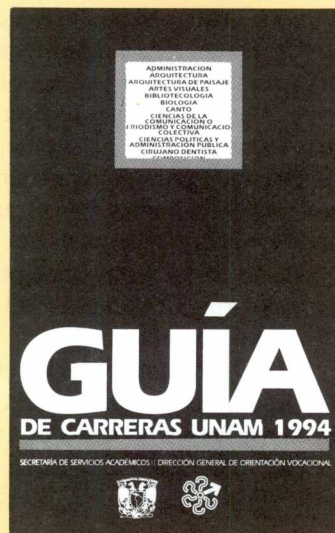
A steadily eroding tax base also seriously impedes the implementation of the Liberal agenda. Government tax revenues have been hit hard by national unemployment, which stands at 11.5 percent, and the rapid growth of an underground economy in Canada. The latter has become the prime form of passive resistance by the public to excessive taxation.

During the election campaign, the Liberals pledged to replace the hated Goods and Services Tax. On the one hand it makes a lot of economic sense to replace the GST, given that it has contributed greatly to the growth of the underground economy. On the other hand, the government will be hard put to find a source of revenue to make up for the more than \$15 billion raised annually by the GST.

The Liberals' loyalty to NAFTA represents one of the greatest impediments to pursuing their policy agenda. In spirit and word, NAFTA represents a "conditioning framework" for the activities of business and government. With respect to government, the treaty is clearly biased against market intervention. Yet at the same time that the Liberals support the accord, they have paying at least "lip service" to the notion of a national industrial policy, including high-tech job training, and research and development activities. This clearly represents a policy contradiction for the Liberals, one which will not likely be overcome through a victory by proponents of a national industrial policy.

The realities of Canada's debt, economic recession, eroding tax base, and the North American Free Trade Agreement place serious constraints on the Liberals' capacity to pursue a new policy direction. It is more likely, therefore, that Canadians will continue to witness more of the same policies prevalent during the Mulroney era, whether we like it or not ❧

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Canada's view of Mexico

Linda Hossie*

I have been asked to speak on the Canadian view of contemporary Mexico.

I became curious not so much about how we view Mexico now as how that might be different from our vision in the past. So I did a computer search through *The Globe and Mail* and other Canadian newspapers, looking at opinion articles and letters to the editor over the past 15 years.

Several things impressed me. First was the range of interest and knowledge about Mexico. Letters came in correcting errors that had appeared in print on Mexican history, giving surprisingly extensive information on Mexico's oil and gas industry, on its voting record at the International Whaling Commission, on the country's flora and fauna and so on.

Some of these were from academic experts, of course, but by no means all of them were. Some were from interested Canadians who I assumed, reading the letters, had been bitten by a passion for Mexico—a romantic attachment I can well understand—and had simply learned all they could about the country.

What gave these passionate letter writers away was the degree of their irritation at unwarranted assumptions

about Mexico or—even greater insult—assumptions that ignored the country altogether.

One writer was deeply annoyed by a journalist who referred to North America as “an Anglo continent.” That will “come as a surprise to Mexico,” he pointed out. (I can share his outrage with this kind of error, having once had a copy editor in Toronto write into one of my stories from Mexico City that Mexico is a Central American country.)

A common theme in the letters was Mexico's enlightened foreign policy in the 1980s toward countries such as Nicaragua and Cuba—usually unfavorably compared to the foreign policy of the United States and sometimes even of Canada.

Mexico was also lauded for what was then perceived as its integrity in limiting foreign investment in favor of Mexican government participation in a number of industries, including oil and gas.

But the strongest theme in the letters of the past is one that survives to this day: the notion of Mexico as an economic threat.

In the past, letter writers, editorialists and other opinion writers emphasized the competition that

imported Mexican fruits and vegetables create for Canadian producers, the danger of Mexico undercutting the Canadian price of oil, or the destabilizing effect of Mexico's foreign debt.

I didn't find anything about the destabilizing effect of the lending practices of Canadian banks. I guess we're not prepared to take our awareness of Mexican history to that extreme.

To move on to the present, the current Canadian vision of contemporary Mexico incorporates many of these attitudes and ideas of the past but with a twist, which I will get into later.

To start, I think that the Canadian attitude toward Mexico is a complicated one and not easily deciphered. So, apparently, do a number of the political scientists I consulted, most of whom, when asked about the Canadian view of Mexico, said more or less the same thing: “Uh, er, hmmm.”

Fortunately, I'm a journalist and the lack of meaningful data on a subject never stops us from having an opinion. So I will jump in fearlessly where some of the best Canadian minds are left stuttering and stammering in confusion.

Just as there is no one Mexico, there is no one Canadian view of it. Someone who has been on a holiday package tour to Cancún is going to have a vastly different attitude toward Mexico than an autoworker in southern Ontario or a politically active member of the Mohawk Nation.

On April 13 and 19, UNAM's Center for Research on North America (CISAN) hosted the “Commemorative Colloquium on 50 Years of Mexico-Canada Relations.” Given the topic's importance, we present this interesting paper from the colloquium.

* Journalist at the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail*.

And any attitude that any Canadian has toward Mexico right now must be undergoing a revolution. It is a revolution that started with the North American Free Trade Agreement, a development that changed Mexico in the Canadian mind, however subtly, from “one of them” to “one of us.”

Suddenly it is of utmost importance to many Canadians to know minute details of Mexican life, such as the hourly rate a Mexican worker is paid. This might have come up occasionally a decade ago—in fact Mexico’s low wage rates were mentioned in a 1984 letter to the editor—but for the most part no one in Canada gave it a thought.

Suddenly many of us are thinking about it, we are thinking about pollution, about Mexico’s need for water, about its human-rights record. These have become common topics of press coverage and political conversation outside of the foreign-policy community and the non-governmental organizations that might have discussed such matters before NAFTA.

On the positive side of the ledger, we are suddenly awake to business opportunities in telecommunications, in the cattle business and so on. Many of these opportunities existed before NAFTA, but the trade agreement focused our minds on them, gave us an impetus to pursue them. We find ourselves in a community of shared interests with Mexico now and the psychology of our relationship is altered.

This sense of opportunity is particularly strong in the west, I’m told, where Canada’s range land and livestock industry give the region a direct connection with a Mexican industry and lifestyle. The sense of threat comes more from Canada’s manufacturing heartland, Ontario.

One academic in Canada—Herman Konrad of the University of Calgary—is a particularly

knowledgeable student of Mexico and of Canada’s relationship with it. He has been keeping track of the amount and the type of Canadian media coverage of Mexico over the years, and he reports that since NAFTA there has been a revolutionary change.

Before the trade deal, he says, news reports focused on Mexico as an exotic holiday destination or they provided coverage of Mexico by way of an American wire service: Mexico distorted by the American political prism.

The most significant change since NAFTA, Konrad says, is that Canadians now have “direct access” coverage—reports from Canadian journalists who go to Mexico and look at the country with Canadian eyes.

There is a parallel development in the academic community, according to Konrad. In the past, Mexicanists in Canada were either transplanted Americans, as Konrad is, or they were Canadians who had to go to the United States to get an education about Mexico. Nothing was offered in Canada that could provide the training these academics needed.

Now, Konrad says, there are at least a couple of hundred Mexicanists in Canada and about 30 masters level and Ph.D. theses being written on Mexican topics. There are courses on Mexico in every major university, he says. Judy Hellman, an academic at York University in Toronto who specializes in Mexico, offers a slightly more jaded view. She says York never even considered offering a course on Mexico until this year. And York is, without question, a major Canadian university.

Stephen Clarkson from the University of Toronto is a political scientist who has long given a course on Canadian-U.S. relations. He says he managed to ease a bit of material on Mexico into his course this year. Not exactly a revolution in consciousness, but a beginning.

Judy Hellman attributes some of the change to students who have become interested in Mexico for the first time since the NAFTA debate started. “They think there may be a job in it,” she said. “Of course if they thought there was a job in pine trees they’d be interested in pine trees.”

Personally, I still count that as a gain. I suppose a more altruistic and starry-eyed motivation might be nice, but whatever causes a growing awareness of Mexico must ultimately lead to better relations between us.

But to come abruptly to a larger point: these communities that I am talking about—journalists, academics, business people and so on—are an elite. I hesitate to guess at what percentage of the population they might represent but it’s certainly not enough to swing an election, for instance.

The broader population of Canada remains woefully ignorant of Mexico, I believe, and resistant to the country because of the stereotypes associated with it. By those stereotypes I mean bandits, Moctezuma’s revenge, a *mañana* [tomorrow] philosophy about getting things done, political instability and so on.

Those stereotypes, I might add, are reinforced by the Mexican tourism authorities who create ads showing Mexicans dozing in the sun of a central plaza under fabulously oversized sombreros. You can live in Mexico a long time before meeting anyone who has the time to doze anywhere at any time while the sun is still up. Many of the Mexicans I know keep a couple of jobs going at once in an effort to support their families and educate their children.

I have yet to see an ad that promotes Mexican art—the murals of Diego Rivera, the sculptures and weavings of Oaxaca, the ceramics from around the country. And yet when you spend any amount of time in Mexico, that is the thing that leaps out at you—the extraordinary cultural vitality of the country.

(We indulge in stereotypes, too, of course, plastering Mounties in red tunics all over our ads for Canada as a tourist destination, even though Mounties in tunics are notably absent from the national scene these days.)

Even some sectors of Canada's elite community, in the aftermath of the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, began talking in stereotypes about Mexico being inherently unstable, wondering aloud whether investment might fall off. David Pendergast, who is organizing a large Mexican exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum this summer, asked what seems the obvious question about that attitude. He wondered if those issues came up after the assassinations of Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield or John F. Kennedy.

That they come up about Mexico with every ripple and buckle in the political fabric is a clear signal that Canadians, even elite Canadians, maintain what is essentially a paternalistic view toward Mexico. It is a perception of the country that is rooted in the past, yet it persists due to a lack of the genuine knowledge and experience needed to dispell it.

An interesting counterpoint is the case of Germany. Even with all the troubles of unification and the violent and distasteful rise of a small but effective neo-fascist movement, we go on blandly assuming that Germany is a stable and prosperous country and will remain so. The firebombing of hostels, the deaths now of dozens of people distress the world community, but not enough to alter its view of Germany.

I am going to commit a small journalistic sin to illustrate my point and take on an article published in *The Globe and Mail*. The writer made his first trip to Mexico late last year and his article introduced a theme that I think is worth pursuing more frequently, and that is the sophistication of Mexico: its art, its architecture, its writers, its thinkers of

various kinds. But he introduced these observations by pandering to the stereotypes of Mexico to which so many of us object. I quote from his article: "There's an awful lot more than tacos, beaches, cheap labor and pueblo poverty."

I don't know whether the writer was referring to the stereotypes he assumed are in the minds of most Canadians (unfortunately a correct assumption, I think), or to his own preconceived ideas about Mexico. Either way, a newspaper that aspires to sophistication—certainly in the international sphere—and which had a bureau in Mexico City for a decade, should have moved a long way beyond this kind of approach.

I am not saying there is no poverty in Mexico, or that wages are not lower: I am saying that to approach all questions through that narrow opening is clumsy and ultimately counter-productive.

Canadians can understand how this might feel by imagining a story in *The New York Times* where the reporter writes in a tone of wonderment about how there really is more than skidoos [Eskimos], Mounties and Indian blockades in Canada.

(Canadians in Quebec are intimate with these kinds of misunderstandings from English Canada, where assumptions are frequently made about corruption in Quebec or about its neglect of individual rights in favour of group rights.)

But I have transformed my writer into a straw man here to make a point. I think almost every journalist who goes to Mexico falls into this trap somewhere along the line. But in the evolution of our relationship, we must reach a place of enlightenment where we stop using clichéd images as our reference point for everything new we learn about Mexico. Only then will we have a hope of beginning to understand the country in all its complexity. And only then will we stop feeding those

stereotypes that act as barriers to understanding among our readers as well as ourselves.

Mexicans make assumptions about us, too, I hasten to add. During my years of living in Mexico, I often had people refer to our President Trudeau, when in fact the country was led by our Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney. I had someone ask me if Canada shares a border with Germany—I answered that if you ignore the Atlantic Ocean and France, yes. The classic response from a Mexican when he learns that a visitor is from Canada—so classic that after a while the Canadian can almost recite it in unison with the Mexican—is this: It's cold out there, isn't it? Well, as it happens, not always: as a native Vancouverite, I know that you can often play tennis there, in shorts, in the middle of winter.

The increased academic interest in Mexico will improve our knowledge of each other. But what will improve it more, or at least more broadly, is the growing connection between popular organizations in the two countries. This really began in earnest during the NAFTA debate when trade unions, women's groups and environmentalists from Canada, Mexico and the United States formed a tripartite network and began to swap information, visit back and forth, and strategize about NAFTA.

I have long believed that the nationalistic left in Canada was missing the boat. By frantically defending a protectionist economy, I thought, it failed to understand its joint interest with popular organizations and working people around the world.

The movement to change that is still in its infancy but I predict it will grow, especially as the economies of Canada, Mexico and the United States increasingly interact. And especially now that the indigenous peoples of Canada and Mexico are starting to meet, to share political and

legal strategies and to understand their common interests.

Which brings me to another event of contemporary Mexican life, the Chiapas uprising. Canadians didn't as a whole over-react to the Chiapas uprising. They identified its roots, more or less correctly, as being a lack of democracy in the region, a persistent and unrelieved poverty and continuing abuses of various kinds. They didn't assume the uprising signalled the start of the next Mexican revolution or the undermining of national stability.

The reason for that is that Canadians recently had a crash course in indigenous history and politics as a result of our own Mohawk uprising in Oka, Quebec. For several nights running, Canadians saw television footage on the news of armed Mohawk warriors confronting the overpowering military force of the Canadian army.

Even before Oka, the very sophisticated political strategies of native people put their concerns high on the national priority list during our constitutional negotiations. Non-native Canadians are increasingly aware of the appalling living conditions of many Canadian native people, and of white Canada's role in creating them, and they increasingly think native land claims and demands for self-government are fair.

As a result of being so firmly ensconced in our own glass house, then, we are a little more reluctant than we once might have been to throw stones. This, I think, prevents us from having a knee-jerk response to the Chiapas uprising as though it were "another civil war in the banana republics." Very angry, justifiably angry, native people is a shameful reality we now share.

Let me move briefly onto the macro-level of the Canadian view, that is, Canada's foreign policy. During the Tory governments that were in power for almost a decade, and which were

bumped only recently by the Liberals, Mexico was not visibly a priority. Cabinet ministers insisted that it was, but for a period of a year, we didn't even have an ambassador in Mexico. While I was a correspondent here, from 1988 to 1990, diplomatic officials at the embassy were not overly encouraging—off the record, at least—about the prospects of investment in Mexico. We negotiated a trade deal with the United States without any reference to Mexico.

That began to change slightly toward the end of Mulroney's tenure. He came to Mexico to sign a range of trade and other agreements and paid Mexico that highest of bilateral compliments: a refusal to get worked up about its human rights record.

That, I think, is directly attributable to the policies of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. He was prepared to tailor Mexico's economy to the western economic fad—open markets and globalization. He was, in short, someone we could work with. And, most crucially, Mexico decided to put itself on the continental agenda by pursuing NAFTA.

Herman Konrad points out that Mexico signalled its interest in Canada much earlier. López Portillo made his first trip abroad, as Mexico's president, to Canada. This is one of the clear signals national leaders can send about their foreign interests, yet there was no sign that the significance of his visit registered with Canada's government of the day, Konrad says.

Very recently, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien made his first state visit to Mexico. I'd be interested to know whether that made any greater impact here.

Canada and Mexico have more in common than is often assumed. It starts with something I mentioned earlier: a non-interventionist approach to world affairs. It includes the obvious fact of our shared and very powerful neighbor.

But it also includes an approach to social and domestic policy that does not rule out a government hand in developing national industries and institutions in such fields as energy, the film industry and publishing.

This approach is changing, of course, and both countries are finding out how painful and controversial it is to go through those changes. But that is something else we share.

Konrad mentions how we like to emphasize that Mexico has been governed by the same party for six decades, to emphasize that we think there's something a little fishy about that. There is something a little fishy about it, of course, but how do we account, then, for Canada having been run by the same party—the Liberals—for the better part of this century?

A little tag end to my observations about Canada's view of Mexico is my delight at seeing in Canada, now, more and more examples of Mexican art. This is the popular consumerism that grows out of increasing Canadian travel to Mexico, but what it achieves is the shifting of our perception about the country away from clichés and toward a new appreciation of Mexico's complexity.

It is no longer the style to bring home felt sombreros the size of satellite dishes. Tourists now search out painted animals from Oaxaca or ceramics from Guanajuato or weavings from Chiapas. Movies such as *Like Water for Chocolate* take us a little further down the path—we learn something about magic realism—the artistic extension of my sworn enemy, the subjunctive tense.

This is a clumsy approach to Mexican culture, but it is at least an approach, and one that rewards the seeker with aesthetic pleasure. For that reason it is bound to grow. I have faith that we are not such philistines in Canada that we can remain oblivious to the richness of Mexico. ✎

Octavio Paz: eight decades of poetry, politics and history

The Mexican poet Octavio Paz celebrated his eightieth birthday on March 31. To mark this occasion, several literary groups have undertaken the task of compiling his complete works, including some unpublished writings, in honor of the man who has employed the full range of literary genres to express and disseminate his universal words and thought.

Background

Octavio Paz was born the year World War I broke out: 1914, which was also the year of the American occupation of Veracruz, the fall of Huerta and the great split among the victorious revolutionaries. He was brought up in a milieu that oscillated between a cult of the French Revolution and Mexican Liberalism.

His early years were influenced by books, but also by play. With the passage of time, this combination of historical characters and the imaginary world led him to reflect on history and politics.

"One of my great pleasures was leafing through my grandfather's huge history books with one of my cousins and examining the illustrations: the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, Cuauhtémoc's torture, the oath of the ball game, the Battle of Trafalgar.... Our childish games were heroic masquerades: D'Artagnan's duels, the Cid's cavalcades, Aladdin's lamp and

Buffalo Bill's escapades in the Wild West.

"Recalling my childhood games many years later, in *Pasado en claro* (The Past Seen Clearly), I found in them a prophecy of my passion for history and politics."

But these childish games also initiated him into one of his greatest passions, poetry. "Poetry is a game, a somersault. Perhaps poetry and history are nothing more than two sides of the same enigmatic reality. Both are present in our childhood."

In the '30s, the contradiction between his revolutionary ideas and his aesthetic convictions was reflected in his first book, *Raíz del hombre* (Root of Man). Of this "babbling" —as he would later call it— he said: "It was erotic poetry, but that was exactly why I thought it was revolutionary poetry. Love and sex were the root of men and women. For me, poetry and revolutionary activity were not essentially dissimilar, although the ways they operated were different."

Universality

His long-standing loyalty to universal thought was shaped by voluntary exile and the influence of other cultures. "Goethe said this repeatedly: 'The time of national literature is long past, now is the time for world literature.'"

When he was awarded the Alexis de Tocqueville Prize, Jean Meyer wrote: "Internationally recognized,



Frida Hartz / La Jornada.

Paz was awarded the French Legion of Honor's Great Cross.

Octavio Paz has never been a nationalistic, provincial or small-town writer. He has been a man of synthetic thought and flashing intuition, with an eagle's eye for detail, within a context that is always universal."

Travels

On his first trip to Europe, Paz participated independently in the French Surrealist movement, keeping his distance as a poet —a Mexican poet. He was later to join the margins of the post-war group for a short time in the '40s.

The Surrealism of the time, particularly as embodied by André Bréton, was what helped him to clarify his values and adopt an ethical position as a poet in the contemporary world.

During his years in Europe he remained in close contact with Latin American writers, such as Julio Cortázar and Pablo Neruda, while keeping abreast of events in Mexico.

In accordance with his political ideas, in 1968 he resigned from his post as ambassador to India in response to the Mexican army's repression of the student movement. He declared himself in favor of: "Not a violent

revolutionary process, but a peaceful and gradual development towards more democratic political and social forms."

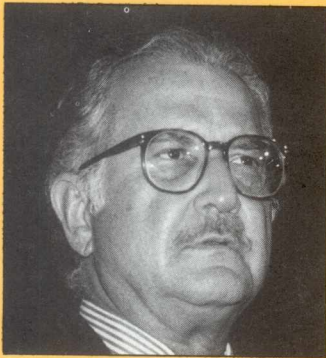
Criticism

Paz' ideas have been controversial, and even highly disagreeable to many people. He has been criticized as an elitist and anti-Communist, and for defending "art for the few" —among other things. Yet while he has been

rejected by many intellectuals, his universal thought has managed to attract world attention, and focus interest on Mexico and thereby Latin America.

Paz defines criticism as "the apprenticeship of the imagination, cured of fantasy and determined to face the reality of the world. We writers need a certain heroism to help us continue writing and persevere, with complete freedom, without

Literary prizes awarded to Carlos Fuentes



Marco A. Cruz / Imagenlatina.

The Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes was awarded the Grinzane Cavour and 1994 Prince of Asturias Literature prizes for the defense of freedom of the imagination and dignity of thought expressed in his writing.

The Literature prize is one of the eight presented annually by the Prince of Asturias Foundation since its inception in 1981. The Grinzane Cavour prize has been awarded by Italy's Cavour Foundation since 1991, with the aim of attracting young people to reading. As a result it has a double jury, with one part made up of critics and the other of students.

To commemorate these prizes, the Alfaguara publishing house announced the publication of the novels *Diana o la cazadora solitaria* (Diana or the Solitary Huntress) and *La edad del tiempo* (The Age of Time), as well as all of the author's narrative works, beginning with *El mal del*

tiempo (Sickness of Time) —including *Aura*, *Cumpleaños* (Birthday), *Una familia lejana* (A Distant Family) and *Constancia y otras novelas para vírgenes* (Constance and Other Novels for Virgins).

Carlos Fuentes was born inside the Mexican Embassy in Panama in 1928. He studied at the Hautes Études Internationaux institute in Geneva before taking classes in law in Mexico under the Spanish Republican exile professor Manuel Pedroso, who encouraged him to read authors such as Plato, Machiavelli and Rousseau.

Fuentes has been a professor of literature at the universities of Princeton, Columbia, Harvard and Pennsylvania, as well as Mexican ambassador to France from 1974 to 1977.

He began writing in Chile at the age of eleven. In Río de Janeiro, at the suggestion of Alfonso Reyes (a Mexican author who wrote on a wide variety of subjects), he decided to devote himself to literature. He combined his diplomatic work with narrative and essay writing, founding the *Revista Mexicana de Literatura* (1955-1958) and coediting the publications *El Espectador* (1959-1961) and *Siempre* (1960).

Among his most representative works are *Terra Nostra*, a literary plea for individual liberty in the face of modern society, for which he was awarded the Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos Prize in 1977.

Some of Fuentes' works have been adapted for the cinema and theater. He has written a number of plays including *El tuerto es rey* (The One-Eyed Man Is King), *Orquídeas a la luz de la luna* (Orchids by Moonlight) and *Todos los gatos son pardos* (All Cats Are Brown).

Among the other prizes he has received are the New York Arts Club Award (1988), the Miguel Cervantes Literature Award (1987) and the Mexican National Literature Prize (1984).

This is the second Prince of Asturias Prize to be awarded to Mexico —the first went to the magazine *Vuelta*— and the fourth for Latin America. Prince Philip of Spain will present the award, consisting of five million pesetas and a reproduction of a statuette of the Spanish artist Joan Miró, next November, when Fuentes will be sixty-six.

Raquel Villanueva
Staff Writer.

Comillas Prize awarded to Enrique Krauze

In Madrid, Mexican historian Enrique Krauze was awarded the Comillas Prize for Biography, Autobiography and Memoirs for his book *Siglo de Caudillos* (Century of Caudillos —caudillos were the traditional strongmen-leaders of Ibero-America). This work analyzes outstanding figures of Mexico's post-Independence epoch—from 1810 to 1910—such as Hidalgo, Morelos, Iturbide, Juárez, Porfirio Díaz, Alamán, Melchor Ocampo and Santa Anna.

The prize was created in 1988 by the Tusquets publishing house for the purpose of awakening interest, in the Spanish-reading public, in a genre which has been but scarcely cultivated in our countries and which makes it possible to recall historical events through the individual figures or groups who were their protagonists.

Enrique Krauze was born in Mexico City in 1947 and received his doctorate in history. As a writer he has focused on history, essays, biography and interviews. He is presently assistant director of *Vuelta* magazine, which in 1993 received the Prince of Asturias Prize for Communication and the Humanities.

Among his main works are *Biografía del poder* (Biography of Power), *Caudillos culturales de la Revolución Mexicana* (Cultural Caudillos of the Mexican Revolution), *Caras de la historia* (Faces of History) and *Personas e ideas* (People and Ideas).



Angeles Torrejón / Imagenlatina.

Raquel Villanueva
Staff Writer.

complacency or fear.... Writers as such are not obliged to improve the country's situation directly. We all have social obligations, but writers have the additional duty of telling the truth. Criticism does not exist in Mexico; there is only a curious procedure of short, flattering little articles, in which only colorless adjectives are spared."

As a means of encouraging criticism, Paz founded the journals *Laurel* and *Taller* (Workshop), which later served as the basis for *Plural* and *Vuelta* (Turn) magazines; the latter has been published for the past fifteen years. "Well-oriented, authentic criticism could do a lot by drawing people's attention to valuable works.

Critics could promote the creation of a small circle of readers capable of appreciation and creating a genuine reading public."

In Mexico, Paz has passed this passion for criticism on to a generation of writers that includes Enrique Krauze, Christopher Domínguez, Aurelio Asiain and Alberto Ruy Sánchez.

Awards

Octavio Paz has received more awards than any other Latin American writer, but the most important of these is no doubt the Nobel Prize for Literature, which he received in 1990. This recognition has served to publicize his thoughts, this time as an official

spokesman, on one of his prime concerns nowadays: the cruelty and barbarity with which man is destroying himself and the planet.

During his speech in Stockholm he commented: "Life on our planet is in great danger. Our thoughtless cult of progress and our very success in dominating nature have become a suicidal race. At precisely the moment when we have begun to decipher the secrets of the galaxies and atomic particles, the enigmas of molecular biology and the origin of life, we have pierced nature to the quick. Thus, whatever form of political or social organization nations choose to adopt, the most immediate and urgent issue is the survival of the environment. By defending nature, we defend mankind."

Homage

To commemorate his eightieth birthday, Mexican and Spanish publishers have edited Octavio Paz' complete works in a variety of formats, ranging from pocket collections to special editions.

Mexico's Fondo de Cultura Económica publishing house has already distributed 15 volumes of the *Obras completas de Octavio Paz*, recently published by the Círculo de Lectores in Spain. Ediciones El Equilibrista will publish a two-volume edition of Paz' poem "Blanco" just as the poet did in 1966. In the publishers' opinion this poem was a watershed in the history of universal poetry. Ediciones El Tucán de Virginia began a collection of essays and poetry called *Festejo: 80 años de Octavio Paz* (Celebration: 80 Years of Octavio Paz).

Octavio Paz has experienced the changes of over half a century, becoming a writer of essays, novels, history, criticism and poetry along the way. He has yet to pass the torch ✎

Mónica Ching
Assistant Editor.

Margaret Atwood and Octavio Paz: convergence and divergence

Graciela Martínez-Zalce *

It has come as a surprise to me, as a Mexican reader, to discover how much Canada and Mexico have in common. One might not have expected this, with Canada and its Anglo-Saxon and Gallic cultures and an economy placing it among the ranks of First World countries and Mexico with its Latin culture and an economy setting it among the developing countries.

Yet in both Canada and Mexico the question of national identity has long been present in reflections on cultural and intellectual life. It is strange to see how, despite the distance and divergences, there are convergences in the responses that some essayists have provided to this issue.

This article will attempt to point these out, using as a starting point two essays that have been central to the interpretation of national cultural identity: *Survival*, by Canada's Margaret Atwood and *The Labyrinth of Solitude* by Octavio Paz¹ in the case of Mexico.

Both the procedure and the form of these texts are similar. Starting from a personal appreciation, a

memory, an intuition, the authors move on to observing the phenomenon through deconstruction and analysis of its composite parts, in order to achieve an in-depth study and interpretative reconstruction. All this is done using a highly "essayist" tone—in other words, an intentionally personal voice to express judgments as well as ideas, without the critical apparatus one would expect from an academic study.

Atwood tells of her initial contact with Canadian literature when it was not yet recognized as such. Paz describes his first stay in Los Angeles.² From the unconscious, from childhood—the germ of a concern already lay in the pages they had at hand or the surroundings of these writers when they were still children. The specificity of this as yet unnamed awareness was a discovery that lay dormant until it emerged years later in the form of words.

In both texts, questions are born of confrontation. The childhood anecdote behind *Survival* is of a girl who discovers that Clark Kent's metropolis has nothing to do with her world. Conversely, there are

similarities between the world that she knows and the animal stories of Charles Roberts' *Kings in Exile* and Ernest Thompson Seton's *Wild Animals I Have Known*; the context of Canadian versus American fantasy.

The underlying circumstance of *The Labyrinth of Solitude* is that of a child who observes a foreign city inhabited by many of his fellow countrymen: the Mexicans of Los Angeles. The city ceases to be a prototypical American city and takes on a new atmosphere, full of adornments, unkempt, negligent and passionate. Thus similarities are established with the country of origin; the Mexican urban context within an American one.

On both sides of the border, to the north of America's northern frontier and to the south of the United States, definitions start with contrasts: we're not like our neighbor, we're not like the giant, we're not the empire.³ The two essayists are aware of this: "The United States is a reality, but such a huge and powerful one that it

¹ Margaret Atwood, *Survival*. Toronto, Anansi, 1991; Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad*. Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970.

² The account of both the stay in Los Angeles and other important moments in his life appears in a longer version in "How and Why I Wrote *The Labyrinth of Solitude*" in Octavio Paz, *Itinerario*. Mexico City, FCE, 1993, pp. 13-42.

³ A propos of this, it is interesting to note Pierre-Elliott Trudeau's simile comparing the relation between the United States and Canada to that of a mouse and an elephant who sleep in the same bed (every time the elephant moves, the mouse is squashed, not vice versa). This is similar to the Mexican saying, "Poor Mexico, so far from God and so near to the United States."

borders on myth and, for many, on obsession," writes Paz.⁴

For her part, Atwood discovers texts describing "the spectacle of what happens historically to small nations caught between big ones when the former try to preserve their own identity" and how they point "the finger at the enemy (identified as America)."⁵

Both are aware that in certain sectors of their societies the American way of life is regarded as a threat, a monster that devours and annihilates the specificity of the other. If these two essays are based on a similar motif, how do they go on to respond to the question it poses?

The leitmotif of *Survival* is Canadian literature, long regarded by Canadians themselves as second-rate. Atwood does not attempt to provide a history of this literature, seeking instead to find the most recurrent patterns in the texts she read as if they had been written by Canada itself. Why choose literature as a protagonist? Because Canada is a mental territory whose inhabitants feel lost, because of their own unfamiliarity with it:

*What a lost person needs is a map of the territory, with his own position marked on it so he can see where he is in relation to everything else. Literature is not only a mirror; it is also a map, a geography of the mind. Our literature is one such map, if we can learn to read it as our literature, as the product of who and where we have been. We need such a map desperately, we need to know about here, because here is where we live.*⁶

The central idea of *The Labyrinth of Solitude* is a view of Mexico's history based on the idea that Mexican man and society move according to a succession of characteristic ruptures and unions. It does not attempt to

discover a chimerical philosophy of the Mexican nor to produce a psychological description or portrait. Beginning with an enumeration of characteristic features, it becomes an interpretation of the history of Mexico and its situation in the modern world:

*Waking up to history means gaining awareness of our singularity, a moment of reflective rest before submitting ourselves to the task.... What distinguishes us from other peoples is not the always debatable originality of our character—the result, perhaps, of ever-changing circumstances—but that of our creations... a work of art or a concrete action do more to define the Mexican—not only in that they express him, but in the sense that, by expressing him, they recreate him—than the most penetrating description.*⁷

Thus, although he does not choose it as his framework, Paz also recognizes art's capacity to serve as legacy, mirror and map.

The result of both works is quite similar, despite differences in the objects of study: a description of the tendency of both societies to adopt certain myths that individuals share. And it is similar because both Atwood and Paz choose fundamental core themes in human life to explore the issues surrounding them. This description may be terrifying. The image that the mirror of the word reflects back to us will not be the sort of embellishment assisted by make-up.

The core themes in *Survival* are: survival, which Atwood regards as the central symbol of Canada; nature, seen as a monster that destroys man or as a victim of the latter's depredations; the victimized animal which carries anthropomorphic values; natives (Indians and Eskimos), either as murderers and torturers of well-meaning white men or as people

exploited and exterminated by the modernity that the white man represents;⁸ explorers and colonizers, the true ancestors; the family novel, in which there is a confrontation between strong grandparents defending a rigid, puritanical tradition and their grandchildren who must move away to be able to escape the failure to which their parents were destined; immigration that does not result in spiritual or financial success; failed heroes, martyrs without a cause, dead in accidents with no glory; artists unable to paint; cold, hard, sterile women, trapped in oppressive and even destructive family surroundings; mansions burning in the purifying flames of this deadly tradition; in short, the re-creation, from various angles, of Canadian society and the imaginary view that Canadians themselves have formed of it.

The core themes in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* include solitude, which is the central symbol of Mexico for Paz; the "Pachuco," the hybrid rebel, product of his Mexican ancestry confronted with the North American environment in which he is immersed, who even exaggerates his aesthetic appearance to differentiate himself from the rest of the society in which he lives; the mask, symbol of the voluntary solitude in which Mexicans enshroud themselves, to defend themselves against the rest of the world, as a form of preservation, demonstrating the prevalence of secrecy over openness, simulation, appearances, avoidance; parties as the only possibility of openness, the celebration of ceremonies to commemorate heroes and events, sumptuous festivities despite poverty, shouts, as a release of the soul, excess and commotion; death, disdained, in the face of which one is indifferent, revenge towards life, the object of

⁴ Paz, "How and Why I Wrote....," p. 24.

⁵ Atwood, *Op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁷ Paz, *El laberinto....*, pp. 9-10.

⁸ In the first case, the native would be a symbol similar to nature as a monster; in the second, he would be the equivalent of a cornered animal.

worship and adulation, fascination in the face of nothingness and nostalgia for limbo; woman, the enigma that is both exciting and repellent, a vulnerable idol that becomes a hardened victim, inured to suffering as a result of so much suffering, located at one of two extremes; the goodness associated with openness and passivity or the badness that implies obstinacy, similarity to man and activity; "La Chingada," the mythical mother whose children are the result of rape, a female who is totally passive, defenseless against the outside world, where the dialectic between the closed and the open is fulfilled with terrifying precision; the syncretism between the pre-Hispanic and the Spanish, where natives, conquerors and colonizers are protagonists of racial and cultural cross-breeding.

So in what way are these two visions alike? I think that their similarity lies, above all, in the dialectic through which the central symbols of each culture are defined. If the symbol of Canada is survival, Atwood approaches it from the dialectic of the conqueror and his victim. In the majority of cases, in her view, the Canadian experiences life as a conquered person. This is not unwarranted; Canadians' first encounter with the environment was brutal and for a long time survival was an achievement in itself.

If the symbol of Mexico is solitude, Paz approaches it from the dialectic of openness versus secrecy. According to Paz, Mexicans close in on themselves to avoid being conquered. This is not unwarranted either. Mexican culture derives from an initial violent confrontation, a clash between two powerful cultures. A feeling of inferiority⁹ is expressed as frustration in both cases, whether one feels like an animal that has been cornered or knows

⁹ As defined by Samuel Ramos in *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico). Mexico City, Espasa-Calpe, 1993.

one is the child of rape. This is the vision of the conquered.

Some will criticize the two texts for generalizing and granting the status of truth to a very personal and subjective reflection, based on individual impressions. While this is true, it does not make the texts any less valid. The essayist's task is to give voice to his beliefs and convince us through his work, with ideas and words.

According to Paz, the Pachucos worked out their rebelliousness "not by means of an idea, but by a gesture. The resources of the conquered are the aesthetic use of defeat, the revenge of the imagination."¹⁰ *Survival and The Labyrinth of Solitude* can be interpreted as pessimistic because they present a dismal view of their respective cultures; they are an attempt to unravel the myths that colonization implanted. Yet one must

¹⁰ Paz, "How and Why I Wrote...", p. 27.

also realize that the fact of asking why, and then trying to provide an answer, is a gesture similar to the one described by Paz.

Why should we ask questions about ourselves? To stop regarding other people as more important than ourselves. This is the basic premise behind the work of Margaret Atwood and Octavio Paz. Nowadays, their interpretations are part of the legacy that shapes the culture they described. Their texts are a mirror in which we can see ourselves, when we feel the need to recognize ourselves. They are maps of the spiritual geography of their countries. We should listen to our writers, to be able to agree or disagree. "For the members of a country or a culture, shared knowledge of their place, their here, is not a luxury but a necessity. Without that knowledge, we will not survive."¹¹ ✕

¹¹ Atwood, *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

Explicación de textos literarios

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The historical novel in Mexico

Eugenio Aguirre *

Over the past decade, Mexico has experienced an unprecedented “boom” in historical novels, as many talented writers have found their calling in this genre. This trend reflects a certain maturation of Mexican society allowing for reflection on the nation’s history and a more reasoned approach to events of the past—events whose influence continues to be felt today.

As with other countries, the history of Mexico can be read in a variety of ways, depending greatly on the sources one uses. For some, history is but the chronology of dates, facts and figures.

For others it is a byzantine epic in which acts of war and military heroes determine affiliations and enmities, while some view history as a scientific challenge or intellectual project. For the overwhelming majority it boils down to the empty, intangible and incontinent verbiage spewed out in the fervid delirium of officialdom.

Nevertheless, the historiographic approach to the reality of the past has evolved, through the incorporation of new resources and techniques that make history more accessible to researchers. Microhistory, regional history, the history of mentalities, as well as historical analysis of economics, demography, food, etc., have provided a new dimension and a more agreeable, interesting and—hopefully—more objective path to the truth.

Literature, which is hypersensitive to historical events and the evolution of historical research, has been nourished by these new approaches, using these new tools to refashion its voice in accordance with new trends. This allows the writer to construct his or her work in complete freedom, unbound by schematic rules and regulations—the violation of which used to mean being cast out of the genre—and with a structure well-fitted to the anecdotes the writer seeks to convey.

One example is Fernando del Paso’s *Noticias del imperio* (News from the Empire). This work reflects the contributions made by the history of mentalities (Lévi-Strauss, Foucault) and microhistory (Luis González, José María Muriá); this is especially evident in the letters exchanged between the French brothers in the novel, as well as in the microscopic detail in which the author conveys the daily life of that era.

In literary terms, in Mexico the process of “rationalizing” the events of the past—a prerequisite to these events being used as material for novels—began to develop in the second half of the 19th century, perhaps because of the popularity of writers such as Walter Scott, Alexandre Dumas and Angel Saavedra (the Duke of Rivas).

It is thanks to Walter Scott’s prolific work that, at the beginning of the 19th century, English speakers (and, later, speakers of other languages) were able to familiarize

themselves with an important part of the history of England and the writer’s native Scotland.

Scott initiated a genre with unsuspected possibilities, through works such as *Ivanhoe*, *The Lady of the Lake*, *Rob Roy* and the saga of Arthur and the knights of the Round Table.

In a similar fashion, Alexandre Dumas the elder recreated part of the history of France in world-renowned historical novels such as *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After* and *The Count of Montecristo*, in which the fictional narrative was based in large part on accounts of events considered to be historically accurate.

In Spain, the Duke of Rivas produced the *Romances históricos* (Historical Ballads), *El moro expósito* (The Foundling Moor) and *Historia de la sublevación de Nápoles* (History of the Naples Uprising), which were widely read by Spanish-speaking writers in the 19th century.

Years later, Mexican writers—such as Vicente Riva Palacios, with *Martín Garatuza* and the monumental *México a través de los siglos* (Mexico Through the Centuries), Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, with *El zarco* (Blue Eyes), and Manuel Payno, with *Los bandidos de Río Frio* (The Bandits of Río Frio)—joined in the task of producing works that melded the essences of narrative, history and tradition, a technique that would slowly take root as literature came to be used as a means for describing historical events.

Nevertheless, the works of this period were imbued with the romantic spirit of the era; fiction was influenced by a moral code which exalted the values sanctioned by the medieval epic, in which a Manichean view of the world constantly made itself felt.

The production of these works, whether epics, historical dramas or novels, required a collective maturity allowing for serene reflection on a community or nation’s past.

* Mexican novelist.

Historians are assigned the task of collecting and recording the key moments of past reality, while writers of fiction give priority to the context of history, above and beyond dates and official heroes, in order to produce literature.

The revolutionary events that began in Mexico in 1910 captured the imagination of writers who had devoted their talents to writing traditional historical novels inspired by events of the distant past. The Revolution obliged them to focus their attentions on events of the immediate past as well as those they were living through themselves.

Thus there arose the “novel of the Mexican Revolution,” whose most important practitioners (Martín Luis Guzmán and Mariano Azuela) left us the dazzling testimony, in fictionalized form, of a history they had participated in directly.

drama. Their works *Los de abajo* (The Underdogs) and *La sombra del caudillo* (Shadow of a Leader), like those of Rafael F. Muñoz, Mauricio Magdaleno and others, did not confine themselves to fictionalized narration of the events but put forward judgements corresponding to each author’s ethical-political viewpoint.

These novels of “steel and bridle,”¹ of intuitive heroes who became part of the military hierarchy through the whims of fate, and bourgeois gentlemen alarmed at changes in the status quo, absorbed the energies of Mexico’s most important writers during the first half of this century, as works of high quality continued to be produced, such as *La virgen de los cristeros* (The Virgin of the Cristeros²) by J. Guadalupe de Anda, and *Pensativa* by Goytortúa Santos.

Outstanding among his works are the stories and *estampas* (images) of Mexico’s Colonial era and Independence period (*Del tiempo pasado* [Of Times Past]). While focused on tasty and piquant anecdotes about famous personages such as “La Güera Rodríguez,” his works reflect the imagery of the common people as expressed in myths and legends based on the syncretism of Mexican culture.

Another figure is José Fuentes Mares, who was principally concerned with clarifying the development of the Liberal and Reform movements in Mexico, in essays such as *Juárez y la intervención* (Juárez and the Intervention) and *Juárez: el imperio y la república* (Juárez: The Empire and the Republic), novels such as *Servidumbre* (Servitude), and theatrical works like *Su alteza serenísima* (Your Most Serene Highness), in which he puts forward his implacable critique of Santa Anna, previously expressed in the historical essay *Santa Anna: aurora y ocaso de un comediante* (Santa Anna: Rise and Fall of a Comedian).

Victoriano Salado Alvarez is another of the authors who cultivated this genre; in his works *De Santa Anna a la reforma* (From Santa Anna to the Reform Movement) and *La intervención* (The Intervention) he related, in novelistic form, the episodes of the great reformist movement which changed the face of the Mexican republic.

The Mexican *costumbrista* novel reached its apogee with Agustín Yáñez in his works *Al filo del agua* (At Water’s Edge), *La tierra pródiga* (The Bountiful Land) and *Las tierras flacas* (The Lean Lands), recreating the way of life of agrarian communities and their principal characters, as well as the aftermath of the Revolution and the changes it brought about.

The 1950s saw the rise of several of our greatest writers: Juan Rulfo, Juan José Arreola, José Revueltas,

“In Mexico the process of ‘rationalizing’ the events of the past began to develop in the second half of the 19th century”

The works of these writers added valuable elements to the genre, contributing to its evolution. The fact that the narrators were eyewitnesses to the events they described made living testimony of the anecdotes and characters described in their works, rather than a dry and bookish chronology. Their sources were no longer other books, documents, or stories from oral history, but the experiences of their own lives as warriors on the run.

In addition—and this is of particular importance—they expressed their own sharp criticisms of the events they had lived through and the personages who played key roles on the stage of the revolutionary

A parallel process was the rise of the 20th-century Mexican novel of the *costumbrista* school (relating local customs and manners)—a forerunner of present-day microhistory and regional history.

During this brief period, only a few isolated figures continued to concern themselves with historical stories and novels. Artemio del Valle Arizpe was one of these few.

¹ “Mexicans, hark the battle cry, grasp the steel and bridle” is a phrase from the Mexican national anthem. (Editor’s note.)

² The Cristeros were participants in a rural religious revolt against the post-Revolutionary government’s policy of secularization in the 1920s and ’30s. (Editor’s note.)

Elena Garro, Carlos Fuentes and Rosario Castellanos, among others. The historical novel—a genre in which these authors did not work—was practically forgotten, without having reached the level of importance it did in some other countries.

Nevertheless, in the preceding period, between 1935 and 1945, the government's *indigenista* policy³ led historians, sociologists, ethnologists, philosophers and archaeologists to give new emphasis to explaining the importance of the Indian world, as Mexicans incorporated this world as a basic part of their self-image and a cornerstone of their nationality.

Such profound thinkers as Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán analyzed the ethnic composition of our people, and even added an ingredient which had previously remained hidden: the black component of some regions' populations. This would make itself felt in literature in general and, subsequently, provided an important contribution to the historical novels produced in the 1980s.

Going by the historical period they cover, the novels of this genre which have been produced in the recent past may be grouped as follows:

The pre-Hispanic period and the Spanish Conquest. Putting modesty aside, we are obliged to mention the novel *Gonzalo Guerrero*, by the author of this article, which relates the history of the personage the book is named after. The novel seeks to recreate the Maya world before the Conquest, and stresses the process of acculturation of the main character and the creation of the first Spanish-American *mestizaje* (the mixture of Indians and Spaniards).

The Conquest and the Colonial era. One work which must be listed here is the novel *Fuego* (Fire), by Paco Ignacio Taibo I, in which the

author presents the story of an uprising by nuns in the city of Puebla in the 17th century. Also deserving of mention is the recent novel *Diario maldito de Nuño de Guzmán* (The Accursed Diary of Nuño de Guzmán), by Herminio Martínez, which recounts the adventures of this rebel conquistador, describing his ambitions and betrayals, as well as his characteristic cruelty. Also relating to this period are the novels *Memorias del nuevo mundo* (Memoirs from the New World) and *Vida y tiempo de Juan Cabezón de Castilla* (The Life and Times of Juan Cabezón de Castilla), by Homero Aridjis, in which the author recreates Colonial life and describes the shadow play produced by the "meeting of two worlds."

The Independence period. Few novels have been published on the Independence movement or the figures involved in it. Halfway between the

The Reform movement and the second Empire. Fernando del Paso wrote his celebrated novel *Noticias del imperio* to describe the Mexican schizophrenia of the mid-19th century, which spawned Maximilian's empire and the reconstruction of the Republic. Paco Ignacio Taibo II's novel *La lejanía del tesoro* (Distant Treasure), which was recently awarded the International Planeta-Joaquín Mortiz Prize, is based on the same period, describing the deeds and adventures of President Benito Juárez and his minister Guillermo Prieto, when the Republic was installed in the area previously called Paso del Norte. In the final years of the Porfirio Díaz period, the bitter "caste war" laid waste to the Yucatan Peninsula; this is the central theme of Silvia Molina's novel *Ascención Tún*.

The Revolution. Although they have to do with the revolutionary

“The revolutionary events that began in Mexico in 1910 captured writers' imagination”

historical and comic genres is Jorge Ibarguengoitia's charming novel *Los pasos de López* (López' Steps), in which the main character relates the odyssey of Generalissimo José María Morales during the struggle for Independence. Although a work for the theater, Vicente Leñero's *El martirio de Morelos* (The Martyrdom of Morelos) is an important work that deserves to be mentioned here and which is related to the narrative genre. Among short novels aimed at describing historical events are *Valentín Gómez Farías, un hombre de dos mundos* (Valentín Gómez Farías, a Man of Two Worlds) and *Leona Vicario, la insurgente* (The Insurgent Leona Vicario), also by this (none too modest) author.

movement of 1910 and deal with figures involved in the Revolution, Ignacio Solares' novels *Madero, el otro* (Madero, the Other) and *La noche de Angeles* (The Night of Angeles) cannot be classed as novels of the Revolution, since their purpose is not to describe the events or political acts in which the characters are immersed, but rather the intimate phenomenology of these characters and their reflection in the events. Of a similar type, Brianda Domecq's novel *La insólita historia de la Santa de Cabora* (The Astonishing History of the Saint of Cabora) puts forward an interesting feminine viewpoint on the revolutionary events in the northern part of Mexico.

³ *Indigenismo* was a policy in favor of Mexico's Indian (indigenous) population, its history and culture. (Editor's note.)

Post-Revolutionary Mexico.

Angeles Mastretta has provided a delicious parody of the era of Manuel Avila Camacho and the outrageous behavior of this president's brother Maximino, in his novel *Arráncame la vida* (Tear Out My Life). In *Alas de angel* (Angel Wings), David Martín del Campo describes events that occurred under the state governments of Tomás Garrido Canabal, in Tabasco, and Felipe Carrillo Puerto, in Yucatan, as well as the socialist movements of that period. More recent events provide the backdrop to Hernán Lara Zavala's novel *Charras*,⁴ which relates the persecution and assassination of a union leader in Yucatan during the 1970s, and Carlos Montemayor's

Guerra en el paraíso (War in Paradise), a well-documented and courageous novel which describes the guerrilla war headed by local teachers' union leader Lucio Cabañas in the mountains of Guerrero.

"Overall" novels. Among this type of novels are Carlos Fuentes' *Terra nostra*, which provides a long-range historical reflection on Mexico and presents a new viewpoint on the Spanish monarchs who ruled New Spain.⁵ Gerardo Cornejo's novel *Al norte del milenio* (To the North of the Millennium) is a project of similar scope.

These works bear witness to several concerns: objectivity in the description of the events; a complete freedom of structure; the demystification of "heroes" consecrated by the political

system established after the 1910 Revolution; a sharp critique of government systems during each historical period; the denunciation of repressive methods, from Colonial times to the present day; and the possibility of subliminally educating potential readers, who are increasingly demanding this kind of work.

At the end of the 20th century, the historical novel has finally succeeded in sinking roots in Mexican literature. More and more, authors are using historical sources to document the anecdotes of their narratives and to situate their characters in context. They recount our history anew, reevaluating it with the aid of the natural freedoms of the literary art, so as to produce a body of work which may well come to be recognized as the Mexican novelistic genre par excellence of the end of our century ✎

⁴ This is derived from the word *charros* (literally cowboys), used to describe corrupt union officials. (Editor's note.)

⁵ New Spain was the Colonial name for Mexico. (Editor's note.)

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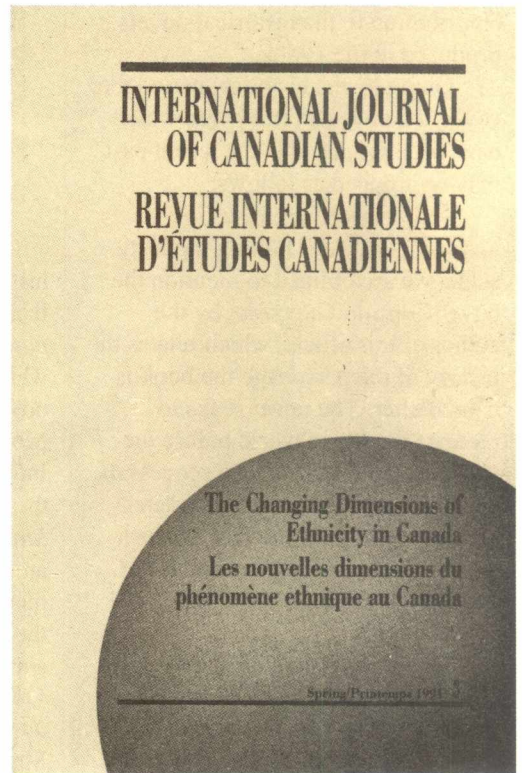
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Mexico in the art of Jean Charlot

*Yohualli de la Villa **

The French artist Jean Charlot, a leading exponent of the Mexican muralist movement, was recently honored in an exhibition, "Mexico in the Work of Jean Charlot," held in the old Colegio de San Ildefonso building, from April 12-June 9.

A man of multiple origins—French, Jewish, Russian and Mexican—Henri Louis Jean Charlot arrived in Mexico in 1921 to lead the "revival of Mexican fresco painting," together with Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, Fermín Revueltas, Ramón Alva de la Canal and Emilio García Cahero.

Charlot came out of France full of energy, and infected Mexico's artistic and cultural milieu with his vitality during the second decade of this century. He discovered the artist José Guadalupe Posada, revived the technique of wood engraving, illustrated poems, books and magazines, wrote outstanding articles on Mexican art, served as artistic

* Writer.



Playing with the Dog, lithograph, 1947.

director of the magazine *Mexican Folkways* and, in 1926, took part in the archaeological restoration of Chichén Itzá. In 1947 he published a seminal work for Mexican art scholars, "The Revival of Mexican Fresco Painting."

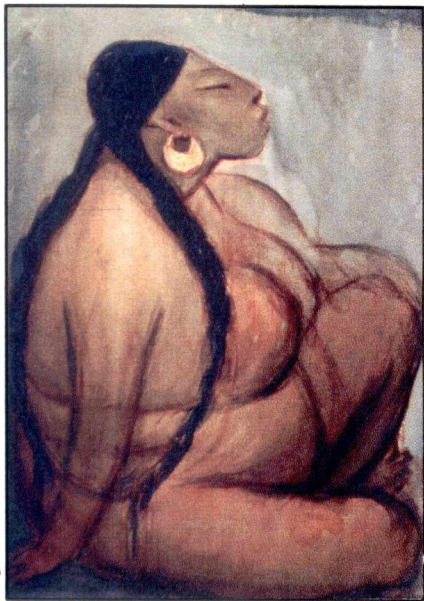
Although he lived in the United States from the forties until his death in 1979, the artist continued to include Mexico in his art. Charlot spent the last three decades of his life in Hawaii, where he perfected his talent as an engraver, book illustrator, critic, sculptor, painter, muralist and teacher.

Charlot produced a total of 70 murals, 30 sculptural projects, 1,500 drawings, 800 graphic works,

countless sketches and paintings on canvas; he wrote 19 books and over 100 articles on art, and illustrated 52 books and magazines.

The exhibition

Sponsored by *UNAM*, the Federal District Department and the National Culture and Arts Council—and with the support of the Honolulu Academy of Arts, the University of Hawaii and the Charlot family—"Mexico in the Work of Jean Charlot" is a historiographical retrospective that covers most of the French painter's artistic development. Over 500 pieces, the majority from public and private collections in New York, San



Sergio Dorantes.

Luz, watercolor, 1927.

Francisco, Los Angeles and Hawaii, reveal the many sides of this multicultural artist.

The exhibition in Charlot's honor was the result of research carried out by the Diego Rivera Museum on Rivera and his contemporaries. This extensive research was coordinated by Blanca Garduño and Milena Koprivitz, who spent two years assiduously compiling material that was either unpublished or unfamiliar to many researchers of the period.

The exhibition is divided into six parts: The French Years, The Mexican Years, Jean Charlot and His Contemporaries, The Art of Book Illustration, Religious Aspects of Jean Charlot's Life, and Hawaii in Charlot's Time, with the aim of showing the different periods in the artist's life and work, from his stay in France, his residence in Mexico, the archaeological trip to the Yucatan and the last three decades of his life in Hawaii. The combination of engravings, books, photographs and personal accounts of the artist reveals Charlot's skill as an engraver, painter, muralist, art researcher, book illustrator and sculptor.

In addition to Mexico City, the exhibition will also be shown at

the Tlaxcala Palace of Culture, from July 29 to October 29, and in the Monterrey Museum from January 17 to March 27, 1995.

Family background

Jean Charlot was born in Paris on February 7, 1898. His grandfather, Louis Goupil, was born in Mexico of a French father and Mexican mother

and was a keen horseback rider, while his uncle, Eugène Goupil, an antique dealer and industrialist, acquired the collection of the Boturini-Aubin codices, with themes, chronicles, histories and maps of pre-Hispanic Mexico, its conquest and the Colonial period.

In addition to these influences, Charlot grew up surrounded by a



Sergio Dorantes.

Kitchen in Red, oil on canvas, 1971.



Massacre at the Templo Mayor, mural painted in the old Colegio de San Ildefonso building, 1922-23.

collection of pre-Hispanic figurines and souvenirs of Mexican origin that his family owned. He was given some ancient pieces of funereal pottery by the French researcher Desirée Charnay as a First Communion present.

Educated at the Lycée Condoret and the École de Beaux Arts in Paris, Charlot won prizes for abstract sculpture and a series of wood engravings on the Viacrucis. During the First World War, he enlisted in the French army and fought as an artillery lieutenant. In 1920, at an art exhibition at the Louvre, he submitted sketches for the murals of a church, which unfortunately were never produced.

Charlot and his mother came to Mexico in January 1921 and were rapidly included in the artistic circles of the day. According to the art critic McVicker, "Charlot was absorbed by Mexicanness and the search for aesthetic and spiritual denominators.... He was so influenced by pre-Columbian art that his painting is still full of it."

The painter Fernando Leal invited Charlot to share his studio at the

School of Outdoor Painting in Coyoacán, where he met the engravers Gabriel Fernández Lezama and Francisco Díaz de León, as well as the sculptor Ignacio Asúnsolo, who introduced him to Rivera. It was there that he met an Indian model who was to have a profound effect on him.

A native of Milpa Alta, Luz Jiménez taught Charlot about the Nahuatl language and the customs of her ancestors.

In 1922, together with Luis Escobar, Xavier Guerrero, Carlos Mérida and Amado de la Cueva, Charlot helped execute Diego Rivera's



Tortilla Maker with Child, color zinc print, 1941.

Sergio Dorantes.



Sergio Dorantes.

Temple of the Warriors II,
oil on canvas, ca. 1934.

composition *The Creation* in the Simón Bolívar Amphitheater. That same year he produced his largest mural painting, *Massacre at the Templo Mayor*, and then painted three murals at the Secretariat of Public Education.

Massacre at the Templo Mayor

In the early '20s, many Mexican artists who had left the country at the beginning of the century began to return. They encountered the social and political changes that the Revolution had produced and which the Minister of Culture, José Vasconcelos, had brought into the field of culture. The work of these artists synthesized what they had learned in Europe with their Mexican roots.

The French immigrant Charlot, who was in the vanguard of European fine arts, carried out his synthesis in the opposite direction. Between 1922 and 1923, he painted *Massacre at the Templo Mayor*¹ on the second floor of the south wall of the stairwell

¹ The Templo Mayor (Great Temple) was built by the Aztecs in the center of their capital city, Tenochtitlán. Today it is one of the most fascinating sites in Mexico City. (Editor's note.)

leading up from the main courtyard of the San Ildefonso building. This mural was the first of those in the Mexican fresco painting movement to be based on a specific historical topic and, because of the technique used, was the first fresco produced since the 16th century.

Charlot's mural was a summing up of the greatest influence of universal art on Mexican fresco painting: the Italian Renaissance. Charlot used Pablo Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* (1456-1460) as a reference for his portrayal of the Spaniards' violence towards the Aztecs during the slaughter carried out at the Templo Mayor under the leadership of Pedro de Alvarado.

Charlot included robotic figures similar to those of Giorgio de Chirico, inserted portraits of his contemporaries, such as the one of Diego Rivera at the bottom of the mural, and—in the style of Renaissance frescos—added a legend taken from the *History of the Indies of New Spain*. He used brass objects to

consequences of the Revolution in her hometown.

A Nahuatl and heir to a legendary tradition, the beautiful Indian woman began selling flowers at the Santa Anita pier in Iztacalco, where one spring she was named the "most beautiful flower in the countryside." Luz was persuaded to pose for art classes at the National Academy and from then onwards her name was linked with artistic and cultural circles in Mexico.

Charlot, who was proud of the Mexican past, was profoundly affected by Luz. She served as an interpreter of indigenous culture, popular customs and traditions of the time, as well as being a superb teller of Indian tales.

The Revolution had frustrated Luz' aim of becoming a teacher. Since childhood she had shown a great ability to learn and proved to be an acute observer of the events that surrounded her. By the time she met Charlot, she spoke Nahuatl, Spanish and a smattering of French.

“Although I have not been able to return to Mexico, it will always hold a special place in my heart”

Jean Charlot

decorate the Indian priests' necklaces and the horses' bridles and harnesses, and also included Expressionist and Abstract Expressionist features.

This work, with its strong vein of social criticism, is not a mere description of events; it also showcases Charlot's great artistic skill.

Luz Jiménez

Luz (1897-1965), whom painters called "Luciana" or "Lucecita" and whose real name was Julia Jiménez, had arrived in Mexico City in the first decade of this century, fleeing the

She became the prototype of the Mexican Indian woman for Charlot—his muse and favorite model, symbol of a people's eternity. Charlot painted Luz in a broad range of popular traditions, as a weaver, a washerwoman, or holding a child or a basket. She also served as an allegory for other works in the variety of techniques that the artist used.

As a result of their fellowship and humanist viewpoint, a close friendship developed between them. This friendship continues to this day between the two families ✎

Orozco in San Ildefonso: the eruption of modernity on the walls of the past

Miguel Angel Bahena P. *

In the old Colegio de San Ildefonso building, Mexican art displays the contemporaneity of its history. By 1922 the conditions had been established for promoting new artistic principles. The triumphant Mexican Revolution needed to express its meaning and values through a new artistic language.

A visionary named José Vasconcelos, then Secretary of Public Education, raised the banner of a new culture in which the collective would become an aesthetic witness to its own history. It was thus that a vast creative force exploded on the walls of the old Jesuit school of San Ildefonso, giving birth to Mexico's most memorable contribution to contemporary world art: muralism.

While there are several reasons why San Ildefonso is a site of extraordinary cultural interest, the works which José Clemente Orozco painted on its walls between 1922 and 1926, at Vasconcelos' invitation, are themselves a visual experience which merits more than one visit.

Among the artists who left their mark on the building, it was Orozco who contributed the largest number of works, 26 in total. Almost all are of exceptional artistic power, satisfying the demands of Vasconcelos' project

to renovate Mexican culture. Always observing the architectural proportions of the building and adapting his compositions to them, Orozco painted the walls of the first, second and third floors, as well as the stairwells of the so-called Big School.

There seems to be a wide range both of themes and of formal means for developing them. Nevertheless, the common thread which ties them together is a meditation uniting history, universal myths, social criticism and daily life into a single whole, whose artistic logic continues to elicit commentary.

In the school's first-floor patio, the artist created unforgettable scenes whose dominant theme is the revolutionary struggle. From left to right one sees the following frescoes: *The Banquet of the Rich*, *The Revolutionary Trinity*, *The Strike*, *The Destruction of the Old Order* and *Motherhood*.

The most famous is undoubtedly *The Trench*, a magnificent fresco in which three men in peasant dress tense their marvelous bodies, without there seeming to be any specific intention to their movements. Framed by a geometric structure, they are



Orozco contributed the largest number of works on San Ildefonso's walls.

* Department of Artistic and Cultural Property, Heritage Office, UNAM.



The Farewell.

only three bodies whose tension reveals the drama of war. Even the figure shown on its knees, defeated, does not lack energy: it possesses a kind of vital failure.

The works of Orozco in San Ildefonso never fail to produce a certain uneasiness in the spectator, perhaps because they are not



The Blessing.

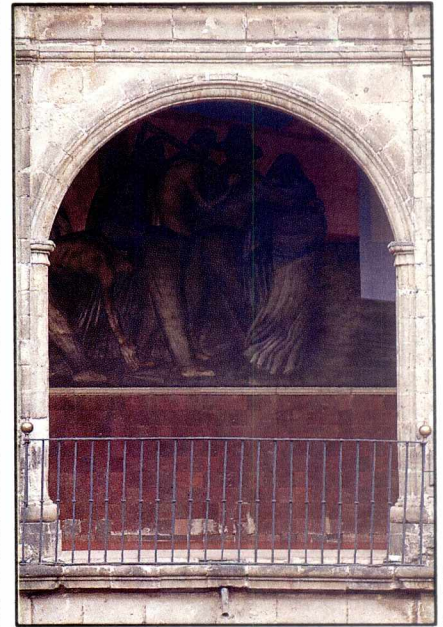
unconditional frescoes for glorification of the revolution's armed struggle. A work like *The Revolutionary Trinity* is far from being an apology of the revolution. Instead, it seems to question the events' meaning as it depicts a soldier with mutilated hands, a weeping peasant on his knees and a worker blinded by the flag which covers his face.

The artist does not consider it necessary to bestow victory, in his painting, to that which had already been triumphant in society itself. Neither does he seek to instruct a supposedly ignorant public about its heroes and their great deeds. His painting is not an ideological reproduction of the existing social triumph. It can be said that, in a certain way, it is the opposite: the hidden side of victory, its tragic dimension, the price paid to obtain it—and that is precisely where Orozco's expressive power resides.

Among the works on the first floor, the fresco called *Motherhood* is an exception to the theme. It is the only mural which has been conserved out of a series of exercises which Orozco originally painted in the school and later erased. Critics have repeatedly pointed out the influence of the Italian Renaissance on the painting, in which the angelic figures of the upper part evoke the weightlessness of Botticelli's figures.

On the walls flanking the entrance to the staircase one observes two frescoes which, although removed from the great themes of the school, are not devoid of virtuosity: *Thirsty Men* and *The Engineers*. Still, Orozco's power returns in the murals in the staircase area devoted to the Conquest: *Cortés and Malinche*, *The Franciscans*, *The Builder-Conquistador* and *Indigenous Races*.

The works on the second floor differ from those on the first, both in style and theme. They tend to be a parody of various social groups' customs. The artist uses the



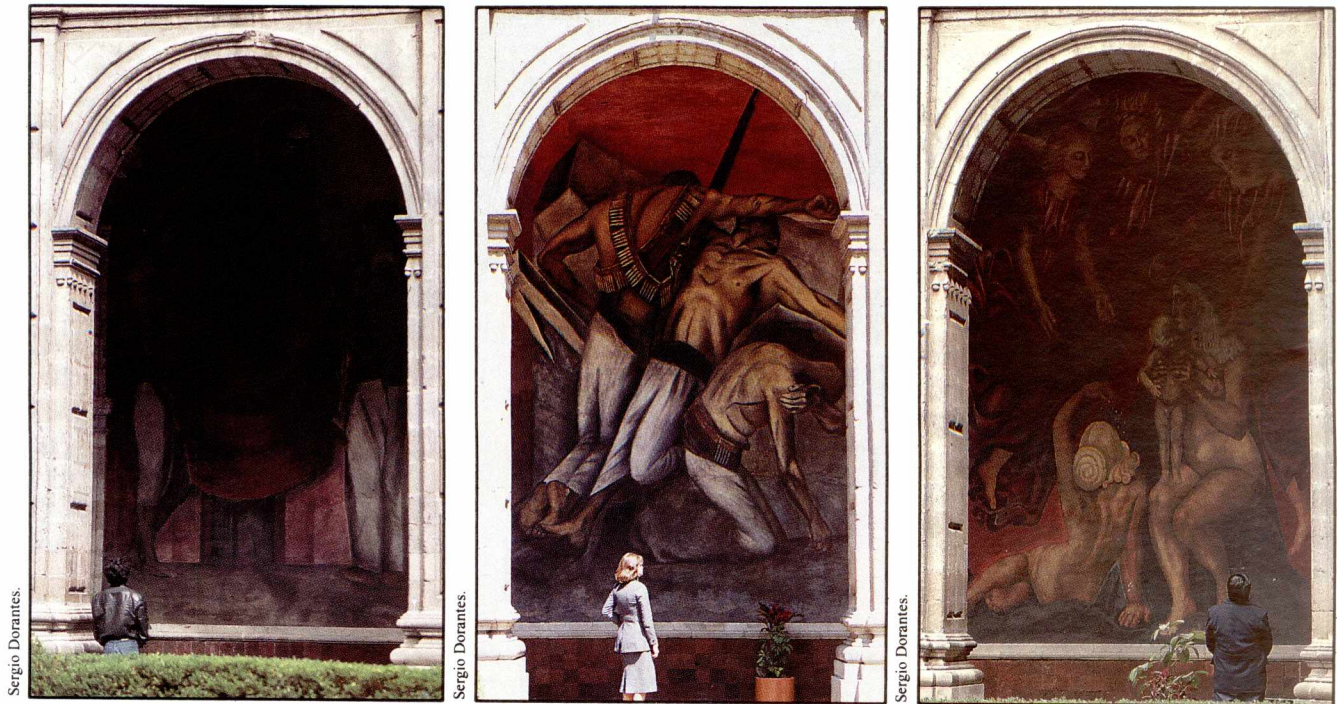
Workers.

exaggerated forms typical of caricature; while in his early works Orozco practiced this genre it would not be entirely accurate to define the works on the second floor as "mural caricatures."

It would be more precise to say that the artist uses the expressive resources of disfiguration in order to put them at the service of painting,



Gravedigger.



The Trench (triptych).

although they do not thereby lose their nature as parody. From left to right, the order of the murals is: *Law and Justice*, *Jehovah Between the Rich and the Poor*, *Liberty*, *The Watchtowers*, *Trash* and *The Rich*.

As is his custom, Orozco does not take sides with any of the social sectors depicted in his work. His mordant wit is aimed equally at the rich and the poor. Beyond parody, the meaning of the frescoes in this section points to a criticism of the ideas, beliefs and idols of modernity. Phrygian caps, scales, swastikas, moneyboxes, chains, skeletons, etc., are used to symbolize the oppression that ideas exercise on the mind of man.

For the painter no concepts are elevated to the status of truth; instead, men are enslaved by these dogmas. Rich and poor appear as grotesque puppets of beliefs, and both are subject to pettiness and vice. The mural entitled *Trash* portrays a mound of abandoned symbolic objects: the dungheap where all ideologies are laid to rest.

The frescoes of the third floor are the following (again from left to right): *Women*, *The Gravedigger*, *The*

Blessing, *Workers*, *The Farewell*, *The Family* and *Revolutionaries*. If the drama inherent in the tragedy of victory predominates in the first-floor murals, while on the second floor the dark criticism of caricature reigns, the theme of the third floor is the pathos of rural life in times of war. The armed struggle does not appear in an obvious manner. The artist shows daily country life, behind the scenes of war.

All the works in this series radiate a luminous serenity, obtained through chromatic contrasts between blues and greys. The figures, less delineated than those of the first floor, blend into the architecture and rural countryside in which they are set, thus creating an ambience of pastoral solitude—a legacy left by those who give their life to the Revolution.

Perhaps Orozco's great theme in San Ildefonso is none other than the sacrifice of a people who get worn out, who tire in the struggle, who abandon their lands and loved ones. A sacrifice which goes beyond the ideology for which they gave themselves to the struggle, and thereby takes on a sacred character.

In symbolic form, the cruciform composition of *The Trench* poses a possible reading on this theme: the three bodies give the impression of being one, in three different times, like photographs which break down the intervals of an action within a single frame.

Thus we see a standing man, another at the moment of falling and a third on the ground in an attitude of defeat. A diagonally-positioned rifle protrudes between the first two figures, setting the axis of the mural's composition, while at the same time it forms the semi-vertical shaft of a cross. The transverse pole of this cross is defined by the imaginary line which runs from the arm of the figure in the middle to the top of the geometric shape of the trench. Thus, the cross and war serve as one and the same artistic metaphor, centered on the sacrifice of a people, in which history and myth constitute two sides of a single coin.

In San Ildefonso, modernity crashes into the walls of the past. And it reconciles itself with the past. Orozco is the main inventor of this synthesis ✎

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The “madness” of Marcos

Fernando Chamizo Guerrero *

Radio UNAM launched the series “Chiapas, Open File” on January 13. The work team, made up of Oscar Oliva, David Vázquez and myself, travelled to Chiapas from March 11 to 19 to interview some of those involved in the conflict. We spent six days in the Lacandon Jungle, where we talked to members of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation’s Clandestine Revolutionary Indian Committee. Subcomandante Marcos made a special effort to address the university radio, and we interviewed him three times, for a total of four and a half hours. Excerpts from the conversation are given below.

- What were the twelve books you brought to the Lacandon Jungle?
- Pablo Neruda’s *Canto general* (General Song), a selection of poems by Miguel Hernández and León Felipe, Julio Cortázar’s *Historia de cronopios y famas* (History of Cronopios and Fame), *Las memorias de Pancho Villa* (The Memoirs of Pancho Villa) by Martín Luis Guzmán and *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. I can’t remember the others.
- What made you choose those books?
- I didn’t really think about it too much. I was told, “You’re going to leave, get your things ready.” I packed some clothes and grabbed the books I had nearest to hand, because they were the ones I read or consulted most often. There were others, but I left those behind. So I threw the books into my bag and brought them with me into the jungle. I left them in the

* Assistant Director of Radio UNAM.

Joaquín Fuentes.



The EZLN taught the country dignity.

“mailboxes” that are like little storehouses we have in the jungle to keep the things we don’t use every day; every so often we go along to check or pick something up. So I used to leave some books there and pick others up, and then I used to swap them around. And that went on for quite a while.

- Do you still have any of that poetry with you today? Do you remember it? Has it given you courage or inspired you?
- What a funny way to start an interview! I particularly recall *Don Quixote* when he ends up saying, “I was sane, I was mad, now I’m sane again” and how, in spite of this, *Quixote* is remembered for his madness. The defeat of madness and the imposition of good sense and

prudence is the saddest part of this book. Yet despite this, people always remember the crazy heroic actions in *Don Quixote*, not the part where he returns to normal life and slips back into conformity. That is what other people and I want to avoid: reaching the point where we say we were crazy and that we will regain our senses again. We think we should hang on to this madness, until the very end.

- And what were your windmills?
- The Mexican Army’s helicopters, which are not exactly windmills and not exactly fictional objects. The Pilatus planes Switzerland’s neutral government sold to Mexico for killing Indians. No, they were very real enemies and they’re still very real. And we obviously used something a little stronger than lances to defend ourselves.

- What became of your generation?
- Fortunately, none of them has a high post in the government or in the Secretariats of State. I think that, in different ways, they have continued to be consistent with their beliefs and what they want to do, or their life plans. It is very satisfying not to find any acquaintances among this country’s great personalities, because they’re the ones who are going to fall very soon. It is also satisfying to know that this other generation, not the generation of change, but the generation of dignity, are the ones who are going to straighten out this country. My generation hasn’t sold out. And it’s not a question of going to the mountains, as we did, but of being consistent with a certain way of thinking. I salute that generation—my generation—for not writing “I was crazy, now I’m sane” and then

knuckling under to the state, to conformity and the intellectual or power elites. I salute their anonymity and raise my ski mask to them. In the final analysis, everyone wears his own ski mask.

- What has the jungle taught you?
- To cultivate hope. The mountain fans the flames of hope, and doesn't let its light go out. That's the fire we lit on January 1 and took to the town halls. There is so much darkness in this country that the little flame we carried gave off a lot of light.
- You gained hope in the jungle; what did you leave behind in the city?
- A subway ticket, a pile of books, a broken pencil and a notebook full of poetry—nothing more. I don't think I left anything else.
- Any friends?
- Quite a few stayed behind.
- Any dead?
- No more than necessary. Sometimes you just need one, sometimes you need more. But no more than that, just the number of dead needed to understand that we had to leave so we could come back different. This time we would come back with no face, name or past, but we would come back for those who had died.
- Do you ever imagine your own death?
- No, I don't want to die. We make the distinction between wanting to die and being prepared to die. People say that the Zapatistas are obsessed with death. It's easy for those in the city to say we're obsessed with death. But the people who live in the jungle have worked out the figures financially showing that it's cheaper to die of a curable illness than to get better. Death plays a different sort of game for us.
- What were your thoughts on December 31?
- I wondered whether the troops would gather. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation is made up of volunteers. It is not enough to say

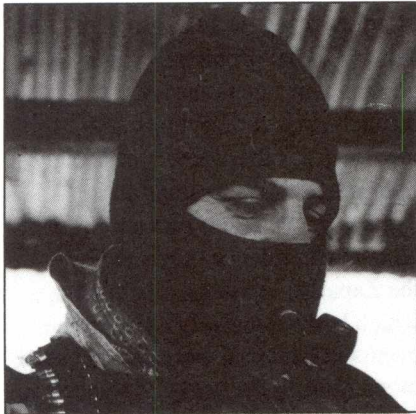
you're going to take the cities. If the troops aren't convinced of what they're going to do, they won't go. That was the gamble—although obviously, deep down, I felt that people would come out and fight with us. Because we had prepared a plan of attack with a certain number of troops and arms. But what if they didn't...? That was my greatest doubt until midnight on December 31. Then I realized we had more troops than we had estimated. Besides, this situation meant a radical change for us. We had spent ten years preparing for this moment.

- What has the EZLN taught the country?
- Dignity. We really insisted on this, because it is a fallacy that Mexicans put up with anything and you can do anything to them and they won't say anything. That's all over. It's no longer as improbable or unlikely to think of a democratic change in our country. But that hope is born of people saying "We've had enough!" That is the lesson taught by those with the least culture, who are the most isolated and have the smallest share in the country. It is a lesson in shame, which the Indians have taught the rest of the country.

- Why has the Mexican government found it so easy to doubt the Zapatista Army's authenticity?
- Because the only way to back up your own hypocrisy is to look for it in others. There is also a tendency to adopt a European anthropological criterion that doubts the Indians' abilities. They say that Indians are incapable of having a sense of national awareness, cannot be concerned about the lack of democracy and are unintelligent. State intellectuals are the ones who doubt the EZLN's authenticity and wonder whether we are being financed by some faction of the government or by foreigners. But these doubts don't affect us. We are betting on the peasants, students and housewives, those who have nothing and who are eventually going to sway the balance. They don't ask where we come from but where we're going. They want to look us straight in the eyes, ski masks and all.
- Why have you been asked to remove your ski mask?
- The government has to strike somehow. They think I'm hiding my face, not because I'm honest or because I really don't want to be a *caudillo*, but because I'm hiding something from my past. So they want



Subcomandante Marcos made a special effort to address the university radio.



Joaquín Fuentes.

I hide my face because I don't want to be a caudillo.

to destroy the myth of Marcos, just as they wanted to destroy the myth of poverty. Sometimes I make a joke that when they learn who I am and find out about my background and *résumé*, they're going to ask me to keep my ski mask on.

- What have been the EZLN's greatest successes?
- Managing to convince the country of three things: that the movement is Mexican; that the reasons behind our uprising are just—in other words, we're not involved with drug trafficking or one government sector trying to go after another; and that our demands are national, not local.
- What about the EZLN's failures?
- We've had some military failures. For us, having people die when it could have been avoided constitutes a military failure. In Ocosingo and Rancho Nuevo we made mistakes that we paid for with our *compañeros'* lives. In the retreats at Altamirano and Las Margaritas we also made mistakes that led to the deaths of some Zapatistas and the imprisonment of others. Our political failure lay in not foreseeing clearly enough that we would move quickly from the military to the political stage. We calculated that this stage would take a long time; our initial reaction was hesitant and we lost a sense of balance in some aspects. We were not prepared.
- Does the EZLN now intend to have a political arm?

- As I said, we had originally thought there would be a long war. The Clandestine Revolutionary Indian Committee is analyzing the possibility, but we haven't given it much thought because the signals we're picking up are war signals, not ones that give priority to politics. The government has gone on kidnapping, assassinating and carrying out provocations.
- Some analysts fear a coup d'état. Do you think that is a possible scenario?
- Yes, certainly. But it would be counterproductive for the system itself. A coup d'état could not be sustained for long, given the current political effervescence.
- So would a transition government be closer?
- If only it were! If only it were. If a transition government is not close, then what is going to be close is a civil war. I can't see any other way to solve

the problems, not only in Chiapas but all over the country. A transition government could emerge on August 21. That would seem to be the most logical option.

- What would be the risks if the government only accepted the Zapatistas' demands in the Chiapas area and not for the rest of the country?
- That the peace talks would fail. The problem is that the government thinks, as some sectors of the media do, that it is dealing with a force that has only taken up arms because of immediate demands. We are not going to relinquish national demands, however attractive local concessions may be. We are militarily a local army, in appearance, but one whose will, demands and aspirations are national—even though we are holed up in the jungle. We don't want anything for ourselves, we want everything for everyone. ✎



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LA ESTADÍSTICA ECONÓMICA EN MÉXICO. Los Orígenes

Sergio DE LA PEÑA y James WILKIE

Aún si la mayoría de quienes estudian a México consideran que solamente ha sufrido el país una gran reforma agraria (la que fragmentó las haciendas o las grandes propiedades a partir de 1910 para crear la parcela comunal), el argumento que se sostiene en este trabajo es que han sido tres reformas agrarias de grandes dimensiones, cada una con la intención de redistribuir la tierra y auspiciar modelos diferentes de propiedad agrícola y de producción.

economía

COMPETENCIA Y CRISIS EN LA ECONOMÍA MEXICANA

Etelberto ORTÍZ

Este trabajo permite un cuestionamiento sobre los diversos enfoques que se han realizado acerca de la crisis en México. El autor ofrece así una vinculación esencial entre las teorías de la competencia y de la crisis formuladas por Marx, que hoy en día es necesario revisar para desarrollar una nueva capacidad de respuesta frente a los embates del neoliberalismo, que se identifica si se piensa en "El capital" de Marx, como un proceso de investigación inconcluso que requiere de trabajo fresco.

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Beyond the truce

The Indian and peasant armed movement that began in Chiapas on January 1 received an unusual response from the federal government, in terms of the rapidity with which a truce was negotiated and talks were begun in order to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict. According to information provided by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), which organized the uprising, it took ten years of organization and training of members before they decided to take the armed road as a means of having their demands heard. In his first declarations, the movement's spokesman Subcomandante Marcos indicated that the Indians were prepared for a prolonged war.

However, within twelve days the Zapatistas agreed to a dialogue with the federal government. With the support of broad sections of Mexican society they reached an armed truce with the army and federal government; after forty days of contact with Manuel Camacho Solís (the Peace Commissioner named by President Carlos Salinas) and the mediator Samuel Ruiz (bishop of the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas), negotiations started. One and a half weeks later, the negotiators made public the document "Agreements for Peace,"¹ whose 34 points answer each of the Zapatista demands put forward in the "Manifiesto of the Lacandon Jungle."²

¹ See "Chronicle of a conflict foretold," *Voices* 27 (April-June 1994), pp. 72-92.

² According to some political analysts, the document defines an "alternative project for the country," since it proposes not only to rescue the Indians and peasants of Chiapas from neglect and long-standing discrimination, but also to broaden spaces for democratic participation by all of society's members and to satisfy the needs

On March 17, at the end of what is known as the first phase of negotiations, the delegates of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indian Committee (CCRI)/General Command of the EZLN returned to their communities to begin the phase of explanation, consultation and —perhaps— approval of the contents of the document. But new actors had arrived on the scene and the attainment of an "honorable peace" still seems a distant goal.

Chiapas goes on the back burner

Two events at the national level displaced the conflict in Chiapas: the assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, on March 23; and the reactivation of political campaigns—which had been overshadowed both by the conflict in Chiapas and the Colosio assassination— of the various parties' candidates, looking toward the August 21 presidential elections.

The holding of a public debate on May 12—for the first time in the history of electoral processes in Mexico— between the candidates of the three principal political forces in the country (PRI, PAN and PRD) dominated the front pages of all the press.

The assassination of Colosio, which has yet to be clarified, provoked a new outbreak of criticism

of those sectors of Mexican society most adversely affected by the "neo-liberal" economic model promoted by President Salinas. Nevertheless, according to Julio Moguel, the document is only the "beginning of a dialogue," given that it contains gaps and omissions, ambiguities and examples of imprecision, as well as juridical contradictions which would have to be clarified before it could be approved definitively (*La Jornada*, March 18).

of armed struggle as a means of solving social problems. Some government functionaries, businessmen, intellectuals and members of other sectors of society interpreted the assassination in Tijuana as the result of a nation-wide climate of violence provoked by the Zapatista uprising. The media, which had extensively covered the events in Chiapas, were also accused of supporting the use of violence as a way to find answers to unsatisfied demands.³

Despite the fact that EZLN spokesmen issued a communiqué condemning the assassination and denying all involvement in the events,⁴ there was little they could do to stop the hostile reaction of a section of public opinion toward their movement. One day after the events in Tijuana, the EZLN announced the suspension of its consultations in Indian communities, declaring that their troops had been put on "red alert" in anticipation of a possible army offensive against them.

The death of Colosio affected the credibility not only of the Zapatistas but also of Manuel Camacho Solís, one of the key players in the negotiation process. Camacho, who had been one of the main contenders for the PRI's presidential nomination, did not hide his anger when Colosio was nominated last November. In response he resigned as mayor of Mexico City, a post he had

³ The main targets of these attacks were the national dailies *La Jornada* and *El Financiero*, the Chiapas newspaper *El Tiempo* and the national weekly newsmagazine *Proceso*.

⁴ In one of three communiqués on the assassination issued by the EZLN, the Zapatistas charged that it had been a provocation plotted by hard-line members of the government. They also expressed their recognition for the prudent and respectful attitude Colosio had demonstrated toward their movement, and the commitments he had made in relation to the struggle for a peaceful transition of Mexico toward democracy (*La Jornada*, March 26).

occupied since the beginning of President Salinas' administration. His appointment as Secretary of Foreign Relations was interpreted as the prelude to exile for not having accepted the rules of the sexennial *destape*.⁵

However, when the conflict in Chiapas exploded, Camacho was designated Commissioner for Peace and Reconciliation and reemerged politically. From that moment on, the PRI's presidential campaign was shadowed by rumors that Colosio might "abdicate" the candidacy and be replaced by Camacho. The Peace Commissioner maintained silence, avoiding public statements on these rumors until exactly one day before the murder of Colosio, when he declared his commitment to peace was more important than his political aspirations. His declarations brought sighs of relief from PRI members—above all the Colosio campaign team, who for the first time saw a clear path for their presidential candidate to capture voters' attention.

With the death of the PRI candidate one day later, Camacho was the target of multiple attacks by sectors of public opinion and Colosio's followers. These attacks affected his work in Chiapas. In statements to the press on April 10, he indicated that it was essential that the EZLN reinstate the process of consultation in their communities, given the risk of losing what had been obtained during the first stage of negotiations (*La Jornada*, April 12).

Almost a month later—on May 4—Camacho and Ruiz, along with some of their collaborators, went into the jungle to reopen talks with members of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indian Committee. They were only able to attain agreement among the negotiating parties to "maintain communication" over the

following weeks; the possibility of beginning the second phase of dialogue remained up in the air.⁶

An additional obstacle has been the campaign of aggression aimed at Bishop Samuel Ruiz, accompanied by attempts to discredit him. This campaign was begun by the cattle ranchers, landowners and members of *Coletos*⁷ society in San Cristóbal de las Casas. According to these groups, Ruiz has acted against his religious obligations by supporting the rebels. In response, Camacho has called the bishop's work as mediator indispensable.

On another front, the debate between Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Diego Fernández de Cevallos and Ernesto Zedillo—presidential candidates of the PRD, PAN and PRI, respectively—distracted attention from the events in Chiapas once again. The event was hailed as a step forward—above all a non-violent one—toward the construction of democracy in our country. Camacho himself told the press that Chiapas moved to second place in light of the historic meeting between the candidates. He declared that "Chiapas is no longer the main political topic in the country; it is an important topic, and what follows will have an impact on Mexico's political life for years to come, but it is not the topic it once was.... The main topic now is the governability of the country... that is, a democratic government" (*La Jornada*, May 12).⁸

⁶ Alejandro Ramos maintains that the work of pacification in Chiapas has accelerated, due to internal and external pressures generated by the August 21 elections, now that the Zapatistas have declared that clean elections will help the peace process. According to Ramos, the choice in the political terrain is clear: to advance towards a democratic transition through a peaceful solution to the conflict, or to fall back on the military solution, as demanded by some sectors both within and outside of the government (*El Financiero*, 8 May).

⁷ "Coletos" is a term for people born in the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas.

New players, old conflicts

While at the national level attention was drawn to other issues, in Chiapas chaos and uncertainty have been provoked by the suspension of dialogue and delay in reinitiating peace talks. The state is plagued by violence: assassinations, clashes between groups of peasants, attacks by ranchers against Indians, land takeovers, sackings, expulsions for political/religious reasons, the seizure of municipal buildings, incidents involving the army, hunger strikes and a rise in common crime are the order of the day.

According to data collected by *Proceso* (May 2), between January 1 and March 31, 228 evangelical Protestant Indians were expelled from the town of San Juan Chamula, while 20 peasants were murdered in several municipalities of the Los Altos region. Involved in these events were soldiers, municipal police, cattle ranchers, peasant groups in conflict with each other, and unidentified masked individuals.

⁸ It is noteworthy that, despite the Zapatistas' declarations that they would remain outside the electoral process, a few hours before the debate was held the EZLN sent an invitation to PRD candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas to visit them in the Chiapas jungle. This contrasts with the refusal to receive candidates of other, minor parties who had expressed the desire to meet with them. The meeting was held on May 16, attended by Cárdenas together with some members of his campaign team and of the PRD leadership. The EZLN did not, as had been expected, give the PRD a "blank check" of support. Instead it severely criticized the party's methods for choosing candidates; Subcomandante Marcos said the PRD unfortunately reproduces some of the worst vices of the official party (PRI). Nevertheless, the Zapatistas noted that they differentiate between the candidate and his party and avoided blaming Cárdenas directly for the problems they criticized. They also stated they would support him if he guaranteed that he would put forward genuinely democratic, alternative proposals and refrain from making empty promises.

⁵ See "Chronicle of a conflict foretold..." *op. cit.*, and "How presidential succession works in Mexico," *Voices of Mexico* 26 (January-March 1994), pp. 75-81.

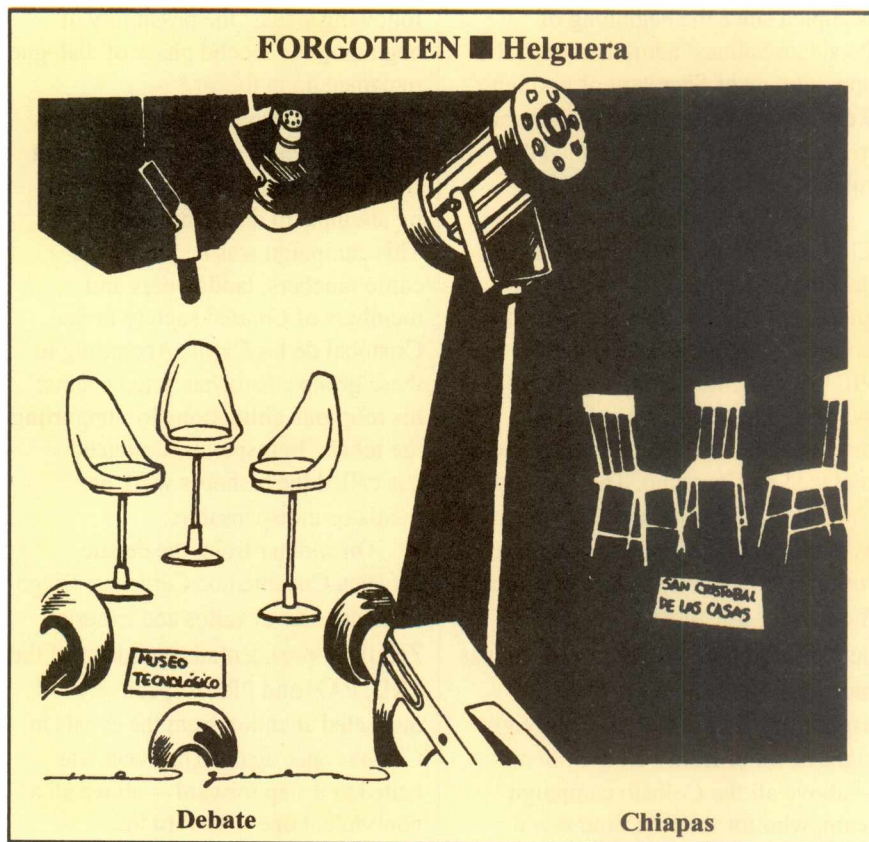
In April two children were burned to death in the town of Oxchuc when persons unknown set fire to their home. Five more peasants were killed in an ambush on lands belonging to a family peasants accuse of being the region's *caciques* (local bosses). Meanwhile, in Mitontic the bodies of nine members of a family—including several minors—were found; the Justice department claims they were killed due to problems related to supposed Satan-worship. Three of the bodies had been decapitated, included that of a baby less than a year old.

For their part, Chiapas cattle ranchers have been involved in acts of violence against peasants. One assassinated a local leader of the EZLN. While it was reported that the Zapatistas kidnapped two members of the rancher's family in retaliation, these individuals later showed up safe and sound.

On April 15, an attack on a military post at the entrance to Tuxtla Gutiérrez, by unknown persons in civilian dress, raised fears that the army-EZLN truce might be broken. Peace Commissioner Camacho urged the Zapatistas to make a statement of their position on the events. The EZLN responded with a communiqué stating that it had no troops in the area and denying any connection with the attack. Unofficial and unconfirmed reports mention another armed group as responsible for the attack: the Clandestine Workers Revolutionary Party/Union of the People (PROCUP).

In terms of local politics the Zapatista rebellion highlighted many communities' rejection of their official representatives. Peasant organizations, members of political parties (including some PRI members) and groups of dissatisfied citizens took over town halls and carried out demonstrations demanding the removal of mayors accused of corruption, *caciquismo*, abuse of power and embezzlement.

Land seizures seem to have been one of the elements leading to a



deepening of the conflict which threatens peace talks. In the months following the outbreak of the armed uprising, and even after the first phase of the peace negotiations was concluded, peasants from several organizations (whether Zapatista or non-Zapatista) have invaded more than 100 properties, confiscated cattle, and demand that the federal and state governments buy the properties for their use.

Ranchers and landowners have responded by threatening to violently dislodge the peasant groups, if the authorities do not take action. On April 19 President Carlos Salinas received a delegation of cattle ranchers, promising to give them a legal response that would put a stop to land seizures. In line with this, two properties were ordered vacated on April 27, leading to the arrest of more than 60 peasants. Nevertheless, the problem continues to exist and takeovers are still occurring.

Several hunger strikes have also taken place in the state. In April, 21

prisoners accused of being Zapatistas fasted for 18 days to protest their unjustified imprisonment. Subcomandante Marcos himself publicly declared that the prisoners were not members of his organization. Sixteen of them were released at the recommendation of the National Human Rights Commission, but they are now asking to be given some kind of aid, since they have no jobs and are rejected in their communities. There were also hunger strikes by groups of technical and secondary-school teachers, as well as members of the local PRD.

In light of these events, interim Governor Javier López Moreno's efforts at conciliation would seem to be insufficient: the new Electoral Reform law, the agreements for land rental and purchase, the review of cases and legal prohibition of expulsions for political and religious reasons—as well as promises of unconditional support for the peace negotiations—have not produced the desired results.

On top of this came the recent nomination of Senator Eduardo Robledo Rincón as the PRI's candidate for governor of Chiapas. Some political analysts have noted that his candidacy is little different from the traditional "dedazo" (nomination by decision of the president or the party tops, without rank-and-file participation), and this has led to questions regarding the state and federal governments' commitment to democratization.⁹

In Chiapas, provocation is the order of the day. Neglecting the importance of a peaceful solution—and one which comes as rapidly as possible—could lead to a new outbreak of even more serious violence, since the number of participants in the events has increased, and the conflicts among them would seem difficult to reconcile. Although many would like to deny it, the fate of Mexico continues to depend in large measure on what happens in Chiapas.

Crisis in peace talks

After a consultation process that took more than three months and involved all the inhabitants of the areas controlled by the EZLN, the

⁹ According to Carlos Ramírez, Robledo Rincón would seem to have little to recommend him as a candidate, given that he collaborated with two former governors who have been accused of corruption and abuse of power. He was private secretary to Absalón Castellanos—who was seized by the EZLN, which gave the ex-governor a military trial and found him guilty of the offenses he had been accused of, only to free him as a result of mediation efforts by Samuel Ruiz and Manuel Camacho. Robledo Rincón was also president of the state PRI during the governorship of Patrocinio González Garrido, who at the outbreak of the EZLN rebellion was Secretary of the Interior (Gobernación), responsible for national security, but resigned his post as a result of the uprising. González Garrido supported the nomination of Robledo Rincón for the post of Chiapas governor (*El Financiero*, May 5).

Clandestine Revolutionary Indian Committee/EZLN General Command declared that the federal government's peace proposal had been rejected by majority vote. In four communiqués dated June 10, the EZLN reported the following:

1. The results of the vote: 97.88 percent voted NO to signing the proposed accord, against 2.11 percent voting YES. At the same time, only 3.6 percent voted in favor of renewing hostilities, while 96.74 percent voted to maintain resistance and call for a new national dialogue with the country's honest and independent forces, focusing on issues of democracy, freedom and justice.
2. The rebels ordered their regular and irregular forces, both within Mexico and abroad, to unilaterally extend the ceasefire, so as to continue the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict and avoid interfering with the August 21 elections. In line with this the EZLN will allow voting booths to be installed in the areas it controls, under the supervision of non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.
3. That the EZLN will not accept aid from the federal, state or municipal governments, and will resist the army's encirclement by its own means and with the aid of the Mexican people.

After expressing thanks to Samuel Ruiz for his assistance as mediator and to Manuel Camacho for his efforts as peace commissioner, the EZLN declared that the dialogue begun in San Cristóbal de las Casas had come to an end.

The Zapatistas explain that their decision is due to the fact that the document *Agreements for a Just Peace in Chiapas* does not give a satisfactory answer to their national as well as local demands, stressing the

government's refusal to recognize the EZLN as a belligerent force. They also repeat their demand that clean, democratic elections be held with the participation of the forces of "civil society." They end by warning that they will not surrender under any circumstances.

Two days later, Manuel Camacho held a press conference to report the federal government's response. He emphasized that:

1. On President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's instructions, the Federal Army will maintain a unilateral freeze on all offensive military action, while troop deployment will be maintained in the area in order to prevent the movement of arms and explosives.
2. The federal government will go ahead with the commitments set forth in the document rejected by the EZLN, applying the document's points in communities not involved in the conflict, while the state government will participate in those forums for dialogue and negotiation which fall within its purview. The mediation of Samuel Ruiz was requested for issues relating to the EZLN.

Commenting on the Zapatistas' demand to be recognized as a belligerent force, Camacho explained that "it would be completely unacceptable to give the EZLN the juridical status of a belligerent force, since this would call into question our national sovereignty and the integrity of our territory, providing the basis for the interference of international forces in Mexico's internal affairs."

As we go to press

On June 16 Camacho resigned as peace commissioner, in response to criticism by PRI presidential candidate Ernesto Zedillo ✎

Elsie L. Montiel
Assistant Editor.

The Maya world in movement

Fulvio Eccardi *
César Carrillo T. **

Demanding a stop to the “plundering of our natural wealth,” hundreds of Indians of Maya descent —Tzotzils, Tzeltals, Chols and Tojolabals— rose up in arms against the Mexican government in the early morning of January 1. The Indian uprising took place in Chiapas, one of the states with the greatest natural wealth and highest index of poverty in the country, and revealed the poverty, oppression and lack of prospects experienced by the inhabitants of one of the last remaining tropical forest zones in Mexico: the Lacandon jungle.

The burning of the Cattle Ranchers' Union building in Ocosingo, one of the most important towns in the Lacandon area, is significant. Inhabitants of the Mexican tropics have suffered the advance of extensive cattle raising, seen how the tropical forest is shrinking and watched their lands and most elementary rights dwindle away.

The Indian peoples of Chiapas have experienced the exploitation of their resources as virtual onlookers for centuries. In the words of Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), “Chiapas has been bleeding to death in a thousand different ways,

paying its tribute to the empires: oil, electricity, cattle, money, coffee, bananas, honey, corn, cocoa, tobacco, sugar, soya, sorghum, melon, mamey fruit, mango, tamarind and avocado, and Chiapas' blood flows through the thousand and one fangs embedded in the throat of the Mexican southeast.”

Chiapas, for example, generates 55% of Mexico's hydroelectric power and is the country's main coffee producer.

Original sin

The tremendous destruction suffered by tropical lands can be attributed to a sort of original sin: the birth of Western civilization in a temperate zone and its expansion to the rest of the world.

The Europeans conquered much of the globe, imposing their way of life and with it their form of using natural resources. When the Spaniards came to the New World, they sought the regions that most resembled their homeland to settle in and recreate their methods of production and cultivation.

Already on his second voyage, Columbus brought plants and animals to America for this purpose.

The Spanish conquerors regarded the luxuriant American tropics as terrifying places, alive with insects, predatory animals and unknown plants whose uses they were ignorant of, and which were therefore nothing more than obstacles for sowing wheat and raising cattle. It was a hostile environment that had to be “conquered” to make it fit for civilization.

Likewise, its inhabitants were regarded as “savages,” souls that had to be rescued and whose knowledge of the environment did not warrant the slightest interest in the conquerors' eyes, except in a very few cases.

Time stands still

The situation has changed very little in this region since the Spaniards' arrival. The Lacandon jungle was inhabited by a non-Maya group, whom the newcomers called *Lacandon* after the name of their main ceremonial center, Lacam Tun. The colonial authorities settled in the high area, with its temperate climate, and there they founded Ciudad Real —now San Cristóbal de las Casas— whence they controlled the entire region.

It was not easy for the Spaniards to subject the Indian peoples of Los Altos, still less the Lacandons, the “disobedient Indians” whom they exterminated. After this, the Lacandon region lay uninhabited for more than a century until, in the early 19th century, a small group of Maya

The recent Indian revolt in Chiapas has highlighted the need for a change in the way natural resources are used in tropical zones. Some alternatives are beginning to emerge from the experiences of groups of organized peasants in the nearby state of Quintana Roo.

* Biologist and photographer whose photos have appeared in *National Geographic*, *International Wildlife* and *Airone*.

** Biologist, writer and editor of *UNAM's Ciencias* magazine.

Caribbean Indians migrated to the jungle from the Yucatan peninsula. These are the present-day Lacandons.

The subsequent history of this region is not very different from that of the rest of the wet tropics: irrational extraction of precious woods, opening up to settlements and the establishment of extensive cattle raising, with the deterioration that this type of production entails.

One of the special features of the Lacandon area is the fact that, due to the region's inaccessibility, the extraction of cedar and mahogany did not start until 1860, almost a century after it began in the Antilles. This, however, did not prevent the exploitation of timber from reaching a level similar to that of other regions by the beginning of this century.

Another particular feature has been the persistent exploitation of the Indians in the Los Altos region of Chiapas and the Lacandon area since the installation of the first logging companies to extract wood from the jungle. In *The Rebellion of the Hanged*, Bruno Traven described the inhuman working conditions of the Los Altos Indians and the despicable way they were inveigled into working there.

The complicity between political authorities, the army and the leading families in Chiapas is revealed by this writer of German origin, whose knowledge and descriptions of this region of Mexico are superb.

The 1917 Revolution, the optimistic movement with which Traven's novel ends, did very little to change the conditions of exploitation. Although the properties of several landowners in Porfirio Díaz' time were gradually expropriated, land still tended to be accumulated and the concentration of political power remained intact, as did discrimination against the Indian peoples. The result is that five hundred years after the Conquest, the prevailing situation in Chiapas has a strongly Colonial feel, as though time had stood still in this part of the country.



Fulvio Eccardi.

Living in ecosystems as complex as the tropical jungle requires knowledge of how they work.

Tropical civilizations

The Lacandon jungle in Chiapas is part of the area known as the Gran Petén, now the second largest area of evergreen forest in the American continent, after the Amazon. And it is in this region, which covers part of Belize, Mexico and Guatemala, that the Maya civilization originated and flourished during its first period, reaching population densities of 750-1000 inhabitants per square mile.

Living in ecosystems as complex as the tropical jungle requires a great deal of knowledge of how they work. The Maya inhabited this land for almost ten centuries thanks to a refined system of water management and the construction of terraces and ridges that enabled them to handle excess water and the flooding it causes in thin soil.

They encouraged the profusion of the most useful plants, managing to grow over one hundred species in a small area. By taking care of the areas of vegetation during their regeneration, they allowed the soil to recover while providing shelter for the white-tailed deer, one of the main sources of protein. They developed a system for handling multiple resources, in keeping with a diverse ecosystem that was little suited to one-crop farming.

The veneration and respect with which they regarded nature, in contrast with the Conquistadors' destructive spirit, can still be seen in a prayer, recorded by the archaeologist E.J. Thompson, that present-day Maya offer before clearing the land to sow corn:

*Oh God, my father, my mother,
lord of the hills and the valleys,
spirit of the jungle, treat me well! I
shall do as I have always done. I
shall make you an offering so you
know I shall not harm your heart.
Allow me to do so. I shall disfigure
you (destroy your beauty) and
plow you to be able to make a
living. Let no animal chase me, no
serpent, scorpion, nor wasp bite
me. Let no tree fall on me (when I
cut it down) and let no axe nor
machete cut me. I am going to
plow you with all my heart.*

Descendants of this civilization, the Indians of the Lacandon jungle have produced several initiatives for managing their resources. Coffee growers' unions, credit unions and *ejido* (a form of community land tenure) unions, as well as health and education councils, have sprung up in this area. However, this desire for improvement was not enough in the

A bit of history

History tells us that in the 19th century the American James Adams, who was introduced to gum by Mexican President Santa Anna, had the idea of introducing little balls of gum with flavoring and sugar to the U.S. market. It was an immediate success. Chewing gum became extremely popular. During World War II U.S. soldiers spread the use of gum to all corners of the globe.

At the end of the war, synthetic petrochemical substitutes were discovered. Gum extraction plummeted and only a few companies continued to produce natural gum. However, the demand for natural products in recent years has revived interest in natural gum.

"Natural gum has synergism," says Giuseppe Sozzi, director of Gum Base Co., a leading Italian chewing-gum company, "that makes added flavors longer-lasting. Natural gum is like first-class steak."

It is not known for certain whether the ancient Maya chewed gum, but the Aztecs did. Women and young men chewed gum in private to clean their teeth, while prostitutes and homosexuals chewed it in public, "making loud, clicking noises" to announce their presence.

face of the conditions of marginalization and market difficulties such as the international fall in the price of coffee.

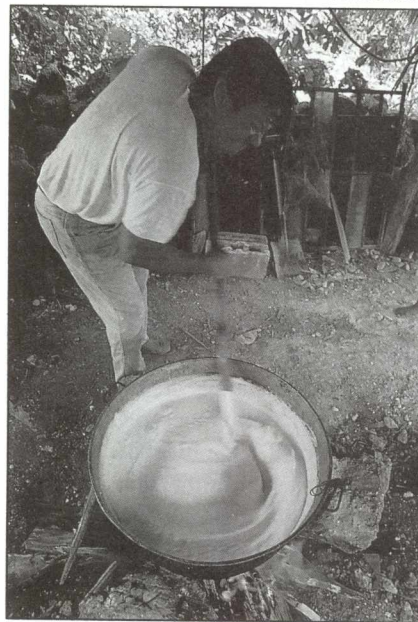
In addition, some orthodox conservationist groups blamed the inhabitants of the jungle for its destruction. The regional organizations' response summarizes their concern: "A true jungle conservation policy should be based on regarding the peasants who inhabit the Lacandon jungle not as destructive animals but as creative people who are not only capable of preserving the jungle but also of making it productive."

As a result of this concern, in September 1993 a forum of peasant organizations was held in San Cristóbal de las Casas. The final declaration speaks for itself: "It is necessary to recognize the importance of the knowledge historically acquired by the Maya culture in order to be able to live in the jungle, by using natural resources adequately for several thousands of years, and to invite the inhabitants of this region to recover the valuable experience of sustained development acquired by their ancestors and other ancient cultures in the world's wet tropical zones. This recognition will serve as proof of the tolerance of diversity and enrich the national culture."

The Maya world in movement

In another area of this same Maya world, dozens of *ejidos* have pointed out new alternatives for the sustained use of natural resources. The states of Quintana Roo and Campeche, part of the zone that covered the second period of Maya civilization and with a history similar to that of Chiapas—the extraction of fine woods to supply the European market and later gum to supply the U.S. army, which regarded the latter as a strategic material—have been the setting for these novel experiences.

Fulvio Eccardi.



Stirring the latex.

"We take an interest in looking after the jungle. My grandfather was a gum collector and so was my father, and I've gone on collecting gum here, in the same place," said El Piporro, as we walked through the jungle of the community called Tres Garantías, in the south of Quintana Roo. "We have 110,000 acres of land here. Over half of it is jungle, which is what we call the permanent forestry reserve. Here no one is allowed to raise cattle or plant crops. We extract gum and wood, but you have to know how to do that."

Unlike Chiapas, in this part of the Yucatan peninsula, ownership and exploitation of the forest is in the hands of the peasants themselves, and each community has a clearly-defined forest area. This situation has raised the peasants' awareness, as Piporro himself states: "We know that the forest could disappear, which is why we have to look after it."

There is a story behind this way of looking at things. When foreign companies unlawfully held the concession for these woods, peasants were contracted as day workers and paid a pitiful sum for cutting down trees and extracting gum.

These companies were never concerned about preserving the jungle. They never replanted a single tree nor respected the time allotted for letting the gum trees recover. Herman

Konrad, a Canadian researcher who has studied the history of the region for several decades, calculates that during that period, in the state of Campeche, 20% of the trees never recovered. This meant nearly a million dead trees in 1929 and 1930.

During the '30s, the concessions for these forests were withdrawn from foreign companies and their tenure transferred to local companies. This measure had an immediate beneficial effect on the peasants' standard of living, since income from the sale of gum rose 300% and small settlements were formed that concentrated the population in specific areas. This permitted the introduction of services such as water, schools and sanitary brigades.

Within a few years, the communities were responsible for all gum production and this gave rise to the first producers' cooperative.

Deciding about their own resources

The situation did not change much as regards the extraction of wood, since foreign companies were replaced by private local and state companies.

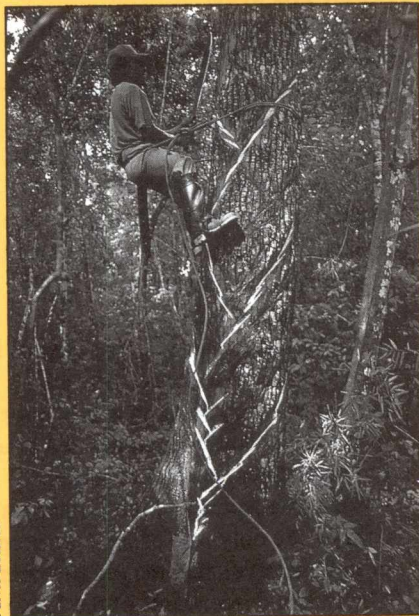
The qualitative change took place just over a decade ago when the concessions ran out and the communities took over the management of the forests. With the support of enthusiastic forestry technicians, *ejido* members began the first inventories of their resources as the basis for a planned exploitation of the jungle. This led to the Pilot

Forestry Plan, begun with financing from the state government as well as the government of Germany.

A key aspect has been the training of forestry technicians from the communities themselves, which has given them a greater ability to intervene in policy-making. "We have divided the forestry area of our *ejido* into 25 lots," says Francisco Montalvo of the Noh Bec *ejido*. "We know how many trees there are in each one, and what type and size they are. Every year, we only cut down trees from one lot."

A forest inventory enables one to estimate the volume that can be used in each logging cycle. At the same time, work has begun on growth studies of the most important species

An amorous tree



Fulvio Eccardi.

Gum collectors make a zigzag cut to obtain the latex.

"The chewing-gum tree is a very choosy lover, it doesn't offer its gum to just any man," says Don Esteban, a gum collector for more than forty years. Chicle or chewing-gum tree (*Manilkara achras*, formerly *Achras sapota*) is the name given to the tree from which gum is extracted. Native to the Yucatan peninsula, Belize and Petén, Guatemala, it is one of the most common species in these jungles. In some areas, it is possible to find more than seventy-five trees per acre, with some growing to a height of more than 130 feet, with diameters of over 3 feet.

Harvest time coincides with the rainy season, beginning in July and ending in February. The gum collectors use a sharp knife to make a zigzag cut from the base of the trunk to its first branches. The latex flows down these channels and is collected in a hemp bag. "Gum is very tricky. If you've got hot hands, it doesn't flow," warns Don Esteban.

At the end of the day, the latex is collected from the bags, filtered and boiled in large shallow metal pans, where it has to be stirred constantly. The moisture gradually evaporates and the mixture grows sticky until it is finally cooked. Once it has cooled, it is poured into wooden molds covered in soap to prevent sticking. The resulting bricks are known as cakes. Each gum collector puts his initials on the cakes he makes.

Gum collectors have undoubtedly made the greatest contribution to the history and culture of the region. Excellent naturalists, they know the uses of an infinite number of plants, animals' habits, where to find sweet water supplies, and of course the whereabouts of archaeological sites still covered by vegetation.

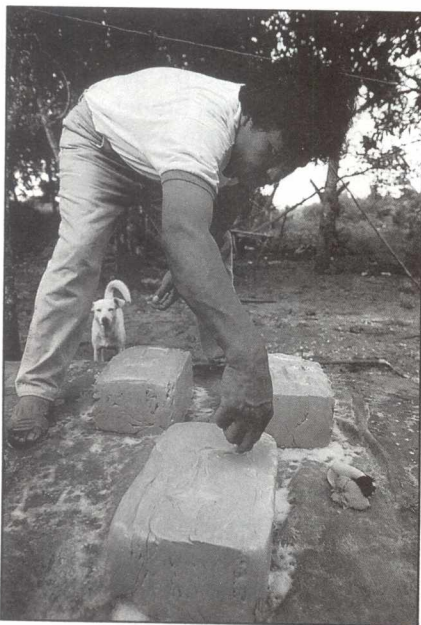
Independent in their working habits, nearly five thousand gum collectors roam through these jungles every season. Watching how they approach the trees and touch them, how they climb up and make a cut for the latex to flow down gives one a glimpse of a close and not always easy relationship between man and nature.

in the region, such as mahogany, and tree nurseries of various species have been created to produce saplings for reforesting the clearings left when mature trees are cut down.

This type of forestry management has won the producers international recognition for the preservation of the jungle and Green Cross certification for products obtained using sustainable methods.

Grass-roots participation in the management and exploitation of the forests has yielded results. Nine thousand peasant families have grouped together into five civil partnerships, in which there is a system of technical forestry assessment that also facilitates the commercialization of the area's various products. The profits obtained thanks to this organization have enabled several *ejidos* to build their own sawmills, purchase heavy machinery to extract wood and pave streets, acquire telecommunications equipment and build parks in the towns.

"The problem we have to solve at the moment," explains Alfonso Argüelles, technical director of these



Fulvio Ecardi.

The bricks of gum are known as cakes.



Fulvio Ecardi.

Piling up mahogany boards.

partnerships, "is the lack of a market for the great variety of wood."

The forests of Quintana Roo are home to more than 120 different timber-yielding species, with a broad range of consistencies and colors. There are extremely hard woods, such as the *katalox*, very soft ones such as the *sac chaka* and others with red sap, such as the *chaká rojo*. Out of this great diversity, mahogany and cedar continue to corner the market.

"Something we have tried to do for some time now is to increase the value of the wood by transforming it into manufactured goods," continued Alfonso. "But to do so, we need machines and tools as well as training for *ejido* members. This takes time, and people need to eat while they are being trained."

New social players

Nowadays it has become almost fashionable to talk about sustained development. But who is implementing it, and where? The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)—based in Yokohama, Japan—calculates that of all the world's tropical timber, less than 0.2 per cent is extracted using sustainable methods. In fact, one of ITTO's aims is for all

the tropical wood commercialized in the world to be harvested using sustainable methods, and so certified, by the year 2000.

It has been proven that in the Latin American tropics, extensive cattle raising is the principal cause of deforestation and the loss of these areas' immense biological diversity. Numerous Indian peoples on this continent have taught us that a more diversified use of these ecosystems is the most efficient means of maintaining tropical forests.

The more than 120 tree species in the Quintana Roo forests, the 100 species in every two and a half acres of the Lacandon forest, gum and other products that also have a market—such as allspice and the Camedara palm—are only part of the cornucopia of raw materials that the jungles offer. The Indian descendants of the Maya are aware of this potential and have used it for a long time.

In this rebirth of the Indian peoples, the groups that already have use and control over their natural resources will emerge as new social players in the search for sustained—or equitable, as it is called in Chiapas—development. We have a lot to learn from them ✘

The rainforest farmers

James D. Nations *

In the tropical rainforest that blankets southeastern Mexico, a small group of Indians is struggling to keep alive an ecological heritage passed down to them generation by generation, since the time of the ancient Maya. Numbering less than 400 men, women and children, the Lacandon Maya of the Mexican state of Chiapas still practice an agricultural strategy that cycles food and forest on the same tropical soil year after year.

At a time when the world's rainforests seem destined to destruction, the environmental knowledge of the Lacandons could serve as the basis for preserving and wisely using the rainforests that remain. Yet the Lacandons themselves are threatened by the same forces of exploitation that are destroying the jungle for quick profits while placing the environment in peril and jeopardizing the health of the world's population.

In the rainforest that surrounds the settlements of the Lacandon Maya lie the stone ruins of a civilization that flourished for six centuries. The Classic Maya turned the apparent disadvantages of this tropical jungle into the organic base for a civilization that stretched its trading ties throughout Middle America. They practiced highly diverse, intensive agriculture and harvested a rich crop of forest plants and animals—a combination that enabled them to support hundreds of thousands of people.

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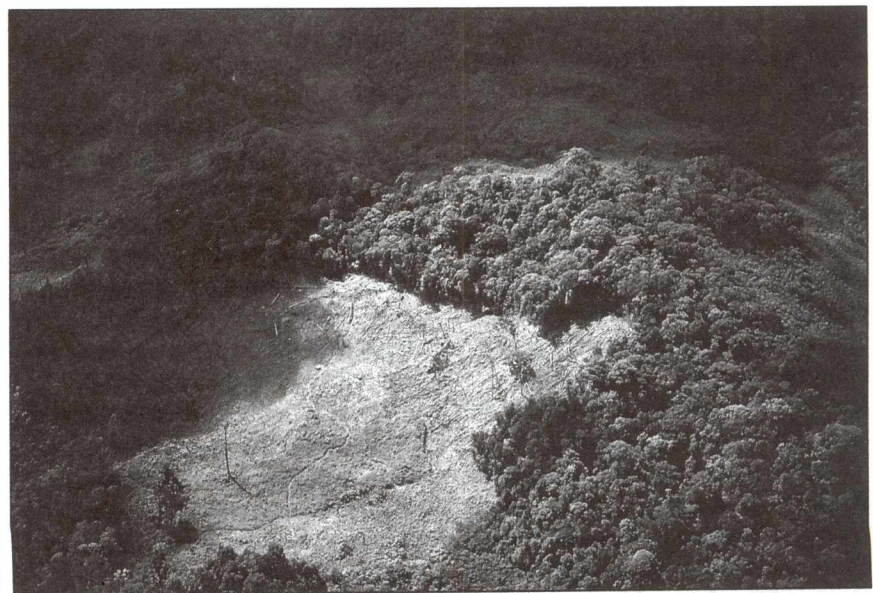
* California Academy of Sciences.

In the end, it was the vagaries of their commercial and political maneuverings—not the rainforest environment or problems of food supply—that led to the disintegration of their society. Gradually, between 700 and 900 A.D., the stone cities and ceremonial centers of the Classic Maya empire were abandoned to the vegetation that lay poised on the edges to reclaim them.

Today, only faint traces of Classic Maya grandeur are preserved in the small thatched huts of the men and women who inherited the territory and name of the ancient Maya. Yet something else survives. Within the language, rituals and farming techniques of the Lacandon Maya, the wisdom of the ancients prevails. In the face of missionary efforts, development projects and massive destruction of the rainforest ecosystem, the Lacandons are guarding the detailed ecological knowledge of their ancestors.

By historical standards, the Lacandon Maya are recent immigrants to the Chiapas jungle. The aboriginal inhabitants of the area were Chol-speaking Maya, and it was this group that constructed the Classic centers of Palenque, Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras and Bonampak. This Chol population apparently declined sharply following the collapse of Maya civilization, but thousands continued to inhabit the Chiapas jungle when Spaniards invaded the Maya world in the early 16th century.

At first seeking gold and silver, the *conquistadores* soon turned their attention to a more accessible resource: the area's Indian inhabitants. The Chol who survived the epidemic diseases the Spaniards brought with them from the Old World were forcibly removed from the Chiapas jungle and relocated into Spanish-controlled towns on the



At a time when the world's rainforests seem destined to destruction, the Lacandons' knowledge could preserve them.

jungle's western fringe. There, they were forced to labor on colonial plantations and cattle ranches for the benefit of the Spanish god and king.

In the Chiapas jungle, the population vacuum created by the death and relocation of the Chol Maya was filled by small groups of Yucatec-speaking Maya, the Lacandons, who migrated into Chiapas from the jungles of western Guatemala. Fleeing disease and disruption in their original territory, they brought with them the ecological knowledge they had developed during centuries in the Guatemalan rainforest—an extension of the same tropical forest that covers eastern Chiapas.

Unaware of this migration, Spanish authorities lost interest in the Lacandon Jungle for several centuries and turned, instead, to the details of their new colonial economy. As a result, the Lacandon Maya were allowed some measure of isolation from the deculturating forces that changed the lives of other Maya peoples.

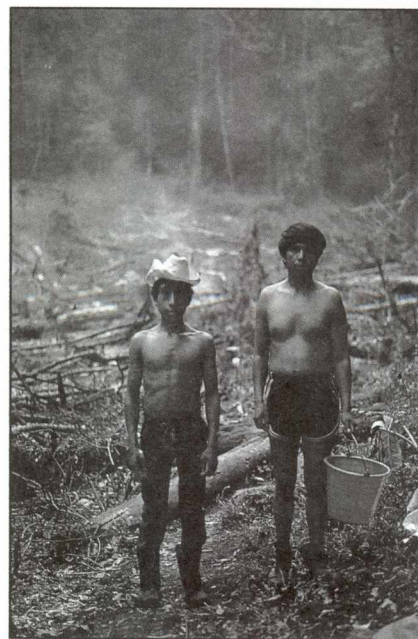
Neglected and forgotten, they preserved their ability to produce a large and continuous food supply without destroying the regenerative powers of the tropical forest. The key factor in this ability is their strategy of *milpa* agriculture—a system of forest agriculture also called swidden or slash-and-burn cultivation.

Each spring, Lacandon families clear small, one-hectare plots in the tropical forest (one hectare equals 2.471 acres) and allow the felled trees and vegetation to dry. In April, they clear fire-breaks around these areas and incinerate the dried cuttings in a blaze of branches, tree trunks and leaves. They have good reason for this seemingly destructive practice.

In tropical forests, the majority of nutrients are suspended in the living canopy of trees and vegetation that shades the thin, rapidly-leached soil. Organic litter dropped to the forest floor is quickly decomposed by

temperature, fungi and microscopic life to be lifted back into the canopy once again. Lacandon farmers release this organic matter by burning the forest vegetation, then quickly planting crops in the nutrient-rich ash. Clearing the land without burning would expose a soil only minimally capable of supporting crop plants. More than this, openly exposing the soil to the torrential rains of the tropics would cause the loss of valuable organic matter.

César Carrillo.



Milpa agriculture, key factor in non-destructive, continuous food supply.

To avoid this situation, Lacandon farmers plant fast-growing species of tree and root crops to provide immediate shade and soil protection to the cleared forest plot. After a few weeks, they seed the area with corn, their primary grain crop. Then, throughout the six-month rainy season that follows, they plant up to 80 different varieties of food and fiber crops—sweet potatoes, onions, taro, manioc, pineapples, chile peppers, squash, lemons, cotton, tobacco, bananas, avocados, beans, cacao and rice, among others.

The days when specific crops must be planted are indicated by the

flowering of certain natural species in the forest. When the mahogany tree flowers in late May or early June, the farmer knows to plant the spring corn crop. Use of these indicator species allows the Lacandons to plant and harvest in concert with yearly fluctuations in temperature and precipitation.

Equally significant in Lacandon ecological knowledge is the practice of planting crops in separate bunches throughout the garden plot; they plant no large clusters of any single species. Thus, although the garden may contain 20 bunches of onions, none of these bunches will be planted within ten feet of another. Through this system of dispersing their crops throughout the garden plot, Lacandons imitate the diversity of the surrounding tropical forest. Just as it does in the forest itself, this diversity impedes the spread of plant-specific diseases and prevents plagues of tropical insects.

Rather than plant long rows of single crop species, Lacandon farmers create a living mass of food plants that occupies the entire cleared area both above and below the soil. Between clumps of growing corn, trees of papayas and bananas shade ground-hugging vines of squash and *jicamas*. Beneath the soil in distinct layers lie the tubers of taro, sweet potatoes, manioc and yams. By following this system of multilayered, compatible crop agriculture, Lacandons utilize available space, water and soil nutrients in a highly efficient and productive manner.

Families continue to plant and harvest crops in the same garden plot for three to seven years, depending on how frequently they weed the area. If they keep the garden free of competitive species during each of these years, they can harvest two corn crops per year with only slight decreases in yield. Then, when weeds have encroached on the garden to the

The threatened Lacandon Jungle

The Lacandon Jungle, situated in the far east of the state of Chiapas, is the last sizable portion of tropical jungle that Mexico possesses. In recent years, huge expanses of this jungle have been converted into land for agricultural production or cattle-raising.

Yet with very few exceptions, the production systems implemented proved inefficient and unproductive, and were soon abandoned or transformed into extensive and inefficient systems. As a result, in addition to the land's failure to satisfy the economic and nutritional requirements of its owners, its fertility has declined, at the same time as the region's enormous biological wealth has been destroyed.

The peasants and cattle ranchers who stepped up their penetration of the jungle from 1960 onwards were mostly Indians who had been driven out of their villages by the lack of arable land and the inhuman living conditions on the farms in Chiapas' Los Altos region. By 1976, the new settlers numbered 70,000, two thirds of whom lived in villages with fewer than 500 inhabitants. Instead of facing and solving the agrarian problem *in situ*, the state government encouraged the spontaneous exodus to the jungle as a timely escape valve. Thus many people abandoned their traditional communities in the sierra, convinced that uncultivated lands in the jungle were not owned by anyone and that the authorities would be pleased to see them occupied and exploited.

Another destructive element that affects the jungle's integrity has been the excessive logging of tropical woods. This dates from the end of the 19th century, but increased dramatically in the 1960s and '70s in line with private exploitation of the forests.

The federal government's attempts to halt destruction of the jungle date from 1967, when an area of over one million acres was declared national property in order to encourage controlled settlement. In 1974, private timber exploitation passed into the hands of federal and state governments and in 1978, the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, with an area of 828,000 acres, was created as a further attempt to protect the heart of the jungle from unlimited logging.

These have not been the only measures. Dozens of projects and programs, designed by federal and state institutions, have so far failed to achieve the desired results. The three fronts of destruction—peasants, cattle ranchers and loggers—continue to advance over the jungle's forestry reserves.

The destruction of the jungle's environment and the lack of resources for its inhabitants should be tackled at the same time and with equal zeal, simultaneously respecting the demands of nature and the population's needs. This is the challenge faced by those with the scientific vision, technical ability and political power to be able to intervene in this matter.

Taken from: *Lacandonia, el último refugio* (Lacandonia, the Last Refuge). Mexico City, UNAM-Agrupación Sierra Madre, S.C., 1991.

point that cutting a new plot is easier than weeding the current one, the family clears a new one-hectare garden and begins the cycle anew.

Still, the family does not abandon the original garden plot. Instead, they plant the area in tree crops—citrus, cacao, rubber trees—and continue to harvest from it as the plot regrows with natural forest species. The native term for this stage of land use—*pak che kol*, “planted tree garden”—symbolizes the Lacandon intent to cycle food and

forest on the same plot. When the planted trees and natural jungle growth have reached a height that will produce a good burn—a process that requires 5 to 20 years, depending on soil conditions—the family will clear and plant the garden again. In this fashion, they reuse the same plots as long as they remain in the area.

Like tropical forest farmers throughout the world, Lacandons prefer to cut agricultural plots from regrowth rather than from virgin forest. The reason for this is simple:

clearing a one-hectare plot of virgin forest requires 40 man-days of labor; clearing the same area of regrowth takes only eight man-days.

Planted tree gardens serve a second important function in Lacandon food production. Recent studies indicate that some tropical forest mammals, especially deer, peccaries, squirrels, pacas and agoutis, maintain higher population densities in agricultural areas than they do in undisturbed forest. These animals are attracted to the food

crops and young shoots of regrowing garden plots, and Lacandons purposely leave part of their harvest vulnerable to these animals.

Game species allowed to fatten on garden crops are later hunted in the same area. In this sense, the planted tree garden is a form of wildlife management area, and the crops allotted to wild mammals are an investment in future food supplies.

The Lacandon Maya food production system is more than ecologically sound; it is also highly productive. Each one-hectare garden can produce up to six metric tons of shelled corn per year, and an equal amount of root and vegetable crops. Even more, hunting in abandoned gardens and virgin forest provides each family member with a more than adequate supply of meat protein.

Despite its ecological soundness and high productivity, however, the Lacandon agricultural system is disappearing—along with the tropical rainforest that supports it. Like tropical forests throughout the world, the Lacandon jungle is being cleared and burned by the juggernaut of progress.

The main forces of destruction in Chiapas are colonization schemes and beef cattle production. Since 1940, more than 80,000 peasant farmers have migrated into the lowland Chiapas jungle in search of land and new lives. In a program similar to the U.S. Homestead Act, government agencies have opened up the area to families from the Chiapas highlands and other areas of Mexico. Such programs are popular because they help relieve demands for land reform in other regions, and thus postpone the need to break up the large landholdings of influential families. The increasing population of rural farm families provides an equally important impetus.

The tragic flaw in these colonization programs is that the immigrant farmers are ill-equipped to deal with the tropical forest

environment. Unlike the Lacandon Maya, they do not carry the heritage of years of coexistence with the rainforest. They lack the detailed understanding of plant-animal relationships, they plant grass for cattle instead of tree crops in abandoned garden plots, and their *milpa* fires burn out of control. As a result, they frequently destroy large sections of forest in attempting to make the land produce.

Fulvio Eccardi.



The area's main forces of destruction are colonization schemes and beef cattle production.


Even more destructive than colonization is the practice of clearing the rainforest to plant pasture land for cattle ranchers. Already, Mexican cattlemen have cleared and burned the northern third of the Lacandon Jungle to produce beef cattle for the nation's growing urban population. In one ironic twist to this situation, some of this beef replaces meat produced in northern Mexico for export to the United States, where it supplies consumer demands for hamburgers, frankfurters, cold cuts and TV dinners.

The forces that are eradicating the Lacandon rainforest and threatening the existence of Lacandon society are

interwoven with complex economic problems that permeate the modern world. The present trend in the Lacandon Jungle is to seek quick profits and short-term solutions to these problems. But this approach ignores the most valuable factor in the area's potential for long-term productivity and progress. That factor is the centuries-old ecological knowledge of the Lacandon men and women. Rather than alter or eradicate the Lacandon food production system—as current patterns of development are doing—perhaps national and international agencies should be learning from the Lacandons instead.

By combining the environmental wisdom of the Lacandon Maya with the technological advances of Western agricultural research, we could create new systems of food and fiber production compatible with rainforest preservation and regeneration. No scientific team understands the forest ecosystem more completely than the Lacandon Maya, yet the Lacandons sometimes lack crucial information about new crop plants, pest management techniques, intensive farming tools and marketing.

Combined, the knowledge of the Lacandons and industrial society could generate viable, ecologically sound systems of rainforest food production. These systems could then be offered to immigrant farmers in the Chiapas jungle as alternatives to their present destructive farming practices. Even more importantly, these newly created systems could compete economically with the devastating practice of beef cattle ranching.

As we turn increasingly to the world's tropical regions for additional food and fiber production, we must remember that the people who live in these regions—people like the Lacandon Maya—are our most valuable source of information and understanding. Moreover, in learning from them, we can, in turn, help them preserve the wise legacy of their past 

The central Post Office

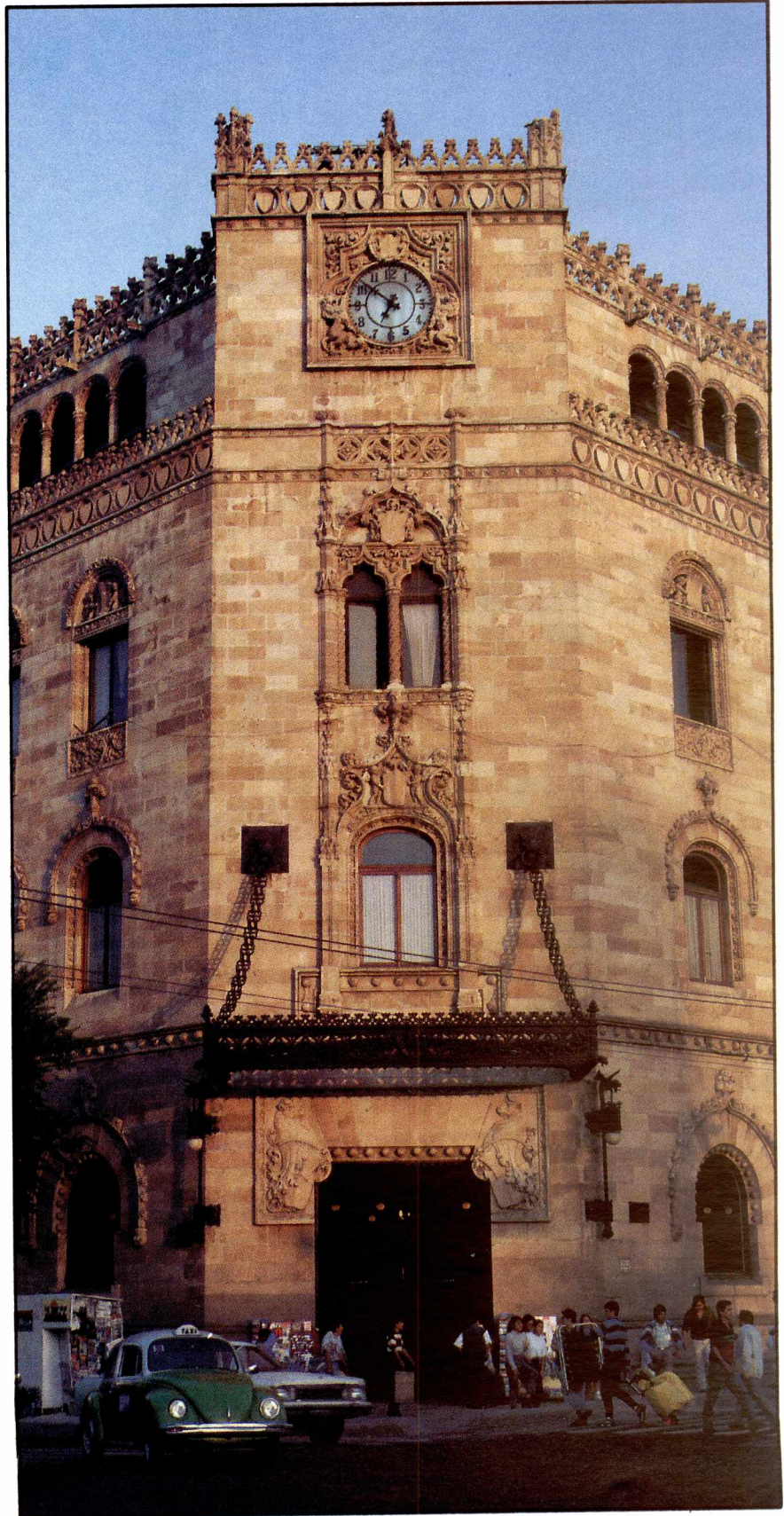
Mexico City's main Post Office is the Palacio Postal, a veritable architectural jewel which stands opposite the Palace of Fine Arts and covers an area of 4,476 square yards.

Designed by the Italian architect Adamo Boari and the military engineer Gonzalo Garita, the Post Office was built in accordance with its purpose and the space available. It was inaugurated in 1907 by President Porfirio Díaz.

Opinions on the building's architectural style vary. However, most would agree that it bears the influence of the Spanish plateresque style, combined with a certain eclecticism reflected in the predominance of Gothic elements such as cresting and zoomorphic gargoyles on the roof, merlons, fleurons and pinnacles crowning the turrets, and the false ogee arches over the raised arches of the windows of the first and second storeys.

The fact that the Post Office is frequently associated with the Palacio de Monterrey in Salamanca on the one hand and the Doge's Palace in Venice, on the other, reinforces this building's characterization as eclectic.

From 1956 to the present, the third and fourth floors of the building

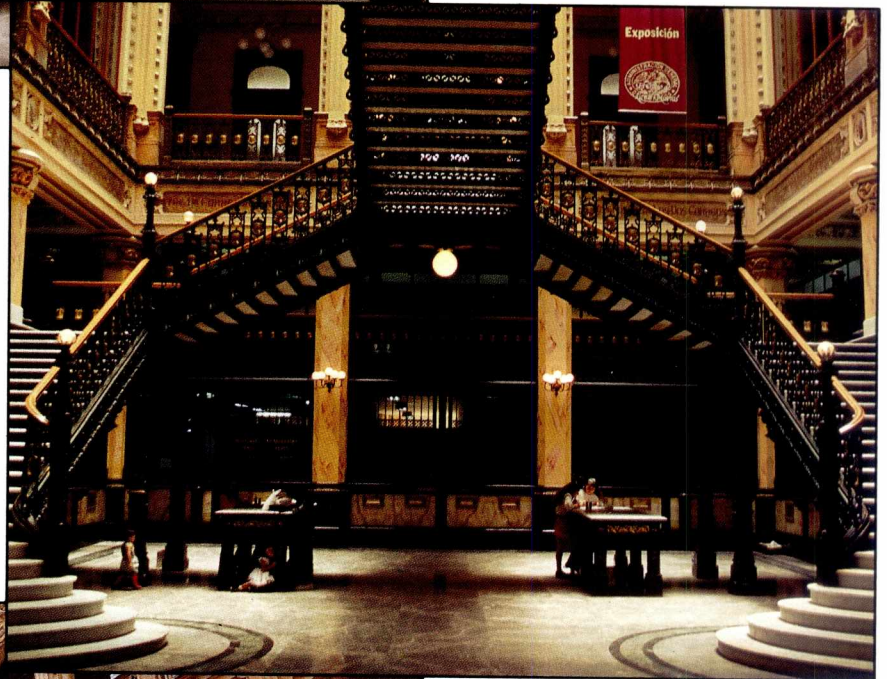




have been leased to the Banco de México. The Mexican Postal Service has its offices for attending the public on the ground floor. Post-office boxes are located in the mezzanine, while the second storey holds a library, hall and museum.

Architecture

The Post Office's four façades are astonishingly similar, both as regards the materials employed in their construction and the combination of ornamental elements used in their design.



The building's main façade looks out onto Tacuba Street. An arch was built over its only entrance, above which the large windows of the second and third storeys can be seen.

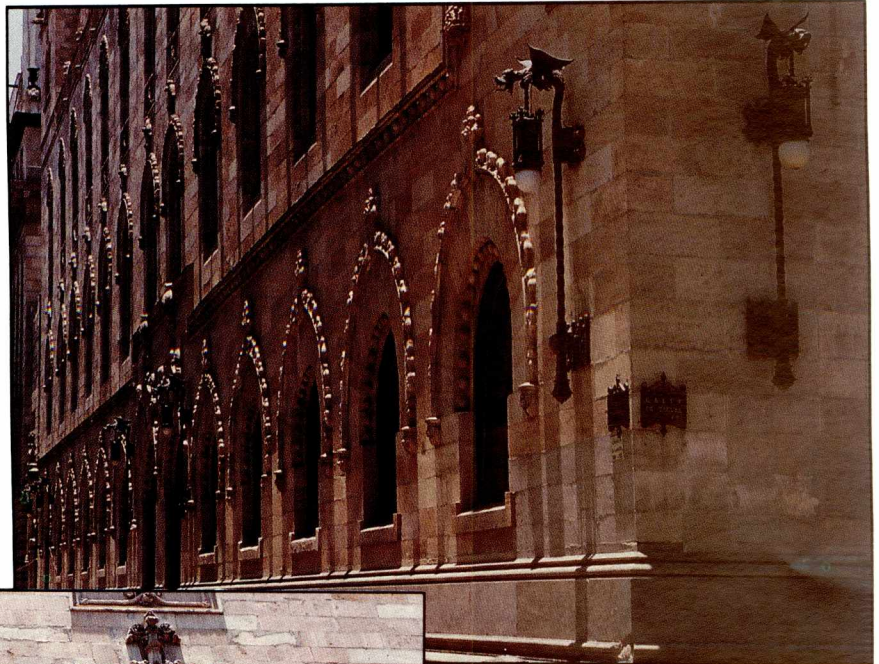
The west façade, facing the Palace of Fine Arts, has four entrances, two of which are occupied by the outside mail boxes.

The presence of eight shells or scallop-shaped moldings under the second-storey windows, and one on either side of the national coat-of-arms, distinguishes this side from the other three. The shells are in the

opposite position to the allegorical, religious ones so common in the plateresque period.

On the east facade, facing the Palacio de Minería and La Condesa Lane, there are two Gothic-style pillars on either side of the entrance to the service courtyard. In the middle there are two fanciful depictions of griffins standing guard, in the medieval style.

The south face, located in an area that makes it almost impossible to see, is the most modest of all. It has two projecting turrets, whose windows are decorated in a similar



manner to those of the north-east section. The top still contains the parapet of the unbroken balcony.

The pan-coupé has a very Mudéjar-style entrance door, with its distinctive panel, featuring two large oxen at either end, under empty coats-of-arms. At the top stands a splendid national coat-of-arms. The animal and plant images in the arch above the entrance turn out to be the most interesting feature, since they suggest a strange sort of allegory associated with the postal service.

Knotted serpents, rabbits, dogs, cactus and acanthus leaves are some



Mexico's National Council for Culture and the Arts was created in December 1988 to meet the cultural needs of a country that has grown and diversified, and that urgently requires better services in a field of crucial importance for the all-round development of a nation and its people: culture and the arts.

After a study of the population's requirements in this area, the federal government decided to gather various institutions and administrative entities under the coordination of a sole body, whose aim is to make culture available to all. The government is thereby able to point all efforts in the same direction and introduce a national cultural policy.

ACTION PROGRAMS

In order to attain the goals of the National Council for Culture and the Arts, a set of programs has been defined to guide the different state bodies in the cultural field. These programs are:

Preservation and Promotion of Our Cultural Heritage. Archeological monuments are mainly the concern of the National Institute of Anthropology and History. The Institute is a government body created for the purpose of researching and preserving the heritage of pre-Columbian cultures. Artistic monuments are principally the responsibility of the National Institute of Fine Arts, a public body created to promote and support the arts.

To this end, the National Commission for the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage has been established, and the registration of all the nation's cultural possessions has begun. **Program for Encouragement of Artistic Creativity and Promotion of the Arts.** This program consists of organizing and putting into effect national plans to support theater, music and

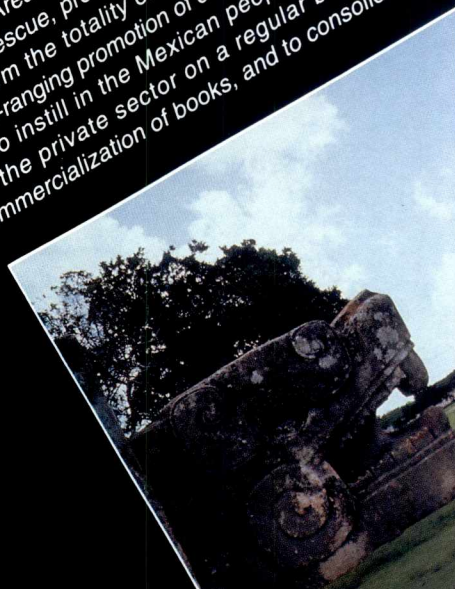


The National Council for Culture and the Arts

dance, as well as to promote visual arts, architecture and literature by drawing up schemes that allow each association to participate.

Program for Preservation and Promotion of Popular Cultures. With the help of such programs as "Support to Popular Culture in the Metropolitan Area of Mexico City" and "Support to Urban and Community Cultures," we seek to promote the rescue, preservation and transmission of popular, rural and urban cultures, which together form the totality of our national culture.

Significant support is given to a national fund for the wide-ranging promotion of craftsmanship. **Promotion of Books and Reading.** We plan to instill in the Mexican people a love of reading, to carry out co-publishing projects with the private sector on a regular basis, to establish an effective system of distribution and commercialization of books, and to consolidate and develop the national network of libraries.



Culture through Audio-Visual Media. In the field of cinema, we have organized an effective scheme to cultivate talent and provide the necessary resources for the production and co-production of high-quality films, in addition to optimizing distribution and exhibition of domestic and foreign films. A video-library program has been started, and with regard to electronic resources, we aim to broaden, modernize and improve their capacity, orienting them towards the transmission of those programs that promote our cultural heritage, literature and music, and national culture.

Education and Research on Culture and Art. We intend to restructure and strengthen professional training in the various areas of the arts, to encourage research, and to train teachers as promoters of culture.

Coordination of Strategic Projects and National Vocation Activities. We support specific activities through the continual functioning of the following projects:

- Decentralization of cultural services.
- Culture for young people.
- Culture for workers.
- Culture and science.
- Culture and the environment.
- Cultural exchanges.
- Modernization of cultural legislation and institutions.
- Professional training of those working in cultural fields.
- Events and special historical projects.
- Cultural industries.
- Audio-visual productions.

INSTITUTIONS MAKING UP THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS

In its function as coordinator of a broad range of efforts, and in order to encompass the diversity of cultural and artistic activity, the Council relies on the help of several institutions and groups whose activities are very distinct. The following institutions are affiliated to the Council: Radio Education, a cultural radio station; Fondo de Cultura Económica, an important publishing house; and, in the audio-visual field, the Mexican Institute of Cinema and Channel 22.

Other organizations that promote the culture of our people are also coordinated by the Council, such as the National Society for Promoting Craftsmanship, the International Cervantine Festival and the Tijuana Cultural Center.

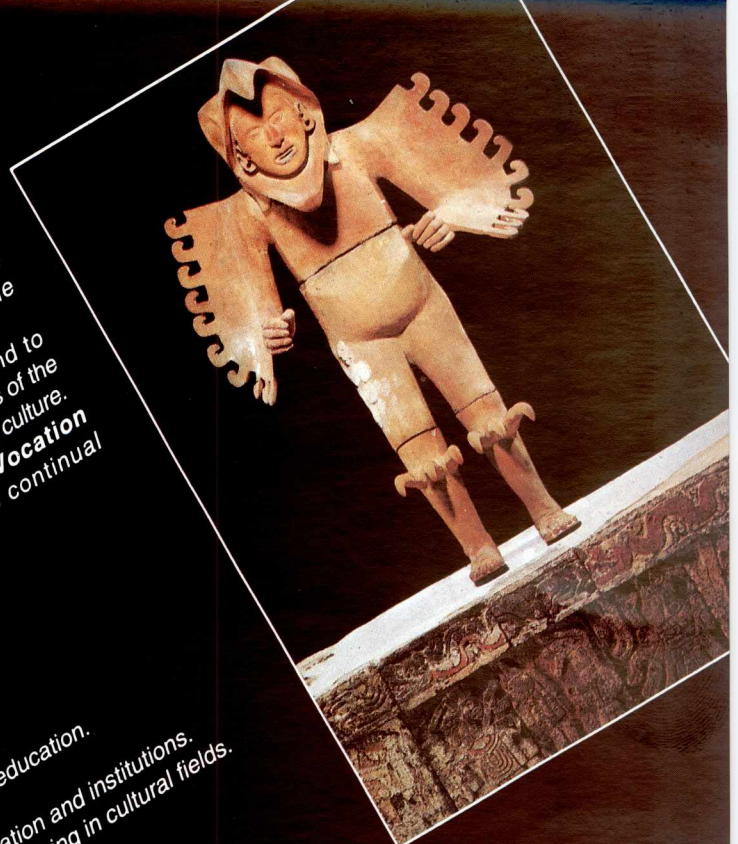
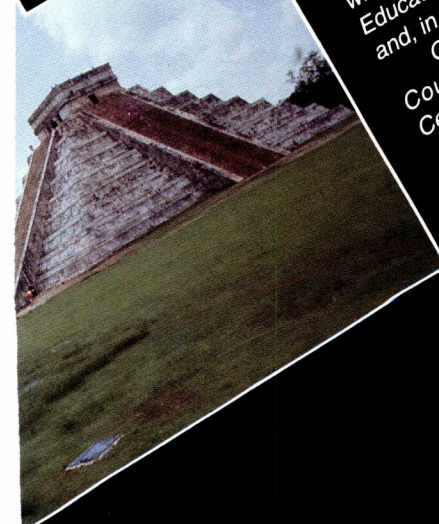
Other groups (such as the above-mentioned National Institute of Fine Arts and the National Institute of Anthropology and History), together with five administrative offices, are in charge of particular aspects of culture and art, such as libraries, publications, popular culture, and the Frontier Program.

It is also important to note the creation of the National Fund for Culture and the Arts—an organization established by the Council in order to attract and administer funds to promote the rescue and preservation of our heritage, etc. Monies are collected from the public and private sectors and from all those who wish to favor cultural enterprises and the work of writers, painters, sculptors, musicians, playwrights and thinkers, all of whom are devoted to some of the most urgent tasks on our cultural scene.

**OUR BEST
TO THE
WORLD**



Consejo Nacional
para la
Cultura y las Artes





of the features making up this iconography. There is an unusual predilection for coats-of-arms, 205 of which are scattered over the building's four faces and *pan-coupé*. This predilection has been attributed to the architect, Adamo Boari.

The inside of the building is remarkably functional, even for today. The ground floor is devoted to service to the public. Spacious corridors lead users across marble floors to the appropriate counter. Above the Mexican marble counters, the iron and

bronze grilles produced by the Pignone Foundry are worthy of note. In 1973, this fine bronze work was covered in black oil paint, and the details of its adornments and moldings painted in bronze dust, as a result of which its original beauty and sheen were lost.

The splendid double staircase enables one to enjoy, from any height, the beauty of the first patio, whose design was influenced by the Spanish plateresque style.

Although rarely visited, since it is the service courtyard, the second patio is the only example of a structure containing a *dado*. The intrados in the glass soffit shows a strong late English Gothic influence.

On the second floor, the hall boasts a beautiful soffit of projecting panels decorated with acanthus foliage, against a background of tiny apples. The tempera paintings, completed by Bartolomé de Galloti in 1905, are the hall's most interesting feature.

The treasures of the Post Office

In addition to the paintings by Galloti, the Post Office houses other treasures, such as a large collection of objects related to the history of the postal service in Mexico, the country's entire stamp collection, as well as bibliographical documents and documentary archives of the post office's history.

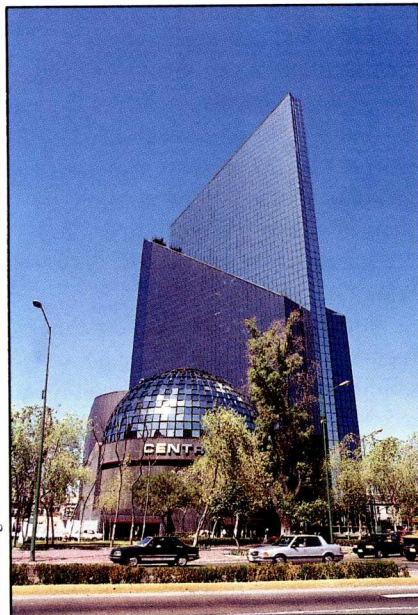
The Post Office Museum, located on the second storey, includes a perambulating wheel, odometers, a selection of mail boxes, franking machines, sticks of sealing wax, pens and inkwells.

The Post Office library contains nearly seven thousand five hundred volumes covering most aspects of the postal service and a collection of official newspapers from the 19th century onwards. It also has approximately eight hundred documents on aspects related to the Post Office and Mexican history ❧

Maricarmen Velasco
Staff Writer.

Intelligent buildings in Mexico

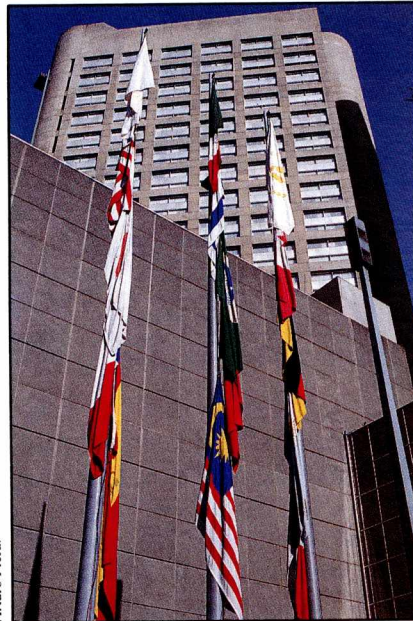
Technology has found its way into all the details of modern life. One of its most recent applications is intelligent buildings, with their sophisticated systems for preventing accidents such as electrical faults, earthquake damage and fires, as well as robberies. These systems contribute to savings of up to 60% of electric and hydraulic energy as well as recycling water through treatment plants.



Yvonne Venegas.

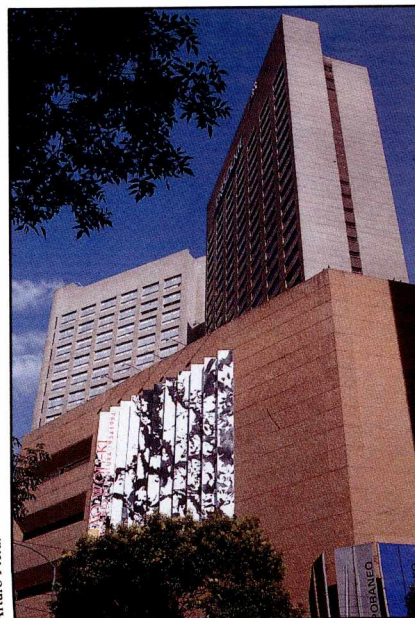
The Mexican Stock Exchange is being upgraded.

As a result of the search for alternative solutions in accordance with growth standards in the world's largest cities —such as New York, Tokyo, Hamburg and others— the concept of intelligent buildings emerged in Mexico in November 1991, together with the foundation of the Mexican Institute of Intelligent Buildings (IMEI).



Arturo Piera.

Recycling water in hotels is indispensable nowadays (front view of the Hotel Nikko).



Arturo Piera.

Museum of Contemporary Art (front), Hotel Presidente (left) and Hotel Nikko (right).

IMEI chairman Jorge Martínez Anaya describes intelligent buildings as those based on a bioclimatic design, with a “brain” made up of digitalized and automated systems that permit rational and appropriate land use, optimizing both space and resources.

Although intelligent buildings imply 5% higher investment costs than traditional buildings, they have automated security systems and an entire floor for the control of indoor



Arturo Piera.

A long-term project for Latin American countries.

wiring, ducts and service machinery, and a balanced distribution of features permitting maximum use of natural and artificial lighting —not forgetting aesthetics, comfort and low maintenance costs.

The concept of intelligent buildings originated in countries such as Japan and the United States in recent decades, owing to the abundance of

financial resources. For Latin American countries, this style of construction is still a long-term project, but one that is slowly becoming a reality in Mexico.

Héctor González Reza, secretary of UNAM's Institute of Engineering, considers the systems used in intelligent buildings to be mechanisms that prolong the useful life of any construction, providing additional benefits for users that offset the cost of investment.

A key factor justifying the construction of these buildings in Mexico is their ability to adapt to the characteristics of the subsoil. There are already plans to use this new technology in the construction of offices, restaurants, hotels, lecture halls, auditoriums, schools, hospitals and telecommunications centers for urban and rural areas.

For Enrique Sanabria Atilano, of Mexico's College of Architects, intelligent buildings solve a common problem in tall buildings: fires. Before the emergence of this new concept, he explains, service areas, stairs and elevators in high buildings were often inappropriately located in the center of the building, becoming deadly traps in the case of an emergency.

Buildings such as the Torre Chapultepec, the new headquarters of



Arturo Pierra

Intelligent buildings have higher investment costs but incur lower maintenance expenses.

the Mexico City Industrialists' Club (the Sierra Building), Mexico's World Trade Center, the Hotel Nikko, Hotel Marquíz Reforma, the Four Seasons, the Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara Hilton hotels, the Alameda, Santa Fe and Corredor Reforma projects and soon the Torre Aguila, Reforma II and other corporate buildings will lead the field in the implementation of systematic building technology.

The purpose of the "brain" located in each building is specialized control of functions such as the use of

ventilators, the opening and closing of windows, and the regulation and programming of continuous lighting.

This concept also involves the use of various types of computerized networks, video cameras and audio networks, while eliminating impractical methods such as drilling through tiles to install double outlets in the floor, etc.

Martínez Anaya points out the importance of distinguishing between buildings which are already intelligent and those with plans to become so. Some buildings, such as the one housing the Mexican Stock Exchange, are currently being upgraded to meet today's technological demands.

If Mexicans realize that it makes little economic sense to invest in poor-quality, short-lived buildings which lack ideal functioning systems, says Martínez Anaya, we will soon have the perfect means for regulating growth in large cities.

Integrating modern technology into the design of its buildings will place Mexico at the forefront of the construction of intelligent buildings in Latin America ♣



Arturo Pierra

These buildings contribute to savings of up to 60% of energy (view of the Hotel Marquíz Reforma).

Fernando Del Rivero
Sales and Circulation Manager.

The U.S. and Cuba: changes ahead?

Santiago Pérez Benítez *

Victory in the Cold War, instead of producing changes in United States policy toward Cuba—which was the case with Vietnam, for example—has hardened the U.S. attitude toward the island. In contrast with the position expressed over the previous twenty years, the condition for normalizing political relations is once again a change of regime in Havana.¹

The Bush and Clinton administrations have started from the premise that this change is not only possible but imminent, although they have not specified how nor exactly when it would come about.² It must be recognized that, nuances aside,

This article was written while the author was carrying out research at the *CISAN, UNAM*.

¹ While it is true that the U.S. never abandoned this goal, it was presented as a realizable objective only in the '60s. In the '70s, in view of the consolidation of the island's political and economic model, the priority became undermining Cuba's alliance with the USSR and reducing its influence in Africa and Central America. Under Carter the suggestion was even made that diplomatic relations be reestablished if Cuba abided by these requirements. See, for example, the description of U.S. policy toward Cuba made by the State Department in its "Fact Sheet," published in the *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, February 22, 1993.

² The most complete exposition I have seen regarding the logic of the objectives and means of U.S. Cuba policy under Bush appeared in the article by Robert Gelbard, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Interamerican Affairs, "U.S. Policy Toward Cuba," in *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, April 20, 1992. For the Clinton administration see, for example, Alexandre F. Watson,

this objective is widely shared among the various political tendencies in Washington.

A change which should nevertheless be noted, in comparison with the '60s, is that today the U.S. declares that it does not seek a violent transformation in Cuba and that the United States no longer presents a threat to the island.³

There is a marked continuity in the means for achieving the objectives Washington proclaims. The argument for continuing these policies is that they have produced results, and that they are the reason the Cuban model has been isolated.⁴ The claim is made that this is precisely the most important time to maintain these measures, since the policy is allegedly about to bear fruit. To do otherwise, according to Michael Skol,

Assistant Secretary for Interamerican Affairs, "The Cuban Democracy Act: One Year Later," in *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, December 6, 1993.

³ However, in military terms there has been no reduction in the enormous deployment of forces surrounding the island, and numerous war-games continue to be held. The purpose would seem to be to use these mobilizations as a form of political pressure, preventing the Cuban government from withdrawing resources from defense in order to use them for other, economic purposes. Yet it should not be ruled out that these exercises are aimed more directly at preparedness for eventual contingencies that might present themselves on the island and call for U.S. intervention.

⁴ See Gelbard, *op. cit.*

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Undersecretary of State responsible for Cuba policy, would be to give an inappropriate gift to Fidel Castro.⁵

In late 1992 the U.S. Congress, after intense lobbying by the right wing of the Cuban-American community, passed the Torricelli Bill tightening the anti-Cuba blockade. Among other measures, this law seeks to prevent trade with Cuba by foreign-based subsidiaries of U.S. companies, impede ships which have stopped at Cuban ports from having access to U.S. ports, and suspend aid to foreign governments which provide assistance to Cuba.⁶

Financing for Radio Martí and TV Martí has been maintained (albeit with growing difficulty), as part of the effort to influence the Cuban people ideologically. In fact a recent nuance in U.S. policy is the current attempt, by any and all means, to increase communication with the island's "civil society" in order to speed a change in regime from within. Paragraph 1705 of the Torricelli Bill calls for increasing the flow of information and envisages the possibility of humanitarian donations as well as arrangements for improving telecommunications, among other measures aimed at accomplishing these objectives.⁷

Another post-Cold War novelty has been the line of promoting as much as possible the activity of

⁵ Cited by Jim Cason and David Brooks in *La Jornada*, March 18, 1994.

⁶ See Watson, *op. cit.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

internal human-rights groups as agents of change and, given these groups' low level of visibility, seeking to contact and influence members of the armed forces, the party apparatus, intellectuals and the youth. This might be called something like the "East Europe formula."

All this is combined with the international campaign to have the United Nations condemn Cuba for human-rights violations. In the diplomatic sphere pressure is put on states maintaining relations with Cuba in order to continue the policy of isolation. First and foremost, advantage has been taken of the "revolution" in the values of Russian diplomacy, but new life has been breathed into efforts to prevent Cuban links with Europe and Latin America. Support has been given to those governments which seek to make internal changes in Cuba the precondition for bilateral relations.

The Clinton administration

Many observers thought this picture might change when the Clinton administration entered the White House. There were a number of reasons for such speculations:

Clinton is the first Democratic president since Jimmy Carter, who sought to face the issue of Cuba. Carter was remembered as the initiator of an opening in relations between the two countries. For some time, moreover, Democratic advisory groups had been posing the need for a new look at policy toward Havana.⁸ Unlike Bush, Clinton had no personal connections with Cuban issues and owed no political favors to the Miami

⁸ In 1992 Inter-American Dialogue, the Democrats' main think-tank on Latin America, issued a report calling for changes in U.S. Cuba policy. Several Dialogue members are currently in Clinton's cabinet. Richard Feinberg, then president of Dialogue, is now in charge of Latin America in the National Security Council.

Cuban community, which overwhelmingly voted against him.⁹

After an uncertain and confused first half of 1993,¹⁰ however, the Clinton White House dispelled whatever doubts that might have arisen. Key spokesmen confirmed that both the objectives and the means of U.S. policy toward Cuba would follow the line of traditional Washington policy.

Despite the fact that the guiding line of current policy is continuity with the past, several nuances have shown up in the Democrats' approach.

There has been a reduction in the hostile language and political-psychological tension used by the Bush administration. "Improving communications with the Cuban people" is a concept which now

“The U.S. blockades its own businesses from competing in Cuba”

The new administration has responded to the reforms that have been occurring in Cuba, particularly in the economic field, by stressing that the changes are cosmetic and insufficient. When it has recognized reform measures, this has been adduced as an argument for continuing the existing U.S. strategy in line with the claim that these changes have been possible only because of the maintenance of the U.S. embargo, the only form of pressure—according to this logic—that Washington has for promoting change in Cuba.

⁹ It is important to recall that through his son Jeb (a key Republican figure in Florida), President Bush maintained close relations with Cuban organizations in Miami. It was no surprise that, in the 1992 elections, a high percentage of Cubans in Dade County—who are, moreover, traditionally Republicans—voted for Bush.

¹⁰ Various factors played a role in this initial uncertainty. One was the standard policy review carried out by every new administration; another was the fact that Cuba was not (nor is it now) a central priority for the White House. The delay in naming an Undersecretary for Latin America also played a role; the Cuban-American National Foundation (the Cuba lobby's main component) vetoed the nomination of Mario Baeza, who had been the Democrats' first choice for the post.

appears more frequently and is given greater emphasis, and the statement is even made that U.S. strategy consists not only of pressure on the Havana government but is a two-track policy which also aims to build bridges to Cuban society.¹¹

In practice more licenses have been granted for humanitarian shipments to the island, and the possibility has been mooted of reaching some kind of accord on telecommunications. It is important to note that this logic also includes the significant increase in the activities of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which in 1993 alone provided half a million dollars in aid to groups seeking to "promote democracy" in Cuba.

Yet what is most significant about Clinton's period in office to date may not be the measures taken (or not taken) by his administration, but rather the debate that has broken out within U.S. society, in Congress, the press and the business community, regarding policy toward Cuba.

The debate

Increasingly forceful arguments are heard, from a range of viewpoints, in favor of overhauling U.S. policy in

¹¹ *Ibid.*

light of the island's having ceased to be a source of worry in terms of national security.

In reality, the discussion does not question the validity of U.S. policy objectives, centering instead on the means for achieving the same ends. According to the new logic, the economic embargo serves to reinforce the Cuban government's nationalist posture, which blames the U.S. —and not failures of the system— for the island's problems. It is further argued that since Washington's final objectives have not been achieved over the past 33 years, it is necessary to change strategies and try out new formulas. Harvard University's Professor Domínguez, for example, argues that the model of free trade and stepped-up relations implemented with China and Mexico should be applied to Cuba as well.¹²

Proponents of this view hold that the partial or total dismantling of the embargo (in exchange for Cuban concessions) could accelerate the changes occurring in Cuba, eventually eroding the foundations of the regime.

On another level, in light of the economic opening currently being undertaken on the island, many U.S. entrepreneurs have noticed how their European, Japanese and Latin American competitors are taking advantage of new business opportunities in Cuba —and this in an economy whose trade with the U.S. could reach between four and six billion dollars a year, according to the Office of the Comptroller General.

In a congressional session devoted to a legislative proposal to lift the embargo, Representative Charles Rangel noted: "While we continue to blockade our own businesses from competing in Cuba, investors from Canada, Mexico and Latin America are taking their place."¹³

¹² See the above-cited *La Jornada* report by Jim Cason and David Brooks.

¹³ *Ibid.* (Quotation retranslated here from Spanish.)

There is a growing awareness, at the practical level, of how the interests and geo-economic logic of the U.S. are coming into contradiction with the geo-political perceptions and narrow interests of pressure groups within American society.¹⁴

Converging with these arguments for a new look at Cuba policy are the demands from sectors of U.S. society for the elimination of the blockade, on the basis of humanitarian concerns and the view that the embargo's limitations on travel to Cuba violate American citizens' rights.

Perspectives

In analyzing the outlook for U.S. Cuba policy, we should not exaggerate the impact of such opinions. In terms of *Realpolitik*, what counts is not the acuity of an analysis but the chances contending positions have for gaining support from political forces and groups.

And this is what remains to be seen in the debate inside the U.S. It is only recently that some business interests, sectors of the Cuban community,¹⁵ the press and social movements have begun to organize in favor of overhauling Washington's policy toward Cuba.

It must be kept in mind that powerful Establishment groups (and not only the right wing of the Cuban community) stand opposed to a change in policy. These groups argue that there is no hurry; the U.S. can adopt a comfortable wait-and-see attitude toward the evolution of events on the island.

¹⁴ See John Saxe Fernández, "Las relaciones cubano-estadounidenses: su impacto hemisférico" in *Girón '92*. Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico City, 1994.

¹⁵ An example of the rise of groups opposed to the community's right wing (represented by the Cuban-American National Foundation) was the attendance by several representatives of moderate sectors at April's Havana meeting with the Cuban government. See Jostexo Zaldúa's account in *La Jornada*, April 24, 1994.

While few in the Clinton administration believe in the rationality of the traditional U.S. course,¹⁶ for the time being the upper hand is held by those who maintain that, between the possible advantages of a change in policy and the geo-strategic and political costs of such a change,¹⁷ the balance is weighted in favor of maintaining the present strategy.

The question nonetheless remains as to the significance of the timid changes undertaken by the Clinton team. Are these minor shifts in a policy which continues along the same fundamental course, or are they instead the beginnings of changes to come in the American line?

We are in the midst of an era of important transformations on the world scene and changes in the approach which up until recently determined Washington's policies. Thus, despite the low priority given it by the White House, the question of Cuba policy is far from being a closed case.

Close attention will have to be paid, not so much to traditional rhetoric, but to the changes which may occur within the contending forces, political conditions in the U.S., the debate inside the administration, the correlation of interests in the state of Florida —and above all to events in Cuba itself. ❧

¹⁶ This conclusion was corroborated by the author's prior interviews with figures who are presently in the administration.

¹⁷ Among the costs they mention is the possibility that the Cuban government might gain a breathing space in the crisis it faces, as well as the resistance to a change that would be put up by the Republican right and the Cuban community in the U.S. While it remains unstated, I believe that decision-makers are influenced by the idea that U.S. recognition of the Cuban government would create a bad precedent in Latin America, since it would be seen as legitimizing a nationalist and socialist government in the U.S.' backyard. It would also go against the grain of "single-superpower prestige." How will the U.S. resolve other world conflicts if it cannot deal with a problem 90 miles off its shores which has continued for more than thirty years?

Historic debate in Mexico

The word *debate* comes from the Latin *debatitō*, which means to hammer, beat, shake. Thus, debate is a contest, struggle, combat, a controversy among two or more persons.

Hopefully 1994 will be remembered in Mexico as the year of debate—that between the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the government for achieving peace in Chiapas, as well as the debate between presidential candidates—and not the year of violence.

With a 34-year lag vis à vis the modern institution of debates—the first was held in 1960 between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon—which involves the use of radio and television to broadcast the match to a large audience, on May 12 a debate was held between the main presidential candidates, for the first time in the history of our country.

The National Action Party (PAN) was the first to promote the idea, through its draft Debate Law of 1982. The first candidate of the PRI (the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which has held power continuously for 65 years) to propose a debate with his opponents was the late Luis Donaldo Colosio. However, this debate could never have occurred without the willingness expressed by the PRI's replacement candidate, Ernesto Zedillo.

Thus Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solórzano, candidate of the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), PAN candidate Diego Fernández de Cevallos and Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León went down in history as participants in this phase of Mexico's process of democratic modernization.

For the first time, opposition candidates gained radio and television coverage on an equal footing with the PRI's candidate, and voters had the chance to compare the presidential aspirants for themselves.

There is no doubt that Diego Fernández won the debate, not only because of his oratorical skill but due to the contents of his remarks. He captured audience attention from the start with his query: "Why is there poverty and injustice when Mexico is a rich country in every sense of the word?" This is a question we all ask ourselves.

In the combat that debate implies, he was also the only speaker to succeed in showing up some of his opponents' failings—he even came armed with proofs which he displayed to the audience—whereas neither Zedillo nor Cárdenas managed to refute him.

Cárdenas, who captured a high percentage of votes in 1988 and maintains that he was the real winner of that year's elections, may have lost the undecided vote due to

his performance in the debate—an important factor given that while Mexicans want change, they are also afraid of it. In fact, the first point Cárdenas made to the audience was not to be afraid of change.

A Mexican saying notes that the higher you are, the further you fall. And Zedillo, candidate of the government party, was the one who slipped furthest as a result of the debate—although this doesn't necessarily mean he'll take a fall in the August 21 elections.

He got off to a bad start by thanking his two opponents for accepting his invitation to debate; but as noted above, while the debate occurred because he was willing to participate, it was not the result of an initiative by Zedillo himself. Then he scolded the other two candidates for profiting from the name of Luis Donaldo Colosio, although the PRI is the only party to do so. He used the term "compatriots" over and over, and failed to utter a single memorable phrase.

He avoided commenting on issues that concern the public. This was the case, for example, when Fernández asked Zedillo to explain what happened with his predictions of economic growth and his National Development Plan, as well as when the PAN candidate told him while he was a good kid with high grades he flunked out in democracy, scoring his pre-debate statement that he would not form a pluralist government. Within a few days President Salinas himself came out in favor of pluralism.

But we will let you arrive at your own conclusions about the candidates on the basis of the summary of their speeches printed below. We have included their opening remarks so you can judge whether or not they gave a good drubbing to their opponents.

I Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The hour of this long-awaited debate has finally arrived....

I have traveled throughout the country over the past six years. I have found a countryside abandoned, factories closed, laid-off workers.... One can safely say that very few are better off than they were in 1988.... Except for a handful who have concentrated most of the country's wealth in their hands, the rest of us are looking for a change, and we want this change to be a just and well-thought-out one.

We should not be afraid of change. Let us think of the changes that occur in our own lives, in a child who grows up and starts changing into an adolescent, a young person,

an adult. As time passes we continue learning, acquiring new skills, new knowledge; we become more able to resolve our problems, and that is the change we want to occur in our country. A change that allows us to improve, that allows us to get to the root of our problems, a change which allows us a way out from the morass the current government has sunk us in, so that we can enter a new stage, of growth, of creativity, of the use of our resources....

It is indispensable that we go forward on the basis of these three key points: democracy, economic growth and social equity....

This government has created many poor people, and here I want to recall that the PRI's own candidate has stated that the greatest shame of the regime, of the government he has been a part of, is the poverty in which it has sunk millions of Mexicans....

Ernesto Zedillo. Good evening, compatriots.... I thank [the other candidates] for accepting my invitation to engage in this debate, which will certainly strengthen our democracy.... Tonight's debate is about, and for, the future of Mexico. Every Mexican family will have the well-being it deserves and which

is its right as a result of what we Mexicans have done in the past and what we will do from now on; not because of what we have *not* done in the past. So this debate is about the future and not the past, compatriots....

I come from a family in which daily life sometimes meant limitations, and sometimes poverty. And nevertheless, thanks to my parents' and teachers' efforts, thanks to the opportunities Mexico has given me, today I am here, aspiring to be your president. This is Mexico, land of opportunities....

My aspiration to serve you, compatriots, is backed up by a lifetime of work, of study, of knowledge, of acquaintance with the country's problems. It is backed up by a long career of public service, which I began when I was very young, a career which has taken me from the most modest posts of public administration to heading two government ministries. I know I am the youngest of the candidates for president, but I assure you that I am the one with the most experience of good government....

Many compatriots are aggrieved by injustice, by the lack of security, by violence, and often by the corruption

Ernesto Zedillo, presidential candidate of the PRI

On March 29—in the wake of the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio on March 23—Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León was nominated as the PRI's candidate for the presidency.

Ernesto Zedillo was born on December 27, 1951, in Mexico City. As a student, he was forced to work as a shoe-shiner, newspaper vendor and even a scrap-metal collector in order to be able to complete his studies. He attended primary school in Baja California and likes to be called a Baja Californian because of his roots in that state—which is currently governed by the opposition PAN and was the site of Colosio's slaying.

Between 1974 and 1978 he completed his Master's degree and Ph.D. in economics at Yale. The title of his doctoral thesis was "Public Foreign Debt in Mexico: Recent History and Future Optimum Growth As Linked to Oil."

Zedillo's political career began in 1978 at the Banco de México. He was Secretary of Planning and the Federal Budget (a post held by the last two presidents, Miguel de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas), Secretary of Public Education, and Luis Donaldo Colosio's campaign manager.

His political fortunes have risen spectacularly over the past 16 years, but winning the August 21 elections will be a real challenge for the PRI as a result of recent months' events: the Chiapas uprising, Colosio's assassination and the kidnapping of high-ranking Mexican executives.

The short time remaining to Zedillo before the elections has turned radio and TV into strategic platforms for this electoral campaign.

For the first time in the country's political history, a debate was held among key presidential candidates. On May 12, Zedillo and his two most powerful opponents—Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the PRD and the PAN's Diego Fernández de Cevallos—inaugurated this method of campaigning in Mexico. Colosio had proposed and accepted this public debate with his rivals.

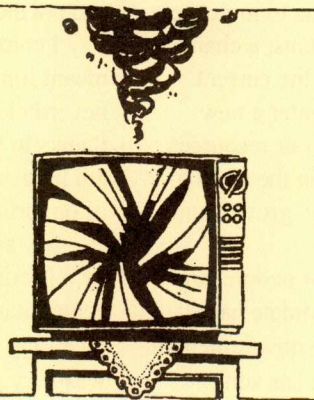
According to political analyst Luis Fernando Núñez Valbuena, "Today more than ever, Ernesto Zedillo's campaign will be a decisive factor in whether or not the PRI wins, and he has two quite strong competitors: Cárdenas and Diego. Now electoral competition is a reality."

Nevertheless, the presidential candidates' main objective should be to convince the electorate to vote on August 21. Otherwise, the winner will have been non-participation.

CALEDON en REFORMA AL CALCE

25 August '94

A FEW NOTES ON THE DEBATE



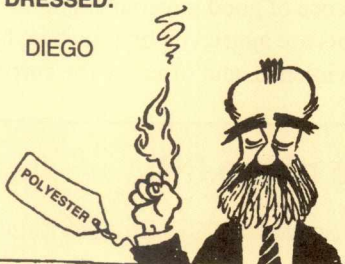
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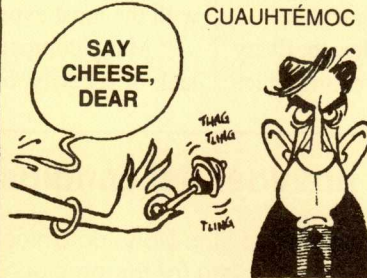
THE WORST DRESSED:

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THE MOST LUGUBRIOUS:

CUAUHTÉMOC



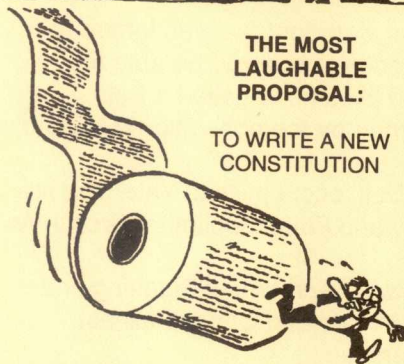
THE MOST-REPEATED CLICHÉ ("CRUTCH" IN SPANISH):

"COMPATRIOTS."



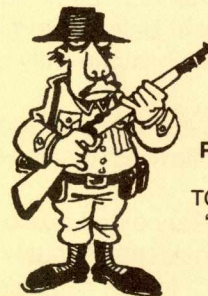
THE MOST LAUGHABLE PROPOSAL:

TO WRITE A NEW CONSTITUTION



THE SCARIEST PROPOSAL:

TO CREATE A "NATIONAL GUARD."



THE BIGGEST BRICK THROWN FROM A GLASS HOUSE:

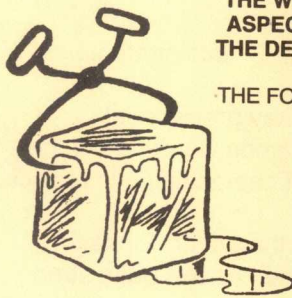
"DON'T SEEK PROFIT FROM COLOSIO'S DEATH."



...WE OWN THE COPYRIGHT

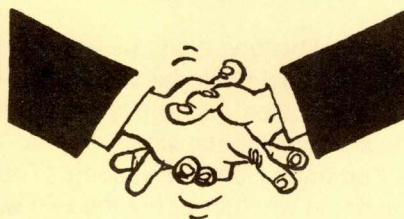
THE WORST ASPECT OF THE DEBATE:

THE FORMAT



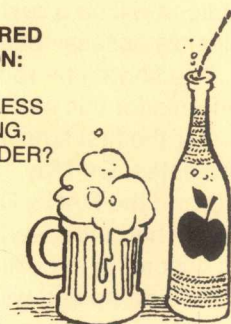
THE BEST PART OF THE DEBATE:

THEY ALL SHOOK HANDS



THE UNANSWERED QUESTION:

WHICH IS LESS FATTENING, BEER OR CIDER?



CALEDON

of the police forces, the judicial authorities and prosecutors' offices.

Because of this I am proposing a total reform of our justice system. It has to be a reform from the foundations, almost from scratch, because we need a justice system that works for Mexicans; to establish a state of law which protects citizens' rights, which avoids violence, which delivers us from insecurity....

Regarding economic issues, without giving ground to inflation and without returning to the policies of the past, we need to grow once again. Our economy must grow much faster than the population, so we can generate the jobs you are demanding. I am therefore proposing an economic policy, one of whose central points will be promoting investment, so we can take advantage of our enormous domestic market as well as the new international markets which have opened up to us....

Poverty is our greatest challenge. We must work so that the millions of Mexicans who still live in conditions of poverty will be able to overcome it.... And we will do this strengthening our federalism, making decisions not here in the center of the country but there, where you live, and we will do this, compatriots, strengthening our democracy....

Diego Fernández. Mexican citizens, friends. We are a young nation with a majority made up of young people. We are a peace-loving people, who want to work in order to live in dignity, who want to progress. We have a great moral, cultural, religious and historical wealth. Our land is large and beautiful, and it yields us minerals and much oil.

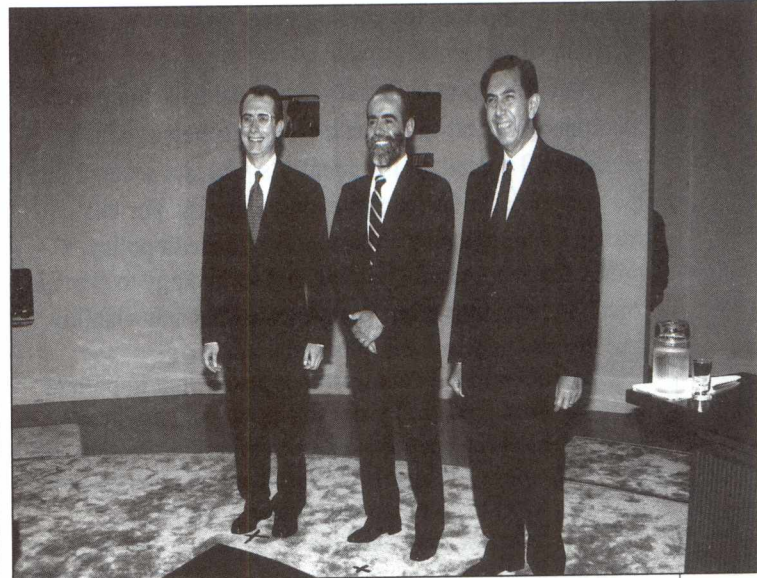
As part of our heritage we also have the oceans' eternal embrace. More than sixteen thousand miles of coastline... with all that implies from the standpoint of tourism, food supplies and trade. And with all this, with everything that we are, with everything we have, the question that must be asked is: why is there hunger, why is there deprivation, why is there unemployment, why is there a lack of security, why is there guerrilla war, why is death amongst us?

I think this is because we have not achieved a just order. Because we have not been able to form good governments. Because politics does not tend to conform to ethics and because the economy has not been genuinely human.

No, Dr. Zedillo. We have not come here to speak only of the future. To speak of the future we must also speak of the present, and to understand the present we must speak of the past....

For me, above and beyond the scope of this debate, my concern is to invite you, the men and women of Mexico... to vote freely and in good conscience so that we can democratically guide the nation's destiny.

And if we all agree that change is urgent, we should also agree that we do not want to change, Dr. Zedillo, in a way that will leave everything as it was; nor, Mr.



Ernesto Zedillo, Diego Fernández and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (from left to right) smile before the debate starts.

Cárdenas, in a way that would take us back to a past which should not return....

We seek a change which does not mean destroying all that is Mexico, because much of what we do have has come at a high price for the Mexican people. We need to achieve a change that consolidates the good aspects, but at the same time is able to overcome and rectify deviations in politics and economics....

In the opposition, compatriots, we have succeeded in making the government carry out some rectifications, and when it has done so we have supported those decisions for the good of Mexico, for you, for the nation. But we have also clearly stated our differences with the government. This is a difference on political as well as economic issues. And I will state it here, albeit briefly. We continue to defend effective suffrage, which the government does not respect; the division of [governmental] powers, which is not respected in Mexico; authentic federalism, municipal life—in a word a state of law. And regarding economic affairs, we continue to fight for a genuinely human economy at the service of man, in which we will all have opportunities to work, as well as for the distribution and sharing out of wealth.... We have a country, we have a people, what we need is a good government. The National Action Party has a democratic internal life and wants to share that with you, because it wants Mexico to live democratically....

II

Ernesto Zedillo. Over the past five years our country has made a great effort to overcome a profound financial crisis.... In only one month of campaigning I have received more than 34,000 letters, and the common denominator of many of them is people's anguish at not having a job, a good job or a better wage. For this reason I am proposing

that we establish, as the coming years' greatest priority, the recovery of economic growth....

A central point in that strategy must have to do with medium-sized and small businesses, businesses which generate 60 percent of the country's jobs and account for the greater part of Mexico's export capacity. For this reason I am proposing a fiscal policy, a credit policy, a policy for encouraging training and technology to provide small and medium-sized businesses with a new viability, and thereby generate the jobs that you need.

Attention to the countryside is also a very important item on this agenda.... I propose a policy of very heavy investment in the countryside: of training for peasants, of new technology, of opportune credit at just prices, a policy enabling them to commercialize their products....

The time has come, as Luis Donaldo used to say, to go from good national finances to good family finances; that the effects of good macroeconomics be felt in the pockets and at the tables of Mexican workers and peasants.... That will be our challenge in the following years, and I am sure we will succeed in meeting it, so long as we look to the future, so long as we do not regress to the policies of the past and do not experiment with that which already demonstrated its complete failure.

Diego Fernández. We have come to debate. I want to dedicate most of my time to Dr. Zedillo, because of what he represents, but these minutes are directed at you, Engineer Cárdenas.¹

In several different forums you have been saying that the choice facing Mexico is between the official option and the democratic option that you represent. I will take the liberty of demonstrating to you, with facts, that you do not represent a democratic option, and that you are a man with one face when in the opposition and another when in government.

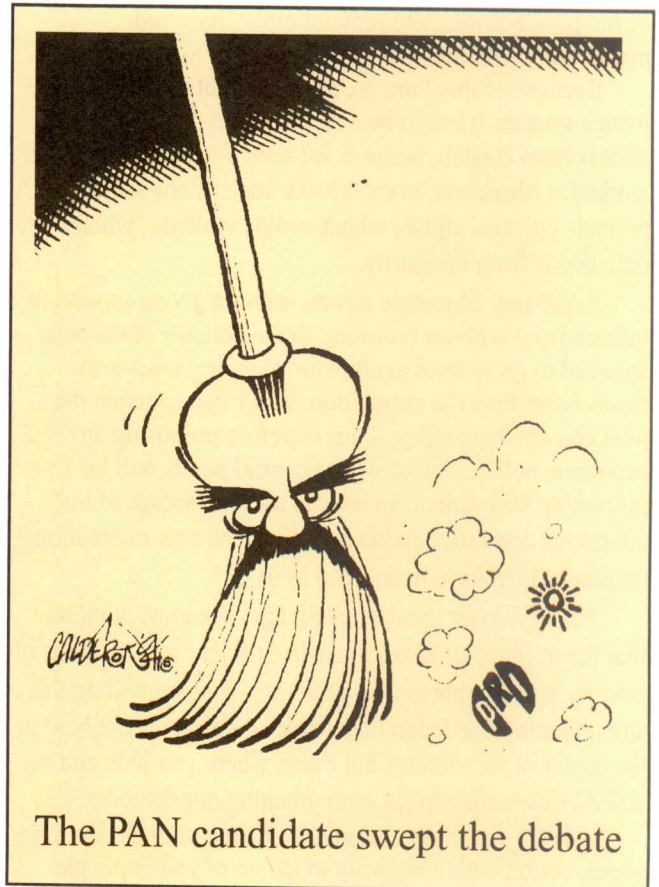
Today, as part of the opposition, you state with democratic intransigence that the government must get its hands off of electoral processes. But you promulgated this electoral law in Michoacán, where you were in control of the elections.² Here it is [shows law].

Today, speaking at schools and universities, you present yourself as a tolerant and pluralist man, respectful of young people, of freedom of speech, of academic freedom, while in your day, in 1985 in Michoacán, Marxism-Leninism was imposed. Here is the [curriculum] text if you would like to look it over. I have it here at your disposal.

That's not all; while you put yourself forward today as someone who is tolerant, respectful, and we could say

¹ In Mexico "Engineer," like several other academic titles, is often used in the same way as "Professor" or "Dr." Cárdenas' academic title is Engineer. (Editor's note.)

² Cárdenas served as PRI governor of the state of Michoacán from 1980 to 1986. (Editor's note.)



sympathetic towards the students, you don't tell them that in Michoacán you promulgated a law that genuinely damaged the dignity not only of students but of an entire people.

I will take the liberty of reading you just one article; this bears your signature, and hopefully you haven't forgotten that. Article 101 of the state's education law says: "Any student who carries out any kind of individual or collective act that infringes public order will be expelled from the state educational system." Under this law all the young people of 1968³ would have been thrown out of the nation's educational system. You aren't telling the students about that.

Another point: today you criticize the government, and rightly so, for immorally and illegally giving money to the PRI. Nevertheless, when you were governor of your home state you gave money to the PRI, and you have admitted this. I have a recording of your voice here if you would like to listen to it.

Finally, you have insisted that you are opposed to the *dedazo*.⁴ I would like to show you here today, with documents, that it is true that you have been opposed to the presidential *dedazo*, but only when it did not benefit you. I

³ Massive student protests occurred in Mexico in 1968. (Editor's note.)

⁴ The *dedazo* (pointing of the finger) is the nomination of candidates by the president or other public officials. See "How Presidential Succession Works in Mexico," *Voices of Mexico* 26, January-March 1994, pp 75-81. (Editor's note.)

am going back a few years, and Mr. Zedillo, please allow me to talk about history. In 1974 you [Cárdenas] said that when [then-president] Echeverría used the methods of exclusion to designate Mr. Torres Manzo as a candidate, you put out a public manifesto which the government didn't like. I have the manifesto here. However, some years later you were governor of your home state of Michoacán, and when a friend of yours asked you "How did you become governor?" you answered: "I told the president I was interested. Later they told me I was the candidate."

Investigation into the Colosio case

The events surrounding the assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta on March 23 —just after he had given a campaign speech in Tijuana— have still not been clarified.

The only fact clearly established so far is that the assassin was 23-year-old Mario Aburto Martínez, a native of Michoacán living in Tijuana. Detained at the scene of the crime, moments after the assassination, Aburto has repeatedly ratified his declaration that he shot Colosio.

The course of the investigation has been characterized by a lack of precise information and the enormous number of doubts it has produced.

In the first official version, released a day after the events, the Attorney General's Office cited Aburto as the sole perpetrator of the crime. However, the special Assistant Attorney General's Office, created at the president's behest to take charge of the investigation, states that photos and video footage show simultaneous and concerted actions by at least five individuals in addition to Aburto —lending credence to the hypothesis of a plot to assassinate the PRI candidate.

Three of these individuals have been identified and are currently being held, together with Aburto, in the top-security Almoloya de Juárez Prison in the state of Mexico. The accused —Tranquilino Sánchez Venegas, Vicente Mayoral Valenzuela and his son, Rodolfo Mayoral Esquer, invited by members of the local PRI committee to participate without pay in the candidate's security detail— have so far denied any involvement in the crime.

To date there has been no information making it possible to identify the person or persons nor the motives behind the crime.

Mr. Cárdenas, this proves that you have one face as part of the opposition and another as part of the government. I agree that you have a great aspiration, an obsession with being president. But we have known you both in the opposition and in the government, and we do not believe that you would be an option of modernity for Mexico. To finish, I would just like to tell you that if the Mexican people has to believe that you are a democratic option, then we would have to believe Aburto when he says he is a pacifist.⁵

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. I have never hidden what I am, and I don't hide it now. I recognize the events in which I have participated during my life. I have nothing to reproach myself with in that regard....

The proposals which we heard in the first part of this segment may sound very similar to our viewers and listeners....

We have strong differences with the PRI and the National Action Party.... We cannot believe, we have no reason to believe either the PRI candidate or his party. They say one thing and do another. We all know that the 1988 elections were marked by fraud and that they produced a government which up through today —and this can no longer be remedied— has lacked legitimacy....

We also have differences with National Action. One difference in particular led us not only to have different positions but to clash in terms of our views on how to move toward democracy. That was when the constitutional reform on electoral matters was put to a vote in 1989, when the PAN voted together with the PRI to move backwards, to close democratic spaces, and this put us on opposite sides.

However, I would like to use this occasion to invite National Action to join forces to move our country toward democracy, that we unite so that in joint action National Action and the Party of the Democratic Revolution can make a decisive contribution to democratic change in our country.

We cannot believe the government's candidate. Only now, it seems, does he realize that there is corruption, there is unemployment, that many things are lacking in our country.... He recognizes the failure of the government's policies because of all the regression they have brought the country. So we have no reason to believe the system, the regime which has been the number one manufacturer of poverty in our country, which offered us a million new jobs a year and has barely been able to fulfill one third of that figure. Which promised us sustained, supported, growing education, while what we have is a big deterioration of the educational system.

We cannot believe those who promised us economic growth, when today what we have is clearly stagnation. Let us

⁵ Aburto is the accused assassin of Colosio; see box on this page about the course of investigations in the Colosio case. (Editor's note.)

Daniel Mendoza / Imagenlatina.



The three parties invited the faithful to watch their candidates on giant screens (photo of PRI rally).

recall that it was under the guidance of Dr. Zedillo [as Secretary of Programming and the Budget] that the National Development Plan was prepared. At this point, at the end of the six-year presidential term, we were supposed to be growing 6 percent, but the rate is barely 0.4 percent. These policies, the policies Dr. Zedillo offers, can only bring us six more years of the same thing, six years of stagnation, six years of corruption, six years of pollution, six years which would mean only a fall into the abyss for the Mexican people.

III

Diego Fernández. Mr. Cárdenas: of course we are very willing to contribute to the fight for democracy together with all who wish to do so, but in a serious way, not just when it is convenient or circumstantially opportune. You did not rebut any of the charges, and now I will devote these minutes to Dr. Zedillo.

Dr. Zedillo: I would like to say something to you that many millions of Mexicans might want to tell you. From the information you have given us recently, we know you have been a good kid, with high grades; but in terms of democracy we sincerely believe you have flunked. I'll tell you why. Allow me to make a comparison.

I am here because thousands of free men and women in the National Action Party freely voted for this candidacy. Yet I would like to tell you, with all due respect, that you are here as a result of two tragedies: first, Colosio's death; and second, designation by the president.

You are in no way guilty of the first, which is beyond your control; but the second disqualifies you, at least if what we're talking about is democracy.

Moving to another topic, in the time remaining to me. Economics is your forte. We know you are a good economist, and your most prominent participation in the government, which you mentioned a little here, has been precisely in the economic field; and in this field the government has failed in fundamental ways.

As a political party, we have tried to act in a completely honorable way, and we have acknowledged, without embarrassment, the things the government has done right. That is the function of the honorable opposition: not to destroy everything, nor to question everything arbitrarily.

But I want to tell you that when we have disagreements we state them as well. For us, your National Development Plan means 40 million poor people. Certainly, there are some macroeconomic changes, which we have recognized, but they do not justify the final result. Hopefully you can tell us what happened with the predictions you made, as [planning] secretary, regarding the current account deficit. You made predictions which repeatedly turned out wrong, over the course of years, to the tune of billions of dollars, and hopefully you can also tell us, if time permits, what happened with your goal of 6 percent growth for 1993. We are at least 15 times beneath that level—and while we're talking about projections, promises and plans, I would like to tell you here and now that we ought to believe you 15 times less than what you say.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. I am surprised by the democracy that National Action's candidate sometimes preaches. I would think we'd have to see Vicente Fox instead of Carlos Medina as the head of government in Guanajuato.⁶ It's just a thought I'll leave you with....

Why should we believe the official candidate now when he offers us change, given that this regime—of which the official party's candidate has been a very prominent functionary, I wouldn't say a man with experience of good government, because what we have seen of his time in office in really a fiasco, a fiasco in planning, a fiasco in education. In any case, why should we believe the PRI candidate... since it is only now that he realizes there is corruption in the government?...

Ernesto Zedillo. First of all, I would very respectfully ask the gentlemen candidates not to try to profit from the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio. Especially you, Mr. Engineer Cárdenas, who very frequently used your well-known verbal violence during Luis Donaldo Colosio's campaign. I was particularly offended when on December 10 in Hermosillo, Sonora, you called Luis Donaldo Colosio a bad Mexican and said he acted against the interests of the country. Instead of seeking to profit politically from his image, you should be asking the Colosio family's forgiveness.

Engineer Cárdenas has said that the proposals sound similar; and it is true, since his proposals have started to sound more like the government's. The more he's realized

⁶ The PAN claimed victory for its candidate, Vicente Fox, in the recent gubernatorial elections in the state of Guanajuato. Nevertheless, PRI candidate Ramón Aguirre took office, only to resign a few days later and be replaced by PAN member Carlos Medina. (Editor's note.)

that his proposals are not accepted by the Mexican people, the more he has adopted the proposals of the government.

The question posed here is this: what would have happened if six years ago Mr. Cárdenas, who did not win then, had won, and if we had adopted the economic policies he put forward then—economic policies of public deficit, policies to ignore inflation, policies of uncontrolled government spending, policies for more government-owned enterprises with subsidies paid for by the people?

The answer is quite clear, compatriots: today the country would be sunk in the deepest poverty; our economy would be a disaster....

We have everything needed for a growing economy; we already have the foundations, thanks to the sacrifices and efforts that have been made. I propose that we return to growth, and that we apply the resources from that growth to the fight against poverty. I repeat that the fight against poverty is our greatest challenge. I am sure that fighting and defeating poverty will be the greatest achievement of our generation.

IV

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The foundations of our platform are democratic change, the transition to democracy, ending the current regime of the government party, and, moreover, recovering a productive economy. It is indispensable that... there begin to be respect for the law and the Constitution, which today are systematically violated by the authorities. Abiding by the law will give us a radically different country.

We are for the division of powers, for authentic federalism, for municipal autonomy, for developing a regime of freedoms in our country. And we want our economy to recover on the basis of concentrating and developing economic policy for generating jobs, the most important challenge the Mexican people will have to face at this, the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st....

We will start off with an emergency plan... an intensive public-works program which could become the leading factor for economic growth in our country. At the same time we will start preparing a plan for sustained growth, which we could put into effect starting in 1996—that is, after one year in office—a plan which would allow us to reactivate productive investment and finance our development without causing indebtedness. That is, spending only what is earned.

That we would be able, additionally, to carry out a deep-going fiscal reform allowing us to have a more just and simpler tax system, and to put an end to fiscal terrorism. We will get rid of the two-percent tax on business assets....

But I would not want to end this segment without mentioning other concerns. The government continues to violate our laws systematically. It continues to create

government agencies and to appoint functionaries who earn very high salaries while ignoring the laws which the government itself has enacted.

What was this National Security Department created for? This placed a functionary over the heads of the Secretaries of the Interior, National Defense and the Navy. This is an offense to our armed forces.

We also see that the government is buying armored vehicles equipped with water cannons. Is that for the elections? What do they want those machines for? Why were they delivered to the Secretariat of National Defense, when they never should have been brought into the country at all? In any case these are for the police: the municipal police, the metropolitan police. Or does the government want to place the armed forces in confrontation with the citizenry?... That is the only explanation for these policies: to continue pitting Mexicans against Mexicans; not to seek a resolution of problems through reconciliation.

Ernesto Zedillo. I would like to devote this time period to a subject of the utmost importance for all Mexicans: the subject of education.

You know that education is the key to individual, family and national advancement.... I am convinced that in the next years we must carry out a great crusade for national education. I had the very high honor of serving as Secretary of Education for almost two years. With the support of the women and men who serve as teachers in Mexico I was able to participate in an educational reform which has led us to decentralize the educational system, out of the hands of the federal government and into those of local governments. This was a genuine act of federalism, because we took power, resources and authority away from the federal government and gave them to local governments. We were able to carry out the first reform of study plans, programs and materials in 20 years; to establish a new system for teacher development in Mexico; to work on reforming Article Three of the Constitution, which established... the government's obligation to provide pre-school education.

With all this, compatriots, we know that much remains to be done with regard to education. For this reason, I propose... that we put an end to illiteracy, that we ensure that

“The wild, violent Mexico, mistakenly called barbarous, is not yet in the tomb; it merely sleeps. Let us not rouse it.... We would all be destroyed if the wild Mexico awoke”

Jesús Reyes Heróles



all primary-school-age children attend school, because 15 percent of children still do not enter primary school, and many drop out before completing primary school; that we make obligatory secondary education a reality; that we multiply the opportunities for training and technological education; that we give a big push to higher education, in the public universities, in the technological institutes; that we make sure that no young person who has the talent, capability and desire to do so is kept from attending university. Let us establish a national system of scholarships for them.... The best investment we can make in our country is investment in people. That is the foundation of Mexico's future.

Diego Fernández. I must respond to two imputations. First, Mr. Cárdenas, in Guanajuato National Action won the election. If we were able to redress the injustice only in part, do not blame us; that was what we obtained. We are not culpable of a fraud which was only partially redressed. However, I would like to say that hopefully on future occasions, in the debates you suggest, we can talk about electoral matters. For the present, I have here 23 cases in Michoacán when the beneficiary was your party, and not on the sort of clear basis as in the case of the victory of National Action and Fox in Guanajuato. This will be available to you in any debate.

Secondly, Dr. Zedillo, I have given you no cause to recommend that I not seek profit from Colosio's death. I have been very respectful in the face of that tragedy; I was aghast at it, and I said so publicly. I merely said that one of the reasons you are here was that crime, but I also said that it was beyond your control, and that you are not to blame for it. I have not sought to profit from the cunning and cowardly crime committed against Colosio.

I will move on to proposals. From National Action's viewpoint it is not a question of putting forward a voluntaristic and demagogic list of recipes. Mexico's

problem is that the country needs to be reconstructed, and the country's reconstruction demands that as Mexicans all of us make a great effort to have a clear conception, from a genuinely human viewpoint, of what Mexico is, with its history, Dr. Zedillo, with its present, and for its future....

Some fundamental measures —pardon me for stating them very briefly, since only a few minutes are available: as president of the republic I will form a pluralist government; this is fundamental. It will not be a party government. And a pluralist government is necessary if we want to find peace and concord among Mexicans.

As president of Mexico, Mr. Zedillo, Mr. Cárdenas, I will not be the head of a political party. I think I will be the first president of Mexico not to be the head of a political party.

I will respect and fulfill the twenty agreements for democracy which a very broad and very distinguished group of citizens from all over the country has put before the candidates. I made these agreements my own because they coincide with the National Action Party's theses and programs, and I reiterate that pledge.

I will respect the federalist powers of the states and municipalities. And this is a clear and viable offer: I will immediately raise, by 100 percent, the amount of funds going to all the country's municipalities.... And don't tell me this is a voluntaristic increase, because it can be done simply by removing one spending program from the hands of the president of the republic.

As part of a great national crusade for public security, I would propose the creation of a National Guard, the basis for which already exists in the Constitution. As part of the administration of justice, I will propose the creation of a General Council to restructure and overhaul that branch of government.

A national crusade is urgently needed with regard to education as well. To emphasize anew the importance of teachers, not to change the Secretary of Education three or four times —as occurred during this six-year presidential term; and spending must be increased... above all if a tax-deductibility policy is established.

In the government to come we will have to achieve absolute discipline and honesty in the government's own spending. We will have to carry out a just, simple, clear and permanent regulation of our administrative and judicial laws, so that small and medium-sized industry, as well as the countryside, may flourish.

And speaking of the countryside, it demands justice, and money. I can only say to you, as time is running out: in the countryside, not one *latifundio* and not one land invasion....⁷

⁷ A *latifundio* is the sort of large landed estate that prevailed before the Mexican Revolution. Land invasions are unauthorized seizures of estates or other lands by peasants. (Editor's note.)

V
Ernesto Zedillo. At this time I would like to stress the issue of justice.

One of the most important wrongs suffered by individuals and families is the lack of security. We must admit that today the citizen does not feel the law is on his side. Every day we hear about acts of violence, acts of aggression against honorable and decent citizens. We must frankly recognize that our system of justice leaves much to be desired.... Because of this, one of the fundamental proposals of the government I propose to lead is carrying out a total reform of our justice system.

This reform must include a review of existing laws, since —let us admit it— unjust laws still exist in our country. A clear example are those laws which do not give women full equality in the exercise of their rights.

I have proposed a reform for transforming this situation. I have also said that the executive branch should not have a monopoly over the offices of the judicial police, and I will promote a reform to break that monopoly. Together with state government, within the

framework of our federal pact, I will transform the way in which police agencies are currently trained, function and carry out their duties.

I will promote reforms of the judicial branch in order to give it greater autonomy and complete independence from the federal executive branch. But it will also have to be a reform which guarantees us that judges will be just, that they always side legally with the citizen.... I propose that this be one of the first points attended to by our government....

Diego Fernández. The financial opening of this country is undoubtedly urgent. The government has committed a crime by opening the borders to competition against the countryside as well as small, medium-sized and “micro” businesses, while protecting a banking oligopoly. This is unjust, and it is a crime which cannot continue.

We need to attract domestic and foreign savings in order to capitalize the countryside as well as small, medium-sized and micro businesses. We also need to promote the participation of all society in creating a modern infrastructure. Just think of the railways. They come from the time of Don Porfirio [Díaz], a hundred years ago.

Negotiating the debate

In 1982, the PAN submitted a proposal for a Debate Law —the first precedent on this subject in Mexico.

Nevertheless, it took eleven years for a PRI presidential candidate to agree to participate in a public debate with opposition candidates. On November 28, 1993 —the day Luis Donaldo Colosio was nominated by the PRI— PRD presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas invited him to a public comparison of the two projects for the country that each of them represented.

On accepting the proposal that afternoon, Colosio said: “I shall invite candidates from other parties to a broad debate in order to compare ideas and programs.”

This marked the beginning of contacts between the political parties to negotiate the terms of the debate, as well as of the polemic between the candidates as to which parties should participate. However, the armed uprising in Chiapas overshadowed the issue of the debate at that time.

Ernesto Zedillo, replacement candidate for the slain Colosio, took up the debate proposal. On April 24, almost a month after his nomination, Zedillo invited Cárdenas and Diego Fernández, the PAN candidate, to participate in the “first debate between presidential candidates in Mexico’s modern history.”

However, three other candidates (of the nine registered), were to go down in history as protagonists of the first public debate in the country’s history: Rafael Aguilar Talamantes (PFCRN), Jorge González Torres (PVEM) and Pablo Emilio Madero (UNO). On May 11, rather than actually debating, these three candidates set forth their ideas and proposals on democracy, poverty, unemployment, public safety, social justice and education —topics they had previously agreed on and which they discussed over a 90-minute period.

The next day saw the historic debate between the country’s three main political forces —the PRI, PAN and PRD, which receive between 80 and 90 per cent of all votes.

While the “debate” between the minority opposition candidates was open to the public, the mass media were not even allowed in for security reasons. While both debates were televised, the one that captured Mexican society’s attention was obviously the one held on May 12. In fact, it has been estimated that this program broke all previous viewers’ ratings in the history of Mexican television, including sports events.

Sources: *La Jornada*, May 12, 1994, and *Reforma*, May 11, 1994.

First-ever presidential debate

May 11 marked the first debate ever held among presidential candidates in Mexico. The participants were Rafael Aguilar Talamantes, candidate of the Party of the Cardenista Front of National Reconstruction (PFCRN); Jorge González Torres of the Green Ecology Party of Mexico (PVEM); and Pablo Emilio Madero Belden, of the National Opposition Union (UNO).

The candidates of the remaining three minor parties —Cecilia Soto of the Labor Party (PT), Marcela Lombardo of the People's Socialist Party (PPS) and Alvaro Pérez Treviño of the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM)— refused to participate, as a protest against not being invited to the "great debate" held the following day between the PRI, the PAN and the PRD.

I will promote an immediate opening-up and pluralism in the media, without injustice and with malice to none... We all need to have communications media which will be useful to society.

A final point: it is urgent that the government carry out —always— a frank, sincere, constructive dialogue with the entire population and call on it to work for the good of Mexico.

The government of the republic must guarantee that in the face of the law there will be neither harshness nor tolerance, but simply justice and understanding, always, so all Mexicans can understand one another in concord. And I propose, with your help, to lead a federal government, a presidency, which guarantees nobility, gentlemanly dignity and managerial ability....

It is necessary that now, once and for all, we Mexicans have a government we can support, that we can trust and upon which we can make demands. It is unjust that, once again, plans come and go, that once again they

be a sort of literature which is gone with the wind. What is in demand today is a commitment to truth, and today the democratic position is, without a doubt, the National Action Party.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. It is late in the day for the PRI's candidate to realize that there is corruption and there are deficiencies in the police forces, in the judicial offices, in the administration of justice. We can pose the question here: why is he just realizing this now? And above all, why is he denouncing this now, and not when he was an official of the current administration?

It is only now that he realizes that in education —and he was Secretary of Education— many are the things left unfulfilled. Primary and secondary education are obligatory according to the Constitution. One quarter of the children who should be going to primary school do not attend primary school. As for secondary schools, only 26 out of every 100 who should complete their secondary education do so. This government has made no effort to abide by the

Citizens' proposals

The issues of greatest concern to Mexicans —which were suggested for the debate between the PAN, PRD and PRI— are education, the economy, public safety and democracy.

Of the 1,417 individuals who responded to the survey conducted by *Reforma* (Mexico City) and *El Norte* (Monterrey) newspapers, 46% thought that education should be the first of multiple subjects for debate, with particular emphasis on the quality of public education.

This was followed by the economy (42%), with unemployment being the main concern; public safety (41%); democracy (40%); the countryside (29%); ecology (25%); social policy (18%); communications and transport (13%); public services (11%); foreign policy and trade (10%); current affairs (8%), including the Chiapas uprising and the assassination of Colosio; federalism (8%); the Church (7%); and the mass media (5%).

Reforma, May 9, 1994.

constitutional requirement to make primary and secondary education genuinely obligatory.

Neither has this government been concerned with improving conditions for teachers. Today, in real terms, they are earning less than half—that is, 48 percent—of what they earned in 1981.

So why should we believe that the official candidate will now really begin to concern himself with education, that now there will be training programs, that now there will be more and better schools for the Mexican people?

During his term, with very high spending... to formulate and publish textbooks.... The Secretariat of Education has not given a public explanation as to why it failed in the contest held [to write] these books, when prizes were paid, and the spending was carried out for these books, which are sitting in warehouses, when our children are lacking basic textbooks in the schools of the entire country.

What does the PRI candidate offer us? More of the same, more lies, more broken promises. I do not believe that this is what we Mexicans want....

VI

Diego Fernández. We would like to stress that, today more than ever, it is necessary to seek the vote of the entire Mexican people; but the vote which Mexico needs is the vote of conscience, the vote of reason, the vote which seeks a better destiny for all.

We cannot accept the vote of fear, of that complicit fear which, if it occurred, would allow—to Mexico's misfortune—that everything continue to be the same; and to go on the same means to get worse. Neither should it be the vote of bitterness and the vote of resentment that comes with revenge and that comes with violence. We need the vote of concord, the vote of peace....

Let me make a special appeal to the young people of this country, who need to participate seriously and in depth, without lies, without pranks, without cowardice. All the Mexican people needs to participate, but there is a storehouse, a patrimony, an incalculable wealth in the women of Mexico, and I believe that the women can, if they so decide, change Mexico on August 21st; that on August 21st they can change the direction of this country,

Debate conditions

Setting. A closed, sand-colored circle. The candidates were placed in the middle along the edges of an equilateral triangle, with the moderator in the center on a lower level. Podiums A, B and C were assigned to Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, Ernesto Zedillo and Diego Fernández respectively, by means of a drawing held half an hour before the debate. The candidates delivered their speeches standing behind high work-tables.

Participation. The debate lasted an hour and a half and was divided into three parts: initial exposition, political ideas and proposals, and final message. In accordance with the results of the drawing, each candidate spoke seven times, in rotating order:

1. A, B and C: 8 minutes each
2. B, C and A: 5 minutes
3. C, A and B: 3 minutes
4. A, B and C: 5 minutes
5. B, C and A: 3 minutes
6. C, A and B: 3 minutes
7. A, B and C: 3 minutes

Rules. Candidates were not allowed to interrupt each other. During their final contribution to the debate, the candidates were not allowed to attack their opponents, since the latter would have no further opportunity to respond.

Time control. Two warning lights were installed so the moderator could use an amber-colored light to advise candidates that they had 30 seconds left to speak, and a red light to advise them that they had 5 seconds left.

Audiovisual arrangements. Ten cameras were installed, seven operating and three in reserve, with a fixed setting. Thus they only relayed images of a single candidate giving his speech, without showing the other contenders, thus preventing viewers from seeing the latter's reactions when they were mentioned. A mobile camera was used for the beginning and end of the program. Equalizers were not used in the sound lines, so as to prevent voice manipulation.

Attendees. Each candidate was allowed 20 guests, including two representatives and two technical supervisors who were permitted access to all areas. On security grounds, entry was forbidden to journalists.

which improves only through the work of all its sons and daughters....

Dr. Zedillo said a few days ago that he will not form a pluralist government; that is tragic. Today, anybody who understands the sign of the times must grant a great breadth of viewpoints in the formation of the new government....

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. I do not know how the National Action Party candidate can call on all Mexicans to join him to change the country, when he has shown a clear disdain for many Mexicans.

I would just like to recall that on one occasion when a group of Mexicans was rightly demanding housing, since they had none, he called them *descalzonzados* [people with no underwear]....

Last Sunday the PRI candidate met with taxi drivers. They offered him a beer and he said he would drink it, but would they please serve it to him in a glass so it would look like [non-alcoholic] cider.

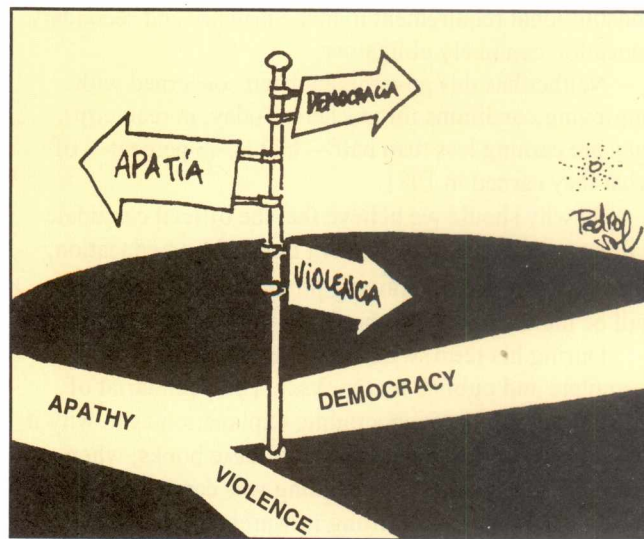
I ask: does the PRI candidate want to give Mexicans beer for cider and cider for beer? Is that the proposal of the current candidate of the official party, Dr. Zedillo, who has so many university degrees and so many academic distinctions which he himself boasts of? Is that the kind of government he wants to give the Mexican people? I repeat, to give us cider for beer and beer for cider?

I would also like to reflect on who the PRI candidate can govern with, who is supporting him.... Let us recall the manifesto which the media have dubbed the "Manifiesto of the Dinosaurs."⁸ This is what the PRI candidate offers us, to return to corruption, to return to populist practices, to return to having the support of those who are largely responsible for the disasters, for the situation of economic, social and political deterioration we are living in at this time....

Ernesto Zedillo. Half-truths are half-lies, and one must not lie to the people, not even a little.... Engineer Cárdenas, when he referred to issues of education, wanted to tell a bit of the truth, and in doing so he told a big lie.

He presented an inaccurate balance-sheet on the current government's educational efforts. Perhaps his advisors, with very bad intentions, did not provide him with the correct facts. During the present administration, in real

⁸ This was an ad published in the Mexican press, signed by prominent officials of previous administrations, some of whom have been accused of corruption and unexplained wealth, as well as functionaries of the current government, who were accused of committing an offense against election laws by publicly supporting a candidate. ("Dinosaurs" is a term used to refer to old-guard, "hard-line" PRI leaders.) The document has also been called the "Ignominious Manifesto." The PAN filed a legal complaint against the manifesto's promoter, Carlos Hank González, Secretary of Agriculture and Water Resources. It is worth noting that our Editorial Director, Hugo B. Margáin, refused to sign the statement. (Editor's note.)



terms, educational spending increased one hundred percent, and most of that spending went toward raising the salaries of the teachers of Mexico.

It is true that there is still a long way to go, and that is my pledge. He did not exactly tell the truth either when he talked about those books in warehouses. It is true that there was a contest, and finally the jury decided that those books should not be printed, and they were not printed. There are no books sitting in warehouses as you alleged, so I beseech you that we stick to complete truths.

I want to devote the remaining time in this segment, compatriots, to speaking about the issue of democracy, to affirm before you that my personal commitment, my commitment as a Mexican, is to the democratic advance of our motherland.

I want to assure you, compatriots, that on August 21st we do not only want your vote. We want legality, credibility, legitimacy, and I am convinced that, thanks to the electoral reforms that have been carried out in recent years, the Mexican people will have an electoral system that fully guarantees the effectiveness of their suffrage.

I do have confidence in the almost two million Mexicans who will be participating in the preparation and carrying out of these elections. Only a minority of those almost two million Mexicans belong to my party. So let us have confidence. The coming elections will be clean.

VII

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. I call on all of you, all Mexicans, so we may win the right to build our democracy. I propose to form a government with the best Mexicans, men and women. A government which will not be of the PRD alone, but which will include those who have participated actively in the democratic movement, people from non-governmental organizations, from business, banking, commerce, people who are now in the universities, in order to have a pluralist

New Public Security Department

At the end of last year, Mexico was one of the few countries without modern military teams, at both the technical and staff level. However, on April 26 President Carlos Salinas de Gortari organized the National Public Security Department, aimed at "creating mechanisms for coordination between the national and Federal District Attorney Generals' offices, and establishing timely, effective channels of communication between the Secretariats of the Interior, National Defense and the Navy, as well as the Federal District Department."

The head of this new department, Arsenio Farell Cubillas—who has served as Secretary of Labor and Social Security over the past 12 years, declared that the department would provide backup to already existing units and implement new security measures, such as:

1. The creation of a special police force in at least 17 Mexican states, comprising personnel trained in techniques for establishing public order. During the initial phase, departments will be set up in the states of Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Chihuahua, Sonora, Baja California, Nuevo León and Guerrero.
2. The organization of anti-terrorist groups, with the aim of putting an end to the terrorism manifested in the country's recent spate of kidnappings. Nearly 300 agents have been trained by instructors from the United States, Spain and Argentina, who gave courses on explosive handling and investigation, assaults on buildings and intelligence.
3. The purchase of anti-riot equipment. The Secretariat of National Defense has imported 296 vehicles for military use, including jeeps, trucks, tanks, double motorcycles and armored trucks with water cannons.
4. The establishment of interdisciplinary police units to combat drug-trafficking in Baja California, made up of federal, state and municipal agents with the objective of combating drug-related activities and crimes.

The creation of this department has produced a number of reactions, but it was formed in response to events in recent months: the armed conflict in Chiapas, the assassination of Colosio and the kidnapping of high-ranking Mexican industrialists.

The discovery in Managua of a list of 150 potential kidnap victims, 77 of whom are Mexican, is an indication that Mexico has become a perfect target for kidnappers. Since the beginning of the current administration, a wave of kidnapping has been unleashed that includes that of Fernando Senderos Mestre (Grupo Desc), Juan Bosco Gutiérrez Cortina (Gutsa), Joaquín Vargas Guajardo (Multivisión), Alfredo Harp Helú (Banamex-Accival) and Angel Losada Moreno (Gigante), the last two of whom have not yet been rescued.

Luis Germán Cárcoba, chairman of the CCE (Business Coordination Council), while denying that the country faces a financial or political crisis, remarked that the problem of lack of security cannot be solved by means of a single mechanism, but only by abiding by the law, with the participation of society as a whole. There has been considerable pressure from businessmen demanding improved public safety, who have expressed concern that Mexico might become a country with similar levels of fear and insecurity as certain Central and South American nations.

According to the writer Carlos Fuentes, this new department is an "anti-constitutional mammoth that undermines the powers of the Attorney General's Office, the Secretariat of the Interior and even the Secretariats for National Defense and the Navy, removing their legal capacity for coordinating matters among themselves and imposing an illegal chain of intermediate power between the president and his secretaries of state."

One of the department's most vociferous critics has been PRD Senator Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, who declared it unconstitutional. "It is a reflection of political instability and insecurity. It contravenes the agreement signed on January 27, after the peace talks in Chiapas."

Despite its critics, the National Public Security Department went into gear immediately after it was created. Only time will judge its success. One can only hope that this organization will not be a step backwards for democracy or become a means of repression and denial of freedoms for the civilian population.

Meanwhile, businessmen no longer trust the security that the nation can provide, seeking protection in the form of multi-million international insurance policies instead.

Mónica Ching
Assistant Editor.

government, the government our country needs to be able to make the transition to democracy.

This is a commitment, and I must stress this: I will call a national consultation to review our Constitution, so we can have a new Constituent Congress in 1997, which can produce a new fundamental law bringing together our aspirations... in order to resolve the country's problems.

The next government will not be one in which the PRD will replace the PRI. We do not want more government parties....

We have confidence in the vote and in the coming elections, despite the conditions in which they are being held.

Let us keep in mind that changes which seemed impossible —today Mandela is president of South Africa; today the opposition has won in Panama— did not appear credible only a few days ago. Let us have confidence in ourselves. Let us go into these elections with faith, with courage, with many votes, so that the vote will be what decides the destiny of our country in this, the end of the 20th century.

I make this pledge before you, to respect the electoral result and see that it is respected.... We want Carlos Salinas to make the commitment not to intervene in this election, that he pledge that this election, on August 21st, will not be the same as the election of July 6th [1988].

I have confidence in the backing of my compatriots. I have confidence that together with you we will be forming the next government, and that this will be the government which builds and develops democracy in our country.

Ernesto Zedillo. Compatriots, I sincerely thank you for your attention. Candidates, sirs, I thank you for having accepted this invitation. I invite you to debate with me again, and that this time we do it together with the rest of the candidates....

I propose to you, compatriots, that together we work for an economy that will generate the jobs and the wages that you are demanding. I propose to you that together we work for that reform and that implementation of a new



Daniel Mendoza / Imagenlatina.

PAN members gather to watch the debate.

“Reason, the mother of tolerance, is the only thing capable of warding off bloodthirsty phantoms”

Octavio Paz

system of justice which will eliminate insecurity, violence and aggression against the citizen.

I propose to you, compatriots, that we deploy a great battle against poverty. I propose to you, compatriots, that in that battle we think of poverty-stricken peasants, of our Indian brothers, of the retired, of the handicapped. I propose to you that we make real the juridical equality of women before the law. I propose to you, compatriots, that we work together in the following years to build a future of progress for our children. I ask that this coming August 21st you go to the polls, that you go to the polls with the confidence that your vote will be respected. And I ask that when you cast your vote you think only of the future of your children, the future of your families. Thank you very much, compatriots.

Diego Fernández. In accordance with the rules of this debate, in this last segment I cannot give a harsh rebuttal, since Mr. Cárdenas cannot reply. I only want to say to you, Mr. Cárdenas, that your accusation is not just. I did not call the poor people who were demanding houses *descalzonados*. That is what I called the leaders who push them forward while not showing their own faces. Read *Proceso*, a professional, serious journal of communication, and you will see the text of what I said and what I maintain now. I did not call them that; excuse me, but I cannot accept your accusation.

To finish, the National Action Party has been fighting for democracy for 54 years; for 54 years it has been fighting for Mexico to live in a state of law, and we are going to achieve this in the next government; to achieve as well a humane economy that will provide everyone with a decent life, sources of employment, justice and legality for all, so that we can thereby guarantee a sufficient and secure, decent life for all Mexican families.

I want to say to you, to end, that if I have not failed you as a candidate, I will not fail you as president. That I need you on August 21st, but I will need you even more over the next six years, because with your help I can be a good president of Mexico.



While the debate did not suffice when it came to learning the candidates' platforms, it did provide a look at their personalities. It remains to be seen what impact it will have on the August 21 elections ❧

Marybel Toro Gayol
Managing Editor.



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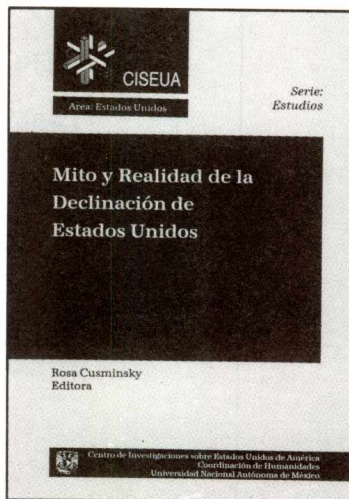
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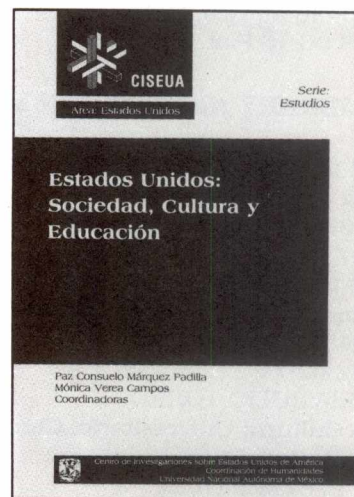
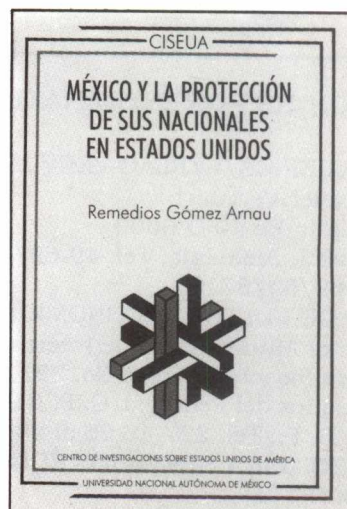
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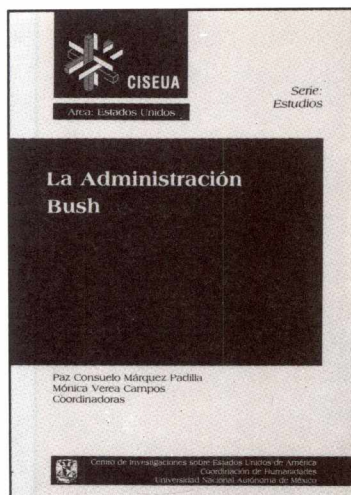
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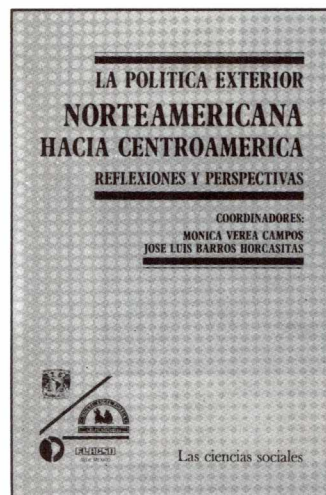
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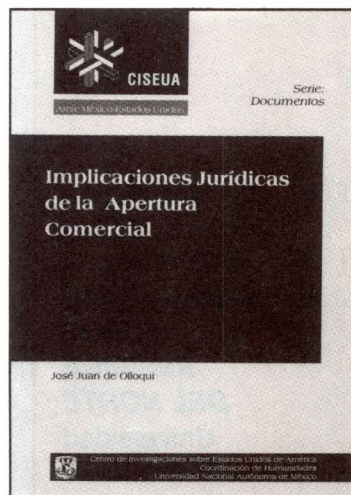
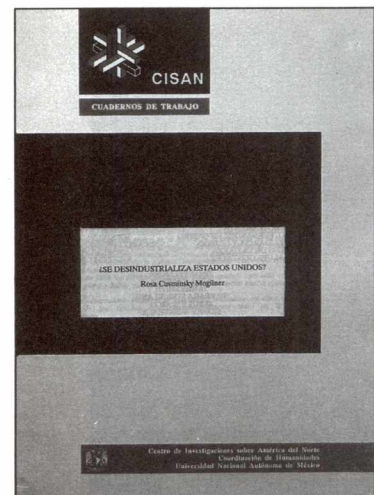
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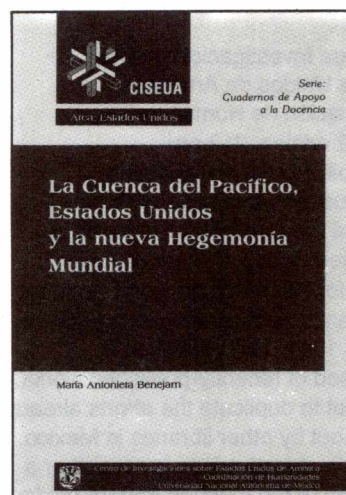
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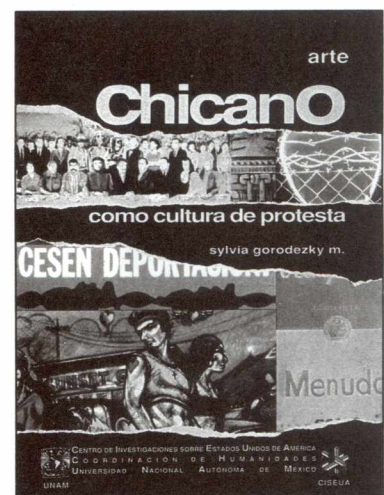
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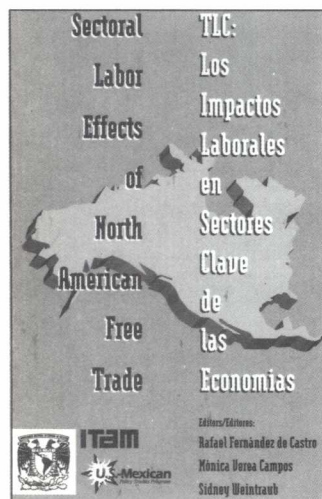
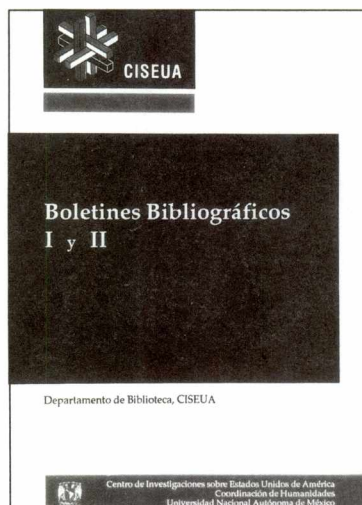
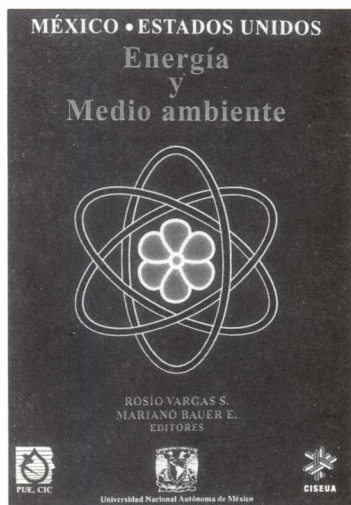
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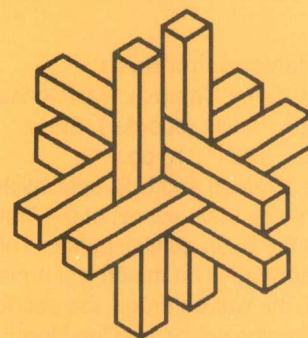
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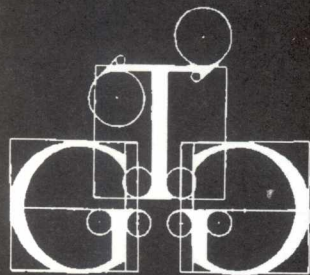
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Jorge Veraza Urtuzuástegui

34

FRANK ZAPPA
Famoso pero no conocido

LA SONRISA.
UN CAMINO HACIA COMALA
Rocio Antón

**CULTURA DEL ROCK (U2, Tori
Amos, Mujeres y rock), Mijail
Bajtin, Umberto Eco, CINE, VIDEO**

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA METROPOLITANA (IZTAPALAPA)
Dirección de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

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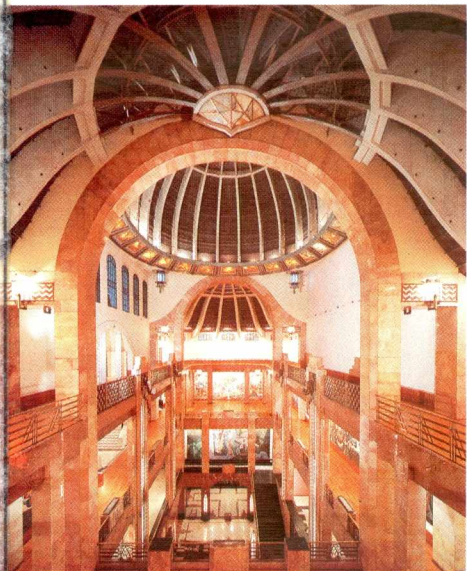
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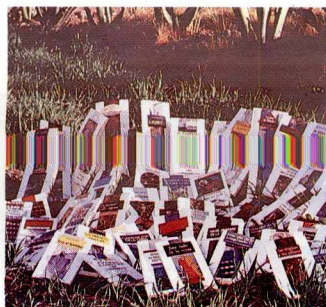
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Maqueta del Ciprés y Tabernaculo del Altar Mayor de la Catedral de Puebla



Esta maqueta del ciprés y tabernáculo del altar mayor de la Catedral de Puebla, que se exhibe en el Museo Amparo gracias al apoyo de la Catedral y de Sedesol, fue realizada en 1798 en madera ensamblada y tallada, policromada y dorada. La maqueta reproduce el monumental tabernáculo neoclásico construido con mármoles policromados, estucos, plata y bronce dorados y cincelados, bajo la dirección del artista valenciano Manuel Tolsá (1757-1816).

Con ligeras variantes, se representa el ciprés actual, constituido por un zócalo de planta circular, con cuatro altares entre los cuales se abren las portadas de los accesos al panteón de los obispos. Sobre éste se levanta el primer cuerpo, formado por dieciseis columnas corintias que soportan un gran entablamento, con frontones que se rompen en cada una de las cuatro fachadas que soportan ángeles de estuco blanco y albergan grandes ráfagas de metal dorado con monogramas. El conjunto está rematado por una gran cúpula peraltada, con ventanas en cada fachada. Esta fachada sostiene la escultura de San Pedro, Príncipe de los Apóstoles, y cubre el sagrario que soporta una gran escultura de bronce dorado que representa a la Purísima Concepción de María, obra maestra de Manuel Tolsá. En los intercolumnios del primer cuerpo, sobre las puertas del panteón, hay grandes esculturas de estuco que representan a los Doctores de la iglesia: San Gregorio, San Jerónimo, San Agustín y San Ambrosio.

Esta obra es hasta hoy el único ejemplo conocido en América de un modelo a escala de un retablo, construido en el siglo XVIII y que formó parte de un proyecto presentado a las autoridades eclesiásticas para su aprobación.

Su autor, Manuel Tolsá, nació en 1757 en España; estudió en las Reales Academias de las Tres Nobles Artes de San Carlos de Valencia y San Fernando de Madrid, en donde llegó a ser Académico de Mérito. Tolsá llegó a Nueva España en 1791 como director de escultura de la Real Academia de San Carlos. Fue el artista virreinal más prestigiado de su tiempo. Como arquitecto tuvo a su cargo obras tan notables como la terminación de la Catedral de México, la construcción del Seminario de Minería —hoy Palacio de Minería—, el Palacio del Marqués del Apartado y la Iglesia de Loreto en México. Como escultor realizó la estatua ecuestre del rey Carlos IV, conocida popularmente como "El Caballito" y el busto de Hernán Cortés, que adornó su sepulcro en la iglesia del hospital de Jesús Nazareno de México.



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